BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 2, 2024

CALL TO ORDER – A regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Meg Bohmke, Chairman, at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 2, 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 (*arrived at 3:02 p.m.*); 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.

CHAIR REMARKS

Ms. Bohmke said that the Commonwealth of Virginia celebrates Local Government and Education Week during the first week of April each year. She said that Stafford County celebrates local government and education every day. She said that they continuously seek ways to inform the public about local government's impact on the community. She said that in honor of this special week, she invited everyone to view their video showcasing a day in the life of Stafford County and how local government intersects with residents' lives.

Ms. Bohmke said that they recently hosted Congresswoman Spanberger, who held a press conference regarding securing over $1.7 million in federal funding for several projects in Stafford County. She said that the funds will be utilized to widen and realign a section of Onville Road and make other improvements.

Ms. Bohmke said that additionally, they will enhance Courthouse Road and Route 1 and implement a state-of-the-art computerized dispatch system for the Sheriff's Office. She said that they expressed their gratitude to Congresswoman Spanberger for her advocacy on their behalf and for visiting Stafford County to announce these awards. She said that she also thanked Sheriff David Decatur and Mr. Kyle Bates for their assistance in disseminating this news to their community.

Ms. Bohmke said that Stafford Utilities are currently conducting their annual flushing of the water lines, which may cause temporary changes in tap water taste and smell. She said that this is a harmless occurrence that does not affect water quality. She said that Stafford will flush all water mains system-wide from March 18 until the end of May as part of an annual effort to clean the entire system. She said that for more information, she directed everyone to visit the Stafford Utilities webpage.

Ms. Bohmke said that she wanted to thank the Sheriff's Office, the Treasurer's Office, Dr. Laura Chretien, and Rebecca Domigan-Brown for organizing the rabies screening event that was held last weekend. She said that this event is always highly anticipated, and this year was no exception. She said that once a human or animal contracts rabies, there is no effective treatment available. She said that therefore, vaccinating pets is crucial. She said that she thanked everyone who attended and contributed to maintaining the safety of their community.

PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING APRIL 15 – 19, 2024 AS NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK IN STAFFORD COUNTY

Ms. Bohmke said that this afternoon, there would be a presentation for their public safety telecommunications team. She said that she would like to welcome them up to the dais. She said that they had special guests in attendance today to celebrate Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

Ms. Bohmke said that she invited these emergency communications personnel to join her at the dais: Sarah Palau, Supervisor; Craig Boland, Dispatcher; Cameron Sacke, Dispatcher; and First Lieutenant Brian Jacobs, Assistant Division Commander. She said that Stafford County appreciated the dedication and professionalism of its 911 staff. She said that they handled over 250,000 phone calls annually and were responsible for determining the appropriate response to each call.

Ms. Bohmke said that thanks to a federal grant, Stafford County was purchasing emergency police dispatching to complement their existing emergency fire and rescue dispatching programs. She said that this would enable their skilled dispatchers to provide even more detailed responses. She said that they took great pride in their 911 staff, and the County remained committed to providing them with the necessary equipment and resources to continue delivering the high level of response they had come accustomed to receiving. She thank them for their service, and it was an honor to present this proclamation to them.

Ms. Bohmke said that she thanked everyone for being here, and she thanked them for everything they did. She said that on February 1, while she attended the Local Government Day at the General Assembly, Falmouth Fire and Rescue rescued a friend of hers and saved her life. She said that this was just one example the work they did every day. She said that they had all sat in the dispatch center and knew it could be stressful, but their ability to triage calls efficiently was truly impressive. She said that they were forever grateful for their efforts and service to Stafford County.

Ms. Bohmke read the resolution.

ADDITIONS – DELETIONS AND APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR AGENDA

Mr. Vosburg said that he had a budget work session proposed to be added at the conclusion of the consent agenda.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to approve the regular agenda with the addition of the budget work session.

Ms. Allen made a substitute motion, seconded by Ms. Gary to approve the agenda as presented, with no additional budget work session.

Ms. Bohmke said that she had requested this budget work session. She said that although she understood that Board members did not want to meet prior to the 3:00 p.m. meeting, she created a list of additional questions she had about the budget, so she felt it was their fiduciary responsibility to hold a budget work session.

Ms. Bohmke said that they always had work sessions on the last day when they were approving the budget and capital improvement plan on behalf of their voters. She said that she felt like it was really important. She said that she would still have these questions even if they did not have the budget work session, so she would raise them at the dais regardless.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to state that previously, during their discussion about scheduling a potential work session, the majority of the Board was not supportive of it. She said that it was particularly about it being prior to this meeting, but in general, most members felt they already had sufficient information. She said that she was happy to have additional discussions and questions as they went through the budget.

Dr. Yeung said that she would like to address some of the concerns or questions raised during this meeting. She said that if they proceeded with the work session, she had one unanswered item from her list. She said that they had been discussing this via email, and if they could provide answers for her, then she would be satisfied either way.

Ms. Vanuch said that to Ms. Bohmke's point, they usually had a budget work session on the same day as the Board meeting. She said that it was not unusual for them to hold such sessions when the

Governor and General Assembly had not yet finalized the budget. She said that there were numerous unanswered questions in this regard, and they may receive some clarification during the work session. She said that an email received earlier today provided updates on recent vetoes by the Governor and their potential impact on the budget.

Ms. Vanuch said it was their responsibility to make every effort to refine the budget without altering any pre-existing decisions. She said that the purpose of the work session was to identify areas within the budget that taxpayers expected them to address and make necessary cuts if deemed appropriate by the Board. She said she saw no drawbacks in conducting a work session today prior to the meeting. She said that to avoid a repeat of last year's late-night deliberations on the dais, she proposed this approach as more practical.

Mr. English said that he was in favor of holding a work session, but he believed they should establish a strict time limit. He said that they did not need to have a two-hour work session.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would agree with that.

Mr. Diggs said that regarding their last work session, he was disappointed because he felt that, when they were discussing what the tax rate would be, some Board members did not really engage. He said that they had the perfect opportunity to have that discussion, but it was elusive as to where they were going until they polled the majority of the Board at $0.908. He said that he would support holding this additional work session, but in the future, they needed to use the time and meetings they had to discuss these issues.

Ms. Gary said that she wanted to make a final statement regarding the matter at hand. She said that although there had been much discussion, she wanted to clarify that her intention was not to imply that she or any other Board members did not wish to put in the necessary work. She said that through multiple meetings with their Budget Director, Andrea Light, and staff, she had addressed all of her concerns and questions.

Ms. Gary said that circumstances may change, which is why they could continue discussing these matters throughout the evening if needed. She said that last year's prolonged discussions were not primarily due to unanswered questions but rather other factors. She said that as a majority of the Board had already agreed on the $0.908 proposal, she felt disappointed that they were being urged to hold another work session that many of them deemed unnecessary.

Ms. Gary said that while they could do it, it would be beneficial to establish a time constraint. She said that she said that she would still vote against the proposal, but she believed implementing a time constraint was necessary due to how these things were happening very last-minute.

Ms. Gary asked if there was desire on the part of the Board to establish a time limit for the work session.

Mr. English said that he believed one hour would be sufficient.

Ms. Bohmke said that they had plenty of time in their day today. She said that if they had to do more work for their taxpayers, she thought everyone needed to have their questions answered and that was most important. She said that she would give it at least an hour and a half, because she did not want to be up against an hour deadline and could not have additional questions answered. She said that it did not seem quite productive.

Mr. Diggs said that he understood Ms. Bohmke's point, but as Ms. Gary previously said, for the last month they had been meeting with staff and having conversations, and it was concerning to him that they were at the final moment and had to spend so much time in another work session to answer all these questions that had come up. He said that he knew that a few things had come up, and he was willing to do the work for their constituents, but it was concerning.

Ms. Bohmke said that for Mr. Diggs' edification, she had been on this Board for 10 years, and she could not remember a date where they set the tax rate and did not have a budget work session. She said that they usually started at noon and went until about 2:00 p.m. She said that it was very customary.

Ms. Gary said that she was only three years into her term on the Board, so she was still learning. She asked if someone could please remind her of a specific instance where the Board reached a consensus to either undertake or abstain from an action, and subsequently, the chair revisited the matter and sought to achieve a different outcome. She said that she did not recall such an occurrence during her time on this Board.

Ms. Bohmke said that her focus was not about achieving a new outcome, but to ensure that the Board had received all relevant information.

Mr. English asked if an hour and 15 minutes would be sufficient time for the work session.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would amend her motion to cap the work session at an hour and 15 minutes.

Ms. Bohmke called the vote on adding the budget work session to the agenda.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to approve the amended agenda to add a budget work session with a 1 hour, 15 minute time limit.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(5)	Bohmke, Diggs, English, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay:	(2)	Allen, Gary

<u>PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC – I (3 MINUTES EACH)</u>

1. Simeon Slayton said that he had a very simple request, or at least he started out thinking it was. He said that he had visited the County multiple times, written letters to the Commissioner of Revenue, and met with Gordon Silver. He said that he had a small business, and he believed a person's worth was determined by what they give and not what they keep. He said that at nearly 80 years old, he anticipates living another 30 years and wants to do as much good as he can. He said that he believed that people that had foreclosures had lost one of the most valuable things to them.

   Mr. Slayton said that he had a skip tracing service that locates individuals unaware of funds they are entitled to after foreclosures. He said that any excess beyond the due taxes belongs to them despite losing their homes. Mr. Slayton said that he has spoken with numerous departments within Stafford, who claim the County does not maintain such a list. He said that such a list is required by law and considered a public record. He said that despite his inquiries to numerous individuals, including those responsible for the County's website, he has yet to find this list.

   Mr. Slayton said that the County Attorney handling auctions also denies keeping one. Mr. Slayton said that interestingly, Fredericksburg has 14 pages of such cases, with some amounts reaching over $1 million. He said that these funds are not retained by the County; they keep records for a specific period before transferring them to the state. He said that the County only retains tax revenue.

   Mr. Slayton said that many people who had been foreclosed on were destitute, and his biggest problem when contacting them was that they think it is a scam, because they cannot imagine that they lost their house but someone owes them $30,000. He said that he covers all legal fees and filing costs, and he needs assistance locating this list. He said that this help would be greatly appreciated.

2. Alan Watkins, 12 England Run Lane, Fredericksburg, VA 22406, said that first, he wished Mr. Vosburg the very best in his future. He said that secondly, he had growing concern regarding

the management of a potential bridge and parkway across the Rappahannock River. He said that Ms. Bohmke may recall that at the January meeting, the FAMPO Board and Policy Committee was finally made aware of the development taking place south of the river called the Neon Project.

Mr. Watkins said that this was the first time this information had been disclosed by the City of Fredericksburg. He said that since then, during the open house held by the consultants on March 20, they learned that there were numerous other developments occurring alongside Gordon Shelton Boulevard in the City of Fredericksburg. He said that last week, at a meeting on March 28, which they may not be aware of, there was discussion about potential new developments that had not even been made known to the consultants or FAMPO.

Mr. Watkins said that in summary, the entire area surrounding Gordon Shelton Boulevard has planned developments, which limit potential bridge and parkway locations. He said that he had a few questions regarding this situation. He said that first, he asked if their County could request specific details and status of each proposed development north and south of the river, including plans and timelines. He asked if these details could be provided to Michael Baker International for transparency to the County and City leaders who would ultimately decide the future of this project.

Mr. Watkins asked if FAMPO could assess the impact of these new developments on the restrictions of the existing four bridge options. He said that lastly, he believed it would be prudent for the County and City leaders consider placing a moratorium on any planned new developments in the area until after Michael Baker International's analysis is complete and final bridge and parkway options have been studied and presented.

3. Linda Muller, 109 Dishpan Lane, said that she believed that the key to Stafford County's ability to flourish is the County having a very successful public school system that would attract new families to their County, in addition to having reasonably priced real estate. She said that they were busting at the seams, and there was a need to expand schools sooner rather than later, as the Board was well aware. She said that she was surprised to learn of the proposed location of a new elementary school between Brooke Point High School and Middle School.

   Ms. Muller said that residents from Dishpan Lane and Black Hawk Estates subdivision were familiar with traffic patterns around the high school. She said that currently, there was heavy congestion at the entrance and exit points for both middle school and high school. She said that adding a new elementary school to this area would exacerbate the problem. She said that she appreciated the efforts of school security personnel who helped direct traffic during peak hours.

Ms. Muller said that infrastructure improvements, such as widening roads or expanding road entrances, would be necessary to accommodate increased bus and car traffic. She said that additionally, in case of school closures due to weather conditions, there should be a plan for coordinating the departure of students and vehicles. She said that they would require some sort of traffic schedule to coordinate who would leave and how. She said that her primary concerns were public safety and traffic congestion, and she hoped that the County addressed these issues while planning for new schools.

4. Julia Lewis, 40 Airpark Boulevard, said that she was opposed to the Clift Farm development and prayed for God's guidance to stand before them with all her courage, exercising her First Amendment freedom of speech in defiance of Jarrell Properties' tactics to silence opposition to their Clift Farm rezoning by all 37 members of the Dogwood Airpark Association. She said that during the February 28 Planning Commission meeting, the DAPA HOA President announced that the association was negotiating with J. Hicks representing Jarrell Properties to create an Aviation Disclosure Notice.

   Ms. Lewis said that on March 25 at 9:55 p.m., she received a group email from the DAPA HOA President detailing DAPA's plans for the project. She said that the DAPA had issued a statement of acknowledgment, stating that they had finally reached an agreement with JPI but there were two conditions. She said that reading from this agreement crafted by JPI, which she had prepared in a packet for them, "number one, DAPA agrees to publicly acknowledge their work and cooperation with JPI on the Clift Farm project, which led to this agreement." She said that they should listen carefully, "number two, DAPA agrees not to present any public opposition to the rezoning application in any form."

   Ms. Lewis said that her HOA president stated, "JPI has been very clear that there is little value to them if DAPA as an organization says it does not oppose the development, but members of DAPA get up and speak in opposition to the development." She said that the email further stated that before JPI. would sign this agreement, the president required a written acknowledgement from all 37 members stating they would abstain from speaking in opposition. She said that as the only DAPA member who has publicly spoken against it, she wanted to clarify that she was not alone.

   Ms. Lewis said that other members were refusing to be intimidated into agreeing to these terms. She said that she understood her association's desperation to protect itself from encroaching development; however, she refused to be bullied by JPI's pressure on her HOA. She said that she requested that they read her packet for a better understanding of the depth of this intimidation.

Ms. Lewis said that if JPI. truly wished to be good community partners, they should reissue the agreement without condition instead of pitting neighbor against neighbor with their attempt to silence all opposition. She asked what actions this Board could take to prevent developers from silencing Stafford County residents' opposition at public meetings. She said that she had met with Senator Durant and Delegate Cole, who both offered assistance to protect her First Amendment right to speak before this Board. She said that she asked the Board to please do the same.

5. Tim Diehr, 54 Clift Farm Road, said that as a member of the Clift Farm Group, he was there that evening to speak against the rezoning application for the Clift Farm subdivision. He said Stafford County's comprehensive plan could be found on their website. He said that the first thing seen in the plan was a question: "What is a comprehensive plan?" followed by the County's answer. He said that they defined a comprehensive plan as arguably the single most important document in a locality besides the county code, which established goals, objectives, and policies to shape the future direction of a community concerning its physical land development.

   Mr. Diehr said that policies often identified what the community envisioned for anticipated growth, including where growth was desirable and the type and intensity of development. He said that a plan should also address other aspects of growth, such as transportation, housing, public facilities, infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources. He said that the comprehensive plan served as a guide to evaluate development proposals based on the desires of the community. He said that over time, it should be re-evaluated and adjusted if community goals or conditions changed.

   Mr. Diehr said that they at the Clift Farm Group believed that the rest of the community should align with their vision and goals. He said that their group had gathered over 1,300 signatures and numerous letters from community members. He said that for the past three years, they had been collecting information to present to the Planning Commission, County staff, and other stakeholders. He said that on February 28, the Planning Commission recommended denial of the application to the Board of Supervisors due to its inconsistency with the comprehensive plan.

   Mr. Diehr said that JPI. has repeatedly claimed that this is what the County desires; however, it was essential to clarify who represents the County and when or where such desires have been expressed. He said that if the County refers to the governmental body, then the comprehensive plan explicitly states that unplanned development is not desired. He said that similarly, if the County encompasses the residents of this area, numerous voices have expressed opposition to unplanned development.

Mr. Diehr said that the interests of the County government and the community were aligned, making this request for zoning straightforward. He said that they did not oppose planned development in their region; rather, they advocated against development without a plan. He said that if development was to occur within this area, it should be done with a clear plan. He said that the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and County staff had collectively worked diligently to establish the comprehensive plan over time.

Mr. Diehr said that through these efforts, communities and supporting infrastructure had been developed and constructed within targeted growth areas. He said that they appreciated their dedication and hard work that benefited their community and encouraged them to uphold the plan and the community's interests by voting against this rezoning application.

6. Rich Ryan, 15 Blossom Tree Court, Stafford, VA said that he had previously emailed each one of the Board members regarding the flooding and safety issues along Brooke Road. He said that in 2018, he approached the Board regarding flooding on Brooke Road, and since then, one thing became certain: no permanent fix had been identified. He said that although VDOT installed a pump and camera at the S-curves, the issue had worsened. He said that the flooding was now prevalent throughout Brooke Road, not just the S-curves.

   Mr. Ryan said that the camera's usefulness was limited because it was not infrared, making it ineffective during early mornings and late nights. He said that since the last meeting, the Board had allocated $7.5 million to address this issue; however, its availability might be in jeopardy due to competing concerns affecting previously identified resources. He asked what could possibly be more important than prioritizing citizen safety and security. He said that from his understanding, VDOT estimated that fixing Brooke Road permanently would cost between $17 million and $20 million.

   Mr. Ryan said they had been in contact with Ms. Gary, who indicated that $7.5 million was insufficient due to inflation but could be supplemented by using secondary six-year plan funding currently available, as well as reallocating emergency access road funds from the state. He said that Ms. Gary had provided them with a County product regarding the funding on Brooke Road as of last month. He said that while the plan was very good, their approach addressed only the S-curves, and the flooding occurred along Brooke Road, sometimes even worse than the S-curves.

   Mr. Ryan said that the plan relied on several assumptions: the Board would not reprogram $7.5 million, additional funding from the SSYP would be allocated, federal brick grant funding, revenue sharing, and reallocation of emergency access road funds. He said that the plan would not address other flooding, including repairs all along Brooke Road, and did not mention widening or address dredging, beaver dam removal, or debris clearance. He said that based on this, they would need to seek additional resources from the state and identify any gaps in order to advocate with state leaders for those resources.

Mr. Ryan said that Delegate Milde had agreed to support their efforts as well by advocating for additional state resources to address the issue. He said that ironically and concerningly, the Board was voting today to increase personal property taxes for residents affected by this flooding. He said that they were consistently being asked to pay increased personal property taxes while their property values decreased.

Mr. Ryan said that what was even more egregious was that they asked them to pay more taxes but failed to provide safe roads for citizens and first responders. He said that he would ask the Board to support the following: to not reprogram the $7.5 million, allocate existing SSYP funding, leverage brick grant funding, bring this issue back onto the ballot and agenda so that public input could be received at a public hearing, and identify any remaining gaps.

7. Kristen Maxson, 1816 Richmond Highway, Stafford, VA, said that said that on March 27 of this year at 3:57 through Ask Blue, 10 points were given concerning the Commissioner's meeting at 6:00 p.m., which was sent two hours early in the interest of being included in the minutes of the agenda. She asked everyone to refer to 3:57 p.m. on March 27 for this entry. She said that in their packet today, page 167 of 282 pages is empty and should read that this page was intentionally left blank.

   Ms. Maxson said that this Thursday, the Historical Commission will meet at 3:00 p.m. She said that there were no minutes for Architectural Review on March 4. She said that it was misspelled and said 2023 in the 2024 entry; this was a typo. She said that a generic example of a standard drawing application was posted, which she called a "dumb attachment." She said that no spoken word or written word exists for both Thursday or last month.

   Ms. Maxson said that she asked them to please respect the people and place information according to the meetings. She said that there is no Potomac Transportation Commissioner meeting agenda or minutes for this Thursday at 7:00 p.m., so she called in and asked if they could be displayed; however, currently, there are none. She said that the standing committees are still on hold while committee structure is accessed. She said that this leaves the public with limited representation.

   Ms. Maxson said that on page 281 of 282 in today's packet, amendments in the packet change "Board of Supervisors" to "Board," which reduces representation. She said that on March 19 of this year, page 7 of 282 in their packet states that Stafford County invested $13 into the data center project at Old Potomac Church Road when the total investment is $6 billion. She said that it said $13; this seems to have a lot of missing zeros or possibly this was trying to help save taxpayers money. She said that whether it was a fact or a typo, they did not know.

REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Allen – stated that she had no reports at this time.

Mr. Diggs – stated that he would like to begin by expressing gratitude towards Mr. Randy Vosburg for his dedicated service as their County Administrator. He said that despite recent attempts to question his character, he wanted to state unequivocally that he was an exceptional leader, and his absence will be felt in Stafford County. He said that he wished him all the best in his future endeavors. He said that he had recently attended the DARE basketball game, where law enforcement and educators competed for the coveted trophy.

Mr. Diggs said that it was an electrifying event, with the game going into overtime twice. He said that the event served as a fundraiser for DARE Day, and it was inspiring to see the community come together in support. He said that he also attended the Stafford County Fire and Rescue Awards Ceremony, where he was reminded once again of the exceptional team they had serving their community. He said that their dedication and professionalism were truly commendable.

Mr. Diggs said that he had attended an Eagle Scout Ceremony for the Boy Scouts of America. He said that it was a privilege to present two scouts, Ryan and Ethan, with a flag flown over their government center, along with a challenge coin and certificate in recognition of their hard work and resilience. He said that achieving the rank of Eagle Scout was a significant accomplishment, and it was an honor to celebrate their achievement.

Mr. Diggs said that if one's intention is advocate for children and educators within the chamber, he urged them to do so in a manner that uplifted and inspired their community's youth. He said that while freedom of speech was a fundamental right, it did not absolve one from accountability. He said that as they crafted their messages for impact, they should remember that their children were observing. He said that the Board should set a positive example for them to follow.

Mr. Diggs said that tonight, he proposed a challenge to himself and his colleagues to embrace innovation. He said that as leaders, they must continuously seek new and creative solutions, push boundaries, and challenge the status quo. He said that it was up to them to create the vision and chart the path forward. He said that they could not rely on external solutions; they must take ownership of their responsibilities. He requested the Board to set aside petty politics and commit themselves to the hard work ahead.

Mr. English – reported that he would discuss an issue concerning Garrisonville and Rock Hill. He said that there was a sinkhole in the area that had been filled and resolved. He said that he had been told that everything was fixed. He said that on March 29, they observed Vietnam Veterans Day. He said he saluted and honored those who fought for them during that time. He requested the Chairman to present a proclamation for these veterans during this month of April.

Mr. English said that in addition, he could not attend their award ceremony on March 30, but his congratulations went to all the recipients at the Fire Rescue Banquet. He said that he wanted to thank Randy Vosburg for his dedication. He said it had been a pleasure working with him, and he wished that he could have stayed longer. He wished him good luck. He said that he had some sad news to share as well. He said that David McDonald Sr., a volunteer for Company 2, passed away on Saturday, March 23 at UVA Medical Center in Charlottesville.

Mr. English said that born on January 26, 1955 and was known for his lifelong dedication to the Stafford Volunteer Fire Department. He said that a life member since 1973, he served as a fire chief and founded the department's monthly gatherings for retired brotherhood firemen. He said that in his lifetime, David enjoyed hobbies such as collecting guns, riding motorcycles, and camping.

Mr. English said that his heart and prayers went to his children, Jamie and David McDonald Jr., along with his numerous grandchildren, brother Rodney, sister-in-law Debbie Folsom, Sandra Myers, and Teresa McDonald, as well as numerous nieces and nephews. He said that he had was preceded in death by his wife and best friend of 47 years, Kitty McDonald, younger brother Johnny McDonald, who also served at the fire department as a life member, and his other brother, Kevin. He said that he hated to bring up bad news, but felt he had to honor and respect these community members that he had known for so long.

Ms. Gary – reported that there had been a community meeting where she was asked to attend and subsequently asked not to attend, and she understood it to be a complex situation involving tension and fear. She said that she wanted to reassure everyone about the actions taken by this Board so far. She said they had approved and voted several times on grant applications, which required significant staff time and financial resources. She said that additionally, the Board had voted to approve the engineering contract, initiating the timeline for the permanent project that is estimated to take three to five years.

Ms. Gary said that this began last spring when they awarded it, amounting to approximately $300,000. She said that beyond that, they were still awaiting grant funding that could potentially eliminate the need for additional funding to close the gap. She said that the current projected cost of the project, as discussed with Transportation staff and verified by VDOT, is $11 million. She said that she was unsure if this figure may or may not include the emergency access road.

Ms. Gary said that she had also spoken with Secretary of Transportation Miller at the state level, who confirmed that the allocated state funds are for maintenance purposes only and cannot be reallocated. She said that however, they did have County funding in the amount of $250,000, which this Board can choose to allocate to the full project. She said she had been in communication with Delegate Milde regarding potential dredging and Port Authority funds at the state level.

Ms. Gary said that they would continue these discussions as they worked towards resolving this serious safety issue. She said that she encouraged anyone who had questions or needed clarification to please reach out. She said that she wanted to express her gratitude for the support the Board had shown in addressing this matter. She said that she would not delve into the issues they had faced there; however, everyone was aware of them.

Ms. Gary said that she thanked everyone for attending and speaking on behalf of the community today. She said that she had attended the Fire and Rescue Awards, an event celebrating those who risk their lives daily for their safety. She said that these individuals perform numerous acts of service, and it was gratifying to acknowledge their contributions.

Ms. Gary said that lastly, she wanted to take a moment to thank their County Administrator, Mr. Vosburg. She said that she would not read her prepared remarks, as did not want to get emotional. She said that she was very grateful and believed that his impact would last for many years. She said that it was a short time, but she felt that she had been bettered professionally and personally due to working with him. She said that she was very grateful for what he had done for their community and this organization. She said that she knew that he would have a blast in whatever he would do next, and they were very happy for him and his family.

Ms. Gary said that she had one more update, which was that she needed to meet with her colleague in the Bylaws Committee. She said that it had become complicated when responding to things while also giving updates from all of their meetings, so they should revisit that. She said that she had requested staff to include links to minutes from multiple committees and commissions on their official website. She said that until that was implemented, she would share them via her social media platforms.

Ms. Vanuch – stated that first and foremost, she wanted to congratulate Sue Schaffer, a Rock Hill resident and her former Sunday school teacher, who received the Parks and Recreation Florence Helm Award this year. She said that she attended the event, expecting a small gathering of around 10 people at a Parks and Rec meeting, but saw that there were hundreds of attendees. She said that it coincided with the Red Fines Award ceremony for children participating in sports programs. She said that coaches and nominated players gather to recognize good sportsmanship across various teams from the previous year's season.

Ms. Vanuch said that it was an amazing event, and she asked Brion Southall why they had not been invited before to this treasured event. She said that she highly recommended attending next year's event as it showcases the children's impressive sportsmanship. She said that she was delighted to be part of such a wonderful occasion and to present Ms. Schaffer with her award as a Rock Hill resident.

Ms. Vanuch said that she had one Eagle Scout who received the rank of Eagle Scout this past week. She said that his name is Aiden Lazerson, and he created a nature trail and outdoor classroom at Rock Hill Elementary School. She said that she would like to thank him for his dedication and achievements. She said that regarding the residents who spoke about the rezoning issue in the Falmouth District, she had reviewed their document provided.

Ms. Vanuch said that it was interesting that they were attempted to be silenced by a developer, and this did not sit well with her. She said that she would appreciate more information on Dogwood Air Park so that she can better understand its implications and determine whether the County needs to send out disclosures related to the airport development. She said that the document suggests that the developer is requesting not to advocate against the development to the Board in order for them to disclose the presence of an airport at the location, which seems ironic.

Ms. Vanuch said that lastly, she wished Mr. Vosburg all the best as he moves on from this position. She said that it had been an honor and a pleasure working with him over the past couple of years. She said that she knew that he would do wonderful things, and she thanked him for giving them some of his time. She said that she knew his family would love it where they were going, and that he would do great.

Dr. Yeung – thanked Mr. Vosburg for bringing in new initiatives, fresh ideas, and helping them grow their goals and objectives, as well as helping her as Vice Chair and Chair of the Board. She thanked him for helping Stafford County with the strategic plans, initiatives, and objectives by putting them into motion in the short time that he had been there. She thanked him for opening up his heart, home, and family to all of them, but especially to her when times were tough. She said that she was still waiting for the address to pop up in her email, as it had not yet, but she thanked him for that.

Dr. Yeung said that she had a few other brief comments. She said that on March 24, she attended the art festival at Brooke Point High School. She said that there was beautiful artwork from students of all grade levels, and she really enjoyed the music ensemble, especially the group from Moncure Elementary School.

Dr. Yeung said that she gave kudos to everyone who participated in the event on Saturday and Sunday. She said that she attended the Office of Youth meeting, GWRC, several joint Board and budget meetings, and an HOA meeting. She said that she would not discuss the specific location, but they were coming fast and furious because of certain things being built in the community that the Board was the last to know about.

Dr. Yeung said that there were questions, and they were there to provide answers. She said that she wanted to reiterate Ms. Bohmke's message regarding Congresswoman Spanberger, and wanted to add that Senators Warner and Kaine were instrumental in not only transportation grants but many others. She said that they were thankful for these representatives to look to Stafford County and help with their needs. She said that she attended the River Basin meeting and the Fire and Rescue Awards as well.

<u>Ms. Bohmke</u> – reported that the Fire and Rescue Award ceremony was stupendous, as always, and she enjoyed seeing who received the Fire Chief Award. She said that guest speaker Tim Nye, a former military member with numerous accolades, expressed his respect for firefighters, stating he never understood why someone would run into a burning building. She said that this perspective was appreciated.

Ms. Bohmke said that they were grateful for Fire and Rescue's dedication and their recognition in the community. She said that it was noteworthy that they had three or four chaplains involved in the service, setting them apart from other jurisdictions. She said that to correct herself, they had eight chaplains participating. She said that considering what they did every day, she was sure those chaplains did a great job for their staff, and she thanked them.

Ms. Bohmke said that lastly, it had been a great 18 months working with Mr. Vosburg, who had been an excellent leader for them. She said that she had enjoyed his laughter and demeanor, and they never crossed words. She said that she wished his family nothing but the best and appreciated his contributions to Stafford County. She said that there were challenges of being a big, growing County, and he rose to the occasion and did the job for them. She said that it was sad to see him leave, but she wished him and his family the best.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

Ms. McClendon said that she had nothing to report to the Board at this time.

<u>REPORT OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR</u>

Mr. Vosburg said that Stafford County had been awarded the Top Dog Award by United Way for the second consecutive year. He said that they were proud to have kept 'Buddy,' which represented their region's competition among government entities. He said that the employees' efforts towards United Way were greatly appreciated, and he wanted to express his gratitude to Ms. Krauss for her contributions as well.

Mr. Vosburg said that winning this award was a significant accomplishment, and he was delighted that they had maintained the title for two years in a row. He thanked their staff for their dedication. He said that lastly, he wanted to thank the Board of Supervisors for allowing him the opportunity to be there. He said that he also wanted to thank the employees and residents of Stafford County. He said that by name, he wanted to acknowledge Ms. McClendon and the partnership with their offices, and Ms. Krauss and Mr. Morris' ongoing support and future efforts.

<u>CONSENT AGENDA</u>

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to approve the Consent Agenda, with items 8 and 9 pulled.

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

<u>ITEM 1. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE MARCH 19, 2024 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES.</u>

<u>ITEM 2. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE MARCH 19, 2024 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES.</u>

<u>ITEM 3. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; RESOLUTION R24-106; APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO THE PRINCIPLES OF HIGH PERFORMANCE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY (FINANCIAL POLICIES).</u>

<u>ITEM 4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION P24-04; PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING APRIL 7 – 14, 2024, AS LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN EDUCATION WEEK.</u>

ITEM 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION P24-05; PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING APRIL 15 – 19, 2024, AS NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK.

ITEM 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION P24-24; PROCLAMATION HONORING AND RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF SERGEANT DALE COLONA.

ITEM 7. DEVELOPMENT SERVICES; RESOLTUION R24-134; PETITION VDOT TO INCLUDE HORNBEAM COURT AND FOREST VIEW ROAD (STUB STREET), WITHIN FOREST HILL ESTATES/FOREST VIEW ESTATES SUBDIVISION, INTO THE SECONDARY SYSTEM OF STATE HIGHWAYS.

ITEM 8. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; RESOLUTION R24-132; BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE STAFFORD COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PURSUANT TO A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED INCENTIVE AGREEMENT WITH FIRST LINE TECHNOLOGY, LLC.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Dr. Yeung would like to address Item 8, to budget and appropriate funds to the Stafford County Economic Development Authority pursuant to a previously approved incentive agreement with First Line Technology, LLC, Proposed Resolution R24-132.

Dr. Yeung said that she believed that this item had been proposed and voted on in 2019. She asked if further information could be provided regarding this item.

Economic Development Director Josh Summits said that this was the third year for the First Line incentive. He asked Dr. Yeung what her specific question was.

Dr. Yeung asked for more information about it.

Mr. Summits said that it was the third year of a five-year incentive plan, and this applied to an existing facility on Lendall Lane. He said that the business paid a total of approximately $20,000 in business and personal property taxes. He said that out of the total amount, $18,000 would be allocated towards the incentive agreement between the company and the EDA.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve Proposed Resolution R24-132. to budget and appropriate funds to the Stafford County Economic Development Authority, pursuant to a previously approved incentive agreement with First Line Technology, LLC.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(6)	Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch
Nay:	(0)	
Abstain:	(1)	Yeung

<u>ITEM 9. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; RESOLUTION R24-133; BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE STAFFORD COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PURSUANT TO A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED INCENTIVE AGREEMENT WITH EXCEL INC. DOING BUSINESS AS DHL SUPPLY CHAIN.</u>

Ms. Bohmke asked if Dr. Yeung would like to address Item 9, to budget and appropriate funds to the Economic Development Authority pursuant to a previously approved incentive agreement with Excel, Inc. doing business as DHL supply chain, Proposed Resolution R24-133.

Dr. Yeung asked if Mr. Summits could provide further information on this item.

Mr. Summits said that it was the first year of a five-year incentive program. He said that this incentive was also in conjunction with the state incentive through the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund, which amounted to $1.7 million. He stated that they had met all their metrics for this incentive. He said that as a result, they would receive a portion of their business personal property taxes paid back, as well as a five-year commitment from the County's Opportunity Fund.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve Proposed Resolution R24-133.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(6)	Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch
Nay:	(0)	
Abstain:	(1)	Yeung

Ms. Bohmke said that for the purposes of the Board's bylaws, members were expected to indicate the reason for abstention. She asked if Dr. Yeung could elaborate on her reason for abstaining from these votes.

Dr. Yeung said that she did not have enough time to review anything and she had a lot of questions on both of them, simply because with Economic Development, they were not aware of all that information that backs into this.

ITEM 10. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY; RESOLUTION R24-127; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A RIDER AGREEMENT WITH COMPUTER AID, INC. FOR TEMPORARY STAFFING NEEDS.

ITEM 11. PLANNING AND ZONING; RESOLUTION R24-139; GRANT A TIME EXTENSION FOR ZONING RECLASSIFICATION APPLICATION RC23155010 AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION CUP23155011 (DOMINION ENERGY – COAL LANDING SUBSTATION PROJECT).

BUDGET WORK SESSION

Ms. Bohmke said that the budget work session would be taking place in the ABC Conference Room. She said that if anyone preferred to remain in the Board Chambers, they could still see and hear everything taking place upstairs. She said that there was some space available for those who wanted to join them in the ABC Conference Room.

At 4:15 p.m., Ms. Bohmke said that Ms. Allen would be timing the meeting at one hour and 15 minutes. She said that she would begin by asking some of the questions she had. She said that she had a question about the CIP under training facility improvements for fire and rescue, which referred to $1,600,000. She asked if Ms. Light could assist her in understanding the training facility improvements.

Ms. Light said that the purpose was to establish a burn building for Fire and Rescue. She said that at present, their County lacked such a facility, so fire and rescue teams must travel to locations like Loudoun and Spotsylvania for that type of training.

Ms. Bohmke said that to clarify, while the burn building was a training facility, it was not the same as a training facility that they had been referring to for a number of years. She said that it was a burn training facility.

Ms. Light said that it was a burn building.

Ms. Gary asked if information could be provided regarding what the current expenses were for doing the training elsewhere.

Ms. Bohmke said that the answer was in the previous answers to the Board questions. She said that it was long.

Ms. Gary said that it was long; she had skipped that section because she had been looking at other items.

Ms. Bohmke said that also in the CIP was a reference to $3 million for a land purchase, specifically for a joint complex land purchase under Fiscal Year 25 capital construction. She asked if Ms. Light could share more information about what exactly that is.

Ms. Light said that the item was slightly mislabeled. She said that the Board, through its financial policies, sets aside $1 million dollars annually for land acquisition. She said that they moved this amount into the capital projects fund so that it is available for the Board's use during land acquisitions for schools, County projects, or any other necessary purposes. She said that the remaining $2 million dollars would be allocated for a joint complex with funds from Utilities to purchase a larger piece of land where the Utilities headquarters will be located.

Ms. Light said that this vision includes a shared facility for various services, such as the burn center and its tower, which would not be ideal next to residential areas. She said that in their CIP, future years may see a fleet services addition or expansion at this location. She said that there were unaddressed needs that were not included in the CIP, which include bus parking for schools, impounded vehicle storage for the sheriff's department, and Parks and Recreation facility storage space.

Ms. Bohmke said that also, regarding the Carl Lewis addition under Fiscal Year 25, she asked if the figure of $2.271 million was accurate considering the Board's decision to defer that until next year.

Ms. Light said that it was no longer accurate. She said that it was in the proposed budget as it was proposed, so staff had left it as-is. She said that they would ask the Board as part of the CIP tonight to make that change in the CIP and budget.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Ms. Light would please make sure that was included in the motion.

Ms. Light said yes.

Mr. Vosburg said that he wanted to bring attention to a document they submitted to the Board earlier today. He said that it contained a letter with a draft resolution. He said that on page 2 of that document, there was a discussion about changes to one-time uses and moving Carl Lewis, consistent with what the Board proposed in the last work session.

Ms. Bohmke she would like to address an issue that they had not yet discussed during the budget season. She said that the Economic Development Authority requested funds from the Board; however, they had not allocated a budget for them yet. She asked whether this was the intent of the Board.

Dr. Yeung said that during a previous meeting, she asked about the Economic Development Authority funding and whether it had been left out of the budget.

Mr. Vosburg said that they spoke at the Board's retreat about the topic. He said there was a $100,000 allocation for strategic plan initiatives related to Economic Development. He said that at the retreat, they received direction from the Board that that was not something the Board wanted to do at this time. He said that there is potential for an ask from the Economic Development Authority involving a property transaction similar to past practices.

Dr. Yeung said that although she had been in the minority, she had expressed her desire for the initiatives to remain in the budget. She said that she wanted to know whether these initiatives included Economic Development.

Mr. Vosburg said that they did. He said that he was speaking of one specific initiative related to restaurants that they had funded, and that money was allocated to the Economic Development Department. He said that the $100,000 towards that specific strategic plan initiative from the Board was funded at $100,000 to the Economic Development Department versus funding it to the Economic Development Authority.

Ms. Allen asked if this $100,000 was a part of the initiatives discussed at their previous meeting, or if they were different.

Ms. Krauss said that they were different.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Dr. Yeung had received a satisfactory answer to her question.

Dr. Yeung said no. She said that it was either yes or no as to whether there was none in there. She said that she was hearing something about a restaurant initiative. She said that for example, at the Christmas event, she found there was staff shortage for both the Economic Development Department and the Economic Development Authority. She said that they did not have the personnel to establish certain processes, and she felt that they were underfunded. She said that they needed to put something in there, either today or from general funds.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Dr. Yeung was referring to the EDA.

Dr. Yeung said yes, but she was also referring to the Economic Development Department, because they worked together.

Ms. Bohmke said that while they did work together, they were funded differently.

Mr. Diggs said that his interpretation was that the will of the Board was to potentially sell property to give them money. He said that they would fund the department within the government and they would get their money through the sale of the property. He said that this was how he understood it from the retreat.

Mr. Vosburg asked if Mr. Morris could provide more information.

Mr. Morris said that there were several factors at play. He said that one involved the property on RV Parkway, which was to be brought before the Board to convey to the EDA, which they would then sell and utilize the funds for EDA purposes. He said that secondly, staff had initiated work with the EDA to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would outline each party's responsibilities. He said that this agreement should reach the Board within the next 60 to 90 days.

Ms. Gary said that she understood that there was a lot going on right now regarding what the agreement would look like. She said that they sort of paused on that after they got through the Amazon agreements. She asked when they would be coming back to that.

Mr. Morris said that it was anticipated that staff would present a draft MOU to the Board within the next 60 to 90 days.

Ms. Gary said that they likely would need a work session in order to discuss what to do with the EDA funds.

Mr. Vosburg said that regarding Dr. Yeung’s mention of staff support for the Economic Development Authority he believed they had made progress. He said that the initial response from some EDA members was positive about the MOU. He said that he did not think they were in a bad position; they would provide them support.

Mr. Morris said that they had believed that they possessed the necessary administrative support to accomplish the required tasks. He said that this was why they were working on the MOU and planned to present it to the Board when appropriate.

Ms. Bohmke said that she believed another crucial task for them in the upcoming six months was determining the role of their Economic Development Authority. She said that there were numerous models available for economic development authorities, and as a Board, they must collaborate with staff to decide what they wanted their EDA to accomplish. She said that since they had limited time today, they should postpone this discussion for later consideration.

Mr. Morris said that they annually held a joint meeting with the EDA, and at that time they could discuss their future direction, initiatives, and goals for the Board and EDA.

Mr. English said that it would likely be beneficial to hold a work session with the EDA and them regarding this type of development. He said that the property in question was on RV Parkway. He asked if they knew what they would request and if they could estimate how much revenue they could expect from that project.

Mr. Morris said that it was approximately $700,000 or $800,000.

Ms. Bohmke said that she had a few questions regarding schools, and she was glad that Dr. Taylor, Mr. Towery, and Mr. Fulmer were present. She said that in one of the resolutions that would be approved tonight, there is a reference to academies and innovation for $2.6 million.

Dr. Yeung said that it was for IT technology.

Ms. Bohmke asked if this was for the new academies within their school division. She said that she did not know what that was. She said that it was a separate line item and that it was new because she had not seen it before.

Mr. Fulmer said that it was actually the lab school that would be located at Mary Washington's Stafford Campus, where they had an established relationship to create a lab school. He said that Stafford County Schools served as the fiscal agent for the lab school, which had its own separate funding sources and budget approved by their governing board. He said that since Stafford County was the fiscal agent, they must appropriate those funds. He said that this setup was similar to CGS in Spotsylvania and CGS in Prince William, with a separate fund to track the lab school's finances.

Ms. Bohmke thanked Mr. Fulmer for the clarification. She said that also, on a couple of the sheets, they had talked about the school site allocations of $635,000, which was under new growth. She said that she was trying to understand how this related to the 773 new students they were expecting. She said that if they divided the number of new students by the allocation amount, they got approximately $821 per student. She said that she doubted that was the actual cost for each new student in their school division. She asked if they were spending more on these new students.

Mr. Fulmer said that the budget shortfall in the prior year was due to insufficient allocation based on student numbers. He said that with additional students joining, they were currently playing catch-up with that $600,000. He said that extra funds were allocated for elementary schools with modular trailers. He said that school site funding had not been increased, even considering inflation, for several years. He said that they had now raised their base allocation by 5%.
Ms. Gary asked if Mr. Fulmer could explain more about the $600,000 in catch-up.

Mr. Fulmer said that they based allocations on the number of students. He said that as the number of students increased, so did their school site allocation. He said that each school had a different amount, approximately $100 to $125 or $150 per student. He said that in FY23, they budgeted for them but did not have enough students allocated, and by FY24, they tried to catch up. He said that now, in FY25, they accounted for the additional students from FY24 that exceeded their projection and also factored in the projected increase in students for next year, adding a 5% inflation rate.

Dr. Yeung said that last year, they allocated the most funding in the past few years. She asked if this was not enough for those additional students. She said that she thought that Lionel had the accurate amount because that was what she was told.

Mr. Fulmer said no, because they had 154 students that they had not expected. He said that while Lionel was accurate, he was never going to be 100% accurate. He said that two years ago, he was only two students off, but this year they had 154 additional students that he did not project. He said that it was a projection, and Lionel had made it clear that he was never going to top his 99.9% accuracy he had two years ago. He said that 150 students off from 31,000 students was still very close and was a very high standard across the state.

Ms. Bohmke said that there was a reference on the chart that discussed utilization of funding to solve problems. She said that on the sheet, it talked about psychologists, with 17.5 FTEs costing $1.7 million. She said that under grant-funded positions, there were 11.5 positions for $920,000. She said that these were the ESSER funds that were now flowing into the budget.

Ms. Bohmke said that if they talked to anyone in the community that needs to go see a psychologist, they were not going to get an appointment for six to nine months because there were not any available. She asked how they all were going to hire psychologists in the school division if they did not exist. She said that she was wondering if that was salary lapse.

Mr. Fulmer said that it was. He said that they had salary lapse every year and had to adjust for it last year and maintain that this year because they were not achieving that entire salary lapse. He said that they considered total salary lapse for all positions: teachers, psychologists, social workers, and central office staff. He said that they budgeted salaries as if fully staffed then reduced by the current amount, which was now $1.75 million. He said that it used to be $3 million, but they were not achieving that $3 million, so In FY23, they faced a shortage and in FY24's budget, they accounted for this.

Mr. Fulmer said that vacancy savings existed, like with psychologists, but filling vacancies could still require additional costs. He said that contracting agencies may cost more than the original budgeted amount. He said that similar situations occurred with teacher vacancies and long-term substitutes. He said that they might save $75,000 or $80,000 on the licensed teacher, but they then had to pay a long-term substitute a base teacher rate. He said that these extra expenses netted to approximately $2 million annually.

Ms. Bohmke said that she did not understand why they would not identify that as a contracted service with psychologists. She said that it would not really be the psychologist at the 11.5. She said that she did not feel there was full transparency in this case, and that was where she was struggling.

Dr. Taylor said that the reason was because they were trying to save money. He said that if they could fill the role, it would benefit them to do so. He said that in the past year, they had had success filling psychologist vacancies, whereas in previous years it had been very difficult.

Dr. Taylor said that fulfilling the requirement was necessary, and when a psychologist left or there was no one in the position, they must purchase services at a cost of 125% or 150% of cost. He said that therefore, posting the position and attempting to fill it through conventional means was advantageous. He said that he appreciated Ms. Bohmke’s question on this matter because finding suitable candidates in today's competitive labor market could be challenging.

Ms. Allen asked, considering the anticipated increase in students for the academic year of fall 2024-2025, how many additional teachers, support staff, or personnel in general would be required to cater solely to those new students, not including the existing ones.

Dr. Taylor said that Mr. Fulmer had retrieved the information from the slide deck that had been shared with the Board. He said that the data consisted of numerous numbers, which may make it challenging to pinpoint specific details. He said that effectively, there were 144 FTEs in total, encompassing various roles such as bus drivers, cafeteria workers, paraprofessionals, and teachers.

Dr. Taylor said that he wanted to highlight that they must consider not only the 154 students who unexpectedly attended last year but also the anticipated 619 students next year. He said that while it is likely that there will be more than 619 students in attendance next year, they preferred to maintain a conservative estimate to avoid overestimating and making unnecessary financial commitments. He said it was financially advantageous to catch up later rather than overcommit initially and subsequently need to retract funds.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to ensure her complete understanding of the questions and responses given during this discussion. She said that during the conversation, there was a reference to a lack of transparency regarding something. She asked if there was something not provided to the public or if she had missed something.

Ms. Bohmke said that if one examines the psychologist category and the other psychologist line below, it might involve a psychologist or contracted services with a psychologist if they cannot be found, resulting in higher costs. She said that was her point.

Ms. Gary asked if Ms. Bohmke was requesting more information presented from the schools for transparency. She asked if this information was somewhere that the public could access it.

Dr. Taylor said that it was in the schools' position control statement that Ms. Bohmke was referring to. He said that it was an important question, as it illuminated what happened when they budgeted for a teacher and did not have one and had to hire a substitute or procure the service from somewhere else. He said that ideally, classrooms should not be left empty; however, there have been instances where classes have been combined due to unavailability of teachers. He said that for example, at Shirley Heim, one classroom had 61 students.

Ms. Gary asked if the answer to that concern was contained in the information provided.

Dr. Taylor said yes, it was in the position statement.

Dr. Yeung said that Dr. Taylor stated it was a requirement. She said that in previous years, there were behavioral health specialists involved. She said these professionals transitioned into becoming child psychologists due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on children's mental health. She asked if this was correct.

Dr. Taylor said that the standards of quality for Virginia required three positions per 1,000 to cover school nurses, school social workers, and school psychologists. He said that this mix was interesting as it may be split across schools or dealt with on a larger, aggregate scale.

Dr. Taylor said that the School Board had considered serving students differently and better by allocating staff per school building due to the growth in IEP requests and 504 plans, which required school psychologists. He said that at their last joint meeting, the Board received data showing increased demand and volume for these services. He said that proportional staffing had gone up proportionally with the increase in caseloads and students utilizing these services.

Dr. Yeung said that she did look into the portal and one of her questions was regarding her uncertainty over who had asked that. She said that she was not sure if it was Mr. English or herself. She said that one of her questions was definitely that, after COVID-19, if they retained all those positions even though they were not needed. She asked if this was the fault of some of the positions that are still there. She said that she knew because when she was on the School Board, they held onto those because they were going to be needing them right after COVID-19, but they also added.

Dr. Yeung said that the second part of her question was a good one. He said that regarding the behavior support specialists and additional paraprofessionals, they faced an issue when using one-time funds for ongoing expenses. He said that those approximately 200 positions ended with the money's expiration.

Dr. Yeung said that they no longer had these staff members in their school system, which meant that students were no longer receiving that support since the COVID-19 funding had concluded. He said that they did not roll those positions into the operating budget. He said that there were a handful of positions listed in the position control statement that did roll over into that operating budget, but it was not 200 positions.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to shift gears slightly and return to Ms. Light regarding the 3R aspects of the schools, which had received considerable attention in the past couple of weeks. She asked if Ms. Light could please outline in the proposed budget the recommendations for those 3R investments.

Ms. Light said that they could review what those are. She said that each year, they received a 3R list from the schools without making any alterations.

Ms. Vanuch said that she was referring to the funds, not the items on the 3R list.

Ms. Light said that regarding how much funding was on the 3R, there was $9 million of 3R projects in FY25.

Ms. Vanuch asked how those projects were being financed.

Ms. Light said that those were primarily through VPSA. She said that there was $1.7 million of County cash funding. She said that there was also a little bit of funding from nutrition services in the amount of $500,000, which was used to replace items such as walk-in refrigerators and similar items.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the $1.7 million was in capital reserves.
Ms. Light said that it was current revenue from the County.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the VPSA was different than what they had discussed on Friday.

Ms. Light said yes, it did not include additional funds. She said that during the March 28 work session, they discussed with the Board the school's 3R funding and potential one-time funding sources that could be allocated, and possibly increasing $6 million in VPSA funding for Fiscal Year 25. She said that this solution did not address the long-term problem; however, it did provide funds within Fiscal Year 25 to tackle some immediate problems.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would cut to the chase here with all of her colleagues. She said that ultimately, they were trying to get to a consensus rate. She said that there were some Board members who were not comfortable with a $0.90 tax rate, and they understood the urgency of addressing the needs of the schools. She said that they should always try to present a majority and as a unanimous body.

Ms. Vanuch said that they were close to being able to do that, but she would like to talk about the negotiation aspects. She said that Mr. Vosburg had identified areas in the budget that were affected by state changes, lowering the tax rate slightly. She said that she had discussed potential adjustments with Ms. Light on Friday, such as postponing some expenses until next year.

Ms. Vanuch said that by exploring these options, they could work towards a tax rate of 88 cents to mitigate the impact on those with significant assessment increases. She said that financing more on the 3R side would be beneficial since it did not directly affect this year's tax-funded projects. She said that she proposed spending the remaining 30 minutes focusing on reaching as close to a unanimous decision as possible.

Mr. Diggs said that it seemed they were at the point where they would be going back to the sheet to decide what they were going to cut from the schools' budget.

Ms. Vanuch said ultimately, that was what it was going to take. She said that no one was trying to undercut and nobody was being political. She said that she was trying to do what was right by the taxpayers right now by giving the schools the maximum funding possible and County government with the most feasible funds, but they should also recognize that many individuals were facing challenging economic times. She said that to the extent they could negotiate, it seemed necessary to revisit the budget sheet and identify items that could potentially be postponed until next year.

Mr. Diggs said that if he recalled correctly from their last work session, they had to cut $2.1 million to get them down to $0.90. He asked how much they would have to cut to get down to $0.88. Ms. Vanuch said that she and Ms. Light had gotten it down to $0.88.

Ms. Light said that it would require a reduction of $10 million to reduce the rate to $0.87.

Ms. Vanuch said that it was not an additional.

Mr. Diggs asked if $0.88 was including the fire tax levy.

Ms. Vanuch said that was correct.

Ms. Allen asked how much it was without the levy.

Mr. Diggs said that without the levy, they currently were at $0.89.

Mr. Vosburg said that he could quickly give an update on the numbers, referring to the sheet. He said that currently, with the consensus number $0.908, they had managed to bring it down to $0.9067. He said that they were talking about fractions here, but with the new reduction, the services remained the same as at .$0908. He said that some changes made did not substantially impact allocations. He said that this rate consisted of $0.8936 for real estate and $0.0131 for the fire levy. He said that he believed that Ms. Vanuch was discussing $0.88 total.

Ms. Vanuch said that it was $0.889 with everything in it. She said that it would actually be lower than that because they would have what they got from this, or they could keep a couple of things that they had identified. She said that the first question to the school, which she knew was an unpopular one, but felt that they owed their constituents to talk through priorities, would be $0.906 that Mr. Vosburg mentioned gave the schools $13 million. She said that if they were able to identify an additional $6 million to put to 3R, which seemed to be their major emergency priority, she would ask if they could get the budget down to $10 million out of the tax revenue.

Dr. Taylor said that they could not achieve that without reducing salaries. He said that that was the only thing left to cut, so they had a difficult position of balancing having schools and having people that actually work in the schools.

Ms. Vanuch said that she did not want talking points. She said that she really wanted the schools to come and negotiate. She said that the state had not finished their budget.

Ms. Gary said that an answer had been given. She said that that was very disrespectful.

Ms. Vanuch said that they had been hearing that there was an extra $2.5 million that the state may provide above what had already been allocated.

Dr. Taylor said that he would not count on the state. He said that the School Board had already adopted and submitted their budget to the Supervisors for consideration.

Ms. Gary said that if this was not political, she would request that they treat each other with dignity and respect. She said that it would not be acceptable to her to sit here and say anyone else was politicizing something, but they did, and had their things on this Board. She said that she did not think they should be treating staff from the schools or from their County with disrespect. She said that it was disrespectful in her opinion. She said that there was an answer that she had heard. She said that she would like to regroup and do this appropriately during this work session, which previously four members did not want to be in.

Ms. Vanuch said that she respectfully disagreed. She said that she wanted to get to a point where they could work together and not throw talking points across the table and negotiate on what was best for the taxpayers.

Ms. Gary said that it was not a talking point, it was an answer. She said that she had received an answer. She said that it was important to hear about what would happen, which was that they would have to cut salaries. She said that this was an answer to her, not a talking point, although it could be used in talking points. She said that they did tours and talked about this all the time, but they should bring it down.

Ms. Allen asked if everyone was done. She apologized to Dr. Taylor, as he had been cut off. She said that if they were negotiating in good faith and engaging the schools, they needed to maintain a level of respect, regardless of their personal opinions. She said that one of the reasons she was not budging from $13 million was that the schools asked for $15 million, and at $13 million, she thought that if the state were able to match even closely to what they did last year, $13 million was the lowest they could get to keep the schools close to $15 million.

Ms. Allen said that if the state adds additional funding, then that gets them close to $15 million. She said that it was a negotiating point in that she was willing to cut from the schools with the knowledge that the state may or may not, but if they did, at $13 million, there was room for them to pull some money back from the state. She said that she would not go lower than $13 million. She said that to tell the schools to pick between 3R and compensation was disingenuous.

Ms. Allen asked if they did not have people in the building, what building would they even be fixing. She said that she wanted to make that clear. She said that they could get to a point where they were making considerate effort to address the school needs. She said that Mr. English and she had brought it forward when she was willing to give up the Carl Lewis funding to put towards 3R.

Ms. Allen said that this was something they were willing to do to meet the schools at their needs and give them additional funding for 3R. She said that it was not as if they were saying they were not trying to address the need. She said that the schools knew where they were, and their option would probably be to compensate their staff so they could keep their doors open, keep their kids in schools with licensed professionals, and make do with the funding for 3R, which they were increasing.

Mr. Diggs said that he understood the presented budget was $15 million, but he would like to ask Dr. Taylor to discuss the original ask that existed prior to reducing it to $15 million.

Dr. Taylor said that it originally was plus $54 million on top of that, so they made $54 million in cuts to year two of their five-year plan. He said that this brought it down to about $20 million, and at the last joint Board meeting, they discussed $4.2 million of staffing reductions made to bring it down to $15 million. He said that there was also a state adjustment in revenue that they felt comfortable with regarding the legislature; however, they felt less comfortable with it now due to some of the gubernatorial politics involved and the fact that it remained unresolved as an assigned budget.

Dr. Taylor said that in terms of programmatic needs, including 3R and a host of other items, there had been $54 million in reductions. He said that to remind everyone, school superintendents did not speak for the Board. He said that the Board had communicated with their vote what their adopted budget is, so he could not speak for them in terms of decisions they would make. He said that he would tell them that it was precarious as it currently was, and whatever ultimate number they were looking at would have to be paired with some other state number in the aggregate before an adopted budget and contracts could be issued on the school side. He said that this was how tight it was.

Mr. Diggs said that regarding 3R, he understood there was $200 million in 3R projects that had not been addressed.

Dr. Taylor said that that was over the next ten years, as a part of the capital improvement plan, but yes, a number of those projects had been deferred a number of years.

Ms. Bohmke said that there were many deferred projects in County government as well.

Mr. Towery said that regarding 3R, it was important to remember that the 3R list shared in October was paired with the critical systems list. He said that the critical systems list, if not done, would result in those specific projects being put back into the 3R. He said that for example, in FY25, the total 3R request would jump from $9.8 million to $27.8 million. He said that it was a substantial difference that he wanted to bring to everyone's attention. He said that the total 3R request over the next ten years was $343 million.

Mr. Vosburg said that he would transition from that topic. He said that they ran the numbers, and regarding what Ms. Vanuch was talking about with her tax rate and the consensus number, it was a $4.64 million difference that would need to be achieved. He said that at $0.9067, it was $0.177 or $4.64 million that would need to be addressed.

Ms. Bohmke asked for the Board's thoughts on giving the schools $6 million for 3R. She said that basically, they would issue bonds, which would cost $600,000 per year for 15 years.

Ms. Gary said that a lot of things were moving around and the intention was to get to a lower rate was very clear.

Ms. Bohmke said that her question was not related to that. She said that this was regarding 3R money that did not impact the rate at all.

Ms. Gary said that she wanted to make sure that giving this $6 million was not with any intention to cut from the $13 million as well. She said that she was happy to give the schools more resources, but needed to understand the intention of those who came up with this idea.

Ms. Allen asked if the $6 million was in addition to $9 million, so they were giving a total of $15 million.

Ms. Gary asked if the intention was to give $6 million while reducing the $13 million.

Dr. Yeung said that it would not be a part of the $13 million.

Ms. Gary said that she understood the funds would not be a part of that, but her concern was that there may be an effort to cut more from the $13 million because they chose to allocate this additional $6 million.

Ms. Bohmke said that it would not impact that number.

Mr. English asked what the bond issuance would do to their AAA bond ratings. He asked if it would impact that at all.

Ms. Light said that it should not. She said that it still fell within their debt capacity.

Dr. Yeung said that she had brought this idea up previously, but this number was even higher than she suggested, which she appreciated. She said that she wanted to make sure that, regarding Rodney Thompson and other schools, this allowed for emergency funding.

Ms. Bohmke said that they would talk about that next.

Dr. Yeung asked what they were calling it. She said that she wanted to make sure the funding gets where it needs to go.

Ms. Bohmke said that the subject $6 million was 3R funding in addition to the $9 million.

Dr. Yeung asked if the schools had to confer with the County about this addition.

Ms. Bohmke said that she did not think so. She said that the Board could appropriate it to the schools and they could use it as they see fit.

Ms. Vanuch said that the total amount would be $9 million from VPSA bonds, increased by $6 million as previously discussed, and an additional $1.7 million in cash from current revenue. She said that she requested that the schools inform the Board of the order in which these projects were being undertaken for consistency's sake. She said that this was important so they could provide answers to their constituents regarding project priorities, such as the tracks at Mountain View or other escalated issues by schools requiring immediate attention with this funding.

Mr. Towery said that they had prepared an updated 3R list, assuming that critical systems did not happen. He said that they could certainly resend this list. He said that this list did not include some of the more recent information regarding tracks and other items. He said that they must revisit and revise the list.

Dr. Yeung asked if tracks were more relevant than North Stafford.

Mr. Diggs asked what that meant.

Dr. Yeung asked if North Stafford was on the critical list.

Dr. Taylor said the School Board had not yet voted to update anything, so staff would have to bring projects to them for the projects to be reshuffled.

Dr. Yeung said that she hoped that a recent email did not trump an eight-year-old critical project.

Ms. Bohmke said that last week at the budget meeting, they discussed allocating $3.5 million for emergency purposes. She said that Chair Siegmund of the School Board clarified this in an email yesterday, asking about their intentions for the funds. She said that she had asked if it was to prevent emergencies or to provide a source of reimbursement for the schools after an emergency had been paid by the schools. She said that during the budget work session, they did not discuss this aspect further.

Dr. Yeung said that she had thought the $1.2 million reallocated from Carl Lewis was meant for the empty coffers of the school. She said that the coffers were empty because they used them on trailers. She said that if an emergency came up, it would hit their general fund. She said that it would be a good idea to put some funding in there.

Ms. Bohmke asked Mr. Fulmer if that was an accurate statement.

Mr. Fulmer said that yes, their capital funds were depleted.

Ms. Allen asked if the schools would rather have money towards the emergency fund or towards 3R. She said that she and Mr. English had agreed that 3R should be prioritized. She said that she was asking for their input before giving her opinion.

Mr. Fulmer said that to preface his answer, he would state that depending on what the emergency was, they may not fix it for six months, so it was better to try to prevent the incident from happening. He said that putting funds towards 3R projects would allow them to attempt to prevent emergencies from happening.

Mr. Fulmer said that at the same time, they knew that they would be having more emergencies, and when something breaks, they would have to fix it because they were so far behind on cyclical replacements. He said that they really needed both, and he understood that they were proposing to add funding to the 3R, so that was a start. He said that knowing that they still needed more, it was a difficult question to answer.

Ms. Allen said that she asked this because, if the emergency fund was intended for 3R projects or system maintenance, she wondered if it could simply be added to the 3R list for a total of $16.3 million to address the emergency.
Mr. Fulmer said that they would allocate the $16.3 million from the beginning in order to fund the listed projects.

Dr. Taylor said that establishing an emergency fund for both County projects and school projects was a beneficial idea because they would be saving for a rainy day, and they knew it would certainly be rainy. He said that as deferred projects continued to accumulate on both the County and school sides, things were going to break. He said that having a system in place to address these unforeseen circumstances, whether funds were allocated today or at a later date, would ultimately save money in the long run by having a reserve of funds available for immediate use in emergency situations to fix problems as they occurred.

Mr. English asked if there was an emergency fund in the County for both County and school emergencies. He said that considering the recent sinkhole incident, he wondered if this could be a shared resource. He asked for clarification on how it would work if it were a shared resource.

Ms. Light said that within the Board's financial policies, there was a required reserve limit of $1.5 million dollars for both the County and the schools. She said that this cash funding enabled them to address immediate emergencies or manage cash flow needs. She said that the schools in the County had fund balance reserves for future capital purposes. She said that as Mr. Fulmer mentioned, the schools utilized their year-end money from that fund, and the County had additional funds available. She said that Utilities also had a fund balance.

Ms. Bohmke said that they had approved Item 3 on their consent agenda, which changes their financial policies that had been in place for a number of years.

Mr. English said that he had not received an answer for his question. He said that his question was whether or not they could pool the funding together into a shared fund for the County and the schools. He said that he wanted the County to have access in case they faced an emergency as well.

Mr. Vosburg said that he was a little confused because Andrea described the fund balance as already existing. He said that if an emergency exceeded various contingencies, they would use the fund balance. He said that they currently had that in place. He said that if there was an additional request from schools without funding, it would come to the County, and they would look to fund it using the fund balance.

Mr. Vosburg said he did not fully understand the concept of what they were discussing. He said that perhaps they were considering earmarking a portion of their fund balance for school emergencies. He asked if that was what they were discussing or if they were talking about a different funding source for this $3.5 million.

Ms. Bohmke said that during last week's budget session, they had discussed the emergency fund. She said that she thought their decision was to set aside $3.5 million on the County side and leave it there. She said that however, Chair Siegmund asked about the Board's intention. She said that she believed it was worth asking the Board where they wanted to go with this.

Ms. Bohmke said that Mr. English seemed to be raising another issue regarding County reserves, but according to their financial policies, they had reserves in case of emergencies. She said that they maintained a high AAA bond rating due to these reserves. She said that she did not think they needed additional funds for the County because they were well-protected. She said that she was comfortable setting aside $3.5 million and keeping those funds available for the school division, then appropriating them if necessary.

Ms. Allen asked if it was $3 million combined.

Mr. Vosburg said that it may be a matter of semantics; he was not trying to minimize it because he believed it was a good concept. He said that however, if there was a fund balance of X dollars, what he meant was that there would be an allocated portion of that amount which the school division knew they could access in case of emergencies. He asked Ms. Light if this was her understanding as well.

Mr. English asked if they would do that anyway.

Mr. Vosburg said that it would give comfort to the schools to let them know what the funding availability was.

Dr. Yeung said that they have always had that fund balance, but it was empty. She said that it was good practice to have money in there. She said that it was their money, but would go towards the school fund that was currently empty.

Mr. Diggs asked if the emergency fund they were discussing was not being created on the County's side, but was being given to the schools for their coffers.

Dr. Yeung said that the County would be holding it.

Ms. Bohmke said that the Board must decide if it would be held on the County's side.

Dr. Yeung said that the County would hold it on their side as they had done in the past.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the County would hold it and when the schools needed it, the County would appropriate the funds.

Mr. Diggs said that Mr. Vosburg said that it was already set up. He said that they were discussing setting aside $3.5 million for the schools, but Mr. Vosburg said that they could already do that.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was not designated for the schools.

Dr. Taylor said that as a reminder, the schools could not carry a fund balance, so the Board had the privilege of being the bank for the school system.

Ms. Bohmke said that the proposal was to designate money for the schools. She said that they already had a capital reserve.

Ms. Gary said that she was not opposed to this proposal, but her caveat was that she did not want to use this funding as an excuse to lower the other $13 million in funding for the schools. She said that she wished to reiterate this because there was a difference between helping and serving. She said that if the schools express specific needs and the Board of Supervisors then does something else, which was nice and would be accepted because the schools needed a lot more resources, she did not want to turn around and not give what was stated to be needed because it would be a disservice. She said that in that case, the Board would be helping but not actually serving their constituents and their children.

Ms. Bohmke said that it had been a long time since she could remember that the Board of Supervisors not giving something they wanted appropriated. She asked if that would be an accurate statement in terms of when they came back and asked for appropriations from leftover monies.

Ms. Gary said that she was discussing the current allocation that they may make and the amount of the $13 million.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was just saying that it was not how they operate. She said that she was glad that Commissioner of the Revenue Scott Mayausky was present. She said that they had received information from Paul Santay via Amazon regarding the data center construction. She said that from what she understood, the best case for data construction was that it would be completed in December 2025, FY26 tax year. She said that she was trying to understand why it should be included in the budget the position Mr. Mayausky had requested for an entire year.

Mr. Mayausky said that there were actually two that they needed, which he would explain very quickly. He said that the business cycle did not align with the budget cycle. He said that they anticipated being 18 months distant from when computer equipment might be installed in data centers. He said that if it was solely for data centers, he could see why it seemed premature, but waiting until the next fiscal year would be too late.

Mr. Mayausky said that to illustrate the complexity of these matters, Prince William County had dedicated three tax auditors, who were essentially CPAs, to studying data centers for six months before they received their first business filing. He said that waiting until the next fiscal year for the business property position was too long; it did not allow sufficient time for learning. He said that they could implement it mid-year, which would provide a full year of preparation. He said that this would prevent them from generating additional revenue in 1/1/25. He said that while he could not guarantee that the position would be revenue neutral, it would certainly generate more revenue than if they did not have it at all.

Mr. Mayausky said that they could delay implementation until mid-year. He said that there was an additional requested adjustment that did not make it into the budget: hiring a real estate appraiser. He said that construction was currently underway, and they had already increased real estate values by $1 million tax dollars. He said that his proposal was to implement both changes mid-year if possible. He said that this would give them a full year to study these matters, become operational, and be prepared for maximizing revenue in 1/1/26.

Mr. Mayausky said that they were already meeting with Loudoun County, and their current capacity was being pushed to its limits. He said that both commercial business property and real estate were experiencing rapid growth. He said that they did not want to hinder this progress. He said that between the years 2022 and 2023, there had been a 34% increase in business property. He said that if they recalled from their recent reassessment, real estate commercial experienced a 24% increase. He said that they aimed to maintain this momentum without allowing the data center learning curve to impede the growth of these sectors.

Ms. Bohmke said that there was consensus from the Board to fund those positions mid-year.

Ms. Vanuch said that she was going to ask whether they would include these items in the budget or wait for revenues to come in before adding them. She said that if they chose the latter option, these would be the first additions since typically, when revenue projections exceed expectations, they began adding positions. She said that this way, there is no budget impact unless additional revenues are generated.

Ms. Bohmke said that she felt like they needed the positions, and she agreed with Mr. Mayausky that they should not be behind the 8-ball.

Ms. Allen asked if this was currently included in the proposed $0.9067 rate.

Ms. Light said that the business compliance officer was, but the real estate appraiser was not.

Ms. Allen asked what the effect would be if they included both.

Ms. Light said that if both positions were implemented mid-year, the total cost would increase to approximately $24,762 due to the real estate appraiser's salary being at $147,000 and business compliance at $97,000. She said that therefore, adding them together and conducting them in the middle of the year resulted in an increased cost of around $25,000.

Ms. Allen asked what would happen if they included them now.

Ms. Light said that for the whole year, it would add $147,309.

Ms. Allen asked how this would affect the tax rate.

Mr. Diggs said that he also would like to know how it would impact the rate if they added them in. He said that he was hesitant about adding the positions mid-year, because as he talked to Mr. Mayausky about this, it was something they were expecting a lot of return from, and he needed time to learn about this whole new world they were entering into. He said that he had reservations about the mid-year point and wanted to know what it would do to the tax rate.

Mr. English asked Mr. Mayausky if he would prefer a mid-year implementation or the entire year.

Mr. Mayausky said that the entire year would generate more money due to their presence, contributing to their 1/1/25 goal. He said that he could not guarantee it would be revenue neutral. He said that while he suspected they would be, he did not want to promise this and did not want them to base their decision on that assumption.

Ms. Bohmke asked if this was referring to the real estate appraiser.

Mr. Mayausky said that for either of the positions, they would both help generate revenue for 1/1/25.

Ms. Gary said that she would have to change her position on this matter due to this information. She said that she would support the full year.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Ms. Gary was referring to one position or both.
Ms. Gary said that she supported both.

Dr. Yeung asked if Ms. Allen had received a response regarding the real estate assessment three was.

Ms. Allen asked if Dr. Yeung was referring to the two positions.

Dr. Yeung said no. She said that she was referring to one position. She said that she knew how much the compliance officer was.

Ms. Light said that it was .005.

Dr. Yeung said that she was supportive of placing one position on a full-time basis immediately, so the one that was needed the most could be put in now, and the other could be added mid-year. She asked if that was possible.

Mr. Mayausky said yes.

Ms. Bohmke said that that would increase the tax rate to $0.908.

Ms. Allen said that it would be included in the $0.906.

Ms. Light said that this was a very small change to revenue. She said that if Mr. Mayausky feels that this would increase revenue, they could increase revenue by $25,000 to cover both of these at mid-year, then the Board could implement these without impact to the tax rate.

Ms. Bohmke asked if that would be at mid-year.

Ms. Allen said that at mid-year, it would not impact the rate.

Ms. Light said yes. She said that if they were to put them in now, they would add $147,309.

Dr. Yeung asked if one was possible.

Ms. Bohmke said that as it was Mr. Mayausky's department, they should hear what he had to say.

Mr. Diggs said that he understood the mid-year implementation, but he was unclear regarding the impact if they implemented these positions for the full year.

Ms. Light said that the impact would be $147,309.

Mr. Vosburg said that respectfully, if they were considering new positions, he had approximately 84 positions that he would like to talk to them about. He said that they left 84 general government positions on the table. He said that if they were opening the door for additional positions not previously proposed, staff would like to address those as well.

Mr. Mayausky said that these two positions would establish the foundation for the revenue they had discussed for the past year. He said that if approved during this budget cycle, he gave his word that they would not return in FY26 to request additional funds because they would not be necessary. He said that at some point, they would need it when they had more data centers; however, these positions would suffice for Fiscal Year 26.

Mr. Mayausky said that to reiterate, if implemented for the full year, it would generate more money on 1/1/25, but he was unsure of the exact amount. He said that if they did this mid-year, they could absolutely prepare and be ready to go for 1/1/26. He said that when everyone agreed they need to be 100% ready and understanding the data center to maximize tax revenue, which they had been discussing for 12 months.

Ms. Gary said that in response to Mr. Vosburg's comment, she would like to clarify that there was no perception of favoring any particular position. She said that she would have preferred to include additional general government roles in the discussion. She said that they were working with something very difficult here, and they all knew that. She said that considering that this proposal aimed to generate revenue, she was glad they were considering it; however, she wished they could have included more of those positions.

Ms. Bohmke said that the Commissioner of the Revenue had indicated that he was amenable to funding these two positions at mid-year. She said that the consensus of the Board was to fund the positions at mid-year. She noted that this would change all the relevant numbers in the budget that would be included in tonight's resolutions.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the Board was amenable to extending the work session so they could negotiate further. She said that it should not go past 7:00 p.m. when the public hearings would begin.

Ms. Bohmke asked if staff had the insurance chart printed out.

Ms. Gary asked if she could suggest an additional half an hour.

Ms. Bohmke said that the Board would take a five-minute recess and then hold an additional 30 minutes of the budget work session.

RECESS

At 5:29 p.m., the Board recessed the budget work session.

At. 5:34 p.m., Ms. Bohmke called the meeting back to order.

Ms. Bohmke said that an item she had discussed with staff, which was in their Board portal, was a question regarding insurance. She said that Shannon Wagner, Director of Human Resources, would discuss this with the Board. She said that this was an important item because they had great health benefits, which were a part of an employee’s package. She said that they could not just shuffle it aside, and it was important that they know and the public should know what their increases are, and what the County was picking up and what the employee was picking up. She said that this was $500,000 in their budget.

Shannon Wagner, Director of Human Resources, said that she presented the chart before them, which displayed the current budget request and options in front of the Board. She said that there were three plans for County health plans, a premium PPO, core PPO, and high deductible health plan with an HSA. She said that employees paid a monthly cost as shown in the first column next to the numerical column on their left. She said that for example, the employee plus family cost for the core PPO plan was $140 per month.

Ms. Wagner said that in the County Administrator's proposed budget, there was an anticipated 10% increase due to rising claims. She said that this would raise the monthly employee cost to $154 per month, which was a $14 increase. She said that one option proposed in their chart of options from the Budget Office was reducing the increase to the County by $500,000 and shifting that savings to employees. She said that if implemented, this change would result in an employee's monthly cost of $271 instead of $154, representing a change of $131 per month for that employee on that plan. She said that this was merely an example, and that the chart illustrated every plan at each tier level.

Ms. Allen asked Ms. Light what the proposed employee pay raise in the budget was.

Ms. Light said that it was a 3% scale adjustment and 2% merit increase for general government. She said that it was a 2.75% average step increase and 2.25% scale adjustment for public safety, so a total of 5%.

Ms. Allen asked if Ms. Wagner knew the increase in pay per 26 pay periods of an employee. She said that the Board must understand that a 5% raise at $50,000 would be an extra $2,500, which if divided over 26 pay periods was less than $100. She said that in that case, the employee would be losing $40 per month that they did not have.

Ms. Allen said that she was not referring to those who earn more, but she wanted to ensure their organization understood this distinction. She said that she was focused on those employees making $70,000 or less and the impact that this would have on them and their families. She said that to clarify, if they were making an average of $200 extra monthly, this increase would eat up all of it.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to clarify the reason behind the difference in this chart compared to the one emailed in the FAQ document. She said that in the FAQ document, the employee monthly cost remained the same, but the last column and the increase from proposed had changed.

Ms. Wagner said that they had removed the final column in an attempt to clarify the chart. She said that the numbers remained unchanged. She said that the last column they took out showed the difference between employees' monthly increase under the proposed budget and if the $500,000 were removed. She said that in the example provided for core PPO family insurance, it was a difference of $131 minus the anticipated $14. She said that staff did not alter any numbers; their goal was to enhance clarity.

Ms. Vanuch said that the last column was significantly different.

Ms. Krauss said that Ms. Bohmke called this morning and they discussed how to make the columns clearer, which was why they amended the chart.

Ms. Bohmke said that she believed it was clearer now.

Mr. Diggs asked how this would impact retirees of the County. He asked if they would be impacted by that increase.

Ms. Wagner said that for many employees, yes. She said that for their retirees that had not yet Medicare eligibility, they were still on their same plans offered to County employees. She said that a retiree in that age category with 15 or more years of service paid the same rate an employee does, so if the entire rates go up, their rates would go up.

Mr. Diggs asked if pay increases given to County employees were also given as increases to retirees. He asked if employees who worked for the County 20 years ago were what they were making as retirees.

Ms. Wagner said that the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) does provide a cost-of-living increase that was at their discretion. She said that it certainly was not equivalent or even comparable to what the County would provide. She said that the decision points were just very different, but there was a cost-of-living that was provided after the retiree has been retired for one whole calendar year.

Mr. Diggs said that he was asking this in order to determine its impacts on not only County employees but County retirees as well.

Ms. Bohmke said that a few years ago, they had considered changes to the retirees' health insurance policy. She said that however, they ultimately decided against making those changes. She asked if staff could please provide the Board with details on what action they took instead. She said that it was approximately four years ago.

Ms. Wagner said that she would have to look into what exact date that was. She said that she could recall that the County was proposing to change the contributions retirees paid in, particularly at the post-Medicare side, and ultimately, the Board decided not to make any of those changes, so those rates to the retirees did not change.

Ms. Bohmke said that the reason they did that was because many of these retirees retired years ago when compensation was much lower, so they felt like pushing the health insurance on them was not fair. She said that she believed that decision was unanimous.

Mr. Diggs asked how these increases to health insurance costs translated to those retirees that had worked for lower compensation in the past.

Mr. English said that he believed that those increases were passed onto those retirees.

Dr. Yeung said that removing the $500,000 from the budget had been proposed. She said that she was unsure which supervisor suggested this removal; however, if only a portion of the amount was removed, there was no mention of reducing it on this sheet. She said that for instance, if one reduced it by $100,000, this implied that the number of beneficiaries had increased and thus required an additional $400,000 to cover their health insurance claims. She asked if this was the understanding. She asked why there was a need for $500,000 specifically for health insurance.

Ms. Krauss said that the $500,000 was originally provided as a reduction in option one, when staff provided the Board with three different budget options. She said that at that time, it was in option one, and was cumulative to option to and option three. She said that the $500,000 was not reduced from the consensus option, so it was in there.

Mr. Diggs asked if this was part of one of their options.

Ms. Krauss said that this was a question that was in the portal. She said that when Ms. Bohmke asked the question while reviewing the information, so staff fixed the charts and brought it forward. She said that it was probably a question from a few weeks ago when they presented the initial options, and they were now discussing it today.

Ms. Bohmke said that she discussed with Ms. Wagner and Ms. Krauss that it was important information for the Board and that people may have missed it in the portal. She said that benefits were huge, so she asked if staff could create a sheet that they could all quickly understood, which was what was provided before them.

Ms. Vanuch said that companies often discussed health care costs annually from an organizational perspective. She said that health care costs would continue to increase incrementally each year. She said that she was unsure of her stance on this issue currently. She said it was crucial to consider the potential precedent set by absorbing additional costs and the message it conveyed. She said that secondly, there would continue to be an increasing disparity between retiree and current employee system.

Ms. Vanuch said that the previous employee plan aimed for more out-of-pocket costs with a lower-tiered plan and limiting the options for Medicare. She said they managed to address that while also addressing a better plan from the County's perspective. She said that from an organizational standpoint, they must evaluate whether they were setting a precedent and if this should be a recurring budget item based on the extent of health care increases.

Ms. Vanuch said that also, many localities around them did not offer offset and health care cost benefits; instead, they provided higher base salaries. She said that this posed a challenge when recruiting younger workforce generations, as their lower salary packages may seem less attractive. She said their benefits were much better, and other counties did not provide the retirement health care they offered. She said that this did not necessarily resonate with the younger generation.

Ms. Vanuch said that their leadership consistently highlighted that some individuals prioritized higher salaries over comprehensive benefits. She said that as an organization, they must determine their desired position in this regard, as it had not helped with retention and recruitment efforts. She said that the feedback from new employees was that they did not fully understand or appreciate their benefits until they left and returned, realizing how advantageous Stafford's offerings were compared to other localities. She said that this was something they heard from a feedback perspective.

Ms. Wagner said that they had started to look at comparable health insurance costs and percentages provided by peer organizations. She said that research in this area had not been conducted for some time. She said that she had obtained relevant numbers but had not fully adjusted them yet.

Ms. Wagner said that in 2013, the Board of Supervisors adopted a percentage-based contribution strategy stating that employees would contribute X percentage of the total premium cost based on different plans. She said that consequently, both parties shared their respective portions annually when increases occurred. She said that the Board may consider revising this strategy.

Ms. Krauss said that to Ms. Vanuch's point, there was a balance that needed to occur. She said that when they were out of the budget process, they should continue their analysis that had already been started. She said that this aligned with their planned market studies conducted every other year, providing them with sufficient data and information for consideration by the Board.

Ms. Krauss said that the work environment was changing, and as a County and organization of this size, they must adapt accordingly. She said that she knew that they currently lagged behind the market. She said that there were various perspectives along the spectrum was crucial, and they should discuss a strategy that the Board wished to pursue.

Ms. Bohmke said that having a work session within the next three to five months was appropriate so that the Board could fully discuss this matter. She said that a lot had changed since 2013. She said that they may end up keeping it the same, but they should at least take the opportunity to look at that and make the right decisions on behalf of their employees and the community that paid these taxes.

Ms. Allen said that given that they were able to get the tax rate down to $0.906, she would like to know how much money they had in between the $0.906 and the $0.908 that they could add towards this health insurance.
Ms. Krauss said that it was already included in the proposed rate.

Mr. English asked what the difference was between the hybrid plan and this.

Ms. Wagner said that the hybrid plan pertained to VRS. She said that there was a VRS hybrid plan for most new employees who had not previously served in the Virginia government, but it was unrelated to the County's health insurance plan.

Mr. Diggs said that overall, when discussing County government recruitment, he felt that they did not spend enough time on the retention piece. He said that they have to remember that as much as they want to draw people here, they had to honor those who have served for 15 years or more. He said that as a new employee in the County, he did not care about health insurance, as Ms. Vanuch had mentioned.

Mr. Diggs said that it was not until ten years in that he began thinking about these things, but it was important to prioritize long-serving staff when discussing benefits, raises, and other related matters. He said that sometimes when they had conversations, it seemed like they were saying that existing employees were stuck here so they should focus on the new people coming in.

Ms. Gary said that she was having some dissonance when looking at this at both a micro- and macro-level. She said that she was not in favor of taking this out and increasing the costs to employees. She said that during their discussions on the tax rate, they had discussed the impact of potentially impacting people at $15 to $20 per month on a tax rate, and now they were talking about their own employees being impacted at $40 to $140 per month. She said that it caused her discomfort.

Dr. Yeung said that she had a question about the CIP. She said that her question was twofold. She said that regarding the Garrisonville Service District, she wanted to know which locations were included at that. She said that she understood that she and Ms. Allen shared that, and Ms. Vanuch. She said that when looking at the resolution, it just said "Garrisonville District," and a lot of business had approached her about if anyone else was paying into it.

Mr. Vosburg said that he could add some information. He said that they distributed an updated map approximately one hour prior to the start of their meeting. He said that the properties on this map were last updated in 2016 or 2017. He said that they also provided a list and a visual representation of the boundaries included in that.

Mr. Mayausky said that staff could work to ensure no new properties were rezoned or subdivided between 2016 and now. He said that if there were any, they would bring these parcels back to the Board for inclusion in the parcel list.

Dr. Yeung asked if there was anyone outside of it.

Mr. Mayausky said that they did not have time to complete that part of the analysis. He said that he noticed that there was only one parcel added in 2016. He said that between 2006 and 2016, only one parcel had been created. He said that he believed there was a good chance they had identified all the parcels. He said they would verify this to ensure accuracy.

Ms. Vanuch said that to clarify, it was not the Garrisonville District, but rather Garrisonville Road. She said that the service district was named after the road, just like Route 17 Warrenton Road. She said that Dr. Yeung seemed to think that this was a special tax for the Garrisonville District. She said that this service district existed due to the repairs that filtered in and off of Garrisonville Road. She said that it would not be renamed as the Garrisonville-Griffis-Widewater-Rock Hill Road Service District.

Dr. Yeung said that regarding the document, she would like to clarify that it states Garrisonville. She said that it also said road, but the it specifically said Garrisonville. She said that she wanted to confirm that the road extended up to Joshua Road and served as the cut-off point. She said that although it was referred to as Garrisonville Road, it covered the surrounding area as well. She said that it started at Interstate 95, but she was not sure why it did not start at Route 1.

Ms. Allen said that that was where Garrisonville started.

Dr. Yeung said that Garrisonville started at Route 1.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was not based on the Garrisonville District.

Dr. Yeung said that Garrisonville Road started over at Route 1 when crossing the bridge.

Ms. Vanuch said that there were no businesses there.

Dr. Yeung said that around that area, there were businesses such as Enterprise.

Ms. Allen said that they did not use that road.

Dr. Yeung said that it should be clarified what the district was. She said that she would not dispute it because she knew the businesses that paid into it on both sides, but it was more than that. She said that it was the whole area. She said that from 2007 to 2024, they could not say that it had not developed into more than they thought it would.

Ms. McClendon said that to clarify, this issue is based on zoning districts; therefore, they were discussing a potentially very small impact. She said that if an area was already zoned commercial or industrial, it was already included. She said that when a new business moved in, the zoning had already been established.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to make sure that it was, and that was why she asked staff to look at the business alongside that are included.

Ms. Allen said that they were already included. She asked if Dr. Yeung brought up this topic because she had issues with supporting the resolution for the service district. She said that she was trying to understand the genesis of her concern.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to make sure that all the new businesses were added to the list.

Ms. Allen said that Ms. McClendon had indicated that as soon as they were rezoned, they were included.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to make sure.

Mr. Morris said that the changes were in values of the improvements to property, not in the number of parcels.

Mr. Mayausky said that the exception was that if there was a rezoning.

Ms. Bohmke said that she believed they had exhausted their budget staff. She said that they had a few corrections to make. She asked if there were any further questions from the Board.

Dr. Yeung asked if this was an appropriate time to bring up Embrey Mill in the CIP.

Ms. Bohmke said that they had three minutes remaining.

Mr. Diggs said that he did not have much to say on this matter, as everyone knew his position. He said that he wanted to make sure they were going to have this discussion because he thought that

conversation needed to be had, but he knew where he stood on this issue. He asked what Dr. Yeung was asking.
Dr. Yeung said that she would vote against the CIP if the item was not removed.

Mr. Diggs said that he would be voting for it.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would like to clarify the current situation regarding the school enrollment numbers. She said that this question originated from a FOIA request from a community member. She said that the information provided in an email from Dr. Stemple indicated there were 1,428 students on the east side of their district.

Ms. Bohmke said that if they subtracted Stafford Elementary School's approximate student count of 950, that left them with approximately 478 students who would be attending a new school at Brook Point. She said that this did not make sense to her. She said that she had consistently expressed her concerns about this issue and, as such, she would vote against the CIP because she could not support the current planning and zoning process for the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Bohmke said that in her opinion, they should be considering alternative options, such as building a school at Embrey Mill instead, which would likely be completed more quickly than the Brooke Point project. She said that while discussing various assets in their County, it seemed counterproductive to tear up existing resources at Brooke Point when there was an extensive list of necessary projects for this community. She said that this decision did not make sense to her.

Ms. Gary said that regarding the school issue, she had received confirmation from a large portion of the affected community in her district. She said that some members of their Board may have also received this email. She said that the community down Brooke had long endured lengthy bus rides for their children.

Ms. Gary said that the parents were not only not upset about it but looking forward to their children no longer having to spend hours on the bus to get home. She said that a lot of the community was in support of it. She said that there was one person today, to be fair. She said that the person who came to speak had never reached out to her once, and she did not know what was going on there. She said that as far as she knew, her community was very supportive of it.

Ms. Vanuch said that she wanted to ask Mr. Vosburg a question regarding the timeline for site plan review. She said that she had previously served on the Planning Commission and was aware of how long it takes for site plans to be reviewed. She said that she was seeking clarification on the timeline from going through the planning and zoning process for a CUP at Brooke Point school. She said that her concern that if the project remained in the CIP as currently listed, it may not be

possible to complete it within the expected timeframe based on typical timelines. She said that she was requesting factual information about the timeline from a logistical perspective.
Mr. Vosburg said that the CUP process could take eight to nine months, which staff had no control over because it involved the appointed Board, elected Board, and scheduling and process of those Boards.

Ms. Bohmke asked how long it took to build an elementary school.

Mr. Diggs said that he understood there were some Board members who wanted to see the school go into Embrey Mill. He asked if the school were to be relocated to Embrey Mill, would it change anything in terms of the nine-month timeframe or the 20 months it would take to build the school. He asked if changing the location had an effect.

Mr. Fulmer said that he could not speak to the timeline and process for a CUP. He said that he did not think that the timeline for Embrey Mill would be shorter. He said that he could say right now that ES19 at Brooke Point and ES18 were on the same exact track, so as far as the permitting process and from staff to staff, they believed that all the permitting would be on schedule.

Mr. Fulmer said that both of those were scheduled to open in August 2026. He said that if they moved away from the Brooke Point site at all to any other site, it would be a minimum of August 2027 before it opens. He said that it had nothing to do with CUP or permitting, it would be due to them starting the design over at the new site.

Dr. Yeung asked about the prototype.

Mr. Fulmer said that they had to take that prototype and design it for the piece of land it would be placed on.

Ms. Allen said that as the other supervisor whose district would be impacted by the school going there, she was not in favor of it, but she was also not in favor of an entire student body being in trailers that they spent millions of dollars on each year. She said that it was stated at the beginning of this conversation that the schools had emptied their coffers to buy trailers, so clearly there was a need for butts in seats in a building.

Ms. Allen said that regarding safety and security, she would at least like to know that people's children were in a building and secured all at once. She said that also, they had already asked the School Board to reconsider and they still cast the same vote. She said that there was no evidence that if they returned to the School Board again that they would change their minds. She said that the Board makeup had not changed and would not for another two years at minimum.

Ms. Allen said that if they were thinking about forcing their hand, that was a different conversation. She said that if they were thinking about going back and changing their minds, they had already attempted that after the Board of Supervisors sent a letter requesting that the School Board take another vote on the matter. She said that they voted no again, so the Board of Supervisors would be consistently delaying the process, even if it would push the school out to 2027, there was no one who could say that it would be 2027.

Ms. Allen said that it could possibly be 2028 or 2029 because they did not know if the School Board vote would change. She said that it was an unknown that they could not control. She said that the only thing they knew for a fact was that the School Board had a majority who wanted the school at Brooke Point, and that was all that the Board of Supervisors had control over. She said that she could not waste time sitting here and wondering if their Board would be trying to convince Board members to flip votes, and no one knew how long that would play out.

Ms. Allen said that they all knew from personal experience what had happened. She said that the School Board said only a few weeks ago that they were not moving it, and unless they could figure out how to change seven people's seats in the next couple of weeks, she did not see it changing for at least another year.

Ms. Bohmke said that she respectfully disagreed with Ms. Allen. She said that the Board of Supervisors only had the power of the purse, which Dr. Taylor had stated previously. She said that it was their fiduciary responsibility to fund the school division. She said that all they had to do was remove it from the CIP. She said that they would take Elementary School 19 out and not fund it in the CIP.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was their responsibility. She said that she disagreed with Ms. Allen. She said that she did not want to be a part of a Board that people looked back on in five years and questioned who put an elementary school on top of Brooke Point High School. She said that she would not be supporting the CIP and would be making it very clear why.

Ms. Allen said that as a rebuttal, there were a lot of decisions they made that people will look back on and question who in the world did that.

Ms. Bohmke said that this was a safety and security issue for all the kids on that campus.

Ms. Allen said that there were a lot of things they had done for safety reasons.

Ms. Gary said that she had a question and a comment. She asked if there was discussion with the School Board about setting up an entire campus of trailers, because that was what she had been told would occur if this funding did not go through for Elementary School 19.

Mr. Fulmer said that they actually discussed it at their FABC today, in terms of what that cost would be and what that would look like if the School Board had to do that. He said that a modular trailer complex could be used for swing space while they did rebuilds. He said that it was not just for elementary schools.

Ms. Gary said that there would be no cafeteria, auditorium, or offices for administration. She said that it seemed those would require trailers as well. She said that there would not be a gymnasium. She said that this was what they were looking at right now, so regarding the power of the purse, she would not beat the County's children up with the purse when they were the ones affected. She said that it was absurd that this was what they were going through. She thanked Mr. Fulmer for affirming that information.

Ms. Gary said that also, she knew that they were over time, and she appreciated the additional time to have this discussion, but she wanted to note that in their last seven-on-seven, she asked for 15 seconds to speak and was timed for 15 seconds, but when there was a topic that comes up that people want to discuss that are running the meeting, all of a sudden they had another five minutes. She said that she felt that this was important to note. She said that she hoped they could wrap this up and get back to something reasonable.

Ms. Vanuch asked if Ms. Light could walk her through the impacts to the CIP. She said that if Mr. Vosburg was correct in that it took nine months for the CUP process, which pushed them out so they could not open at the proposed timeline, she would like to know the effects on the CIP. She said that she would like to know the impacts of if they did nothing versus if they pushed it out a year to what they knew would actually happen. She said that she was nervous that they would be misaligned and would be unprepared for negative unintended consequences.

Ms. Light said that the schools are moving forward and ready to begin contracting for construction in FY25. She said that if the Board did not want to authorize the budget or project in the CIP or both, the Board would need to hold a public hearing and an appropriation because it would be over 1% of their budget.

Ms. Vanuch asked if they would have to do a public hearing.

Ms. Light said that was correct.

Ms. Vanuch asked if it took nine months to get a CUP, it would push the timeline out a year, because that was not a part of the current timeline. She said that in the CIP now, they had the schools getting part of that construction fund now. She said that if that was not feasible, they would not be ready. She said that nine months from now was November or December for the CUP approval. She said that it likely would not happen. She said that this was regardless of the Board's action on the CIP. She asked what risks there were for that disparity.

Ms. Light said that the risk would be that funds would be appropriated and not used within that same period of time.

Ms. Vanuch asked if pushing that funding into another year would impact the tax rate.

Ms. Light said not necessarily. She said that the tax rate this year was not contemplating any issuance of debt for FY25, and they assumed that debt would be issued, so it impacted FY26. She said that if a school was pushed out from FY25 to FY26, they would assume that the debt impact would impact FY27.

Ms. Vanuch asked if it would push everything out.

Ms. Light said that they could choose not to appropriate a project. She said that for example, if the Board decided that they did not want to budget and appropriate the $2 million for Drew Middle School, and wanted to push it out a year, they certainly could do that.

Ms. Vanuch said that her intention was to convey that by not implementing what they knew would likely occur and combining it with the CIP, there would be unintended consequences in a year or two that would affect other potential projects due to the fact that delivery at the specific location would not happen on time based on the usual process.

Mr. Diggs said that Mr. Fulmer just said that both elementary schools are on track. He asked if that was correct.

Dr. Yeung asked if that was true.

Mr. Towery said that that was true. He said that they just had a conversation with Planning staff the other day, and anticipated the CUP would be before the Board of Supervisors as early as May for consideration.

Ms. Bohmke asked about the comprehensive plan.

Mr. Towery said that the comprehensive plan was following the same timeline.

Ms. Vanuch asked if Mr. Santay could provide further information.

Mr. Santay said that the CUP application has been submitted; however, it must first be presented to the Planning Commission for consideration. He said that they would likely deliberate for several days, defer the matter, and then re-advertise. He said that it was probable that this process will extend beyond May. He said that ultimately, the outcome depends on how the Planning Commission proceeds with the application.

Mr. Towery said that the timeline they were on for High School 6 had a quick CUP approval as well. He said that the purpose of the CUP was regarding the building height. He said that they were considering constructing a three-story school at the Brooke Point high school site. He said that Brooke Point High School was currently three stories. He said that the thought had been that there should be no significant delays in this process; however, potential delays may occur but they anticipated completion by May, certainly by summer.

Mr. Towery said that to meet a 22-month construction schedule, they planned to pull a grading permit in September or October. He said that if necessary, they could shorten the construction schedule by a couple of months if they had to. He said that if they hit some delays, they could still hit the constructions schedule on time.

Dr. Yeung said that she initiated the conversation and would close it out. She said that she would not be supporting the school. She said that Drew was delayed for the past six years, and none of them made a ruckus on that. She said that she was just saying that she had issues with Drew since her tenure on the School Board. She said that Supervisors Allen and Gary mentioned that the school will be constructed in their neighborhoods. She said that both school representatives opposed its location but were outvoted.

Dr. Yeung said that she was going on record to say that the campus of trailers were intended to be at Brooke Point as a temporary solution, regardless of whether a school was planned for that area or not. She said that this was to show the community they had to use trailers because they could not put in a school. She said that the growth is occurring in Garrisonville, and space for trailers was needed there now. She said that it seemed counterproductive to relocate students across to put them in trailers there due to a lack of available schools.

Dr. Yeung said that the growth of the 800 students would be in Garrisonville, and they were okay with those students being misplaced. She said that she was okay with that. She said that she hoped to God that nothing happened at Brooke Point High School, because blood would not be on her hands and she would not vote for it.

Mr. Diggs said that regarding Dr. Yeung's comment about having blood on her hands, along with related things about safety, he could not help but feel that they were trying to put fear into the community and make a bigger situation than what it really is. He said that the reality was that they had grown too fast, there were students that needed seats, and they needed a school. He said that his position had not changed. He said that he did not like that it was at Brooke Point High School, but it was the School Board's decision.

Mr. Diggs said that when they talked about their responsibility and the power of the purse, they knew that they needed to build schools. He said that years from now, if people were upset about how they ended up with a school there, that was the School Board's decision. He said that he trusted that if the community was upset with the School Board members' decisions, and most of the Supervisors had said that they did not want the school at that location, they would make a decision in two years for those members on the Board.

Mr. Diggs said that beyond that, they were also looking at the campus down in Hartwood where they were putting High School 6 and an elementary school down there. He said that the idea that high schools and elementary schools cannot be together should be reviewed. He said that they needed to pull back, because he saw a lot of politics being played in this conversation back and forth about promises made outside in the community.

Mr. Diggs said that they must go back and think about the kids, and the reality was that they did not need to delay building an elementary school. He said that if they did not like the decision, it still would not change. He said that he had talked to a majority of the School Board and knew it would not change, whether they pulled it out of the CIP or not.

Mr. Diggs said that they needed to move forward, and he liked that they were engaging with the School Board regarding their plans for the middle schools. He said that to delay this project was to do more harm to their kids. He said that to talk about safety, as a law enforcement officer, he was concerned about the trailers. He said that he was concerned about the safety of their students.

Ms. Bohmke said that she appreciated Mr. Diggs' perspective. She said that this was not about politics for her. She said that she would be okay with building the school someplace else; it did not have to go in Embrey Mill. She said that if they wanted to pick another site, she would be fine with that. She said that she thought that it was a no-brainer because it was a proffered site where the vast majority of the children were. She said that she would not die on her sword for it to have to go to Embrey Mill, but she did not believe that Brooke Point was the right location. She said that for her, it was not about politics, it was about common sense. She said that it may be for other Board members, but that was not what it was about for her.

Ms. Gary said that she believed that any more of this discussion could be had on the dais as they figured out the rest of the budget. She said that she was grateful for the progress made during this meeting. She thanked everyone for bringing some of these items forward and having discussions about these items that they could look at again.

RECESS

At 6:23 p.m., the Board recessed its meeting.

At 7:00 p.m. Chairman Bohmke called the evening session to order. Ms. Allen gave the invocation. Ms. Vanuch led the Board in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

PRESENTATIONS

There were none.

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

1. Rich Ryan, 15 Blossom Tree Court, said that during the earlier 3:00 p.m. session, he discussed the issue of Brooke Road. He said that he wanted to provide a different vein of information on this matter. He said that last night, citizens held a closed resident town hall meeting at the Brooke Volunteer Fire Department. He said that a survey conducted during the meeting revealed that residents had incurred an estimated $30,000 worth of property damage due to road conditions, even when the road is not flooded.

   Mr. Ryan said that this issue is not just an inconvenience; it is a safety concern as first responders cannot effectively respond to incidents on this road. He said that additionally, school buses often refuse to pick up children from their area because the roads are deemed unsafe. He said that Stafford County Fire and Rescue members pointed out that sections of Brooke Road are sinking dangerously, forcing fire trucks to drive in the middle of the road, facing potential collisions to avoid the sides of the road collapsing from the weight of the fire truck.

Mr. Ryan said he understood that some of this information may seem repetitive, but the residents wanted to emphasize their determination to address this issue permanently. He said that they said they would continue to organize and make their voices heard until this problem is resolved. He said that if necessary, they were prepared to hire engineers and pay for a review of the road's compliance with state and local laws on their own dime.

2. John Edgar, 5 Potomac Overlook Lane, Stafford VA, said that he had lived at his current address for the last 29 years. He said that he was speaking on behalf of the 15 families living within the Potomac Overlook subdivision on Marlboro Point Road. He said that as the president of the Homeowners Association, he wanted to bring attention to the impact that frequent flooding at multiple points along Brooke Road had had on their community and express support for County efforts to resolve this issue.

   Mr. Edgar said that Brooke Road, east of the railroad bridge at Andrew Chapel Road, served as the sole ingress/egress route for hundreds of homes and thousands of residents living off of Brooke Road. He said that their school children traveled daily on County buses along this road. He said that additionally, it was the only route available to police, fire, and medical services in reaching their residents. He said that lack of access could be a matter of life or death.

   Mr. Edgar said that the flooding appeared to have two primary causes. He said that first was the rainwater from higher terrain to the north of Brooke Road overwhelmed the inadequate culverts and ditches on the road, causing it to run across the road into the adjacent swamp. He said that VDOT's attempts to maintain these culverts and ditches had proven futile. He said that secondly, the roadbed was at or slightly below the elevation of the swampy area that received water from Accokeek Creek and the Crow's Nest Nature Preserve.

   Mr. Edgar said that high tides on the Potomac River and runoff entering the creek upstream caused the swamp to overflow onto the road. He said that the degree and frequency of flooding have increased in recent years. He said that whenever the rain gauge at his house recorded more than one inch of rain, he either stayed home or used his 4x4 pickup truck to safely navigate the flooded roads. He said that personally, in November 2020, his family lost one of their vehicles, which was swept away in the flooding. He said that there was a picture of this in the Freelance Star. He said that luckily, his wife who was driving the car was rescued by good Samaritans in the area.

   Mr. Edgar said that numerous other cars have suffered the same fate. He said that in the future, someone else may not be as lucky. He said that in closing, he requested that the Board prioritize and protect the $7.5 million budgeted for the Brooke Road roadway reconstruction and realignment project. He said that furthermore, he asked the County to reallocate $2 million in prior year funding available in the secondary six-year plan and seek further funding from outside sources towards completion of this long overdue project. He said that the taxes being discussed tonight are important, but so are human lives.

3. Lisa Lineweaver said that she was a graduate of Stafford Senior High and had a master's degree of science. She said that their last Superintendent was trying to spend over $1 million to remove urinals from all Stafford County Public Schools, and consequently, the School Board and Board of Supervisors did not fund or proceed with any building or renovation projects during his employment. She said that they currently have a Superintendent who is focused on education.

   Ms. Lineweaver said that now is the time to build much-needed and overdue schools in Stafford County. She said that she wondered how they could consider focus on a new Rising Star building for preschoolers, Head Start, etcetera, when they had such emergent issues with their schools housing K-12 in terms of overpopulation. She said that then, she read the Stafford County Plan for Human Services, page 4, which revealed that the Hispanic population had more than doubled between the last two censuses. She said that in 2010, 28% of Hispanic kindergartners were not ready for kindergarten.

   Ms. Lineweaver said that she loved Spanish people and had traveled through Mexico with her high school Spanish class and maintained close friendships with Hispanic friends for 29 years. She said that she had a conversation a Hispanic husband of one of her friends about what he thought about the border. She said that he said that he believed that the United States had to do something about Spanish people pouring over the border.

   Ms. Lineweaver said that In February 2024, it was reported that the border crisis continued, prompting Virginia's governor to authorize sending the National Guard to Texas to help fortify the border alongside 13 more state governors. She said that this situation was due to border policies that were implemented at the beginning of the Biden Administration. She said that everyone should contact their legislators and request their assistance in controlling the crisis at the border.

   Ms. Lineweaver said that additionally, there were families from war-torn areas not accounted for in the last US Census regarding ethnicities, which resulted in significant population growth and the need for human services, including language skills. She said that they must repair, replace, and build new schools thoughtfully. She said that they should be prioritizing preserving their beautiful rural areas and slowing down growth. She said that they should build the much-needed new high school and replace the old elementary school in Hartwood District as planned.

Ms. Lineweaver said that they should build the new U-shaped Drew Middle School with 1,100 students, featuring a moderately-sized auditorium and gym that can accommodate two parents attending events. She said that it was a middle school and not a high school, so it should be moderately sized. She said that they should construct a new elementary school in Stafford, but know that they would need to widen Route 1 from Garrisonville to where Courthouse Road meets Route 1.

Ms. Lineweaver said that the new Fountain Park, already approved by the Board of Supervisors, also needed to go up. She said that the area has been experiencing bottlenecking for two to three hours of standstill traffic during rush hour for decades when large events are held nearby. She said that to reiterate, they must build wisely while simultaneously petitioning their government regarding overcrowding issues.

4. Natalie Richardson, 1003 Wythe Court, said that she worked at Dixon Smith Middle School. She said that she was here to thank Mr. Diggs for fighting for the school. She said that she attended his town hall and thought it was awesome. She said that she learned a lot and she thanked him. She thanked Ms. Gary for all of her support in keeping their school, staff, kids, and everyone safe. She thanked Ms. Allen and said that they appreciated her support 100%. She thanked her for supporting the schools the way she does.

   Ms. Richardson thanked Mr. English for supporting staff and schools every day. She said that she started the initiative to support the support staff, but she was here to request that they fully fund the schools. She said that they needed safety in their schools, they needed the schools fixed, and they needed new schools built.

   Ms. Richardson said that most of all, what happened at Rodney Thompson, a school that was not even that old compared to a lot of schools in the County, was the reason she was asking the Board to fully fund the schools. She said that it was for the safety of the students and the staff.

5. Aabram Marsh, said that he was a retired Air Force Officer, currently employed by the federal government, married to a middle school teacher, and father of two Stafford students. He said that as was the case when he addressed them last year, he wore red for two reasons. He said that the first reason was red for ed, red to support their educators and staff members.

   Mr. Marsh said that the second reason was to remember everyone deployed, in honor of their school district's celebration of military-affiliated children and their families. He said that since his family arrived in Stafford in 2020, he had contributed his talents to a lot of initiatives throughout the County. He said that one of these involvements has been as the Chair of the Budget Advisory Committee. He said that he was not present in that capacity today. he said that he was here to address their severe funding shortfalls.

Mr. Marsh said that when he last spoke to them, he mentioned one thing, which was that when he was a young officer, he learned that officers eat last. He said that this meant that leaders prioritize their subordinates at all times, without exception. He said that they were not doing this consistently in regards to their children and their schools.

Mr. Marsh said that as they saw in the presentation by concerned staff and community members at the last meeting, budget increases to compensate government staff employees and Board of Supervisors had outpaced the funds allocated for their students over the past decade. He said that hence, their County officers were eating first and their children were taking the scraps. He said that for example, his son's high school had a condemned track, and this was at the start of the track season. He said that they would not be hosting any meets on that track.

Mr. Marsh said that his daughter's school had the unfortunate distinction of being one of the few remaining schools in the United States with a well and septic system. He said that they did a good job in providing a solid education, it was imperative that they fully fund their schools. He said that this responsibility lay with the Board of Supervisors, and the public implored them to put their children first. He said that officers eat last.

6. Howard Rudat said that he appealed to their sense of humanity that evening. He said that they should reflect on the events at Rodney Thompson School. He said that they were a mere hours away from tragedy on par with Uvalde or Sandy Hook. He said that the physical and emotional toll on families would have been devastating and unrecoverable. He said that their first responders would have witnessed things that should never be seen except for in combat, and these things would haunt them forever.

   Mr. Rudat said that they would have a building that they no one could ever return to; the pain would be too deep. He said that the tragedy would place a permanent scar on the community, not because of an automatic weapon carried by an individual with a grudge or mental health issues, but rather by deliberate decisions made by Supervisors who found something more important to fund or distrusted school officials. He said that next would come satellite news trucks from around the world. He said that they would have been on the news 24/7, and the media would dig into videos and minutes of every government meeting and every email sent by a government official, and reported on exactly what they found.

Mr. Rudat said that lawsuits would have followed, potentially leading to a bankrupt County. He said that ultimately, those tragedies would have been laid at the Board of Supervisors' feet. He said that God throws pebbles to get their attention to get them back on the right path. He said that if what happened at Rodney Thompson did not get their attention and change the course of funding to fully fund the schools, from this day forward for their schools, God help them for what tragedy would besiege them next.

7. David Fauth, 18 Antietum Loop, Stafford, Virginia, said that he would be brief. He said that he did not think these comments would change the decision on the tax rate tonight. He said that he thought that it had already been decided, and people were present to express their opinions. He said that these opinions should have been shared in November or December to influence the Board's decision, so this public hearing probably would not change many minds. He said that listening to the work session this afternoon, he heard some good ideas. He said that one was discussing the 3R priorities for schools.
   Mr. Fauth said that as a citizen, he would like to know the 3R priorities for the entire County. He said that there should be one list for all departments in the County, such as Police and Parks and Recreation. He said that Mr. English mentioned something similar with the budget set aside. He asked why there was not a single Countywide list. He said that they were responsible for buildings and vehicles; therefore, there should be one list for each category.

   Mr. Fauth said that the School Board could help in creating such a list of Countywide priorities. He said that he knew that was for next year, but they should think about it. He said that he knew it was a heavy decision and the Board had put in a lot of hours. He said that he looked forward to hearing the outcome and would be paying his taxes in June.

8. Michelle Wickman said that on Thursday, she worked her last day as a teacher in Stafford schools. She said that it was bittersweet, but she made the decision to leave because that was what was best for her family. She said that the most stark contrast she noticed was that in her first two days in the private sector, she felt more valued than she had in her ten years as an educator in this County. She said that it was not because of lack of trying, lack of sentiment, or on behalf of the school division or the community, but was purely and simply due to a lack of resources.

   Ms. Wickman said that it was year after year of having to show up at these meetings and beg to be valued by various members of this Board. She said that they spent a lot of time talking about the cost of funding the schools but very little time about who was paying the significantly higher cost that has resulted from years of underfunding. She said that over the past few years, she had attended numerous meetings where they discussed the cost of funding schools and the need for increased support.

Ms. Wickman said that however, their conversations often lacked focus on who ultimately bears the brunt of these financial constraints - their dedicated educators. She said that she saw more colleagues across the district going out on FMLA due to stress and anxiety this year than she had ever seen. She said that she would be surprised if they came back. She said that they were no longer just losing talented Stafford educators to other districts; they were witnessing their departure from the profession altogether.

Ms. Wickman said that the mounting pressure within their County was causing irreparable damage, much like the failed water heater at Rodney Thompson, which was a narrowly averted tragedy. She said that she hoped that incident served as a wake-up call for them all, but it was appalling to see a near miss, an almost liability, a mechanical failure, would have potentially greater impact on decisions made there tonight than the very real crisis that people endured every day as educators in Stafford.
Ms. Wickman asked the Board to inform her which County government buildings had mold, sewage leaks, or cockroaches. She asked which of their departments lacked sufficient resources to the extent that they could no longer offer services to everyone who needs them. She said that more importantly, she inquired about which employees worked under such terrible conditions, always asked to do more with less, that they were suffering mental health crises.

Ms. Wickman said that she wanted to know who in the County should be prioritized more than first responders and educators. She said that those were the two employee groups she was had just described. She said that the type of people who believed so much in what they did that they would keep doing it under difficult conditions meant that they were easily taken advantage of. She said that whether consciously or not, this Board had been taking advantage for years. She said that although this issue could not be resolved immediately, they had a golden opportunity to do the right thing.

Ms. Wickman said that they all knew that $2 million was a drop in the bucket when it comes to the entire budget, so they could allocate the $2 million and redistribute funds from another area to increase the $13 million to $15 million to fully fund the schools, regardless of the decision made regarding the tax rate. She said that as she mentioned two weeks ago, if they genuinely supported education and wished to change the situation that was rapidly deteriorating far below the status quo, they should prove it with their votes tonight.

9. Kathleen Meade said that she had participated in a lot of conversations these past couple of months regarding this budget season and the need for the Board to fully fund the schools. She said that at first, a lot of her conversations were about learning and listening, because she did not know about the state of their schools or what fully funding their schools really meant. She

said that she had questions and wanted to learn more. She said that slowly, the conversations she was a part of shifted towards informative dialogues.

Ms. Meade said that she began to talk with friends and parents at their school about what fully funding their schools would do. She said that she had spoken to teachers, Stafford County school employees, community members, and even her 94-year-old grandmother, a retired 2nd-grade teacher. She said that the hardest conversations were those with her children, who were in first grade, second grade, and fifth grade.

Ms. Meade said that in simple words, they had explained the implications of fully funding their schools for them and their teachers. She said that they also decided to inform them about the incident at Rodney Thompson. She said that explaining this to her kids was hard, because all she could imagine were kids sitting down below the bursting pipe. She said that she thanked God that it did not happen that way. She said that the harder part about it all was the question from her fifth grader asked afterwards.

Ms. Meade said that he looked at her and asked if the same thing would happen at his school. She said that she knew that they all had a lot of conversations, too, and like her, they do not know everything, so a lot of times the Board members were listening and asking questions as well. She said that there were so many people who stand before the Board with information, such as their superintendent, Dr. Taylor.

Ms. Meade said that he was the subject matter expert for schools, understanding the working of the schools and was the go-to guide if they have questions or need more information. She said that she hoped that listening to Dr. Taylor's insights would hit them hard and make the Board realize how bad things are. She said that their kids did not have conversations like they did, but if they did, she could promise that they would beg for their schools to be safe, their teachers to stay around, and for their education to be worth funding.

Ms. Meade said that there were 31,000 students and 4,000 teachers within their school system. She said that the Board’s vote tonight would impact all of them. She said that deep down, they all recognize the impact and importance of education. She said that it was not just about arithmetic or literacy skills; it can ignite joy, curiosity, and a strong motivation to be a better person and create a better society to live in. She said that she wanted to thank the Supervisors who were voting to fund their schools tonight. She said that they are amazing and heroes to them and their children.

10. Shannon Fingerholz said that this quite possibly will be her last Board meeting of the year. She said that she had volunteered for a position that deserves her full attention. She thanked those

Board members who openly expressed their stance on the tax rate decision. She said that some individuals spoke frequently and aggressively but had not shown bravery. She said that bravery was doing what was responsible and transparent in front of the camera.

Ms. Fingerholz said that in Thursday's work session, it was proposed to reduce school funding by an additional $2 million and then allocate funds to an emergency reserve for future use. She said that it was said plain as day that they would knowingly continue to underfund educators, facilities, and children, thereby creating more emergencies. She said that this logically did not make fiscal or safety sense.

Ms. Fingerholz said that she was sick and tired of hearing Board members state to the public that they say they understand the need for the increase in taxes but that they did not really understand what they were saying. She said that they say they want to hear from the public, and they show up to meeting after meeting and year after year, saying to fund the County schools with an appropriate tax rate. She said that it was not just for schools but for Fire and Rescue and the Deputies.

Ms. Fingerholz said that they then repeatedly make comments suggesting that they, the people who voted them into office, are too stupid to know what they are saying. She said that they were given numbers, timelines, and invitations to see things in person, as well as told personal experiences. She said that they were given answers upon answers, yet they continue to not listen. She said that the School Board was being very aggressive because they all feel extremely desperate about the dire outcomes.

Ms. Fingerholz said that the Stafford 2040 plan barely grazes schools and that the contracted grant team stated the Board's priorities, none of which mentioned schools. She said that when they talk about cuts to HR, Fire and Rescue departments, or the Sheriff's Department, they referred to people, but the schools were just a big number. She said that it was easy to vote against what one chose to ignore. She said that the people in this room were on opposite ends of the political spectrum, but were unified in the need to take care of the responsibilities of the community. She asked if the Board was.

Ms. Fingerholz said that it was time for them to get off their phones, stop texting their friends, and look their community in the eyes. She said that they must ask themselves if the ones among them that project themselves as leaders were truly leading this community to a stronger, healthier, financially stable, and better-equipped Stafford. She asked if, when they talked about the community behind closed doors, they valued them as neighbors, or if they pictured them as mocking their intelligence, putting them beneath them because their own image and control was their first priority.

Ms. Fingerholz said that if it was the latter, then they probably wanted others to fall in line as well. She said that they should let them stand alone in their willful ignorance. She said that if the money comes from the 1% sales tax from the state, the same people would be paying the same money, but the Board would continue to claim it was different.

Ms. Fingerholz said that if they genuinely cared about the struggles of their financially-strapped constituents, they would wholeheartedly support the library, the Moss Free Clinic, and the schools where so many children seek refuge in a place to learn and do better. She said that they would also reevaluate the tax relief program, which they could do. She thanked them for being brave and voting for $0.91.

11. Erica Doherty, 19 St. Charles Court, said that she was here as a resident, taxpayer, and voter of Stafford County, to urge the Board to fund their County for a better tomorrow. She said that Stafford was no longer a desirable place to live. She said that when she moved here several years ago, Stafford was known for how good their schools were. She said that Stafford was one of the best places to live in Northern Virginia. She said that those days are over; hopefully not forever, but for the current time.

    Ms. Doherty said that Stafford County was no longer a place people recommended others to move to. She said that she had personally recommended others not to move here, and she had seen others online saying the exact same thing. She said that Stafford County is a mess; they are overcrowded, underfunded schools, and there was nothing to do here. She said that they need to drive to Fredericksburg or Woodbridge for any recreational activities.

    Ms. Doherty said that this statement had nothing to do with the current Stafford teachers at their schools, who were amazing and cared so much for their students. She said that this comes from a lack of forward planning from the leadership of their County. She said that regarding their schools, they needed a fully funded school budget, and really, they should add extra to play catch-up. She said that Rodney Thompson should never have happened, Drew should not be this bad, and kids should not be left at bus stops due to lack of buses.

    Ms. Doherty said that they should have built several new schools in the past ten years. She said that as a personal example, her son traveled to North Stafford High School but could not use the restrooms because they were gated and locked, as there were not enough staff members available to monitor them adequately. She said that had been fights, illegal activities, and instances of vandalism in the bathrooms that were further exacerbated by the overcrowding in schools.

Ms. Doherty said that she was unsure of how this was legal, yet because of the inaction of the Board and insufficient funding for their educational institutions, this was how their kids are treated. She said that these types of experiences were what prospective residents heard about Stafford County. She said that this was one example among many problems caused by underfunding their schools. She said that this needs to stop immediately. She said that immediate action must be taken to fund school maintenance and ensure safety and functionality.

Ms. Doherty said that they needed to hire enough staff to keep students safe, assigning a regular teacher to each class, and providing support staff with living wages to support their dedicated teachers and students. She said that they needed to construct buildings at a rate that caught up with the growing number of children in their County and maintained this pace for future growth.

Ms. Doherty said that these were not wants, but essential needs of their community. She said that as a homeowner, resident, and voting taxpayer, she understood that increased taxes would be necessary, but that was the cost of preparing their County for a better future. She said that again, Stafford is no longer a place people would recommend others to come to, but she believed that the actions this Board would take tonight could set them in the right direction to making Stafford County the desirable County they used to be.

12. Josh Meade said that tonight was a pivotal moment for public education in Stafford County. He said that he recognized that many of them faced difficult decisions, not of their own making, but impacting them due to the choices of their predecessors. He said that the decision they made this evening would influence the lives of Stafford County students for years to come. He said that he had heard stories from several Board members who overcame obstacles to reach their current positions.

    Mr. Meade said that their hard work and determination played a significant role in their success, but so too did their foundation, which was built through their primary and secondary education. He said that those early years of education were critical for the development of their emotional, social, and cognitive skills. He thanked them for sharing their stories of success, as they served as motivation for students across their County. He said that they should be proud of the commitment they made for themselves and the commitment they made to serve Stafford.

    Mr. Meade requested that before voting this evening for the Board to consider the 14,000 economically disadvantaged students in their County. He said that their schools provided these students with education, counseling, meals, and most importantly, an opportunity for a better life. He said that he hoped that they would invest in them and their future in the same way that they have invested in themselves. He said that they could all agree that this budget season had been contentious. He said that he had attended meetings and work sessions, read news articles, and heard the voices of so many supporting their schools.

Mr. Meade said that instead of viewing contention as hostility or disrespect, they should see it as passion for their students, staff, and community. He said that he was thankful for the passion displayed by members of the Board of Supervisors, School Board, and community members alike. He said that their passion demonstrated how much the students and staff of Stafford mean to them. He requested that before casting their vote that evening, they remember the promises made during their campaign and consider the influence their own education had on their success.

Mr. Meade said that he asked them to remember the 31,000 students and 4,000 staff that their decision would impact. He said that by voting to fund Stafford County Public Schools, they could create a brighter future for that second-grader who dreams of one day becoming president. He said that they had the power to ensure that a teacher does not have to leave a classroom filled with students they love due to financial reasons.

Mr. Meade said that their vote had the potential to change the outlook of public education in Stafford County. He said that they should share that power by investing in their future: the students of Stafford County Public Schools. He thanked those who would be voting that night in support of Stafford County Public Schools, as their support was appreciated and would make a significant difference in the lives of so many within their community.

13. Karl Johnson, 2158 Harpoon Drive, said that he was not planning on being here at all tonight. He said that he moved to Stafford about 22 years ago. He said that he and his wife had five children and lived in Aquia Harbor for the entire time. He said that they love it there. He said that he was telling them this because his wife had been looking at real estate in places other than Stafford County. He said that their five children attended elementary, middle, and high schools among them.

    Mr. Johnson said that when they moved here, the schools were tenth from the best in the state, and they were now nearing tenth from the bottom in the state. He said that they had become home schoolers for their middle school child because of the situation at her middle school. He said that he wanted to make an economic appeal. He said that it was very myopic to not spend money now to improve the school system.

    Mr. Johnson said that if they figure out a way to prioritize the school district and make it a selling point of Stafford County, they would have a much larger pie to divide up. He said that he understood there were a lot of amazing needs, but the pie would shrink if people were not willing to move here. He said that it would shrink considerably if people like himself, who did not want to move, felt that it was their only choice.

Mr. Johnson said that he wanted to simply appeal that if they wanted a bigger pie to build the roads and all of the other things, they should make the school district the selling point, and he suspected strongly that the real estate agents would be very happy and his neighborhood values would probably go up along with the rest of the County.

14. Molly Denham said that the Board members could probably guess what she would advocate for today. She said that after listening to the budget work session last week, she hoped that those who pledged to vote for the $0.908 tax rate would stick to their word. She said that however, she would continue to say that she believed that rate is too low, and she was extremely disappointed that the Board had knowingly chosen to underfund the County and its needs.

    Ms. Denham said that to quote one of the Board members from Thursday's budget meeting, when you talk about decisions, make sure that when your staff is telling you what you need to do, do it, because if you go against your staff, then I am going to question your decision because you did not listen to your staff." She said that she believed that this Board should perhaps take its own advice. She said that this was exhibit A in poor decisions.

    Ms. Denham said that the County's staff and Administrator informed the Board that the minimum tax rate to fund the County was $0.94, yet here they were, going against their staff and not fully funding the County and its needs. She said that she recommended they take their own advice before throwing stones at others while living in a glass house. She said that she knew she was taking the Board members' advice by definitely questioning decisions and the overall decision-making ability.

    Ms. Denham said that there were those on this Board who stated that they would not support the tax rate recommended by their staff due to concerns about taxing elderly individuals with fixed incomes out of their homes. She said that it was a valid concern that she also shared. She said that to address this issue, she suggested revisiting the qualification levels for the Stafford County Tax Relief Program.

    Ms. Denham said that current income limits may be too low to effectively assist many of their senior citizens. She said that the County had set the maximum income level at $35,000 for 50% relief and $40,000 for 100% relief. She said that this was while many neighboring counties have adjusted their income limits to those that would be of real assistance. She said that for example, Fairfax County's limit is set at $85,000, while Prince William's is set at $110,563.

Ms. Denham said that revisiting their County tax relief program levels could provide relief to those most affected by any future increase in tax rate without hindering the Board's ability to fully fund the County. She said that although she knew that this was likely not going to be heard, she would again state that the tax rate was too low, but they could vote for a rate of up to $0.91, and that was what she would request they vote for tonight.

15. Cynthia Lynch said that she did not have a formal statement. She said that she lived in Vista Woods in the Rock Hill District and she loved it there. She said that she and her husband built their house in 1992 and had been there ever since. She said that her children owned homes in the same neighborhood. She said that she liked the speaker’s idea about giving tax relief to elderly people.

    Ms. Lynch said that she will turn 80 in July, and she is still working. She said that last year, the property tax increase cost her $400 monthly with PITI. She said that whenever her house payment increases, so do her insurances. She said that her six-year-old car's tax, paid twice a year, amounts to a car payment. She said that she wanted to stay here because her family and social circle are based here.

    Ms. Lynch said that if they raise the taxes, she kindly requested consideration for senior discounts. She said that she operates a daycare facility. She said that she has been doing so for 57 years and employs a Christian curriculum. She said that she is state-licensed and plans to continue their operations. She said that she could not work forever but could not afford not to. She asked if there was some way they could work that out.

16. Michael Mintzer, 2 Planters Place, Stafford VA, said that he had been there for 24 years. He said that he had listened to the previous speakers and was almost embarrassed to argue against increasing the tax for personal property. He said that schools are important, and if the money would be going to the schools, then by all means, it should. He said that he would argue that they did not need to increase the personal property tax rates due to inflation automatically increasing the County's tax revenues.

    Mr. Mintzer said that inflation was called the hidden tax for a reason. He said that every price increase for automobiles, trailers, boats, and other items increased the money the taxes would bring in for the County. He said that from his own personal experience he and his wife had returned from South Korea in 1974. He said that he had ordered a new 1975 Jeep Wagoneer for $5,000, believing it to be the most expensive vehicle he would ever own. He said that at that time, a new Chevy Impala cost around $2,600, while a VW Beetle was priced at $1,600.

Mr. Mintzer said that the Jeep Grand Wagoneer, reintroduced this year, now sells for between $88,000 and $108,000 depending on options. He said that the average new pickup truck is now valued at over $50,000. He said that the inflation they had experienced would naturally increase the County's revenues due to higher prices on vehicles, boats, and other items. He said that increasing the County tax rates would intensify the inflation problem in the United States rather than alleviate it.

17. Daniel Cortez said that according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, households in Virginia were now paying $1,100 more per month for goods and services compared to 2021. He said that a visit to a grocery store would reveal the increased cost of basic necessities today, which showed that President Biden's claim of a better economy was false. He said that independent voters would again note who attempts to seek higher office in this Chamber rather than conduct responsible supervisor business to maintain low taxes, live within budget constraints, and downsize if necessary.

    Mr. Cortez said the term was downsize if necessary, and it was necessary. He said that on Saturday, he was with the very patriotic and proud Vietnamese-American community as their primary speaker, celebrating Vietnam Veterans Day on March 29 signed into law by President Trump in 2017. He thanked Mr. English for being the only individual to show respect to their Vietnam veterans in this chamber today.

    Mr. Cortez said that the Vietnamese community, like the Hispanic community, was composed of veterans and citizens, and recognized that the current situation at their southern border mirrored the circumstances in South Vietnam 54 years ago when they fought alongside the South Vietnamese against the Viet Cong, Cambodian murderers Khmer Rouge, and their opium-producing drug lords.

    Mr. Cortez said that the cost of unvetted, undocumented individuals in their schools remained unaddressed by their political superintendent, breaking the financial backs of their veterans, children, and grandchildren. He said that on the most holy day of their faith, the President of the United States insulted Hispanic Catholics by banning religious designs from the annual White House Easter contest and other moral insults.

    Mr. Cortez said that independent voters would acknowledge which party and supervisors upheld moral integrity in the upcoming election, especially in the Aquia District. He said that Stafford County was overspending and that President Biden's economic restrictions on energy and smart business expansion, like the defeated arena concept by Democrat State Senate Finance Chair Louise Lucas, were damaging their economy.

Mr. Cortez said that Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger failed to support Stafford County by not encouraging Lucas to create 30,000 jobs for Virginia or urging President Biden to issue mandates similar to those enacted by President Trump to stop the influx of undocumented immigrants, who were bringing drugs and crime to their streets, subsidized by illegal cartels.

Mr. Cortez wished Mr. Vosburg good luck. He said that he would not mince words and state that again due to aggressive, abusive supervisors, they drove out another competent man. He said that Mr. Vosburg was respected and he should know that. He said that it was no wonder why folks did not want to work in Stafford County.

18. Allyson Reilly, Indian Point Road, said that she was here to ask the Board to take action regarding the flooding on Brooke Road. She said that as she drove here tonight, she had to drive down the center of the road due to erosion at various points along the sides. She said that the road was at risk of collapsing, and unfortunately, a school bus may be on it when it happened.

    Ms. Reilly asked if the Board wanted to be responsible for the children on these buses. She said that bus drivers had already been instructed not to drive through water if they could not see the bottom of the road. She said that that was pretty sad, because that was at any given time that water was going across the road. She said that there were 10 new locations where water covered the road on Brooke Road.

    Ms. Reilly said that the ditches were so full of sediment that it exacerbated the issue by allowing water to flow directly onto the road. She said that it was bad. She said that Ms. Gary had personally seen the state of the road, which looked like a warzone. She said that the trees in the creek had died, and debris from tree trimming had been thrown back into the creek, worsening the problem.

    Ms. Reilly said that she had been in the area since 1992, and in 2018, the Board was approached about fixing this road, but they had yet to do anything. She said that there was currently $7.5 million allocated for repairs, with an additional $2 million that could be allocated from the SSYP fund to repair this road. She said that some repairs had already been made by adding concrete underneath, but the sides of the road were still eroding. She said that unfortunately, someone would be on that road when it goes down.

19. Curt Alvis said that he represented the Brooke Fire and Rescue. He said that in Stafford County, there were two communities with one road in and one road out: Widewater and the eastern section of Brooke. He said that this posed an exceptional risk to public safety, especially during foul weather when Brooke Road was often blocked. He said that in 2018, only one area experienced swift water flooding on Brooke Road, which was the S-curves between Raven Road and Maplewood Drive.

    Mr. Alvis said that at present, there were nine areas where swift water covered the road after every rainfall. He said that these locations were situated between Andrew Chapel and Marlboro Point Road, totaling 11 spots in that stretch. He said that when traditionally flood-prone roads like Harrell Road and River Road experienced flooding, alternative routes were available. He said that in Brooke, however, they must drive through the water.

    Mr. Alvis said that according to current protocols, responding units would need to tie off two swift water technicians. He said that he would have a difficult time tying off two firefighters, and they would physically poke their way down Brooke Road to ensure that the road was not undermined and there were no sinkholes.

    Mr. Alvis asked them to imagine the time it takes for 11 areas to be poked through by these technicians. He said that they faced two options: either spend significant response time dealing with the floods or drive through them, risking potential damage to their vehicles. He said that this was not saving any lives, and both scenarios would be bad for the public.

    Mr. Alvis said that he was aware that the County Board of Supervisors did not directly fix roads, but they did prioritize road projects for repair by VDOT. He said that currently, $7.5 million in road projects were at risk of being pulled. He requested the Board to keep the Brooke Road project in their priorities. He said that this week alone, they had received one to two inches of rain. He said that if they wanted to see for themselves, he would take them down there for a ride, but they should hold on.

20. Nancy Rueter thanked the Board of Supervisors as a group for their many hours of dedication in creating this budget. She said that they had done the best they could to ensure that their tax dollars were used productively and economically. She said that their efforts to secure additional funding through state and federal grants benefited all residents of Stafford and helped make it a good place to live.

    Mr. Rueter said that they had good schools, although they could be better, along with police and fire protection, and parks and recreation. She said that however, these services came at a cost, which is where their tax dollars come in. She said that they desperately needed more schools and upgraded buildings, good teachers and staff, and well-trained firefighters and police who were paid a living wage that could compete with neighboring counties.

Mr. Rueter said that based on what she had heard today, they required a tax rate of at least 90.8% to fully fund the budget. She said that if a higher rate was required, that was fine. She said that they could not wait another year to get these things done. She said that by waiting, there would not be a 25% sale off, but in fact prices would go up. She said that she supported the Board in their $0.908 tax rate or higher if that was what it takes to fund these things.

21. Robert Rowlette, 76 Clift Farm Road, said that he would like to begin by thanking Mr. Diggs for hosting his town hall last week, which provided a great opportunity to listen to the issues, initiatives, and efforts in his district, as well as hear from Senator Durant and Delegate Cole on their work in Richmond. He thanked the entire Board for dedicating long hours to addressing the budget and tax rate, and had listened as they debated passionately, compromised where possible, and stood their ground when necessary.

    Mr. Rowlette said that he was confident they had done so with their constituents' and all County residents' best interest at heart. He said that it was safe to say that most people disliked seeing their taxes increase and the budget surpass a billion dollars; however, most residents recognized it as a fair share contribution to ensure quality education for their County's children, safe roads for citizens, and responsive fire, rescue, and public safety services for all residents.

    Mr. Rowlette said that fair share did not mean that fair share did not mean that taxes and costs of services should be borne by residents alone. He said that while he was excited about the prospect of higher tax revenue generated by data centers and other businesses, they need to pay closer attention to the cost of residential development on the public.

    Mr. Rowlette said that every new home constructed had an impact on everyone involved, whether it involved more children in schools, additional vehicles on roads, increased numbers of people in parks, or heightened demands for services such as fire, rescue, public safety, and others. He said that comprehensive plans were designed to help them achieve this by focusing resources where they wanted growth to occur, supported by the CIP and their budget.

    Mr. Rowlette said that as taxpayers, they expected development to share in these costs through cash and other proffers, which the CIP and budget could facilitate. He said that in the upcoming weeks, they would be asked to make a decision on this matter as they voted on the JPI Clift Farm rezoning and conditional use permit. He said that the Planning Commission identified in their vote to deny these applications that this area was not designated for more intensive growth.

Mr. Rowlette said that the area lacked essential public services, facilities, and commercial services to support an age-restricted community. He said that the cash proffers totaling only $62,500 on a $40 million development would not rectify these deficiencies. He said that even without considering any school children, this development would result in over $9 million in costs for the public. He said that this was not a favorable deal for Stafford County citizens, and he urged the Board to support the citizens and the Planning Commission's vote by denying these applications.

22. William Stewart said that the Board had received an email from himself regarding the need for a knowledge consultant at no cost to the County. He said that his basic request was that if the supervisors did not go forward with this, he would like them to put an agenda item for the next meeting to discuss this, because it was very important. He said that they had been basically lied to by Amazon, their attorney, and their consultant, and they needed to do something about it to defend the County in the future from a similar situation. He said that this situation should not happen again and they must prevent it in the future.

23. Kristin Maxson, 1816 Richmond Highway, said that she had learned so much from the public at these meetings. She said that she was very grateful for this. She said that they saw a video at 3:00 p.m. in the Chambers featuring a statement: "Leave your area better than you found it." She said that in today's ABC room session, the Chief Director of Financial Services mentioned that when asked about a title entity, the reply was that the title is misrepresented.

    Ms. Maxson asked how the budget could be misrepresented when dealing with a budget and numbers concerning allocation. She said that this occurred at approximately 4:05 p.m.. She said that the work session also proposed budget agenda minutes from March 28, item mandatory comments 7 through 10 was missing. She said that new expenditures 24 and 25 were missing, and new positions 49, which was not disclosed to the public. She said that this was questionable. She said that the layout was unprofessional for public reading.

    Ms. Maxson said that $1.5665338 billion was their declared budget. She said that the elderly woman who runs the daycare center is likely well-versed in budgeting. She said that County Administrator stated at 4:21 p.m. that Economic Development received land from the Board and then sold it. She asked how this could be. She said that this was against the judicial process. She said that to take land from somebody and sell it did not make sense. She said that in the packet today, it described VA State Bill 285 allowed bus shelters of 200 feet on the state right-of-way. She said that this was equivalent to the length of a hockey rink. She said that such measures took property away from owners. She said that lobbyists had conflicts of interest when they took people's property and open spaces.

Ms. Maxson asked the Board to be mindful of their votes and review the packet materials. She said that representatives stated that FAMPO was perceived as lacking comprehensive information while others described it as innocuous. She said that the situation benefited some while affecting others. She asked if there was an ordinance identification for this conflict. She said that concerning the March 19 minutes in their packet, a suggestion was made to dissolve the historical preservation. She said that this occurred during the time when zoning was being changed. She asked if this was conflict.

24. Barry Tovig said that he believed that he was the last speaker, which should make the Board delighted. He said that he lived off of Marble Point Road in the Aquia District, which may suggest the reason why he was here. He said that it had been no secret to the Board, having just heard Kyle Bates from VDOT on February 20 give a 12-point PowerPoint on the whole history behind Brooke Road, beginning with 2018 when this whole problem was presented to the Board. He said that Mr. Bates pointed out that 450 residents relied on this road as their sole access point for getting medical attention and getting their children to school.

    Mr. Tovig said that they had to traverse this road. He said that since 2018, not much had happened. He said that yes, a pump was installed on an S-curve, and while some may think this had solved the problem, it had not. He said that the problem had escalated. He said that others had spoken of the tragic events that had occurred, including a woman being stranded and a fire starting in a car, but they had not heard that citizens had saved people who had flown off the road and been stranded.

    Mr. Tovig said that he was present to request the Board to fully fund this project. He said that there had been rumors since the publication of an article in a local newspaper that a couple of the members of the Board may be musing about diverting, referred to as repurposing, those funds from the Brooke Road project. He said that this had $7.5 million allocated to it in the CIP, and it may be repurposed to other needs, principally the Route 1 intersection near Stafford Road.

    Mr. Tovig said that he appreciated that there finite monies to go around, but this was a number one priority for the Board. He said that it was a potential legal liability for the Board if a death occurred. He said that to conclude, he requested the Board to keep the $7.5 million in funding and to look to other sources such as the SSYP, BRIC, PROTECT, and other funds from VDOT.

25. Clarissa Quinn thanked the Board for their attentiveness and using their listening skills tonight. She said that she appreciated seeing all the Board members able to listen to everyone's concerns, questions, and comments during such a long day and after such a long weekend with

their families. She said that she wanted to recognize one of her teachers, Ms. Wickman. She said that she looked at her she would cry.

Ms. Quinn said that last time she was here, she came home and her daughter, a high school freshman, said that she saw her teacher and librarian, and was so proud to have seen her speak. She said that to learn that she was no longer with them was really sad and disappointing. She said that she was so appreciative of Ms. Wickman because her daughter had her first Battle of the Books with Ms. Wickman and was so scared and nervous, so she really appreciated Ms. Wickman being present for that.

Ms. Quinn said that she knew that she would still touch other people's lives. She said that she moved to Stafford in 2013 with her two kids, and was pregnant with her third at the time. She said that they decided on the house they wanted to live in based on Kate Waller Barrett's and H. H. Poole's ratings, as well as Stafford's ratings. She said that they had their plan to go, and they hoped that they would stay.

Ms. Quinn said that ten years later, it really had changed, so she hoped that the Board could consider Stafford again as being one of the best counties to live in. She said that her T-shirt was representing her freshman at North Stafford, and on the back it said "They won't quit, and I won't quit either." She said that her community tells her to wear orange, red, yellow, or purple, she would wear any color for her community and her teachers. She requested the Board to do their best to fund their schools.

26. Greg Goldstein, Ford DeWitt Road, Stafford, VA, said that he was here to talk about opposing the reported plans of Buc-ee's coming to the lot across from Embrey Mill development. He said that he lived in Austin Ridge, which is directly adjacent to that parcel. He said that as they were going through their decision-making process, he asked them to consider that the residents had already expressed their strong opposition at community meetings.

    Mr. Goldstein said that the impacts they anticipated from this development would not only affect their community but also anyone using 610, 630, Route 1, and 95. He said that he felt that he was a hostage to traffic; he had to plan his day around what was going on in order leave Stafford County to go to any recreational activities. He said that he was really disappointed that Economic Development had brought Buc-ee's as a resource to their community.

    Mr. Goldstein said that there would be zoning problems, but more importantly, residents were concerned about the increased traffic, property values, safety of children, and environmental impacts. He said he had lived in Stafford County for nearly 20 years. He said that his children had graduated from this school system, and he was very appreciative of that. He said that his family moved to this area for that reason. He said that he felt somewhat guilty about bringing this issue up tonight, but he was very passionate about it.

Mr. Goldstein said that a petition started just last week had already accumulated 50 signatures. He said that as the Board considered Buc-ee's, he asked for them to think about the residents who had paid tremendous amounts of taxes towards building this community. He said that Buc-ee's would not achieve that. He said that if having 100 pristine bathrooms was something they were proud of in Stafford, they could do better.

Mr. Goldstein said that this was his perspective on Stafford, and he hoped the Board members shared it as well, because it was not the right business for them. He said that he tried to give Buc-ee's the benefit of the doubt, but beyond traffic concerns, they did not have an employment problem in Stafford. He said that the unemployment rate in Stafford was less than 2%, which was lower than Virginia or the national average.

Mr. Goldstein said that the good jobs that this would bring were already abundant, as evidenced by numerous vacancies. He said that if they looked at how they treated their employees, they should go on Glassdoor and see how they treated them. He said that he did not think it was something good for Stafford. He asked the Board to please reach out to communities to see how they would be impacted. He said that he appreciated the Board listening to him and that they would be hearing more from the community.

27. Dana Brown, 41 St. Williams Way, said that she agreed with previous speakers who said that they had to live within their means. She said that the piggy bank was getting pretty empty in her house, and she had listened to speakers who were threatening to move because of their schools. She asked about people like her who might want to move because of high taxes. She said that she believed there were more of them than there were of them.

    Ms. Brown said that schools were the biggest part of the budget, so that was fair game, but it seems like when anybody, whether a citizen or Board member, questions spending decisions, they are accused of hating the schools. She said that it was not true and it was not fair, and she believed it was done on purpose to bully people. She said that again, they need to live within their means with what they can afford. She said that she thought they were offering too much in their schools right now, and it is unsustainable.

    Ms. Brown said that previous superintendents had said the same thing. She said that she thought it was maybe time to reimagine their school's business model. She asked if they really needed to be a social services agency. She said that maybe this was better left to the County in that department. She asked if they really needed to offer free lunches to all students regardless of income. She said that she had heard talk of that during this budget season. She said that maybe they needed to use public-private partnerships and rename sports facilities after businesses.

Ms. Brown said that they had a lot of offerings that were expensive, and so was the infrastructure. She said that she had heard from a School Board member that sports were what made kids come to school, but that was not true. She said that the law is what makes kids come to school. She said that they had a study paid for by taxpayers to evaluate their high school programs several years ago, and the results indicated that they had too many and needed to get rid of some of them. She said that they did not do it.

Ms. Brown said that they wasted the money on the study, kept using the money on the programs, and now they were adding programs to it. She said that they needed to dial it back a bit and scale back to what they can afford. She said that lastly, she wanted to mention the Rodney Thompson incident. She said that maybe she did not understand, but her understanding was that the Board gave money to the schools and the schools decide where and when to spend it.

Ms. Brown said that maybe they need to reevaluate their priorities on what they spend their money on. She said that she agreed that it was a problem, but she did not know how it was the Board of Supervisors' fault. She said that again, they should keep in mind that they did not have a lot of money anymore. She said that they had been giving more and more and more and getting higher and higher taxes, which was just not sustainable.

28. Susan Depp said that she was a little surprised by how the conversation went last month, and she believed that they added something to the budget that she wanted to talk about. She said that this was regarding the Retired Canine Care Emergency Fund. She said that her family and she loved animals, but she found it surprising that during the budget discussion, there was agreement to allocate $10,000 plus $4,000 for dog insurance.

    Ms. Depp said that she would now share a personal story, which she hated to do. She said that in 2005, her husband and she adopted two pets with their four children. She said that they named them Midnight and Memster. She said that one year later, when her husband tragically passed away in the line of duty, these pets became emotional support animals for her family.

    Ms. Depp said that her daughter had recently told her that if it had not been for Midnight, she would not be here today, and she had no doubt that this was the case, because pediatric trauma from the sudden loss of a parent was very real. She said that Midnight and Memster are still with them, but their care has become increasingly expensive. She said that she understood that these animals were family, and she understood it was the same for these retired military dogs.

Ms. Depp said that she loved how devoted they were and had seen them at many DARE days. She said that she was so impressed with their intelligence and loyalty; they were amazing creatures and she fully appreciated that. She said that she was so glad they had them, but she would never dream of asking anyone to pay for her pets' care. She said that when these dogs retire, they become pets, so they could either be cared for by their handlers or donated to various services that specialize in taking care of retired law enforcement dogs.

Ms. Depp said she Googled support for retired police dogs, and there are at least six nationwide foundations dedicated to providing grants for retired police dog care. She said that Police Magazine even has an article discussing how easy it is to set up a foundation for this purpose. She said that people loved dogs' causes and would be glad to contribute to taking care of these dogs.

Ms. Depp said that she did not think the County wanted to start this precedent of paying for dog insurance in their budget, especially since they just talked about the costs of health insurance rising. She said that dog insurance would not be any different and would continue to escalate at astronomical amounts. She said that she did not think they wanted to set this precedent, so she hoped they would take it out of the budget.

29. Chris Freeman said that he was present to talk about the situation at Rodney Thompson Middle School. He said that he had been doing mechanical trades for 23 years. He said that his understanding was that the expansion tank failed, and the pressure relief valve likely also failed. He said that pressure relief valves were not just safety measures; they were the primary safety mechanism for those boilers. He said that he never came to these things ever, and did not come for a lot of stuff, but the idea that those things would fail is ridiculous.

    Mr. Freeman said that he did not know what the situation is, as his wife did a much better job of keeping track of local politics than he did, but it was something that needs to be addressed. He said that if it was a matter of funding the schools, then they should fund the schools. He said that if budget cuts were necessary, they should find ways to save money without compromising safety. He said that there was no reason to have critical systems fail. He said that he had done consulting work with the Corps of Engineers and on design-build projects for the federal government at U.S. Park Stables, among other things.

    Mr. Freeman said that he could try to help them save a dollar here and there, but they did not achieve that by letting all the mechanical systems fail. He said that it would cost more money in the long run. He said that they could already see that, as he was sure it would not be cheap to fix everything that fell apart. He said that if they keep kicking the can down the road, then they would just pay more money in the end.

30. Christy Freeman said that she was able to get her husband out of the house because he was really upset when she told him what happened in that middle school, knowing that their own children attended these schools. She said that she was not scared of a lot of things when they go to school; she felt like they were safe, happy, and had wonderful teachers who loved them. She said that now, she was scared that they could be greatly burned due to maintenance being ignored, and that was ridiculous.

    Ms. Freeman requested that the Board fund their schools appropriately, whether that means that the taxes went up a little bit. She said that the assessment on her house did go up over 30%, and that may be the hit they take. She said that while she would not like for it to go up 30% in the next two years, she did not understand why people want their houses to be worth a certain amount but do not want to pay taxes on it. She said that she did not get it.

    Ms. Freeman requested that the Board fund their schools so they can pay their teachers. She said that if they do not pay their teachers appropriately, they will have no schools to maintain, and if they do not maintain their schools, they will have no teachers to pay. She said that they cannot pick one; they have to have both. She said that their students would have to deal with the consequences either way, and they could not do that.

31. Bart Randall, 7 Dorchester Court, said that regarding the Rodney Thompson issue, the question had been asked tonight as to why they found themselves in this situation. He said that according to industry standards, maintaining assets required 2.5% of their assured value. He said that with $1 billion of asset value in Stafford, they needed approximately $20 to $25 million annually just to keep the lights on and keep things running well. He said that they all know that the County had provided schools with $10 million for 3R projects.

    Mr. Randall said that $8 million dollars of that amount came from their credit card, not cash. He said that they added $8 million to their debt service each year due to insufficient funding of the 3R projects with cash. He said that over 15 years, a $10 million annual shortfall left them $150 million short of adequately maintaining their schools through these 3R projects. He said that this was just 3R projects and did not include new construction or rebuilds; it simply covered keeping their assets well-maintained.

    Mr. Randall asked if they were surprised that there was a problem. He said that it was by the grace of God that they were not talking about lawsuits or kids dying. He said that that was what would have happened six hours later when there were kids in that cafeteria. He asked where the next one would happen. He asked what they were going to do to make sure that this does not happen again. He said that they were could not write a $150 million check, and he understood that. He said that they had to do something. He said that this served as a wake-up call and a shot across the bow.

Mr. Randall asked what they were going to do. He said that they could not continue with the status quo; something has to change. He asked which side of history they wished to be on in this matter: part of the solution or part of the problem. He said that until now, the Board of Supervisors had been part of the problem. He said that this Board has been part of the problem by not providing schools with the resources they needed to maintain their facilities.
Mr. Randall said that these were not only the schools' assets; they belonged to the County as well. He said that these were assets their children go to. He said that that was important. He said that they must make a decision on what actions to take. He said that they must fully fund what they needed. He said that they needed to give them with the 3R projects they needed. He said that they needed to give them the tax rate of $0.89, or $0.91 including the fire levy. He said that they must make this happen, and it was not just going to be for today, it would be for the next 20 years.

32. Mauricio Ching said that he was one of the first responders to arrive at Rodney Thompson, and while he could not go into details, thinking about it now and thinking about all the people that are here trying to get money for the schools, those could have been potentially very bad circumstances with regards to the staff that was there and especially the children.

Mr. Ching said that brought to mind the potential dangers faced by staff and children present. He said that it would have been a lot for his brothers and sisters in the Fire Department. He said that they were already pretty taxes with everything they do every day, so if they were to see an incident involving children and everyone there, it would have probably wiped out half of their first responders that day.

Mr. Ching said that he wanted the Board to consider the implications that could have happened if people were in the building at the time. He said that he may not be a great public speaker, but he was there to express his support for everyone who was here for better school funding. He said that he hoped that they could find it in their hearts to provide the necessary resources for them. He said that his fellow first responders and him would continue serving their community every day, not for money or anything like that, but because they love what they do. He thanked the Board for all they do.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ITEM 14. FIRE AND RESCUE; ORDINANCE O24-12; CONSIDER ADOPTING AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND REORDAIN STAFFORD COUNTY CODE SEC. 12-62 "AMENDMENTS, ADDITIONS, AND DELETIONS TO THE VIRGINIA STATEWIDE FIRE PREVENTION CODE" TO INCREASE CERTAIN FIRE PERMIT FEES FOR BLASTING AND FIREWORKS.

Deputy Fire Marshal Ben Goldman said that he would break this item into two separate parts. He said that the first permit was for aerial displays for fireworks. He said that the new fee structure would place the cost on the contractor conducting the fireworks show rather than the taxpayer. He said that his team spent up to six hours at each event, ensuring safety and preventing accidents, which cost the County significant resources.

Mr. Goldman said that the second part was the increase in the blasting permit fees along the I-95 corridor. He said that contractors required these permits for blasting through rock beds as part of construction projects. He said that they currently paid $200 for a permit, which did not cover his team's research and up to 20 inspections, each lasting an hour, within a 90-day period. He said that therefore, they were requesting an increase in that permit fee.

Mr. English asked if more funding was required to cover the inspections.

Mr. Goldman said that $1,000 was fair. He said that it could be 20 times but it may be as few as 15 times. He said that it also depended on the weather, because rain may impact the schedule of blasting.

Mr. English asked if this was a standard fee amount of if it varied.

Mr. Goldman said that it was different prices at different places across Northern Virginia.

Ms. Bohmke opened the public hearing and asked if there was anyone in the Board Chambers who would like to address the Board on this item.

1. Molly Denham said that she did not know a lot about the subject but wondered if there was an hourly rate that could be charged instead of a flat fee to cover the inspections.

2. Kristin Maxson, 1816 Richmond Highway, said that there were a lot of questions. She asked if there would be publication saying that there will be blasting and how close it will be to schools or activities. She asked if they would publish the decibel of the blasting along with

safety issues. She said that because there was a fee, it pays for the process, but she would like to know if there was a representative who could hear concerns of neighboring property owners.

Ms. Bohmke closed the public hearing. She asked if Mr. Goldman could address the questions raised.

Mr. Goldman said that the last question regarding seismic and noise impacts near buildings was why they visited sites during blasting operations. He said that they ensured that seismograph equipment was placed to record earth movement and sound waves from the blast. He said that they must adhere to specific parameters.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Mr. Goldman could discuss the question about the hourly rate.

Mr. Goldman said that they could look into that, but at this point, they were not considering an hourly rate for that.

Ms. Allen asked what methodology was used to determine the price point.

Mr. Goldman said that they went back to 2021 and reviewed the number of permits issued and the number of conducted site visits during blasting activities. He said that they calculated the total cost and found that their average expenses amounted to approximately $1000.

Ms. Allen asked if that $1000 captured the rate in some way.

Mr. Goldman said yes.

Dr. Yeung asked if the blasting and fireworks permits were separate.

Mr. Goldman said that they were separate permits.

Dr. Yeung asked if companies usually did the blasting.

Mr. Goldman said yes, contractors would come in and do the blasting.

Dr. Yeung asked if the fireworks permit could apply to a home.

Mr. Goldman said that the fireworks permit was done by a certified contractor.

Dr. Yeung asked if individuals were asking for that performance.

Mr. Goldman said yes.

Dr. Yeung said that she had done that a couple of times, and they had to pay the person in addition to paying the fee. She said that because they were talking about a company versus an individual, she did not think that the pricing should be that high for aerial displays. She asked if that was overlooked.

Mr. Goldman said that no, it was not overlooked. He said that the most permit usage was by a contractor, not an individual. He said that there were potentially two individuals in the County who may have fireworks permitted this year, but maybe not for another two or three years.
Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to approve Proposed Ordinance O24-12.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

ITEM 15. PARKS, RECREATION, FACILITIES AND TOURISM; ORDINANCE O24-10; CONSIDER ADOPTING AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE FEE SCHEDULE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION.

Director of Parks, Recreation, Facilities and Tourism Brion Southall said that he would present tonight a fee increase. He said that Stafford Parks and Recreation offered an array of programs and opportunities that provided social and community benefits. He said that these fees supplemented the funding provided by the Board for these County programs. He said that in the past ten years, facility and recreational fees had not been reviewed.

Mr. Southall said that new programs were priced using a direct cost method. He said that increases in operations, such as utilities, staffing, and other expenses, also were calculated. He said that in 2023, their revenue actuals were $1.9 million. He said that a 10% increase would result in an additional $190,000 next year.

Mr. Southall said that moving forward, staff proposed securing a consultant to create a price recovery philosophy that could be presented back to the Board for approval on how program fees would be calculated. He said that this typically involved a tiered value process, ranging from programs with a high community-wide benefit to programs with a high individual or specialized benefit. He said that they planned to propose this in this year's budget. He said that staff recommended approval of the ordinance.

Ms. Gary asked if this would impact the Rouse Center.

Mr. Southall said no.

Ms. Gary said that she understood there was a public-private partnerships and wanted to know if anything carried over. She said that the schools paid to use swim facilities there, so she wanted to ensure they were not feeing themselves here.

Ms. Bohmke opened the public hearing. She asked if there was anyone in the Board Chambers who would like to address the Board on this fee schedule. Seeing none, she closed the public hearing.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to approve Proposed Ordinance O24-10.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

<u>ITEM 16. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; ORDINANCE O24-08 AND ORDINANCE O24-09; CONSIDER ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNTY CODE TO INCREASE THE TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX RATE AND THE CIGARETTE TAX RATE.</u>

Ms. Light said that if acceptable, she would like to combine the discussion of the transient occupancy cigarette tax and the personal property public hearing.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was okay with that.

Ms. Light said that presented for the Board to consider was the cigarette tax increase from $0.30 to $0.40 per pack on Ordinance O24-08 within the proposed budget. She said that the tax did not cover vaping, which was subject to a state tax. She said that this tax only applied to tobacco products. She said that the anticipated revenue for this tax was projected to be over $512,000. She said that transient occupancy tax on Ordinance O24-09, the current rate of 7% would be increased to 9%.

Ms. Light said that the first 2% of the tourism or hotel tax would be directed towards tourism initiatives, while any additional revenue generated above this amount was unrestricted. She said that if the Board decided to increase the rate further in the future, they had that option. She said that as proposed, these funds would support capital improvements for parks programs and were estimated to generate just over $832,000.

Ms. Light said that the Board also would also consider a public hearing for the vehicle personal property tax tonight. She said that vehicle values had normalized after experiencing abnormal spikes in previous years. She said that the advertised tax rate was $5.89 with an effective rate of $2.95. She said that the effective rate represented 50% of the vehicle's value. She said that staff anticipated that a rate of $5.69 or $2.85 would meet the proposed revenue growth for Fiscal Year 2025.

Ms. Allen asked if Ms. Light could explain the relationship between the $5.69 and the $2.85.

Ms. Light said that $5.69 was the tax rate. She said that the assessment ratio was set at 50% by the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office. She said that the assessment resulted in $2.85 She said that the effective rate, which represents what they are actually being taxed at, amounted to $2.85. She said that this odd aspect of the Code of Virginia was something they encountered annually.

Dr. Yeung said that the advertised rate was $5.89, and staff anticipates a rate of $5.69 to meet the proposed revenue growth for 2025. She asked if the Board had decided where they would land.

Ms. Light said that no, there has not been a decision.

Dr. Yeung asked if this topic would come up again about what rate they have to decide.

Ms. Light said yes.

Dr. Yeung said that if staff was telling her the proposed revenue growth was matched at $5.69, she would like to say that this affected everyone who owned vehicles, and did not just affect homeowners. She said that this tax affected poor people and those with used cars.

Ms. Bohmke said that this tax did not include RVs, which was a separate tax.

Ms. Bohmke opened the public hearing on the transient occupancy tax or the cigarette tax. She asked if anyone in the Board Chambers would like to address the Board on these topics. Seeing none, she closed the public hearing.

Ms. Bohmke motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve Proposed Ordinance O24-08.

Ms. Gary said that it was important for the Board to consider future funding methods for partner agencies that assist homeless individuals who were housed in local hotels and motels. She said that they may only stay under 30 days, which means they are subject to paying transient occupancy taxes. She said that they must stay aware of this because there were no exemptions at the state level regarding this tax. She said that with that said, she would be supporting the tax increase.

Ms. Allen said that their Deputy County Administrator may be able to research this with their partner agencies for the next budget cycle.

Ms. Bohmke said that this tax may be increased to 9%. She said that she would like to remind everyone here that they were having serious discussions about the Regional Transportation Authority, and Ms. Light had made them aware that the other counties in this region were at the same rate that they were going to be at. She said that if they were going to increase that money to go to the RTA, it would be challenging.

Mr. Diggs said that the other jurisdiction would have to increase it to the same rate. He said that regarding the RTA and discussions at FAMPO and GWRC, they would have to increase theirs as well.

Ms. Bohmke said that that was correct. She said that it should be noted that Spotsylvania County had already informed them through a letter that they would not be participating in the RTA. She said that the potential participants would be limited to the City of Fredericksburg and both King George and Caroline Counties if they decided to join.

Ms. Gary said that there was a state-imposed cap on the transient occupancy tax.

Ms. Bohmke said that there was no cap.

Ms. Gary said that she had heard someone say there was in the RTA meeting. She said that she agreed that it would be challenging to raise it above 9%.

Dr. Yeung asked if Ms. Bohmke could further discuss her concern regarding this item.

Ms. Bohmke said that their job involved conversing with members of the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO), a part of the George Washington Regional Commission. She said that FAMPO primarily focused on planning issues in their region. She said that since January, subcommittee meetings had taken place involving Ms. Gary, Ms. Vanuch, herself, and other Board members to discuss entering into a Regional Transportation Authority (RTA).

Ms. Bohmke said that like Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia already had established RTAs, while Richmond began their RTA a couple of years ago. She said that two years ago, some delegations attempted to gain legislative approval for an RTA in their region, but they basically said last year to allow them to establish one independently if desired.

Ms. Bohmke said that an RTA would impose additional taxes on residents, such as transient occupancy, sales tax, or meals. She said that the goal was to increase revenues for regional roads and compete with other RTAs in the state, including Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, and Richmond. She said that their subcommittee meetings aimed to study this matter. She said that it was all about transportation and roads.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to make a brief comment regarding raising taxes in terms of the RTA. She said that technically the transient occupancy tax had nothing to do with the RTA unless they chose to allocate the funding there. She said that at their Board retreat, their conversation began on generating additional dedicated funding for Mountain View Park, Musselman Park, and necessary ballfields and pickleball courts. She said that this increase in taxes allowed those funds to be directed towards parks, which would attract tourism through events such as baseball and volleyball tournaments.

Ms. Bohmke called the vote for O24-08, an amendment to the County code to increase the transient occupancy tax. Ms. Allen seconded the motion.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to approve O24-09, an amendment to the County code to increase the cigarette tax.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

<u>ITEM 17. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; RESOLUTION R24-137; CONSIDER SETTING THE CALENDAR YEAR (CY) 2024 PERSONAL PROPERTY – VEHICLE TAX RATE.</u>

Ms. Bohmke opened the public hearing for the Calendar Year 2024 personal property vehicle tax rate.

1. Dana Brown, 41. St. Williams Way, said that when she moved there 23 years ago, they were in the middle of a four-year phase-out process for the car tax; however, this did not come to

fruition. She said that now, 23 years later, the car tax continues to rise. She said that her bi-annual car tax exceeds $600. She said that her children cannot afford this expense and require her assistance. She said that in addition to increasing car taxes, there have been consecutive real estate tax increases over the past few years, a new fire levy, and a probable one-cent sales tax for schools.

Ms. Brown said that they were killing the golden goose. She said that they could only pay so much money. She asked the Board to live within their means just as they expected the public to do. She said that when they cannot afford something, they have to cut something at home. She said that they could not live on credit and she did not want the County to live on credit. She said that they could not continue to think that they can just pay and pay and pay. She said that it was getting too much to live here. She asked them to keep the car tax in check.

Ms. Bohmke closed the public hearing.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen to defer action on Proposed Resolution R24-137 until the next Board meeting.

Ms. Allen said that during their previous budget work session, the Commissioner informed them that scheduling this item closer to their following Board meeting would provide more accurate data on car values. She said that this would enable them to determine a more precise tax rate needed for generating the same revenue for transportation. She said that considering the many comments about road conditions, extending the timeframe by two weeks will ensure a thorough assessment and present an appropriate tax rate that addressed their transportation needs adequately.

Dr. Yeung said that one of the taxes needed to stay as-is and not be increased because it would affect all people and not just those who can afford it.

Ms. Bohmke asked if this item could be rescheduled to the 7:00 p.m. meeting rather than the 3:00 p.m. meeting.

Ms. McClendon said that the matter could return at 7:00 p.m. at the Board's direction.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ITEM 18. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; RESOLUTION R24-71; CONSIDER SETTING THE CALENDAR YEAR (CY) 2024 TAX RATES.

Andrea Light, Chief Director of Budget and Management, said that the Board was asked to review the calendar year 2024 tax rate, proposed Resolution R24-71; the FY25 budgets, proposed Resolution R24-74; the FY 2025 appropriation, proposed Resolution R24-75; the Capital Improvement Program, Resolution R24-76; and to advertise a public hearing for VPSA issuance.

Ms. Light said that beginning with the service districts, these were presented as they had been advertised, following the proposed budget. She said that regarding Lynhaven Lane Service District, staff had collaborated to examine its future, knowing that it would come before the Board again for additional state funding consideration. She said that staff recommended reducing the tax rate on Lynhaven Lane Service District to effectively zero until approved as part of the SSYP. She said that the amended version was before the Board with the Lynhaven Lane Service District at a zero cent tax rate.

Ms. Light said that the calendar year 2024 real estate and fire tax levies were presented for the effective rate, proposed budget, and advertised rate. She said that throughout several budget work sessions, the Board had discussed numerous changes, including reductions in school operating costs, removal of reclassifications of promotions, reduction in library increase, removal of one ambulance crew, removing two court deputies, one HR specialist, having a security analyst paid 50% by utilities, reducing an additional eight hours of pay time for cooperative extension, adding retired canine medical care, and removing minimum wage of $205,000.

Ms. Light said that the governor was not signing the increase to minimum wage; therefore, they did not need to include it. She said that the jail's adopted budget was $163,000 less than the proposed budget. She said that they had included $100,000 for mowing. She said that they replaced ongoing funding for increasing capital and school 3R projects with one-time funding.

Ms. Light said that although these items no longer appeared on the list, she clarified that they were still being supported by one-time funding. She said that this affected the budget tax rate. She said that during the work session, they discussed adding the business compliance officer and real estate tax assessor positions with the Commissioner of the Revenue, which would increase costs by $24,762.

Ms. Light said that they believed that changes to interest revenue could fund these increases for the Commissioner of the Revenue's positions and social services. She said that the 3% COLA increase from the state for social services had been included in their calculations. She said that changes made to expenditures resulted in an updated real estate tax rate of $0.8936, with a fire levy remaining at $0.0131 for a combined tax rate of $0.9067.

Ms. Light said the Board requested staff to provide the tax rate from a $0.91 tax rate down to $0.87. She said that several capital and one-time adjustments had been made in the budget resolution. She said that first was moving $8 million of unassigned fund balance for capital projects from parks to the fire levy. She said that by moving the funds to the fire levy, the Board was able to maintain the levy at the effective rate. She said that there was some discussion about changing tennis courts at Pratt Park into pickleball courts, increasing the number of courts from two to three. She said this would result in increases for both the general fund and capital projects fund. She said that the Board discussed increasing the 3R funding with VPSA funds for schools by $6 million.

Ms. Light said that the Board decided to transfer one-time Carl Lewis funding to the schools' 3R. She said that this move shifted Carl Lewis funding from FY25 to FY26. She said that the difference between the $1.3 million and $1.8 million was due to a proffer that will appear in FY26 and it could not be dedicated to the schools' 3R.

Ms. Light said that the schools' major projects included Elementary Schools 18, 19, and High School 6. She said that they anticipated letting contracts in FY25 that require budgets for both FY25 and FY26. She said that there was no additional cost or increase to the overall budget for these school projects. She said that Elementary School 18, as proposed in the budget, had a $33.5 million budget and will need an increase of $10.5 million. She said that Elementary School 19 had a budget of $44.2 million and required an increase of $16.6 million. She said that High School 6, to fund part of FF&E and contingency, needed an additional $7.7 million.

Ms. Light said that it was crucial to note that these adjustments did not increase the overall budget or cost of these projects. She said that it was about the timing of the appropriation so that schools can let construction contracts or purchase FF&E and maintain sufficient contingency funds when needed. She said that the last project on this list was for utilities.

Ms. Light said that data centers required a water reuse system. She said that recently provided information stated that it would cost approximately $15 million, and the expenses would be fully reimbursed. She said that since Utilities would spend money, the Board must create an appropriation and authorize it; however, they would receive one hundred percent reimbursement for these costs. She said that all of these changes were included in the resolutions - both the budget resolution and the appropriation resolution at the dais.

Ms. Light said that proposed Resolution R24-74 had been amended to incorporate all these changes from slides five and six and reduced Lynhaven Lane's budget to zero. She said that to make additional changes, a supervisor may propose a to approve R24-74, with the additional changes.

Ms. Light said that proposed Resolution R24-75 as a budget appropriation. She said that it contained a 5% holdback on the appropriation, consistent with Board policies. She said that changes made in the budget resolution must be reflected in the appropriation resolution. She said that in the capital improvement program, which would be approved by R24-76, included moving Carl Lewis from FY25 to FY26 and the water reuse system for utilities. She said that what was not listed here as a change was increasing the school's 3R funding by $7.3 million.

Ms. Light said that a possible motion for this would be to approve resolution R24-76, moving Carl Lewis to FY26, increasing the school's 3R funding by $7.3 million, and including the water reuse system for utilities along with any additional changes that may be proposed.

Dr. Yeung said that she proposed removing Elementary School 19 from R24-75.

Ms. Light said that the Resolution R24-76 provided in their packet had not undergone any alterations. She said that they distributed three resolutions during the meeting: the budget resolution, the appropriation resolution, and the tax rate resolution. She said that these documents reflected the modifications made during the earlier work session.

Dr. Yeung asked if 55 was the latest update regarding Garrisonville.

Ms. Light said yes. She said that this figure was determined by their assessed value and the requirement to achieve a budget balance of approximately $417,000. She said that this amount primarily covered the debt service. She said that the debt service for Garrisonville was issued during FY 2013 and would be settled in FY 2033.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to confirm if there were any remaining tennis courts left.

Ms. Bohmke said that there was one.

Dr. Yeung asked how many pickleball courts there would be.

Ms. Light said there would be three.

Dr. Yeung said that there were six pickleball courts. She said that she was unsure if they had assessed the number of people still playing tennis on those courts, but it is what it is. She said that, concerning the $14,000 for medical care, she had concerns about it, and they should reconsider it.

Ms. Allen asked for clarification regarding Resolution R24-76 and the $7.3 million in additional funding. She asked if this funding encompassed the discussion they had about the bond and VPSA, totaling $15 million.

Ms. Light said yes.

Ms. Vanuch said that it was $6 million allowing them to borrow and the $1.3 million emergency fund.

Ms. Bohmke asked, regarding Resolution R24-71, which pertained to tax rates, as they were postponing the discussion on personal property until next week, if they would maintain the previous tax rate or adjust it to zero.

Ms. Light said that the personal property tax for vehicles had been eliminated from their current tax rate, which was R24-71.

Ms. Gary said that regarding the Lynhaven Lane service district, she was not up-to-date on this matter since it was outside her district and she was unfamiliar with the specific details. She said that she had noticed that the proposed budget for this project was $5,500. She asked if the changes made involved removing this from the original plan and considering funding through SSYP resources instead.

Ms. Vanuch said that this was the issue she raised at previous meetings regarding a petition for her predecessor to establish a service district for paving an unpaved road. She said that new residents had moved in and now opposed granting access to the County for roadwork under easements. She said that by law, as a service district, they could not fund access to easements; thus, this created gridlock. She said they could not proceed with the project due to lack of access to necessary easements.

Ms. Vanuch said she directed staff to notify everyone involved about the current status. She said that it was unfair to continue collecting taxes for an uncertain outcome. She said that if residents refused to grant easement access for the road, then they collected funds without a clear plan for redistribution. She said this was complicated when handling service district finances. She said that halting tax collection seemed prudent until they resolved the issue.

Ms. Gary said that she wanted to know if the total cost was $5,500 or if there was an additional expense. She asked if it was expected that these funds would be reimbursed through the SSYP at a later time.

Bryon Counsell, Chief Director for Infrastructure, said that last year's SSYP approved funding for the project this year. He said that due to their inability to gain right-of-way for paving the road and providing it to VDOT for acceptance into the public system, they must either prolong or push the project out further while continuing to work with property owners.

Mr. Counsell said that staff currently believed that reaching a resolution with the property owners was unlikely soon. He said that staff recommended indefinitely delaying or canceling the project. He said that this action would set the real estate tax collection back almost to zero, as they would no longer collect taxes on a project that may not proceed any longer while they explored options for returning funds to residents.

Ms. Gary asked about the total cost if the project were completed. She said that the current price was $5,500, which no road project costs..

Mr. Counsell said that the SSYP approved approximately $400,000 for the project costs.

Ms. Gary said that if they removed this, they were effectively stating that they wished for the funds to originate from the SSYP. She asked if it would be just the $5,500.

Ms. Vanuch said that they had not completed that part yet because it was due to their obligation to do so since it fell under a service district. She said that this is why it was funded through the SSYP; when it was established, it was designed specifically for matching funds from the SSYP with the resident service district. She said she would never advise undertaking a service district in one's own district as they can be quite challenging. She said that due to the lengthy funding process, as they act as both the bank and the service provider, collecting payments before allocating funds and completing work, residents ultimately pay mortgage-like payments to them.

Ms. Vanuch said that until they determined how to disperse those funds, it must hold up the SSYP funds. She said that if tomorrow they granted them access to the easement and allowed them to proceed with the work, they would be obligated to do so.

Ms. Gary asked if the funds used were previously allocated for SSYP.

Ms. Vanuch said that the entire setup of the service district was completed in 2019 before she joined the Board.

Ms. Gary clarified that there was also an additional $5,500 in the CIP that was no longer needed.

Ms. Vanuch said that was the increase in taxes for the taxpayers. She said that they would be paying more money this year. She said that it was the amount the County would be collecting from the additional tax.

Ms. Bohmke said that if the supervisors wished to make any further alterations to the CIP, they could do so during that time.

Ms. Light said yes. She said that regarding the school's $1,340,952 3R money, which was under Carl Lewis' initially, it was her understanding when drafting the resolution that this amount was intended for the schools. She said that the intention was to budget and appropriate these funds to the schools. She said if this was not the intention, it could be removed from both the capital improvement program and the budget.

Dr. Yeung said that the intention was to place it in the school's emergency fund. She asked where the funds were currently allocated.

Ms. Light said that in the resolutions, it had been budgeted and appropriated from the general fund to the school's capital projects fund. She said that if this was not the Board's intention, then they could amend the budget and appropriation resolutions accordingly.

Ms. Vanuch said that she was intimately involved in the three-hour discussions and believed she had a clear understanding of the topic. She said that to ensure everyone recalls their previous conversation from the work session, she would repeat the information. She said that the proposed budget allocation for VPSA was $9 million, which was not included under the CIP.

Ms. Light said that it was part of the CIP, the budget, and the appropriation resolution.

Ms. Vanuch said that they had $1.7 million in cash on hand for 3R funding. She said that they allocated an extra $6 million for 3R work. She said that they agreed upon a $1.3 million emergency fund to be held in reserve by the Board. She said that Dr. Taylor suggested that they could not hold onto it due to fund balance restrictions. She said that if necessary, they could provide the additional $1.3 million from their reserves. She said that this totaled an additional $18 million for 3R and emergency funds.

Dr. Yeung said that it was supposed to be up to $3.5 million.

Ms. Vanuch said no. She said that they increased the allocation due to their discussions last week, which initially proposed $3 million. She said that after consulting with Ms. Light on Friday, they aimed to provide more assistance. She said that they arrived at an $18 million budget. She said that only $1.3 million would be allocated for emergency funds; the remaining amount could be used for the listed projects addressing necessary maintenance work. She said that this was what she recalled from the earlier work session. She said that her request was to ensure that all these details were included in the resolution or motion on the CIP.

Ms. Light said that the resolution on the CIP listed 3R school projects; however, it lacked specific details. She said that the attached school projects and what was included in the proposed budget would change when schools reevaluated their spending plans for the $18 million allocated to them.

Ms. Vanuch asked how to proceed when making a motion since she would not support the reallocation of funds for Elementary School 19 to Brooke Point. She said she wanted to vote against this specific funding; however, she did wish to support the 3R aspects. She said she was trying to determine how to separate her vote and only oppose the Elementary School funding. She said that they could remove that portion from the motion and vote on it separately.

Ms. McClendon said that since the CIP was approved overall with numbers for budget purposes, and removing those numbers would leave gaps and missing data. She said she was not entirely sure how they would accomplish that request.

Ms. Vanuch said that the people who supported Elementary School 19 would amend the motion to include it.

Ms. Light said that regarding the budget for FY25, it included Elementary School 19 at an increased rate of $44 million in both budgeting and appropriating processes. She said that if the Board decided against including Elementary School 19 in FY25, it could remove it from the budget and the appropriation.

Ms. Light said that if someone proposed a motion for Resolution R24-74 regarding the Fiscal Year 2025 budget, they could amend the resolution to eliminate Elementary School 19 from the budget. She said that the staff would then make those changes in the budget and appropriation before presenting them to the Board for final approval and voting on the resolutions.

Ms. Bohmke said that if there was a majority in favor of supporting it, then there was no need to go through those processes.

Ms. Light said that was correct.

Ms. Allen said that she had a clarification question. She said that she wanted to ensure they had the correct numbers and resolutions prepared to avoid repeating any changes. She said that, as Ms. Vanuch mentioned, when making the motion for R24-76, they should state the total amount. She asked how they would allocate the funds to the emergency fund.

Ms. Light said that the Board appeared to have provided guidance regarding the emergency fund. She said that assuming there were no concerns from the County Attorney or Administrator, they could implement this change within the fund balance.

Ms. Allen said that they will automatically transfer the Carl Lewis funding to the emergency fund.

Ms. Gary said that at present, they had reached a point where the rate stood at 90.67 cents. She asked what the difference was from the 91 cents that was advertised.

Ms. Light said that the difference was approximately $866,000.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to adopt Resolution R24-71, setting the real estate tax rate at $0.8936 and the fire levy at $0.013.

Dr. Yeung asked if the Board could request from the school for next year's budget to provide actual figures so that they could observe the difference in funding they were providing currently. She said that they could bring forth the request at the upcoming joint school board meeting. She said that she and Dr. Taylor discussed criteria for evaluating teacher progress and student development, and it would be beneficial to include this as part of the package when it was submitted.

Ms. Vanuch said that she acknowledged they had made significant comments throughout all the work sessions. She said that although she was clear that she would not support this particular tax rate, she wished to review the school-related figures. She said that evening, she attempted one last time to achieve a unanimous vote and support from the School Board in an effort to lower the tax rate by at least one penny to mitigate the effects on individuals like Mrs. Lynch and Mr. Mintzer from Rock Hill. She said that although she had not met them, she appreciated their attendance. She said that thousands of residents in Stafford County with high assessments were also on her mind as they worked to offset these while supporting the School Board.

Ms. Vanuch said that she proposed bringing the tax rate funded school proposal from $13 million to $10 million. She said that this did not receive the majority's support, so they would be stuck with the proposed tax rate. She said that she would vote against this proposal due to the reasons mentioned. She said that she was particularly concerned about the sustainability of continuous tax increases, and this would mark the third year and nearly a 30% increase in taxes within just three years.

Ms. Vanuch said that at the last meeting that there had been a 46% increase in credit card debt, Americans were relying heavily on their credit cards, which will not help alleviate this issue. She said that businesses located in strip malls pay taxes and are working hard to survive. She said that those businesses were seeing tax increases of a minimum of 25%. She said she would not be surprised if some of the businesses went out of business because property owners passed the cost of the real estate taxes to the business owners. She said they would see massive impacts from the tax rate.

Ms. Gary said that she appreciated the detailed explanations and hearing perspectives from their community and constituents. She said that from her perspective, she served the entire County because Stafford County signed her paycheck, and all of her decisions affected every single one of them and their families. She said that at the end of the day, they were approving funding for insurance for animals while discussing placing more financial burden regarding insurance on employees in the work session. She said that she believed some things were backwards.

Ms. Gary said that she was not afraid to pay an extra dollar or two for her coffee; she would make adjustments and figure it out. She said she was scared of the situation in their schools. She said it was not just about safety issues but also the culture and climate because they were not empowering their leaders, such as the School Board. She said that although she did not like the BPHS site, she would support it because this is where they were currently at, and their children needed to have their rear ends in seats, not in trailers or temporary buildings.

Ms. Gary said that they must pay for the support staff, educators, and administrators to properly run these organizations. She said that as a parent of four children still in school, she saw firsthand the impacts when they did not address these issues. She said she had witnessed this issue repeatedly over the years and was tired of it. She said that she would vote for their children's future, and she would vote for their families' well-being. She said that if others were struggling with these potential tax increases and they became a burden, please reach out to her. She said that they had numerous resources available, and there were ways to help alleviate the situation.

Ms. Gary said that her family also faced challenges. She said that they did not take vacations, and she had to sit through timeshare presentations if she wanted to bring her children to the beach. She said that she firmly believed that they were making progress. She said that they had many opportunities ahead, and the future looked promising.

Ms. Gary said that additional revenue was expected, which is why they were funding additional positions in the Commissioner of Revenue's Office to prepare for it. She said that she did not wish to speak excessively, but she felt it was crucial to express this sentiment and leave on a note of hope. She said that regardless of the direction they chose, they would continue to work diligently to serve them all fairly.

Ms. Allen said she would like to emphasize her support for this proposal. She said that for her, it was all about schools; a thriving community depended on the success of its educational institutions. She said that to achieve this, they must start by taking care of their staff and maintaining their assets. She said that she appreciated her colleagues' efforts to increase the 3R funding beyond the initial proposal, but she believed there was no need to reduce the School Board's allocation simultaneously.

Ms. Allen said that in her opinion, they could address both concerns at once. She said that her family did not have a high income; her husband worked for a non-profit organization, and she was a nurse. She said that they managed their finances carefully, and investing in their children's future and the County's future was always worth it. She said that as her grandmother taught her when she was young in Guyana, leaving a lasting impact on the next generation after was crucial.

Ms. Allen said that for her, this meant focusing on schools now and ensuring that future decisions consider the well-being of their children. She said that to ensure the success of future generations and maintain the greatness of the country, it was crucial to equip them with the necessary skills and resources.

Ms. Allen said that she always prioritized investing in their children and supporting their first responders who worked tirelessly for their communities. She said that when considering the impact on families, an additional $20 per month may seem like a small sacrifice, but it was essential for funding their first responders and schools as they experienced rapid growth.

Ms. Allen said that as a member of this growing community, she understood that sometimes difficult decisions must be made to accommodate expansion. She said that while she was willing to compromise, she realized that further reductions to the school budget would jeopardize their children's future. She said she will be supporting the tax rate for these reasons.

Mr. Diggs said that he supported the tax rate but emphasized his priority of people first. He said that collaboration and working together were essential for their decision-making process. He said that they had reduced the rate from $0.94 to $0.9067. He said that schools were crucial to their community's economic growth.

Mr. Diggs said that newcomers often inquired about the best school in the County. He said that supporting staff was essential. He said that discussions about transferring healthcare costs onto employees during the work session were not worthwhile. He said that employees, both on the County and school sides, were vital, and by taking care of them, they would take care of the community.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was the last speaker and discussed her past experience serving on the School Board from 2010 to 2014. She said that discussions about the school community were limited during that time. She said that as a supervisor, she emphasized the importance of including schools in their conversations. She said that there was even an unfavorable reference to schools in a financial statement, which she changed.

Ms. Bohmke said that she made sure they considered the impact on the school division during their discussions. She said that when comparing Stafford County to Prince William, there was a $20,000 difference in salaries. She said that now, the difference was reduced to an $8,500 gap depending on one's position on the scale. She said that they could have been more cost-effective in their budgeting decisions.

Ms. Bohmke said that she delved deeply into the budget, and she was among the most knowledgeable on the Board. She said that she understood all of it, and her background was in public finance, and she believed their community faced numerous financial pressures currently. She said that last year, they increased taxes by nine cents and introduced the fire levy, which she had supported wholeheartedly. She said she could not provide EMS staff at the fire department with two new crews due to budget constraints; instead, they agreed on one crew this year. She said that ideally, they needed two crews, but their finances only allowed for one.

Ms. Bohmke said that another aspect that had not been discussed was the 6.5% increase in water and sewer rates, as it was their second year of a three-year installment plan. She said that all these factors accumulate. She said that additionally, this year's property assessments were notably high. She said that she concurred with some of her colleagues at the dais that it had nothing to do with not supporting the schools. She said that she was supportive of all of the 3R initiatives, but they could have made better budgeting decisions in the process. She said that she could not support the proposed tax rate.

Ms. Vanuch said that it was mentioned that they were not fully funding the schools even at the proposed tax rate. She said that at a $0.906 tax rate, they were providing an additional $31 million to the schools this year. She said that with the extra funds from the 3R perspective, they were giving the schools more than they requested.

Ms. Gary said that she was concerned during their work session earlier that they might end up in a situation where they approve additional funding for schools but fail to meet their needs adequately. She said that she worried about the implications of providing extra funds without addressing the School Board's prioritized needs. She said that it was crucial not to overlook those while offering additional support.

Ms. Gary said that it was like asking someone to fulfill their tithe first before making an offering in church or insisting on a specific dish at a restaurant without addressing the initial request. She said that they must ensure that they are meeting the schools' needs before providing any extra assistance. She said that they were not fully funding the schools, and they will not be able to achieve complete funding. She said that last year, she proposed advertising at a specific rate to gauge public reaction. She said that many individuals supported it, while others expressed fear. She said that she collected substantial data regarding this issue.

Ms. Gary said that this year, they have made significant efforts to address the situation with their priorities and the unique characteristics of each district. She said that perhaps next time, they can fully fund the schools. She said that it will take some time to reach that goal but believed they were on a path in the right direction. She said that although they had not yet achieved what was explicitly requested unless they reached $15 million, she was happy with the relative peace and harmony experienced during this budget session.

Ms. Bohmke called the vote on the motion by Ms. Allen to adopt the tax rate.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (5) Allen, Diggs, English, Gary, Yeung
Nay: (2) Bohmke, Vanuch

ITEM 19. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; RESOLUTION R24-74, RESOLUTION R24-75, AND RESOLUTION R24-76; CONSIDER ADOPTING THE FY2025 BUDGET, APPROPRIATING THE FY2025 BUDGET AND ADOPTING THE FY2025-FY2035 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP).

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to adopt Resolution R24-74.

Ms. Light said that the budget included $1.34 million to be allocated to the schools rather than being held in an emergency fund by the County. She said that a supervisor could make a motion excluding $1,340,952 from the general fund transfer, the capital projects transfer, and the schools' capital project fund.

Ms. Allen amended the motion to exclude $1,340,952 from the general fund transfer, the capital projects transfer, and the schools' capital project fund.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to adopt Resolution R24-75 and remove the transfer to the schools from the general fund, the capital projects fund, and to the schools' capital projects fund, and reduce the appropriation of those funds by $1,340,952.

Ms. Allen asked if the funding for Elementary School 19 was included in the appropriation.

Ms. Light said that yes, in the appropriation, it included the amount for Elementary School 19. She said that if the Board decided to remove this allocation, they can propose an amendment to remove the funding for Elementary School 19.

Ms. Bohmke said that for the record, she would vote against this motion due to her opposition to the location of Elementary School 19. She said that she did not approve of its placement.

Dr. Yeung made a substitute motion, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to approve the resolution and exclude funding for Elementary School 19 from the appropriation.

Mr. English said that he would like to clarify that he would vote in favor of including funding for Elementary School 19 in the budget; however, he was not supportive of its intended location. He said that he wished to be on record for this stance as he believed it was an unsuitable choice. He said that delaying the decision may result in repercussions, but he strongly opposed the project proceeding there. He said that he would support the motion to keep progress going.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(4)	Allen, Bohmke, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay:	(3)	Diggs, English, Gary

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to reconsider the vote.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(5)	Bohmke, English, Gary Vanuch, Yeung
Nay:	(2)	Allen, Diggs

Ms. Bohmke called the vote on the substitute motion.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(3)	Bohmke, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay:	(4)	Allen, Diggs, English, Gary

Ms. Bohmke called the vote on the original motion.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(4)	Allen, Diggs, English, Gary
Nay:	(3)	Bohmke, Vanuch, Yeung

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to adopt Resolution R24-76 and increase funding for schools by $6 million, move Carl Lewis from FY25 to FY26, and include the water reuse system.

Dr. Yeung made a substitute motion, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to adopt Resolution R24-76 and increase funding for schools by $6 million, move Carl Lewis from FY25 to FY26, include the water reuse system, and exclude Elementary School 19.

Ms. Vanuch asked whether Dr. Yeung wanted to exclude Elementary School 19 entirely or delay it one year.

Dr. Yeung said she wanted to delay it for one year.

Ms. Vanuch said that she accepted the friendly amendment.

Ms. Vanuch asked Mr. Morris to come up and address some questions. She said that during this afternoon's work session, they discussed the challenges of Elementary School 19 being completed this year and its inclusion in the CIP for the current year. She asked if he could provide a timeline detailing how long it would take for the schools to reach the Planning Commission, then proceed to the Board, obtain the necessary conditional use permit, and explain how this tied into the overall timeline. She said that this process would push back the elementary school's inclusion in the CIP.

Mr. Morris said that in general, the CUP process took approximately eight to nine months to complete. He said that the schools had recently submitted their paperwork to the planning department for this permit. He said they had a meeting today with the planning department, who hoped that the Planning Commission would review the application in May.

Mr. Morris said that the Planning Commission may require one, two, or three meetings to complete the process before sending it to the Board. He said that depending on the timeframe, the Board's public hearing and final decision could occur just prior to the summer break, during the summer, or as late as September or October.

Ms. Vanuch said that was only if things went according to plan. She said that the site review process usually took time. She said that in her experience with commercial development, she had seen instances where it took developers six months just to pass the initial stage of site reviews before reaching the Planning Commission.

Mr. Morris said that the decision relied on the contents of the application and its thoroughness, as well as the Planning Commission's assessment of its preparation. He said that once satisfied, they would proceed to the Board.

Ms. Bohmke said that during the budget work session following the approval of the consent agenda, the school division's facilities director stated that the matter would be presented to the Board in May.

Mr. Morris said that was incorrect. He said that the matter would be presented to the Planning Commission in May at the second meeting at the earliest.

Ms. Vanuch said that the reason she asked those questions was because, once the CIP moved projects, debt financing implications must also move. She said that it was crucial for delivering schools on schedule, so they should be included in the CIP at their expected completion times. She said that the School Board did not follow their advice to relocate Embrey Mill earlier in this process. She said that was why she supported the motion; it did not eliminate the school but moved it to a more realistic construction timeline.

Ms. Gary said that she was informed after their meeting that an incorrect statement had been made. She said that she understood there was frustration earlier and that she was a bit disappointed that an employee was put in the middle of this situation. She said that she hoped they could move forward and focus on the topic at hand. She said that they should have addressed these schools' approval earlier to avoid such problems.

Ms. Allen said that since they had already approved the budget appropriation for schools, she questioned the impact of moving the project out by a year. She said that they had already budgeted for this expense, so she wanted to know what impact it would have on their current budget if they were to move it out a year.

Ms. Light said that the Board approved the appropriation, granting the schools authority to spend those funds. She said that even if it was removed from the CIP, the schools possessed the authority, unless the Board revoked the appropriation resolution and took another action.

Ms. Allen said that they had already approved the appropriation, so there was little that the Board could do to limit the use of the funds.

Ms. Bohmke said that for the record, she could not support the location of that elementary school atop Brooke Point High School due to several reasons. She said that it was not because she favored its placement at Embrey Mill. She said that if the community did not wish to construct it there, then find another suitable location. She said that Embrey Mill was where the majority of students resided, making it the most logical choice.

Ms. Bohmke said that she did not comprehend why, when two school board members representing Griffis-Widewater and Aquia Harbor districts voted four times in favor of building the school at Embrey Mill, other board members on the School Board opposed them. She said that these representatives understood their districts' preferences and did not want to place the school atop Brooke Point. She said she was against it, and she believed this decision would be a significant setback for the County. She said that the residents living nearby would undoubtedly suffer.

Ms. Gary said that she did not want it to appear as if she was not listening to her constituents or communicating effectively with her counterpart on the School Board. She said that they communicated frequently, and her goal was to ensure they had the resources needed to make informed decisions.

Ms. Gary said that as elected officials, their choices were their own responsibility. She said that she had done her best to support schools by providing necessary resources. She said that many of her constituents, over a thousand, were satisfied with the chosen location for a school. She said that they simply wanted a school in their area, and she understood this because she had heard from various neighborhoods.

Ms. Gary said that she was actively listening to their concerns, despite the occasional misconception that she may not be accessible. She said that she had received feedback from individuals within her district who had not contacted her before but still expressed their opinions. She said that it was crucial to consider all perspectives, not just the most emotional or attention-grabbing ones. She said that she had been diligent in communicating with her constituents and working collaboratively with her counterpart to make what she believed were the best decisions possible.

Ms. Allen said that she had expressed her preference for Brooke Point but had stated that if anyone from the affected community contacted her with their concerns, she would take them into account. She said she received little feedback. She said that the consensus among her constituents was that they simply wanted schools to be built.

Ms. Allen said that they consistently maintained that they were responsible for funding schools, and while there may have been disagreements among colleagues about how this should be done, ultimately, the voters would decide in two years whether they approved of the School Board's decisions. She said that at present, their priority was to fill seats in classrooms rather than trailers. She said that the majority of students were concentrated in a particular area, but she did not have jurisdiction over redistricting.

Ms. Allen said the School Board would need to address this issue and determine how to accommodate the additional capacity provided. She said that her role was to provide funding and allow them to manage the details. She said that she was fulfilling her responsibilities, and now it was up to the School Board to ensure that capacity was not an issue.

Dr. Yeung said that she had served on the School Board and was familiar with the districts. She said she communicated with counterparts, though not her own, from other areas who explained their reasons for opposing this decision. She said that both her colleague and she were surprised by the response given to a constituent regarding the rationale for removing children from that school. She said that alternative explanations could be proposed now, such as bus routes or other factors, but the truth remained unchanged.

Dr. Yeung said she supported Embrey Mill location because it was where growth was occurring and staff recommendations indicated it was suitable. She said that despite this, the superintendent later sought another site after being instructed to do so. She said that they wanted filled seats, yet they were willing to relocate students who lived nearby and bus them to a farther away school. She said she questioned whether that was a good decision.

Dr. Yeung said that they were proposing something larger - building a school with taxpayer funds. She said that while they had autonomy, good decisions were essential, and she maintained her opposition to Brooke Point. She said that perhaps if there were community meetings for area residents instead of waiting for them to contact the School Board, they would have better information. She said that Embrey Mill did not hold a town hall stating they would not have a school either. She said that regardless, the decision had been made, and she hoped both schools opened on time and that costs were accurately reported, as this was crucial for taxpayers.

Ms. Bohmke called the vote on the substitute motion, to adopt the CIP and exclude Elementary School 19.

Ms. Bohmke said that the school division did not come and share with the Board of Supervisors. She said that according to their policy, in the event they were going to increase the square footage of the school, they should have been a part of that conversation. She said that they increased the funding by about $20 million for each school, which would cost them all money. She said that they planned to have a conversation with them regarding creating a new middle school prototype. She said she was glad that they were going to discuss possibly changing the prototype for their middle schools.

Ms. Bohmke called the vote on the substitute motion.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(3)	Bohmke, Vanuch, Yeung
Nay:	(4)	Allen, Diggs, English, Gary

Ms. Bohmke called the vote on the original motion.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(4)	Allen, Diggs, English, Gary
Nay:	(3)	Bohmke, Vanuch, Yeung

ITEM 20. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; RESOLUTION R24-68; AUTHORIZE ADVERTISEMENT FOR A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER ISSUANCE OF VIRGINIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS AUTHORITY (VPSA) BONDS.

Ms. Light said that the Board was being asked to consider advertising a public hearing for a VPSA, Resolution R24-68. She said that the anticipated issuance amount of the VPSA was $91 million, allocated for High School 6, Elementary Schools 18, 19, and 3R projects. She said that due to the recent Board decision to increase the school's 3R projects, she suggested that the Board may wish to adopt an advertisement at a revised amount of $97 million for the increased issuance of debt for the school's 3R projects. She said that the public hearing and subsequent authorization did not constitute an agreement to fund this VPSA for borrowing, as it would be done through the fall and spring borrowings.

Ms. Gary asked whether the resolution was set to advertise at $97 million or $91 million.

Ms. Light said it would be advertised at $91 million unless amended.

Dr. Yeung asked if $91 million was only partial funding for the projects.

Ms. Light said that was correct. She said that bonds were issued incrementally based on cash flow. She said that they issued them when needed, allowing spending to occur within the next two years. She said that there was approximately $7 million in the 3R fund unless the Board decided to add another $6 million. She said that the funding included Elementary School 18 at around $33.5 million, Elementary School 19 at $44.2 million, and High School 6 at about $2 million.

Ms. Bohmke said that they could approve it, and it would return for a public hearing when issuing the bonds.

Ms. Light said that was correct.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to adopt Resolution R24-68 with the amount for the advertised issuance of bonds set at $97 million.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Bohmke stated that Dr. Yeung had agreed to defer her New Business Item, Agenda Item 12, Discuss Economic Development Strategic Plan And Alignment with County Strategic Plan, to the next meeting.

ITEM 13. FIRE AND RESCUE; RESOLUTION R24-143; CONSIDER AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO APPLY FOR THE 2023 STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) GRANT TO SUPPORT HIRING ADDITIONAL CAREER FIREFIGHTERS.

Joe Cardello, Fire Chief, said that he was requesting authorization to apply for a federal FY23 SAFER grant application. He said that the SAFER grant program, administered by the Department of Homeland Security through FEMA, focused on enhancing public and firefighter safety. He said that it provided funding to fire departments to increase or maintain frontline firefighters and meet industry minimum staffing standards for adequate fire protection.

Mr. Cardello said that Congress had allocated $360 million this year, with approximately 300 awards expected. He said that the County Fire Department requested authority to apply under the hiring activity section. He said that the SAFER grant period was three years, during which there was no local financial obligation or match. He said that the grant covered salary, benefits, and FLSA overtime. He said that after the performance period, the County was expected to cover salaries but had no obligation to maintain grant-funded positions.

Mr. Cardello said that considering the program's time-sensitive nature, the closing date being next Friday, three options had been developed for the Board's consideration. He said that all focused on NFPA 1710 compliance priorities. He said that as a career fire department, the current workforce aligned with NFPA 1710 standards. He said that option one consisted of 27 full-time employees, which would staff all current engines with four personnel on each shift. He said that currently, there were three personnel on every engine.

Mr. Cardello said that option two involved 39 full-time employees to staff all current engines with four personnel and add an engine to Potomac Hills. He said that this addressed the service gap in the north suburban demand zone, as it was the only fire station in a suburban demand zone without dedicated fire suppression staffing.

Mr. Cardello said that option three was 63 full-time employees to staff all of the current 9 engine companies with four firefighters and add staffing to Widewater, Potomac Hills, and Brooke. He said that after consulting with staff and Merchant McIntyre, they reached a consensus that their grant application should prioritize bringing the County in line with NFPA 1710 compliance.

Mr. Cardello said that last year's unsuccessful application expanded services but did not meet the NFPA 1710 staffing standards. He said that this current request aligned with the 2015 grant they applied for, which added a fourth person to engine companies and was successful. He said that this one was similar and had a better chance of success. He said that he recommended option two, with 39 full-time employees, as the most appropriate and beneficial choice for a SAFER grant application. He said that one reason for this recommendation was that it aligned closely with their targeted strategic growth of adding 12 full-time positions annually until they reached an optimal staffing level.

Mr. Cardello said that they recommended option two. He said that for years, they had requested a 12-position increase annually until they fully staffed suppression crews at Potomac Hills, Widewater, and Brooke, as well as EMS teams at Rock Hill, Mountain View, and Hartwood Station. He said that they would continue to present these requests, and the 39 increase aligned with their ongoing goals.

Ms. Bohmke asked what the cost to the County would be when the grant expired for option two.

Mr. Cardello said that it was $10 million.

Ms. Bohmke said that for 27 firefighters, the cost was $7.3 million.

Mr. Cardello said yes. He said that option two would cost $10 million on day one of the fourth year of the program. He said that the first three years were entirely funded by FEMA.

Ms. Bohmke said they had received two SAFER grants in the past, but they were never of this magnitude.

Mr. Cardello said that in 2015, they staffed only four engines; now, they staffed nine.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they could decide not to hire the positions after it was awarded the grant.

Mr. Cardello said that they will begin issuing awards in June. He said that from June through September, they will make an award. He said that if they received an award, staff would bring it back to the Board for final approval and appropriation. He said that if they wished to change the number of new hires, such as 12 instead of 39, they could do that; however, he noted that they would have to reapply and go to the bottom of the list. He said that there was no guarantee at that point.

Mr. English said that discussing a $10 million budget increase was concerning. He said that this spending habit led them into deeper financial trouble. He said that they implemented these measures, then raised taxes to cover costs, only to later regret their actions. He said that it was an additional four cents on the tax rate.

Mr. Cardello said that Chief Granger drew his attention to a point. He said that the total cost for the initial three years amounted to $10 million. He said that in the fourth year, their responsibility would be $4.238 million.

Ms. Bohmke said that did not make sense since it was $7.3 million for the 27 employees.

Mr. Cardello said that was the total for the first three years. He said that FEMA would cover $7.38 million for the first three years for 27 employees; for the 39, they would pay $10.66 for the first three years; and for the 63, they would pay $17.2 million for the first three years. He said that the amounts he provided represented the accumulated costs they would not have to cover. He said that if they chose option B with the 39 employees, as of day one in year four, they would be responsible for $4.2 million.

Mr. English asked about the impact on the tax rate.

Ms. Vanuch asked how it could be feasible to hire 39 firefighters and only pay $4.2 million in the fourth year, after all the grant funds had been exhausted. She said that the expenses for employing 39 firefighters far exceeded $4.2 million.

Ms. Bohmke said that when they initially had a 12-member crew in Falmouth, it was $1.2 million. She said that after implementing new stations, it had increased to $1.6 million.

Mr. Vosburg said that you would receive all their equipment during the first three years.

Joseph Grainger, Assistant Fire Chief, said that SAFER allowed for hiring entry-level firefighter positions. He said that when staffing an engine company, one aspect included company officers, who were paid at a higher rate and typically had seven to ten years of experience. He said the disparity between this number and the cost for one engine company per year was approximately $1.35 million to $1.4 million.

Mr. Grainger said that this represented 39 firefighter-level positions. He said that they bring them in at step one, grade one, and promote them annually. He said that this budget projection was based on that progression. He said that in their fourth year, these firefighters had been on the job and would be entering their fourth year on the public safety pay scale.

Mr. English asked how much it would cost.

Mr. Grainger said it would cost the County $4.2 million in the fourth year.

Ms. Gary said that designating this matter as time-sensitive would be essential for meeting the application deadline. She asked what factors influenced the decision to reach the $4.238 million.

Mr. Cardello said that the cost was based on the current public safety pay scale.

Ms. Gary asked if the cost would be higher.

Mr. Grainger said that regarding the Board's FY25 budget, they included a projection with a 2.25% scale adjustment, which they considered today. He said that they had incorporated this and collaborated with the County Attorney's office to ensure that if they approved their application, they could implement the changes they decided on tonight.

Ms. Allen said that for those living in Widewater, they must be adequately staffed. She said that throughout the past year alone, she could not count the number of times the Fire Chief had contacted her about an incident in Widewater and requiring assistance from other crews. She said that when discussing road safety, there was only one access point to enter Widewater. She said that not having an engine stationed at either Potomac or Widewater significantly impacted response time.

Ms. Allen said that if they relied on an engine from another location, valuable minutes were lost that some residents may not have, and homes and lives could be at risk without immediate assistance. She said that by staffing a fire engine in both Widewater and Potomac Hills, response times could be reduced, potentially saving resources and reducing the strain on other engines. She said that engines from Quantico or Falmouth had to respond to calls in Widewater.

Ms. Allen said that it was not solely about $4.2 million after four years; it was about public safety. She said that as their community expanded, the coverage standards would require more resources in the future. She said she did not see why the County could not accommodate the costs in four years. She said that two of the three stations without an engine were in Widewater.

Mr. Cardello said that he understood that some of them were concerned about the high cost. He said it was crucial to recognize that there were still three stations in the northeast without dedicated fire protection. He said that their aim was to use federal funds to resolve this issue and hope that in four years, they would be able to cover the expenses themselves.

Mr. English said that the budget for one ambulance and fire rescue crew was $724,000 for six crew members. He said that the current request was for 39.

Mr. Cardello said that the new hires would be fire crew and EMTs.

Mr. Vosburg said that in the past, their traditional request was for a fire crew. He said that this year, they pivoted to ambulance crews with plans to return to fire crew requests next year. He said that if they added one fire crew in each of the next three budget years, it would result in the same outcome as front-loading all three crews in the first year. He said that by doing so, they maintained the same overall cost while adopting a different approach. He said that supporting this concept aligned with their historical philosophy of adding a crew annually.

Ms. Bohmke asked for an update about the Rock Hill station.

Mr. Cardello said that there were three career personnel assigned there.

Ms. Bohmke asked if there were EMS at the station.

Mr. Cardello said that they lack dedicated EMS. He said that only three firefighters were present. He said that these personnel included a firefighter, an officer, and a Master Technician.

Ms. Bohmke asked about Hartwood.

Mr. Cardello said that it was the same.

Ms. Bohmke asked when they expected the Embrey Mill station to come online.

Mr. Cardello said that he hoped it would be online by next year.

Ms. Bohmke asked about the Aquia station.

Mr. Cardello said that Aquia currently had five personnel, with two assigned to the EMS unit and three assigned to the fire truck. He said that they aimed to increase staffing by adding one member to each shift.

Ms. Bohmke asked about White Oak.

Mr. Cardello said that White Oak had three new staff starting July 1.

Ms. Gary said they should proceed with the SAFER grant. She said that this would result in significant savings for a necessary investment, similar to receiving federal funds for COVID-19 relief. She said that she supported the proposal at 39 and hoped it would be approved.

Dr. Yeung asked why the request was coming before the Board with such a close deadline.

Mr. Cardello said that the application became available on March 11. He said that they opened it for a limited time of 30 days.

Dr. Yeung asked why they would be considered at the bottom. She asked if they would be able to get the application in on time.

Mr. Cardello said that they would submit on time. He said that if their application would be approved and the Board decided to accept a lesser amount, they could reapply. He said that they would likely have to go to the bottom of the list and wait for consideration after everyone else.

Dr. Yeung asked if anyone dropped out of the program in 2015.

Mr. Cardello said yes, some people quit.

Dr. Yeung asked if there was a process of review over the three-year period.

Mr. Cardello said that they were required to submit reports for a period of two years in the past. He said that currently, this had increased to three years. He said that previously, they needed to complete quarterly or biannual reporting.

Dr. Yeung asked if health insurance benefits were included.

Mr. Cardello said it included FLSA, overtime, salary, and benefits.

Ms. Allen said that she understood that some individuals had concerns regarding the matter. She said she was more focused on ensuring that they secured at least one unit in Widewater. She asked if option one was competitive and would maintain the staffing goals.

Mr. Cardello said that this year's requests all had the NFPA 1710 standard in mind and were designed to meet it by having four people on every engine. He said that their current requests were more compliant with the standard than last year's.

Ms. Allen asked if option one provided them with an engine in Widewater.

Mr. Cardello said no. He said that option one would only add an additional crew member to existing engines.

Mr. English said that he was hesitant and concerned about potential future issues. He said that they could not predict how their financial situation may change in four years. He said that he was unsure where he stood on this matter. He said that while he acknowledged the benefits of the deal and its necessity, his apprehension stemmed from the possibility that they would struggle to cover costs down the line. He said that data centers were hoped to provide additional revenue as they increased taxes just to maintain existing expenses.

Ms. Bohmke said that another other option to consider would be including option one, followed by potentially adding an engine crew at Widewater in the upcoming budget or the one after that.

Ms. Bohmke asked what the costs would be for Ms. Bohmke's proposal.

Mr. Cardello said that the cost would be approximately $1.8 million on day one. He said that they would incur the costs of the engine on day one.

Ms. Allen said that it did not seem to make much fiscal difference to do it that way.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to deem the matter time sensitive.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to adopt Resolution R24-143 at 39 positions.

Dr. Yeung made a substitute motion to adopt Resolution R24-143 at 27 positions. There was no second and the motion failed.

Mr. Diggs said that he had listened to the discussion, and this was essentially something they could begin planning for. He said that there had been a conversation about doing 27 and then adding a fire crew; however, that would mean paying upfront costs. He said that with this option, if they knew that they had a $4.2 million cost, or however much with increases over the years, they just needed to start planning accordingly.

Mr. Diggs said that as they entered the next budget sessions, they could have those conversations. He asked what the alternative was. He said that if they did not take action and then a house burned down or something similar occurred, they would depend on Quantico to assist them with fire rescue coverage.

Ms. Vanuch said that her concern was that they were not adding engine companies. She said that if they relied on Quantico, they would still be relying on Quantico because it was not as if they were staffing more engines; instead, they were simply adding one more person to an existing engine.

Mr. Cardello said that at 39 positions, they were adding an engine.

Ms. Vanuch said that they could add engines in the upcoming budgets without changing the staffing standards to four crew per engine. She said they could staff an engine at Widewater, then one at Potomac Hills, and the cost would only be $2.2 million. She said she was worried about when Embrey Mill was built and getting three people to staff it. She said she wanted to build up engine capacity before changing staffing standards. She said she could not support the proposal because of the change to staffing standards.

Ms. Gary asked for clarification about the plans for option two.

Mr. Cardello said that with option two, they would upgrade all of the current engine crews to four career staff per engine and add an engine at Potomac Hills. He said that this aligned with the consensus standard for minimum staffing from NFPA, which was considered the national benchmark for fire departments. He said that if someone was seeking funding, it would be more advantageous to request resources that brought their department into compliance with this standard.

Ms. Gary asked if the previous application was for compliance.

Mr. Cardello said that it was not. He said that it was for three-person staffing and increase coverage in Widewater, Brooke, and White Oak. He said that they had discussed with peers experienced in the applications, and the limited staffing was likely the reason the application was not successful. He said that it did not comply with the national standards.

Ms. Gary said that concerning the substitute motion, she did not want to increase staffing and use County funds that could be supported with federal funds instead.

Ms. Allen said that if they were to do three engine crews, the cost would be $5.4 million. She said that over those three years, they could determine how to start appropriating funds for this purpose. She said that spending $5.4 million over four years for only one engine crew seemed unreasonable when there could be 39 new crew members. She asked what the average crew size was for a similarly sized county.

Mr. Cardello said that the national standard was four members, which was the safest option for both the public and their firefighters. He said that twelve years ago, he participated in studies conducted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. He said that they carried out a thorough investigation into four-person crews, three-person crews, and two-person crews. He said that a crew of four can complete all of the 20 or so critical tasks necessary on a fire ground 25% faster than a team of three. He said that departments that do not adhere to this standard typically aspire to achieve it.

Ms. Gary said that the 25% faster speed was significant when considering safety issues. She said that in numerous situations, it could mean life or death.

Mr. Diggs said that if they already intended to add fire crews each year, he was unsure why they would not apply for federal funding and have them cover the majority of expenses until the four-year period was complete.

Mr. English said that it scared him to know that there would be 39 employees in four years. He said that he did not know what shape they would be in. He said that while it may have been a good deal, the unknown aspect was concerning. He said staff often found themselves in situations where past events had led them to their current state without proper foresight. He said that the prospect of paying for 39 employees in four years was frightening, and it was possible that they could be in bad shape by then.

Mr. Cardello said that Supervisor English raised a valid point regarding events from the past that still impacted them today. He said that they required EMS coverage on the west side and fire coverage on the east side. He said that their objective was to utilize federal funds to achieve this goal, potentially planning for four years ahead.

Mr. Diggs said that if they had 27 positions, they could not do a three-person crew based on the national standard.

Mr. Cardello said that was correct.

Ms. Gary said that they recently approved pay increases for the Sheriff's Department. She said that the decision was crucial as it addressed staffing and pay issues related to public safety. She said that by doing so, they managed to maintain their workforce when other counties faced a shortage of 200 officers. She said that she advocated for continued investment in all aspects of public safety.

Ms. Bohmke called the vote.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(3)	Allen, Diggs, Gary
Nay:	(4)	Bohmke, English, Vanuch, Yeung

<u>CLOSED MEETING</u>

At 10:55 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to adopt Resolution CM24-12 to authorize closed session.

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

Resolution CM24-12 reads as follows:
A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board desires to hold a Closed Meeting for (1) discussion and consideration of certain Board appointments; 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 2nd day of April, 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 11:20 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to adopt Resolution CM24-12(C) to certify the closed meeting.

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

Resolution CM24-12 (C) reads as follows:
A RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY THE ACTIONS OF THE STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN A CLOSED MEETING ON APRIL 2, 2024

WHEREAS, the Board has, on this the 2nd day of April, 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 2nd day of April, 2024, that to the best of each member's knowledge (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the Motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened, were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to adopt Resolution R24-142, authorizing the County Administrator and County Attorney to execute any and all required documents for settling Stafford County Board of Supervisors v. SCJ Asset Management and Investment Company.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

<u>Resolution R24-142 reads as follows:</u>

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR AND THE COUNTY ATTORNEY TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO SETTLE *STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS V. SEJ ASSET MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT COMPANY,* CASE NO. CL20-2223

WHEREAS, the Board and SEJ Asset Management & Investment Company are parties to the condemnation case*, Stafford County Board of Supervisors v. SEJ Asset Management & Investment Company,* Case No. CL20-2223; and

WHEREAS, the parties in the above-referenced case desire to enter into a settlement agreement to resolve the respondent's claim for just compensation under the terms and conditions discussed in closed session with the County Attorney;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 2nd day of April, 2024, that the County Attorney and the County Administrator, or their designees, be and they hereby are authorized to execute any and all documents that they deem necessary and appropriate to settle *Stafford County Board of Supervisors v. SEJ Asset Management & Investment Company*, Case No. CL20-2223, under the terms and conditions discussed in closed session.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to adopt Resolution R24-138, authorizing the County Administrator and County Attorney to execute any and all required documents for settling Stafford County Board of Supervisors v. Virchow LLC.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Nay: (0)

Resolution R24-138 reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR AND THE COUNTY ATTORNEY TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO SETTLE *STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS V. VIRKOB, LLC*, CASE NO. CL20-4057

WHEREAS, the Board and Virkob, LLC are parties to the condemnation case*, Stafford County Board of Supervisors v. Virkob, LLC,* Case No. CL20-4057; and

WHEREAS, the parties in the above-referenced case desire to enter into a settlement agreement to resolve the respondent's claim for just compensation under the terms and conditions discussed in closed session with the County Attorney;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 2nd day of April, 2024, that the County Attorney and the County Administrator, or their designees, be and they hereby are authorized to execute any and all documents that they deem necessary and appropriate to settle *Stafford County Board of Supervisors v. Virkob, LLC,* Case No. CL20-4057, under the terms and conditions discussed in closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:22 p.m., Chairman Bohmke adjourned the April 2, 2024 Stafford County Board of Supervisor's meeting.

Randy Vosburg

Randal E. Vosburg
County Administrator

Meg S. Bohmke

Meg Bohmke
Chairman

From: Wufoo
To: Mark A. Kaminski; Andrew L. Spence; Cheryl D. Giles; Julia E. Holmes
Subject: Public Comment Form [#52]
Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 8:14:07 AM

Name *	Nathan Sekinger
Address *	18 Fletcher Dr. Fredericksburg, VA 22406 United States
Email *	n.sekinger@gmail.com
Election District	Falmouth
Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) *	Support the School Board's Budget

Online Comments: *

I urge the Board of Supervisors to fully fund the School Board's request. In my years as a Stafford county educator, I have seen the impact of shrinking per pupil expenditures in the loss of high quality instructional opportunities for our students. Stafford is ranked 111 out of 132 for per pupil expenditures. We could and must do so much more for the children here. As a teacher, and a Stafford parent and home owner, I urge the Board to reject the logic that we can continue to spend less and expect high quality results. You get what you pay for and our community deserves so much better.

From: Wufoo
To: Mark A. Kaminski; Andrew L. Spence; Cheryl D. Giles; Julia E. Holmes
Subject: Public Comment Form [#53]
Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 8:32:30 AM

Name *	Cindy Simpson
Address *	60 Brush Everard Court Stafford, VA 22554 United States
Email *	vagirl5875@gmail.com
Election District	Garrisonville
Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) *	Budget

Online Comments: *

As a resident of Stafford County and a CASA (Rappahannock) volunteer, I ask that the funding for 2025 be increased to $3,920, the funded amount prior to last fiscal year.

CASA volunteers advocate for abused and neglected children, our most vulnerable citizens. At the request of the judges who appoint us, CASA volunteers meet regularly with the children involved in the cases, do independent investigations into the children's circumstances and identify needed services to help them, and ultimately, we 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 hope you will see the value of the work we do, and increase the funding for 2025 to $3,920.

Respectfully,
Cindy Simpson

From: Wufoo
To: Mark A. Kaminski; Andrew L. Spence; Cheryl D. Giles; Julia E. Holmes
Subject: Public Comment Form [#54]
Date: Thursday, March 21, 2024 4:17:54 PM

Name *	Kimberly Lester
Address *	6 Barlow House Court Stafford, VA 22554 United States
Email *	kimberlypaige333@gmail.com
Election District	Garrisonville
Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) *	Buc-ee
Online Comments: *	No! No Travel Stop! This will increase crime, lower property values and make traffic much worse! This is a community not a rest stop for trucker showers!

From:	Wufoo
To:	Mark A. Kaminski; Andrew L. Spence; Cheryl D. Giles; Julia E. Holmes
Subject:	Public Comment Form [#55]
Date:	Friday, March 22, 2024 9:46:23 AM

Name *	Craig Lester
Address *	6 Barlow House Ct Stafford , VA 22554 United States
Email *	clester432@gmail.com
Election District	Garrisonville
Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) *	Buc-er's
Online Comments: *	No thank you, move it south one more exit by the airport, fed ex and Amazon

From:	Wufoo
To:	Mark A. Kaminski; Andrew L. Spence; Cheryl D. Giles; Julia E. Holmes
Subject:	Public Comment Form [#56]
Date:	Sunday, March 31, 2024 5:06:32 PM

Name *	Erin Crosswell
Address *	31 Washington and Lee Blvd Stafford, Virginia (VA) 22556 United States
Email *	erinobrokta@yahoo.com
Election District	Rock Hill
Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) *	FUND THE SCHOOLS FULLY!!! Stop Making Excuses.
Online Comments: *	I am a Stafford County Citizen with 2 students in SCPS schools. I want the schools to be funded. I want the schools to be funded like they were funded in 2011. Stafford County has money. Please spend that money on schools and invest in the future of our children. To fail to do so is irresponsible. Stop the finger pointing and excuses. Thank you.

From:	Wufoo
To:	Mark A. Kaminski; Andrew L. Spence; Cheryl D. Giles; Julia E. Holmes
Subject:	Public Comment Form [#57]
Date:	Monday, April 1, 2024 4:03:52 PM

Name *	Ignacio Esteban
Address *	10 Dallhan Ct STAFFORD, VA 22554 United States
Email *	IgnacioJEsteban@Outlook.com
Election District	Garrisonville
Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) *	Tax Rate Increase

Online Comments: *

There should be less tax and fee increases and more spending cuts in other programs. Tax increases is never the solution but rather a burden to the hard working members who live in Stafford County. All property taxes need to be cut and not increased since many families are dealing with higher costs just to break even.

Also no to Buc-ees from coming to Stafford. We do not need another gas station in the area especially one with 120 gas pumps. This will lead to more crime, traffic congestion, people, and environmental issues. Many of us who live in the Austin Ridge and Embrey Mill area do not want this behemoth here rather something more appealing perhaps a county park where children can play, with walking trails, tennis and pickleball courts. This area is better suited for those activities. Buc-ees is not a good fit in this area THE BUC STOPS HERE - NO BUC-EES!