BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
MARCH 28, 2024

<u>CALL TO ORDER</u> – A work session of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Meg Bohmke, Chairman, at 6:02 p.m. on Tuesday, March 28, 2024 in Conference Room ABC, George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford VA.

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

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

<u>BUDGET WORK SESSION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND GENERAL FUND</u>

Mr. Vosburg said that they had provided two documents for review. He said that the first document, which he assumed they were familiar with by now, contained colorful boxes displaying various funding options. He mentioned that Andrea would discuss this in detail shortly.

Mr. Vosburg said that the second document was similar in appearance to the sheet used during their one-on-one session. He said that the primary difference was that in the new version, position listings had been organized by department or office rather than listed in descending order of cost. He said that this allowed for a more comprehensive view of position allocation by department. He said that he would now pass the presentation to Ms. Light.

Ms. Light said that they would discuss the content presented in blue, which consisted of options one, two, and three. She said that these options depicted budget scenarios under different tax rates of $0.91, $0.90, and $0.87, all of which included the fire levy at an effective rate of $0.0131 cents. She said that the top box illustrated reductions in school funding, while the middle box showed new expenditures and positions removed.

Ms. Light said that County Administration and Budget staff met with most Board members to discuss their budget priorities. She said that the gray section at the end represented consensus options, where four or more members agreed independently on these choices. She said that by adopting the consensus options, School Board funding for operating purposes was reduced from

$15 million to $13 million, which still represented a $13 million increase compared to their current funding.

Ms. Light said that the consensus options also removed reclassification personnel changes for County-only positions, amounting to $300,000. She said that there was discussion regarding whether to remove or postpone increases to capital ongoing and 3R in schools or fund it through one-time resources. She said that this would affect ongoing operating funds, but would assist with the tax rate.

Ms. Light said that there were four or more who decided that the library increase request of $474,000 be cut in half, so that was their increase only, not their base budget. She said that out of personnel, four had agreed to remove one Fire and Rescue ambulance crew. She said that two individuals had requested removing two court deputies and two that wanted to remove one, so they left one in there.

Ms. Light said that they reduced the security analyst by 50%, as there was consensus to pay for half of it out of Utilities. She said the position would be supporting Utilities. She said that two HR specialists had been proposed, one for classification and compensation and one for retention and training. She said that there were two that wanted one removed and two that wanted the other. She said that there was not consistency there, but there was consistency to remove one of the two HR specialists, so further direction from the Board would be sought.

Ms. Light said that with all of those changes, they were down to $0.908. She said that additional reduction options had partial agreement. She said that at least two Supervisors felt that removing a Sheriff traffic supervisor, a network analyst, and the additional Sheriff court deputy would be beneficial, for a total reduction of $449,000. She said that before the Board was a sheet that went through mandatory commitments and obligations.

Ms. Light said that beginning with new expenditures, this was what was in the proposed budget. She said that starting at line 11, the budget included $15 million for schools, which was the proposed amount. She said that new expenditures had also been included in the budget, listed from highest to lowest. She explained that this was why they appeared in their current order. She said that Mr. Vosburg had mentioned new positions had been added based on department and alphabetical order. She said that this was why they appeared in their current order.

Ms. Light said that staff sought the Board's guidance on their desired tax rate and any items they would like removed from the budget. She said that the more clarity they had today regarding their preferences for Tuesday's meeting, the better prepared they could be to meet their requirements and present their budget accordingly.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would like to bring everyone's attention to the budget presentation that Mr. Vosburg conducted earlier. She said that if they had their budget book with them, they should refer to slide 5, which highlighted compliance positions, public safety positions, and capacity positions. She said that she wanted to remind everyone of the importance of these positions in relation to compliance, public safety, and capacity. She said that they were all vital positions, and the Board's job was to prioritize these positions before making adjustments or additions.

Ms. Bohmke said that she had a few questions regarding the general budget. She said that in speaking with the Sheriff, he said that he was okay with delaying both of the court deputies. She said that she appreciated staff's effort in creating a sheet that listed all positions by category, as it made it easier for her to review them.

Mr. Vosburg said that an email had been received from Eric Olsen this afternoon that was advocating for his department's positions.

Ms. Light said that it was for a paralegal and a media specialist, and both were in the consensus option.

Ms. Bohmke said that if the Board decided to lower the tax rate, she wanted to remind everyone that when they implemented body-worn cameras, they were aware of the increased expenses associated with this initiative. She said that as a Board, they took on this responsibility collectively. She said that some of them may not have been present during that time, but many of them were.

Ms. Bohmke said that if they had the opportunity to read his email, she believed that he provided valuable information about resources required in the Commonwealth Attorney's Office for successful court cases. She said that for those who did not have the opportunity to read it, he mentioned several instances where insufficient videos or videotapes have led to derailed court cases. She said that she simply wanted to bring this to everyone's attention, given their busy schedules and varying access to emails.

Mr. English said that if the state approved a 3% raise for state employees, this would impact social services employees. He said that if this was indeed the case, would it cost the County 2% if they gave them the savings of 3%. He said that he received this information during the social services meeting held recently. He said that unfortunately, he did not know the exact number of employees they had. He asked about the financial impact of this decision on their end.

Ms. Light said that the social services rate had not yet been calculated. She said that this would likely result in additional revenue that could be utilized by the Board in its entirety.

Mr. English asked if it was $1 million or less in savings.

Ms. Light said that it was possibly $150,000.

Ms. Bohmke said that the Board needed to discuss briefly a matter regarding the Moss Free Clinic's support. She said that despite not being a significant amount, there had been considerable media attention surrounding the hospital's potential support for the clinic. She said that she had previously believed that $60,000 was allocated in the budget for partner agencies, but upon reviewing the budget, she found that it was actually $30,000.

Ms. Bohmke said that regardless of the financial amount, if the clinic was supported, there may be a need for a hold back due to uncertainty about its viability for the entire year. She asked if, in their partner agencies, they provided quarterly installments or distributed funds in July. She said that she knew that for the library, payments were made quarterly; however, she was unsure about other agencies.

Ms. Krauss said that the threshold for the first installment was $30,000 or less, which was paid in full. She said that for amounts exceeding this limit, payments were divided into quarters. She said that in some cases, specific agencies requested payments in halves; they had made this request. She said that consequently, in this particular instance, the amount was $31,940, so the sum would be due in July unless they deferred payment.

Ms. Bohmke said that she understood that there were five clinics in the region.

Ms. Allen said that at the hospital, when deciding which clinic would best suit each patient's needs for discharge, they consistently chose Moss due to its accessibility. She said that the majority of their patients requiring free clinic services were referred to Moss. She said that in the two years she worked at Stafford Hospital, she rarely sent anyone anywhere else besides Moss.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was interesting because she had real-time information. She said that last year, they served a thousand patients. She said that they could discuss this matter possibly towards the end of June and decide what actions they wanted to take. She said that by then, the hospital may have more information due to recent developments in the market and public statements.

Ms. Bohmke said that regarding VDOT mowing, she said that she had a conversation with Kyle Bates yesterday about this issue. She said that she believed their medians would look significantly better as a result. She asked Mr. Vosburg if he could please provide details about his last conversation with VDOT.

Mr. Vosburg said that he understood that there were initially eight cuts, but these could be reduced to six cuts. He said that the six-cut option was $137,000.
Ms. Bohmke said that the previous option seemed less favorable compared to the $167,000 expenditure. She said that the Board must now consider this alternative. She asked if there was anyone present who was not familiar with this option.

Dr. Yeung asked what the schedule was for the grass cutting.

Mr. Morris said that they would begin cutting their first cut approximately within the next couple of weeks. He said that they cut again during mid to late summer. He said that the remaining cuts would occur during other times until October when additional cuts were desired. He said that in total, there were six cutting instances.

Dr. Yeung asked if this was in addition to what the County cut.

Ms. Bohmke said that the County did not cut VDOT property.

Mr. Morris said that staff did not cut the grass. He said that they only cut parks, and there were some gateways that they cut because they owned them.

Dr. Yeung asked if they could begin with four cuts and see how it was before jumping to six cuts.

Mr. Morris said that the price was per cut, so it would be adjusted according to how many cuts they would like.

Mr. English asked if they reduced it to four cuts, could they then request a fifth cut later in the year.

Mr. Morris said that they had to finalize the contract within the next two weeks and could not amend it after.

Dr. Yeung asked if the contract was changeable every year.

Ms. Bohmke said yes.

Dr. Yeung asked if they could start with four and then go up. She said that they had zero last year.

Ms. Bohmke said no, they had the bare minimum that VDOT does, which was two. She said that this was why their medians looked so bad.

Dr. Yeung said that was correct. She said that they should go to four. She asked why they were jumping to six. She asked if they would save money.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they would have four cuts in total or four new cuts plus the original two cuts.

Mr. Morris said that the County would pay for four additional cuts. He said that six was $137,000, or about a $45,000 reduction for two. He said that it was going to be approximately $90,000.

Ms. Bohmke said that the six was for the entire year as well.

Dr. Yeung said that things did not grow in the wintertime. She said that she was trying to save money.

Ms. Vanuch asked if it was four additional cuts on top of the current two.

Mr. Morris said that was correct.

Mr. Vosburg said that it was six plus two right now.

Ms. Vanuch asked if there was something firm in the contract that told them when to deploy the resources to mow.

Mr. Morris said that there typically would be a clause like that in a mowing contract, but he would have to confirm that.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would appreciate it if Mr. Morris could confirm that. She asked if they would be required to pay for the six cuts even if drought conditions were experienced in the duration of this contract.

Mr. Morris said that he would have to verify that. He said that generally, that was true, but he was unsure about the VDOT contract.

Ms. Bohmke said that the time of the contract would include next year's spring.

Mr. Morris said that to clarify, the contract was for this calendar year. He said that budget-wise, they would need money for next spring, being this current budget.

Dr. Yeung said that they should not do six but do four.

Mr. Diggs asked if they could budget four now and budget four for next year.

Dr. Yeung asked if they could have four in total and maybe next year they could do six.

Ms. Allen said that the Board must decide if they wanted an additional four cuts or an additional six cuts, irrespective of the two cuts already provided by VDOT. She said that for next calendar year, they must decide if they wanted four additional cuts this year or two for this year and two for next year, totaling four additional cuts.

Ms. Vanuch said that since they were starting this now, they should do the six cuts. She said that it was crucial that there was a provision in the contract that prompted them to authorize mowing only when necessary, as mowing unnecessarily was a waste of resources. She said that provided that there was this safety measure in place, they should be fine with six. She said that if they had any left over for next year, they could address that issue then.

Mr. Morris said that they would be re-bidding the contract every January, and the next year would be no exception. He said that consequently, the price may increase slightly due to this process. He said that they must ensure that their budget can accommodate these expenses until the end of June.

Ms. Gary asked what the cost was of this project.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was $137,000.

Ms. Gary asked if these were safety concerns, such as people being unable to see around because of its height. She said that she was trying to determine if it was simply a visual issue.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was a visual issue.

Ms. Allen said that it was for beautification.

Ms. Bohmke said that there was consensus from the Board for four additional cuts.

Ms. Bohmke said that the volunteer fund balance on the OpenGov site indicates approximately $300,000 in volunteer funds. She said that one of the projects at Falmouth Fire that has been pending for some time is the installation of a light that activates when vehicles exit the station and cross four lanes, where there is currently no traffic control. She said that there has been an instance of a car colliding with a fire truck. She said that if someone has recently visited Butler Road, they would be aware of the high speeds at which drivers travel.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would like to allocate funds from the volunteer reserve fund for this safety-related project. She said that the estimated cost is around $60,000. She said that the allocation will be made from the volunteer reserve fund. She said that VDOT would not pay for the issue, so it was the County's issue.

Mr. Diggs asked if the widening of Butler Road would include a solution for this problem.

Ms. Bohmke said that that project would not take place any time soon.

Mr. English asked what the money from ambulance calls was used for. He said that if it was going into the General Fund, they could designate some of that money for this light. He asked if they could do that.

Ms. Light said that those were operating dollars that were a part of the General Fund reserve. She said that they received about $2.5 million in ambulance reserves, primarily supporting Fire and Rescue.

Mr. English said that this was a Fire and Rescue issue.

Ms. Light said that they would have to take out $60,000 from the ongoing budget.

Dr. Yeung said that she supported installing a light for safety reasons. She asked if grants were available for Fire and Rescue to take advantage of. She said that she had shared a lot of funding information with Mr. Vosburg and understood they had a team now that was looking into funding. She said that she wanted to ensure they explored all avenues for funding.

Mr. English asked if FAMPO or GWRC could provide funding for this issue.

Ms. Bohmke said that they could potentially ask them about the GO Virginia fund. She said that her next question was regarding the $912,000 allocated for increasing salaries to 75% of market rate. She asked for the total number of positions within general government that would be impacted.

Ms. Light asked Ms. Krauss if she could provide that information.

Ms. Bohmke asked for information regarding the code compliance requirements for InfoRhythm Digital E-plans. She said that she was curious because they had incurred expenses related to this and assumed that their planning and zoning processes were already digital. She said that she wanted to clarify what additional software costs were necessary for this specific item.

Mr. Vosburg asked if Ms. Bohmke was referring to something on the list.

Ms. Bohmke said no, it was on OpenGov.

Mr. Vosburg said that he would look into that.

Dr. Yeung asked if they were asking about line items yet.

Mr. Vosburg said that that they were examining the number of people affected by the market study, and then they were going to follow up on the code enforcement or the code plan item.

Ms. Krauss said that the study examined 50 positions, many of which had ladders associated with them. She said that these positions were progressive, encompassing Admin 1, Admin 2, and Admin 3. She said that in total, approximately 80 positions would be affected by movement. She said that to clarify, the study focuses on positions rather than people; thus, more people may occupy these positions, but the number provided refers to positions.

Ms. Light said that the number found in the General Fund affects 176 people. She said that various funds, including Utilities, Tourism, and Transportation, have a total of 237 individuals impacted.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Utilities was a part of those 176 people.

Ms. Light said that there were 176 all in the General Fund, but there were 237 in total, some including Utilities, Transportation, and Tourism funds.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the Tourism funds were flowing through the General Fund.

Ms. Light said that the Tourism funds had a separate allocation, so the portion of funds mandated by state code remained within the Tourism fund and was utilized exclusively for supporting tourism initiatives.

Ms. Bohmke said that they had another 4% that flowed into the General Fund and supposedly used for sports tourism. She asked if that was right.

Ms. Light said that it was used to offset costs to Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Allen said that these positions were not funded with that; they were funded with the mandated funds.

Dr. Yeung asked what percentage the state was paying for the paralegal requested by Eric Olsen.

Ms. Light said zero.

Dr. Yeung asked if this was in addition to what the state provided.

Ms. Light said yes. She said that this was above comp board funding was for the Commonwealth Attorney.

Dr. Yeung asked if this was something that needed to be added for their legislative agenda. She asked why the County was responsible for this position at this point in time.

Ms. Light said that with the introduction of body-worn cameras and increased workload in the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, additional staffing was required to support that program. She said that for every 75 body cameras deployed, one Commonwealth Attorney must be added. She said that this arrangement allowed Commonwealth Attorney Mr. Olsen the option to appoint a paralegal. She said that this really was an unfunded mandate by the state.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to bring her colleagues' attention to the new initiatives listed, which amounted to $248,000. She said that they had spent considerable time, effort, and resources over the past two years on initiatives and work that guided the County in a specific direction. She said that if they stalled now, they would have to restart from scratch. She said that she hoped that they continued their progress and maintained their focus on their shared goals.

Dr. Yeung said that as her colleagues knew, next week's agenda included a discussion about their initiatives, strategies, and collaborative efforts among all departments. She said that they had various plans in place, such as the comprehensive plan, traffic plan, master plan, their strategic plan, and the economic development department's plan. She said that she hoped they could continue to move forward with these plans and maintain their momentum.

Ms. Bohmke said that regarding the new initiatives for $250,000, she asked if the Board was aware of the specific components of this allocation.

Ms. Krauss asked if Ms. Bohmke was referring to Item 23.

Ms. Light said that the new initiatives comprised training for various departments. She said that there was new software for finance, specifically records management software. She said that the current software was at its end of life, necessitating a $12,915 investment for the next version. She said that there was rental of a capital suite and funding for the Registrar to expand voting by mail.

She said that initiatives for hiring had been implemented to ensure adequate advertising capabilities. She said that due to limitations in hiring procurement officials, a consultant service had been secured to act as a virtual employee, expediting procurement processes. She said that safety concerns included drone maintenance for fire and rescue, which had received or would receive a drone through a grant. She said that maintenance for this equipment would be ongoing. She said that unlimited storage capabilities had been provided for the sheriff's body-worn cameras.

Ms. Bohmke asked if there was an item related to economic development and business alignment.

Mr. Vosburg said that was a strategic plan item 4, which matched up in the County Administrator presentation to this slide, which showed the different initiatives.

Ms. Vanuch asked for further clarification regarding the funding for the capital suite.

Ms. Light said that the capital team rented space, and the cost was increasing by about $4,500 next year.

Ms. Vanuch said that she simply wanted to clarify that the term “capital suite” was tied to their business processes and not for recreation.

Mr. Diggs said that when discussing these initiatives, they must establish a tax rate that enables them to accomplish those objectives. He said that in his experience, the order of priority was ensuring they support their schools, public safety, and staff members. He said that if it came down to choosing between employee raises or funding an initiative, he would prioritize taking care of their staff because they were essential for running their programs effectively. He said that he wanted to clarify this point since the initial tax rate proposal was $0.89, which would eliminate various items which had been stated to be important.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to ensure that her statement was clear regarding staff in various departments such as fire and rescue, sheriff's office, and school systems. She said that staff members should be happy and receive raises; however, they also required the necessary tools to perform their duties effectively. She said that if staff members were satisfied with their salaries but lacked the required tools or faced unfulfilled initiatives, this hindered their ability to achieve objectives and goals. She said that she aimed to clarify her focus on providing staff with essential tools and engines rather than pet projects.

Ms. Bohmke said that they should return their discussion to the consensus option. She asked if there was support at $0.908, which was how staff had prepared the budget and included the $0.0131 fire levy.

Mr. English said that he recommended they take out both HR specialists, because they did not need those positions right now.

Ms. Gary asked if they could review the importance of the HR specialist position.

Ms. Krauss said that there were two human resources (HR) positions in the budget. She explained that one was an analyst specialist responsible for handling classification and compensation. She said that they had been working towards establishing a more stable foundation in their approach to compensation based on market standards. She said that they had committed to conducting market studies every other year, which they implemented last year.

Ms. Krauss said that having a staff member dedicated to analyzing career ladders and implementing them was the main role of this position. She said that it involved assessing how positions were classified over time, as they may require updates due to changes in service delivery. She said that the other position focused on retention and training, aiming to provide more opportunities for employees to grow within their roles and improve overall retention within the organization.

Mr. Vosburg said that overall, it would add resources to the HR department to give them more capacity. He said that everyone worked on the different aspects of HR, but there was overlap among their responsibilities. He said that other individuals had been handling similar tasks, so allocating additional resources did not mean that they would not benefit from them in other areas of HR management. He said that the primary objective was to improve their HR department's efficiency, particularly in streamlining their hiring process.

Mr. Vosburg said that in today's competitive labor market, quicker response times could significantly increase their chances of attracting and retaining top talent. He said that unfortunately, by the time they made job offers, they often lost three potential candidates due to delays in their hiring process. He said that therefore, their main goal for creating this position was to strengthen their HR department's resources, enabling them to expedite their hiring process and maintain a competitive edge in the job market.

Ms. Bohmke asked which position was more effective in speeding up the process.

Mr. Vosburg said that adding either of the positions would have a similar effect on their capacity. He said that it would allow them to pull back some of the duties other positions currently performed and give them to the new position, so everyone could better focus on the process. He said that whether they received position A or position B, it would have the same impact, in his opinion.

Mr. Diggs said that at his town hall meeting last night, he presented information regarding the proposed tax rate of $0.908. He said that approximately 135 people attended the event, including elderly residents who expressed concerns about being taxed out of their homes. He said that despite these concerns, no attendees had negative comments about the proposed $0.908 tax rate.

Mr. Diggs said that he had received emails today that criticized the rate for being too low and not adequately supporting resources such as schools and other vital resources. He said that he wanted to provide that information that he had gained last night and today. He said that there was a good representation from all districts except for Rock Hill, and the attendees included various constitutional officers.

Ms. Allen said that regarding the HR Specialist position, she would like to know if there was a difference between the salaries of the two positions.

Ms. Light said that they were both the same at $103,482.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to discuss the concerns about emergency items for schools, which came up during the last meeting and must be done as soon as possible. She said that she recognized that Ms. Gary was concerned about the hot water issues, and she was concerned as well. She said that she would go back to her statement she made when the School Board emptied out coffers of the emergency reserve fund to buy trailers. She said that it was at zero right now.

Dr. Yeung said that she would like to talk to her colleagues about putting funds back in there. She said that Ms. Allen had mentioned giving the school $1.4 million or CIP or whatever it is they need. She said that what they did not want for the school to have funds, and she knew they were watching, and she knew that the state may give them more funding than they asked for, because they did not know what they were getting.

Dr. Yeung said that for the sake of making sure they have the funds they need, and that they utilize that fund appropriately, she did not want to sit here and say she was appropriating funds towards certain things, but they could assure that they put some funding where they come back to them with an emergency that they have that funding for them. She said that she was proposing that they put $3.5 million into the school reserve fund for emergencies, outside of whatever they came to agreement with, be it $10 million, $12 million, or $13 million. She said that they should have that funding separate for emergencies that they had to come back and ask the Board for.

Mr. Vosburg said that he would address Dr. Yeung’s comment. He said that he would point out Item 18 on this list, which is a yellow box representing the school increase for 3R. He said that they had a base level amount allocated for 3R funding. He said that the proposed increase in this box amounts to almost $710,000. He said that this increase was included in the cut box; however, this was because they have reprogrammed one-time funds to cover this expense. He said that the amount was being funded but through one-time dollars.

Mr. Vosburg said that in response to Dr. Yeung's point and the discussion at their last meeting, Ms. Light was going to mention that they had $1.4 million allocated for the Carl Lewis Center, which was proposed to go as one-time money for 3R, so putting that together it was about $2.1 million for 3R. He said that he was unsure if that was going towards the $3.5 million mentioned by Dr. Yeung, but currently, their budget with the change on Carl Lewis, contemplated an additional allocation of $2 million towards 3R. He said that he understood that this was still $1.4 million under what Dr. Yeung had suggested, but it would be going towards the 3R projects.

Dr. Yeung said that she did not want that funding to be used for items such as turf fields, unnecessary roofing, and items that were not deemed necessary. She said that she wanted to make sure that emergencies were being covered. She said that her emergency was not the same as Ms. Bohmke's emergency. She said that she wanted to make sure that in the 3R list that they did not end up doing turf fields at the end of the year.

Mr. Vosburg said that unless it was an agreement between the Boards, they could not dictate that.

Dr. Yeung asked if they could put the funding in the emergency fund instead of in the 3R.

Mr. Vosburg said that the school system's perspective was that they had over $50 million in pent-up projects, so if they provide them with an additional allocation of $2.1 million or $3.5 million, they would want to use it to take items off that list, which would not go to the intent of what Dr. Yeung was discussing.

Dr. Yeung thanked Mr. Vosburg. She said that was why she yielded to her colleagues.

Ms. Light said that she would be concerned for the schools if they allocated funds in the general emergency fund due to the time-consuming process of obtaining appropriation authority. She said that they would need a School Board action requesting funding from the Board, which would mean waiting until the next scheduled Board meeting. She said that if it was for an emergency, it could take two weeks or more to appropriate the necessary funds.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the schools could address the emergency with their General Fund monies, and then the Board of Supervisors could reimburse them.

Ms. Light said that if they were comfortable with that, they could.

Ms. Bohmke said that if it was a true emergency, she did not see why the Board of Supervisors would not go along with that.

Ms. Allen asked if they were done talking about the HR positions.

Ms. Bohmke said that they were.

Ms. Allen said that there had been no consensus on the matter.

Ms. Bohmke said that they were talking about the $0.908 tax rate right now.

Ms. Gary said that Mr. English had requested cutting the two HR positions, then an explanation was given about what they were and that one could potentially go. She said that it would be helpful if they could poll where the Board members stood on that topic.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was happy to do that. She said that there was consensus from the Board to keep one position.

Mr. Vosburg said that to frame the discussion, which appeared to be focused on reducing the tax rate, Ms. Light could display more of the bottom right-hand side of the page for reference. He said that since the current tax rate was $0.908, if the goal was to reach $0.90, a reduction of $2.1 million was necessary. He said that if the aim was to achieve $0.89, a reduction of $4.8 million was required.

Mr. Vosburg said that decisions regarding HR positions were considered, each position typically costing $103,000. He said that in order to reach $0.90, $2.1 million in reductions must be made, which may involve eliminating numerous positions or implementing deeper cuts in other areas. He said that it was unclear where the Board stood on this matter; nonetheless, achieving a further tax rate reduction would necessitate significant adjustments or further cuts elsewhere.

Mr. English said that he would prefer $0.89, but he would like the schools to keep the $13 million, so he could accept $0.90. He said that however, he believed that more cuts needed to be made.

Mr. Diggs said that to achieve their target of reducing expenses by $2.1 million dollars, they had considered eliminating both HR positions and the Sheriff deputy position. He said that even after these cuts, they would still be far from their goal. He said that these small positions they were going to cut would not do anything significant enough to get them down to $0.90. He said that it was evident that they would have to pull something huge off of the list.

Mr. Vosburg said that they would be at about 10% of the $2.1 million if they removed the court deputy and HR specialist. He said that they still would need to cut $2 million after that.

Ms. Bohmke said that regarding the growth positions for the school division, there were 800 new students. She asked how much money was allocated for the growth positions. She asked if the class sizes depended on the grade level. She said that they were also getting funding from the state for that as well. She said that she would like to revisit that number with the schools.

Ms. Vanuch asked if Ms. Light could review how a penny on the tax rate was worth about $2.5 million.

Ms. Light said that each penny difference was equivalent to $2,625,000. She said that to calculate this, one should divide $2,625,000 by $0.08, which resulted in $2.1 million. She said that there was a two-penny difference between $0.87 and $0.89, which would mean the difference would be added twice.

Mr. English asked if the Fire Chief could go without the two fire crews this year, which were items 26 and 27 on the list.

Chief Cardello said no.

Mr. English asked if they could do without one.

Chief Cardello said that it was a tough question to answer.

Mr. English said that he respected the Chief's answer. He said that he understood if they could not.

Chief Cardello said that they could not go without one.

Ms. Allen said that she wanted to comment on that item. She said that this was an item she would not budge on. She said that she knew one may potentially go to her district, and she knew that in the last month, she had received innumerable text messages from the Chief about Widewater and Griffis emergencies they responded to. She said that sometimes they required assistance from Quantico. She said that taking one ambulance away from nine that answered so many calls in ten was unacceptable. She said that at some point, public safety did not just mean the Sheriff's Office, it meant Fire and Rescue, and she absolutely would not compromise on taking away both crews.

Ms. Bohmke said that she agreed with that. She said that they truly required both, but she would be satisfied with one.

Ms. Gary said that she agreed that they needed both. She said that the only reason she landed on one was because she was trying to achieve consensus. She said that if there was a desire for both, they could explore that, too. She said that it would not get them down any further. She said that they were in an uncomfortable reality where they had cut everything they could, so they were now talking about cutting into public safety. She said that they had already done this a bit. She asked if Ms. Bohmke would like to discuss keeping the two.

Ms. Bohmke said that based on conversations she had with all Board members, she did not think there was support to cut both of them.

Ms. Gary said that they needed two.

Ms. Bohmke asked if there was support for keeping two in the budget.

Ms. Vanuch said that they have to get to the tax rate. She said that they could sit here all day and play with what they want and what they do not, because everyone has their priorities.

Ms. Allen said that she would absolutely not move from the $0.908. She said that she refused to touch anything that would negatively impact the schools.

Mr. Diggs said that he was supportive of $0.908. He said that he did not want to make any more cuts to public safety or anything that would impact the morale of County staff in terms of the listed new expenditures. He said that he had come down from what he said on the dais about $0.91, so he was decided on $0.908.

Ms. Vanuch said she was absolutely not supportive of $0.908. She said that she would not go that high.

Ms. Gary said that she was at $0.908. She said that they had already cut too much.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was another tough budget year. She said that she could not be at $0.908 in light of the increases they did last year and the increases they did the two years prior to that. She said that this was given where people were in this inflation market. She said that she was most concerned about the middle class. She said that she respected everything Mr. Diggs said about his town hall last night, and she understood that many people supported this, but she did not think those citizens understand.

Ms. Bohmke said that people do not always understand what a $0.908 is compared to an effective rate of $0.84. She said that she respected it and was glad Mr. Diggs had those conversations with people, and she was sure a lot of those people did not mind their taxes being increased. She said that however, they had had some significant increases, and with inflation and where it was, unfortunately, she would like to see the schools cut some.

Ms. Bohmke said that they need to bring the schools down to about $11 million and put money in the reserve account for them. She said that they could take it out of unrestricted funds as well, where they had $8 million available due to changing financial policies. She said that the money was flowing down into the fire levy. She said that they had shifted a lot of money around to make this budget work, and like their personal lives, they could not have everything on their wish list.

Mr. English asked if Ms. Bohmke believed that they could get the schools to go down to $11 million.

Ms. Bohmke said that they would not have another conversation with the schools. She said that it was their job as the funding agency to analyze their budget and collaborate. She said that it was not an easy job. She said that this was the tough decision they had to make.

Dr. Yeung said that she spoke to her colleagues in other districts, and there were concerns about counting up to four votes, because it appeared that it was a majority of the seven. She said that School Board members felt that their voices were not heard. She said that when she was on the School Board, they talked about the needs as well as their wants. She asked Ms. Light what the budget for the schools was.

Ms. Light said that it was $459 million for the operating fund.

Dr. Yeung asked how much they would tentatively be receiving from the state.

Ms. Light said that in the budget presentation from February 27, the schools were looking at state funding of $278 million. She said that $30.3 million of that was a projected increase in funding from the prior year.

Dr. Yeung said that they believed they may be receiving $2 million to $6 million more, which she hoped they would get. She said that it did not mean that the County had to give less, but she believed that they could potentially hold it. She said that giving them an amount while also putting a certain amount in reserve was what she had suggested earlier. She said that she agreed with Ms. Bohmke on that. She said that both of them had served on the School Board, and they knew what it was like going through that budget.

Dr. Yeung said that there were possibly some cuts that could be made there. She said that she was unsure if Ms. Light answered the question about new positions were planned for, and how many new students were expected. She said that she knew the growth was in Garrisonville, where they would not be getting an elementary school. She said that 40% of the growth in students was in Garrisonville. She asked how many teachers they were planning on hiring for the new growth.

Ms. Light said that according to the February 27 document, there were 144 school-based positions which were FTEs for 619 students. She said that there were additional adjustments for 154 students from prior year. She said that they were adding bus drivers, which amounted to 20 FTEs, plus 5 FTE bus attendants. She said that the total cost for these positions was $11.5 million.

Ms. Bohmke asked for more information regarding the 154 students from the prior year.

Ms. Light said that it resulted from growth that had occurred faster than anticipated. She said that she could verify that with the schools.

Ms. Bohmke said that she did not understand that.

Ms. Light said that they conducted enrollment on September 30 and calculated average daily membership on March 31. She said that there were instances when a Virginia school system used these metrics and reported them to the state. She said that they would request that schools provide more information regarding the 154 students in question.

Ms. Allen said that she had consternation regarding the reduction from $15 million to $13 million for schools, and it was not because she wanted to give the schools a blank check for whatever they wanted. She said that Widewater had the most northern schools in the County, and the proximity to other localities like Dumfries meant that their teachers and staff faced significant pay disparities compared to their counterparts in those areas. She said that this had led to the loss of valuable personnel from their schools.

Ms. Allen said that she could easily go ten minutes to work in Prince William County than to go to Widewater. She said that Widewater was also one of their few purple star schools for military families, providing them with a smooth transition. She said that they had Barrett and Shirley Heim schools in their district as well. She said that her issue was not solely about cutting. She said that cutting anything from the schools meant cutting personnel, and Prince William was already going to give their schools more than what Stafford was in terms of personnel, so not even giving them something competitive did not sit right.

Ms. Allen said that she understood that they had collectively had issues with the School Board, but she was no longer looking at it through that lens. She said that was more about her child who was preparing to take her SOL with a long-term substitute teacher because her science teacher had recently resigned after 10 years in the County to pursue a better-paying government job. She said that now, she had an English teacher teaching her science. She said that she was personally hearing stories and witnessing herself of the significance of keeping their staff competitive.

Ms. Allen said that she was aware that it was not just about their angst with the schools or mistrusting what they could do. She said that the Superintendent had told them that any cuts come from their personnel. She said that she refused to make any cuts that would further put their children behind in their SOLs and their testing and being equipped to eventually be members of their community. She asked how they were equipping their children to be successful. She said that they were getting ready to have a whole elementary school of children entering their system.

Ms. Allen said that they were asking someone to say, come to Stafford County and take this pay raise and deal with all these unknowns or go to Prince William where they're building schools at ridiculous rates. She said that now they were stopping, but their salaries were competitive and they had better resources. She said that this was not a fair scenario they were giving their children to compete for teachers to teach them.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to make a few comments regarding the funding for schools. She said that she had personal experience having many children who have gone through the school system and had witnessed the same problems year after year, primarily related to staffing. She said that her daughter in seventh grade had had almost as many substitute teachers as full-time staff teachers since she began in the Stafford County school system in kindergarten. She said that she was not exaggerating; her daughter had truly had nearly as many substitute teachers and one year had five teachers alone.

Ms. Gary said that while she respected the fact that some Board members had served on the School Board, these were real things that she had experienced as a parent. She said that in addition to safety and infrastructure issues, the high turnover of personnel had a significant impact on students' learning experience. She said that it caused learning loss and stress for both students and administrators.

Ms. Gary said that it was challenging for administrators to manage behavioral issues when they constantly needed to train new staff members and acclimate them to school leadership. She said that addressing staffing issues appropriately would benefit many aspects of their schools, including deputies dealing with various school-related matters. She said that it was important to address this for many reasons.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Mr. English and Ms. Vanuch would like to discuss their thoughts on the proposed tax rate.

Mr. English said that they were making some substantial cuts to get to what they needed to do. He said that they were in bad times in terms of people trying to make ends meet, and he did not want to put another tax rate on them. He said that the schools could probably help them to reduce it to find their lowest bottom dollar. He said that he understood that the schools had already given their lowest number, but they would be getting state money. He said that he also had constituents who were trying to make ends meet with day-to-day bills. He said that he did not know where he was at right now.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would not vote for that high of a tax rate. She said that they were not doing great from an economic perspective in the country. She said that she would share some statistics. She said that the overall cost of goods had increased by 17% since 2021. She said that food costs had risen by 25%. She said that gas prices had gone up by 40%. She said that homes sales had increased by 26%. She said that credit card debt had grown by 46%.

Ms. Vanuch said that people were living on their credit cards. She said that staff was proposing another minimum 10% tax increase on top of two previous years where taxes had increased by 10%. She said that this amounted to a 30% tax increase when people were already struggling financially. She said that real wages had decreased by 2%. She said that people were taking pay cuts; they were not receiving raises. She said that meanwhile, County staff had consistently received substantial pay raises.

Ms. Vanuch said that one of the answers to the questions she asked the schools, which was also said in public at the dais by multiple speakers, they had not received pay raises, but that was incorrect. She said that since 2022, teachers had received an average increase of 7.2%, while service staff had received 5% and a 11% service scale correction. She said that additionally, there was a mid-year adjustment of 25% for bus drivers.

Ms. Vanuch said that the following year, teachers had received another average increase of 12.25%, while service staff had received 5%. She said that last year, they had received a 5% increase across the board, with a mid-year adjustment of 2% for teachers and 3.5% for service staff. She said that they had been providing these raises. She said that they were not where they needed to be, but it would take time to get there. She said that they could not increase the taxes this much again this year.

Ms. Vanuch said that people cannot afford it and were living on their credit cards. She said that she had been attending HOA meetings in her district where people showed up, and whether they were from an affluent neighborhood or non-affluent neighborhood, it was overwhelming, and she had received a mandate when she was reelected by 70% to keep taxes low. She said that it was loud and clear through the campaign and was loud and clear when she was out knocking on doors and talking to constituents in her district. She said that she was nowhere close to a $0.90 tax rate.

Ms. Gary said that she was that person. She said that she spent money on this job, because it was not financially beneficial for her family, but she loved her job because she loved all people. She said that they had a lot of different people in this County, but she was one whose family was just getting by. She said that this was not lost on her. She said that it was disheartening to hear others emphasize their commitment to helping people while simultaneously neglecting her child's education.

Ms. Gary asked the Board to please not let her child attend a school where things were falling apart and she could potentially not come home because water melts her. She said that this was unacceptable. She said that she could not continue to sit there and listen to these arguments again and again, but it seemed like she would have to. She said that she asked her colleagues to forgive her outburst but emphasized that this was their reality. She said that she was that person described, and one of many who faced similar situations.

Ms. Gary said that through her conversations with constituents, she had gathered data showing that over 60% of them wanted them to prioritize education funding. She said that their children deserved safety. She said that there was security in the real estate market and for people’s homes when they took care of their school system. She said that they could not continue to make excuses for not investing in their schools because the cost was upsetting to people.

Ms. Gary said that she would be even more upset if her children were injured. She said that she did not even know how they were sitting here and having this conversation about trying to cut the schools. She said that it was already low enough. She said that they were already doing everything they could, and they needed to be at $15 million. She said that however, they had set a rate where they could be at $13 million.

Ms. Gary said that this felt like a clown show that had more to do with what they looked like to the public for their next election and mandates than actually taking care of people, including children. She asked if anyone could tell her they would be okay with knowing that a room full of middle schoolers ended up in the hospital because that water pipe burst during the day.

Ms. Gary said that if Board members could convince her that it would be okay and they would sleep at night after that, then she would agree with lowering the funding for the schools below $13 million. She said that she did not believe that a single Board member could convince anyone that they would be okay with that. She said that she hoped not.

Mr. Diggs said that the Board's job was to take care of the County. He said that when looking at whether or not to raise taxes, and analyzing how they arrived at these historic tax increases in Stafford over the last two years, it was due to a period of time when the tax rate was being equalized and taxes were being lowered. He said that previous Board members were very excited to do that, and now they had now found themselves in a position where they must implement these historic tax increases to catch up.

Mr. Diggs said that throughout his time in this community, he had observed that past Boards had tended to postpone difficult decisions, continually delaying them. He said that every budget season brought the same arguments about not raising taxes too much, but eventually, they reached a point like today where such measures became necessary. He said that last night, he had a conversation with a Republican representative who expressed concern about Stafford County's inadequate funding for schools.

Mr. Diggs said that they discussed the 1% tax increase and its allocation towards building schools, as well as their responsibility as Board members in ensuring the proper care of their educational institutions. He said that if Board members wished to lower the tax rate, he had committed to working with them on this matter; however, it could not come from the schools. He said that it must be from elsewhere. He said that when they reached $15 million, Dr. Taylor and the School Board informed them that they had already made significant cuts.

Mr. Diggs said that he and Mr. English had initially sought $15 million when they began this process, but eventually agreed upon $13 million. He said that they faced some criticism for this decision, but he could stand by it. He said that he could not justify cutting more from the schools given all of their current issues. He said that they had tracks being shut down, and support staff was upset.

Mr. Diggs said that although they may have received significant increases or simply increases, for staff earning $1,000, these raises were not substantial. He said that this decision would be difficult, but they must confront it head-on. He said that initially, the County Administrator proposed a rate of $0.94. He said that they all agreed that this was too high; some suggested $0.89. He asked what rate they would be at if they removed the fire levy from the $0.908 rate.

Ms. Light said that the advertised rate without the fire levy was $0.8949.

Mr. Diggs said that they were there without the fire levy. He said that it was incumbent upon them to present these discussions effectively when addressing their constituents. He said that he would love to achieve the equalized rate of $0.84, but if they must account for all mandatory expenses, he believed that rate would be $0.87. He said that this ensured that they could avoid promoting a drastic tax increase that would cause panic among their constituents, such as the $0.40 increase attempted last year.

Ms. Allen said that regarding Ms. Gary’s comments, she would like to share that two days ago, her daughter texted her and told her that someone threw a desk in her classroom and almost hit her. She said that it was crucial for Board members to recognize the importance of licensed teachers in maintaining classroom management skills and structure. She said that her husband, also a licensed teacher, had emphasized this point throughout their marriage.

Ms. Allen said that just as they would not seek medical care from unlicensed professionals or have medications administered by unlicensed pharmacists, they should not place unlicensed teachers in front of their children for their education and classroom management. She said that the lack of proper training contributed to an increase in school incidents. She said that children could sense the difference between a substitute teacher and a licensed teacher, affecting classroom dynamics and respect.

Ms. Allen said that she had considered reducing funding from the schools past the $13 million; however, after her daughter's experience, she decided against it. She said that she discussed this with her husband, who stressed the necessity of classroom structure supported by licensed staff. She said that now, when they experienced various lockdowns and related events, this issue was directly related to it.

Ms. Allen said that she was not pontificating, but was sharing her personal experience and insights from being married to a professional who had been in education for the past 20 years. She said that this was her first point. She said that her second point was regarding Mr. Diggs’ remarks. She said that as many of them knew, her mother worked as support staff and left her job. She said that receiving a 100% increase in salary from $800 per month may sound appealing on paper; however, if someone was making $800 per month, $1,600 still fell below minimum wage.

Ms. Allen said that throwing percentages around was not helpful without considering the actual salaries people were earning. She said that if teachers were being underpaid and given a 20% increase over three years to make them competitive, this was not a 20% raise on top of an $80,000 salary they were already making; rather, it was about making their salaries competitive to retain staff in their County.

Ms. Allen said that when discussing inflationary pressures affecting everyone, the constituents facing those pressures were their school staff who had less pay. She said that they wanted them to stay in their County with limited resources in schools, handling more students and teaching assignments due to their growing school system, and then tell them they would give them only 2% to 3% raises while they managed their households and dealt with inflation. She asked how this math worked for them.

Ms. Bohmke said that one of the things they dealt with at the end of the budget season was looking at their utility program. She said that they were increasing user fees this year by 6.5%. She said that this was the second year of a three-year increase. She said that one Board member mentioned something about tax rates over the years. She said that looking at OpenGov.com, they could see all of the tax rates going back to 2013. She said that the rates were 107, 102, 102, 99, 99, 99, which included increases in assessed valuations and stable tax rates. She said that in 2020, due to COVID-19, there was a dip in tax rates, which were 99, 101, 97, 97.

Ms. Vanuch said that the rate was equalized that year, so there was no increase in tax.

Ms. Bohmke said that in 2021, the figure was 97. She said that then, in 2022, they reduced it to 85 due to COVID concerns. She said that then, they increased it again to 93, and now they had proposed a reduction to 92. She said that ten years ago, they was exactly $20,000 difference between their schools and Prince William's. She said that she was shocked when Dr. Taylor presented information that said that it was $8,200 or $8,300, she was shocked.

Ms. Bohmke said that it used to be $20,000. She said that she probably still had all her files at home somewhere down in the basement to validate that. She asked staff for information regarding non-departmental partner agencies. She said that in there, they had operating budget contingency reserve at $500,000 and alternative obligations at $118,000, and $400,000 for grants contingency. She said that there was another number.

Ms. Bohmke said that as it related to the CSA, she knew that Ms. Krauss added another $1.7 million, and some other significant increases were included as well. She asked what increase they had seen over the last three years with the CSA. She said that it seemed like a big increase. She said that all those things were impacting their General Fund and the tax rate.

Ms. Krauss said that the sunset clause for the Commonwealth Subsidized Adoption (CSA) program was implemented a few years ago. She said that during this time, she said that the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) conducted a study that led to a temporary hold on rate increases from private providers. She said that the intention was to implement a statewide rate for CSA across the Commonwealth. She said that this attempt failed, leading to the sunset clause's expiration.

Ms. Krauss said that as a result, rates increased this year significantly, and this year, the number of children placed in CSA has risen to 85. She said that this mean they exceeded their budget by $1.5 million dollars. She said that the average number of children placed in CSA over the past three years has been between 75 and 85. She said that they have included the rate increase in their budget for next year, acknowledging that private providers face inflationary costs like any other organization.

Ms. Krauss said that they there was no state regulation over the extent of these increases, and they were in a position where if the school had identified that these children, due to their individualized education plan, had to be placed in a private day, they were required and mandated to pay that. She said that they could not refuse, so they were obligated to do that.

Ms. Bohmke said that $1.7 million was over half of a penny in the budget. She said that she had a question about a large adjustment made for the Office of Community Engagement, which was stated to be a 23% increase of $237,000 for this upcoming year. She asked what this pertained to.

Dr. Yeung said that every individual has unique experiences with their children's education and schools. She said that she raised four children through Stafford County Schools, two of whom graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). She said that one pursued nursing at Duke Medical School, while the other two graduated from the University of Virginia (UVA). She said she had always trusted teachers and staff in the school system.

Dr. Yeung said that everyone's experiences differ, so she would not discuss or challenge experiences within the school system. She would not refute people’s experiences or repeat what was said. She said that when discussing support staff, her husband served as support staff in the school system for 20 years. She said that perhaps they were uninformed about this fact. She said that many people know John Allen, who worked as a crossing guard, in the kitchen, and at the front desk at Hampton Oaks. She said not to talk to her about the $9.75. She said that she could tell them about that.

Dr. Yeung said that she could mention that she was on the School Board for four years because she was. She said that she knows how the sausage is made. She said that she did not have to sit there and air the dirty laundry. She said that when discussing decisions, when staff advises them on necessary actions, they should follow their guidance. She said that if they disregard their staff and Superintendent's recommendations with new decisions, and deciding where or where not to build or whether or not to support this or that.

Dr. Yeung said that she would question their decisions, because they did not listen to their staff. She said that when they need more buses because they changed a route, and then wanted the County to pay for it, that was a decision made against staff's recommendations. She said that they wanted her to pay for that. She asked if the fire levy was included in the $0.908.

Ms. Vanuch asked if they could talk about the tax rate in totality.

Dr. Yeung asked what the raise for the personal property tax was.

Ms. Bohmke said that it had risen to $5.89, an increase of $0.40.

Ms. Vanuch asked if they could take some time to talk about that.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to make sure that the public understood that in addition to the $0.908 on the screen, it included the fire levy but not the increase in personal property tax.

Scott Mayausky, Commissioner of the Revenue, said that the personal property tax of $5.49, which was expected to generate revenue similar to last year's figures. He said that during his discussions with Ms. Light, he learned that there was a $3 million increase incorporated into the County Administrator's budget. He said that the additional $0.40 in the proposed rate covered this $3 million increase. He said that to clarify, the $5.49 served as the effective rate for this tax category, differing from real estate but generating about the same revenue.

Ms. Vanuch said that they had readvertised at $5.89. She said that however, this was not necessary to bring in the same amount of funding.

Mr. Mayausky said that he was not suggesting that.

Ms. Allen said that the Transportation budget and funding sources were based on that additional money. She said that if they removed that $3 million, they must reassess which projects will not be funded. She said that this involved many of the major construction projects that were scheduled for this upcoming fiscal year.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Ms. Light could explain where that money was flowing in and how it was being used. She asked how it would affect their projects if they did not implement the $5.89 figure.

Ms. Light said that she spoke with Mr. Mayausky earlier today about the anticipated increases in personal property tax related to some businesses coming online. She said that there was $3.8 million anticipated in the Fiscal Year 25 budget for personal property growth, which included a typical growth of about 2.5% and some projects that they anticipated would be coming online for businesses with personal property associated with them.

Ms. Light said that in their discussions today, they estimated that $1.75 million was related to these businesses and about $0.20 on personal property, from $5.49 to $5.69, it would increase it to the same revenue number. She said that if the Board wanted to maintain the $5.49 rate, they would lose approximately $1.5 million in revenue and have to cut expenditures at some point.

Ms. Gary asked what the rate would need to be in order to not lose funding.

Ms. Allen said that it would be $5.69.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Mr. Mayausky had any additional information regarding the uploading he had achieved that would allow them to decrease the rate at all based on any new information.

Mr. Mayausky said no. He said that the last time they ran what was essentially a bill file, they ran it on March 19 and on March 26. He said that they picked up $400,000 in revenue. He said that they would continue to run it every week, but it looked like they would come in close to what they generated last year at $5.49. He said that to achieve additional revenue, they would have to go above $5.49.

Dr. Yeung asked if $5.69 was necessary to level the funding.

Mr. Mayausky said that $5.69 would get them the additional funding discussed by Ms. Light. He said that if they left it at $5.49, they would generate the same revenue as last year.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the rate necessary to achieve Mr. Vosburg's proposed budget numbers would be $5.69.

Mr. Mayausky said that he would defer to the Budget Director.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the percentages would change if they ran the numbers at a higher rate.

Mr. Mayausky said that they had been working through the business filing process each week, and consequently, the number would continue to increase. He said that the revenue generated from $5.49 would rise. He said that they would continue working with the Budget Director. He said that by the time others sat down to vote on the rate, they should have accurate figures. He said that he anticipated that by the end of next week, they would be close to determining the final number. He said that this was not true of the car tax.

Ms. Vanuch said that they would not be voting on the car tax on Tuesday.

Mr. Mayausky said that was what he had discussed previously with the Board.

Ms. Bohmke said that she thought that they would be re-voting on April 2. She said that the question was whether Mr. Mayausky would have additional numbers in the next two weeks. She asked if there was a benefit to waiting if they could reduce the rate at all and still bring in the same amount of revenue.

Mr. Mayausky said that the longer they waited, the more accurate the numbers would be. He said that waiting until the second meeting in April was the traditional meeting when they set that rate. He said that the data was usually good by then, and the Board usually decided at that time.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to note her concern with how many decisions the Board was pushing out.

Mr. Vosburg said that if the Board adopted the budget on April 2 with a lowered personal property tax rate that did not match what was necessary to cover the costs of their projects, they would have to eliminate projects from their plans.

Ms. Bohmke said that there was consensus from the Board to set the personal property rate at the second meeting in April.

Ms. Krauss said that Ms. Bohmke had an earlier question regarding the increase in community engagement budget. She said that this increase was primarily due to the allocation of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for initiatives such as CityBot and GoGov, which were related to their website. She said that additionally, funds were shifted from non-departmental sources to address specific needs related to OnBase and strategic planning software for the Board. She said that the budget also included a position conversion and provisions for salary increases if the Board decided to retain those.

Mr. Vosburg said that to summarize, there were three Board members who were supportive of the $0.908 rate, two who were unsupportive, and two undecided.

Ms. Bohmke said that she believed that was correct. She said that it appeared that they may need a budget work session on Tuesday. She said that people may have their individual decisions, but they must act as a Board and make decisions as a majority of the Board. She said that they must go back to the drawing board unless a Board member changes their mind.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was not going into the budget meeting at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday without knowing where they would set the tax rate. She said that it was unfair to budget staff who created all the resolutions and accurate numbers. She said that one year, they had a mistake in all the budget numbers, and the fault of that mistake rested with the Board because of their last-minute decisions.

Mr. English said that he would make things easier by stating his support for the $0.908 rate.

Ms. Bohmke said that in that case, another budget meeting would not be necessary unless it was to discuss the CIP. She asked if Ms. Light had information regarding the CIP.

Ms. Light said that before discussing the Capital Improvement Program, there appeared to be some support from the Board to allocate additional funding for schools' 3R projects. She said that the topic was briefly mentioned regarding setting aside funding. She said that staff had investigated potential additional funding sources to support the 3R program. She said that between Carl Lewis and Capital Project Reserves, they estimated $4 million could be provided for this purpose.

Ms. Light said that debt issuance could increase by approximately $6 million. She said that $10 million could be allocated for schools' 3R projects in Fiscal Year 25. She said that in their Capital Improvement Program discussions with the Board, they focused on issues affecting Fiscal Year 25, such as the Carl Lewis rebuild proposal, which was suggested to be postponed, with the $1.4 million being reallocated to schools' 3R projects.

Ms. Light said that the question was, based on their earlier discussion, was this funding allocated, were they budgeting or appropriating it, or was it being set aside in a fund balance reserve for the School Board in case of emergencies.

Ms. Bohmke asked what Ms. Light's recommendation was for the best way for the schools to access those funds.

Ms. Light said that her recommendation would be that if they had significant funding needs, it should be budgeted and appropriated to the School Board, with the understanding that as soon as the Board of Supervisors allocated those funds, they did not know what they would spend them on. She said that they could switch them out or do whatever they see as important to them, but she believed that they had indicated they had a significant need and had provided data to assist with that.

Ms. Bohmke said that they could put it in the resolution and draft it; although they could do whatever they wanted, they could specify in the resolution that these funds were provided for this specific purpose. She said that she did not believe this would hurt.

Ms. Gary asked if Ms. Bohmke could repeat the details of what she was trying to do. She said that she was taking notes.

Ms. Bohmke said that they would create a new reserve for schools specifically designed for emergency purposes. She said that upon transferring all funds to their disposal, the schools have complete autonomy in allocating the resources. She said that their control was limited to categorical funding, which she did not endorse.

Ms. Bohmke said that the only thing the Board could do, and had done so in years past, when the Board approved the schools' budget, they could specify that $3.5 million had been set aside for emergency purposes. She said that the schools could potentially utilize this money for other purposes, such as purchasing a new building.

Ms. Gary said that she was good with doing it that way. She said that it was a good accountability measure for what their intentions were.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was for their intentions, but it had no strings attached.

Ms. Light said that in Fiscal Year 25, they could increase debt for schools, allocating VPSA funding of an additional $6 million for their 3R programs. She said that approximately $10 million could be allocated if the Board approved for FY25. She said that they had progressed plans for Musselman Park in Fiscal Year 25, following seven votes in favor of moving Drew Middle School forward, also starting in Fiscal Year 25. She said that regarding Elementary School 19, staff sought further clarification from the Board regarding their desired course of action.

Ms. Allen said that on Tuesday, they had decided as a Board that they would negotiate with Germanna. She said that if they could not secure that site, four Board members had expressed their desire to move forward. She said that she did not recall the timeline for back-and-forth communication. She said that eventually, they would hold a closed session for discussing the offer.

Ms. Bohmke said that was accurate. She said that she had a sidebar conversation with Ms. Gary after that. She said that one of her concerns, which she also shared, was that building the school so close to a data center was not recommended. She said that in their discussion, she herself expressed that ideally, the site should be at least half a mile or one mile away from the data center for safety reasons. She said that if the project were in her district, she would prefer the school to be located further away from such facilities.

Ms. Allen said that it was in her district.

Ms. Bohmke said that was correct. She said that she had not thought about her district going up that far, but Ms. Allen was correct. She said that currently, there were Brooke Point, Stafford Middle, and Stafford Elementary schools in the area. She said that both Stafford Middle School and Brooke Point were located near the data centers.

Ms. Gary said that she was aware of their concerns, which is why she brought up this issue in their discussions. She said that she knew that this was something they needed to consider when examining the CUP for the data center and the proposed elementary school location near Germanna site. She said that she was referring to the CUP now approved for the data center. She said that some members of the public may have concerns about placing an elementary school so close to the data center.

Ms. Gary said that since they had a majority in favor of moving forward with Elementary School 19, they should continue on that track. She said that she was not against discussing options with Germanna, but she thought it would be a waste of energy. She said that right now, their kids need seats. She said that she had overheard that if they did not get seats open soon, they may end up with the scale of a campus of trailers. She said that she would like to move forward with Elementary 19. She said that VPSA was not ideal, but it was what they had right now. She said that they needed a school.

Ms. Gary said that she was aware of their concerns, which is why she brought up this issue in their discussions. She said that she knew that this was something they needed to consider when examining the CUP for the data center and the proposed elementary school location near Germanna site. She said that she was referring to the CUP now approved for the data center. She said that some members of the public may have concerns about placing an elementary school so close to the data center.

Mr. Diggs asked about the school's proximity to the data center and whether they were discussing possible contamination due to cancer-causing substances.

Ms. Bohmke said that if they looked at the research that had been done, it was the microwaves emitted from data centers that affect the brains of young people.

Mr. English said that he felt like he was in one right now considering how his brain currently felt. He said that regarding Elementary School 19, he felt that the school budget would not be moved to Embrey Mill. He said that they were proceeding with their plan. He said that he did not like it at Brooke Point either.

Mr. English said that he wanted to go on record in saying that he did not think it was a good place; he thought it was a horrible place. He said that he would like to see them pause this decision, but they were not going to bend and they had their heels dug in on it. He said that he would not hold them up with 19.

Ms. Bohmke said that she understood that they needed the seats. She said that when she pulled up the plans that Mr. Vosburg had sent them that day for the school site, and when she visited the site and knew exactly where it would be situated, and when she looked at how close that school is, she wanted to call Ms. Gary and ask if she could imagine all the construction going on for two and a half years at that site. She said that in her mind, it was the biggest travesty in this County.

Ms. Bohmke said that the Board of Supervisors was the funding body, so she questioned why they would allow the School Board to do this when they were not transparent and increased the budget by $25 million. She said that in terms of debt service, they were not even able to participate in that conversation regarding the size of the elementary school.

Ms. Bohmke said that they did not consider the Board of Supervisors, but they were now showing them the new middle school prototype. She said that at the end of the day, when they read the legislation in Richmond, they were the ones who were accountable. She said that they could decide and say no, they did not want that school built there. She said that her primary reason was safety and congestion.

Mr. English said that he completely agreed with Ms. Bohmke.

Ms. Gary said that the Board had decided.

Ms. Bohmke said that this Board had not decided.

Ms. Gary said that four of them had said they should go forward.

Ms. Bohmke said that those members could speak for themselves. She said that it was their Board’s responsibility to weigh in on this. She said that they had a suitable site at Embrey Mill, which had been recommended by the Superintendent for development. She said that she would vote against this proposal because she believed it was ridiculous.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would hate to be a parent, child, teacher, support person, cafeteria worker, or the person who cuts the grass at Brooke Point during the two and a half years it would take to construct the school at that location. She said that people would ask what was happening there, and they would answer that the community never knew about it.

Mr. English said that he agreed entirely with Ms. Bohmke regarding her concerns. He said that they had not been transparent in their actions. He said that they would not listen to the Board of Supervisors about 19. He asked if there was a way for them to temporarily halt this process and gather community input from everyone involved. He said that perhaps they should hold a special meeting to simply listen to what the community had to say.

Mr. English said that he not believe their information was accurate. He said that Ms. Gary would be catching the heat because it was in her district. He said that the Board owed it to Ms. Gary and the taxpayers, but he did not see what they could do. He said that he would be willing to pump the brakes and have a community meeting about it.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would approve of that.

Ms. Allen said that she believed that Widewater and Aquia predominantly supplied Brooke. She said that her constituents had known about this decision, and although she had expressed her dissatisfaction, she had not heard any complaints from parents. She said that this topic had been discussed ad nauseum in Board meetings for the past two months, appearing in newspapers and social media. She said that despite this, she had not seen anyone up in arms besides their Board in an overwhelming fashion.

Ms. Allen said that some constituents may feel this way, but she had not heard from her constituents that they did not want it or that it would be destructive to Brooke Point students. She said that the second point she would like to bring up was regarding what Mr. English said. She said that if they said no, they were not getting the elementary school, the School Board would not change, so the question was what they would do for the next two years in terms of schools.

Ms. Allen said that she was not referring to the delivery of the schools, but in general, if they would pause building a school for another year and a half. She said that there was so much unknown in turnover on their Board in terms of what they want to do, and the only thing she knew was that there was an opportunity to build a school here and now. She said that as much as she did not want Brooke Point to be disturbed, she did not want to hold up the process of putting millions of dollars into trailers until they figured out where to put a school.

Mr. Diggs said that he had a question and a statement. He said that he remembered when they were having this conversation before, he could not remember which School Board member said it, but when they did Stafford High School, school was in session when they built the school. He asked if that was correct.

Ms. Bohmke said yes, but it was much further away when that happened.

Mr. Diggs said that he had gone on record at the beginning that he did not like the location of the school, but he had concerns about delaying it. He said that he believed that constituents would vote in favor of School Board members if they exhibited confidence in their actions. He said that he agreed that they were not involved in the decision-making process. He said that he shared concerns about expanding the school's size without consulting or notifying them.

Mr. Diggs said that he would emphasize that their primary focus should be on the well-being of children currently in these conditions. He said that the kids in the trailers raised safety concerns for him. He said that he trusted that Stafford County voters would make informed decisions if they perceived that the School Board had endangered their children's safety.

Mr. Diggs said that so far, outside of their Board meetings, he had not encountered the overwhelming response or engagement on parents being upset about this. He said that it had been more of a conversation they had had in the room. He said that he had had a few, but most of the people that said things to him were constituents from Embrey Mill who wanted it in Embrey Mill, and it had not been from elsewhere in the community.

Ms. Gary said that to the same point, she had not been hearing people upset about this topic. She said that in fact, she had encountered individuals who had mostly shared their concerns about overcrowded schools and had expressed happiness about the prospect of a new school being built. She said that this was the path that the School Board had chosen. She said that they could continue discussing their disapproval, but she believed the School Board was aware of their concerns but was determined to proceed with their plan for that site.

Ms. Gary said that the community was not upset to the extent that they might think; they were simply relieved that a new school would be built, which would alleviate some of the overcrowding issues. She said that this was the reality of the situation. She said that it may not be as exciting in a negative way as some might want it to be for whatever purposes. She said that the people just wanted schools for their children, and it was very simple.

Mr. English asked if it was possible for them to organize a community meeting after this budget concludes. He said that they could schedule it during the first week of May, ensuring that it did not conflict with other events. He said that this would provide an opportunity for community input at locations such as Brooke Point High School or other accessible venues. He said that by doing so, they could gauge public interest so the Board could know.

Mr. English said that if no one shows up, they would know where the chips fall, and if a lot of people show up, they would know where they were and maybe the School Board would change their mind based on the citizen input. He said that the citizens should be given the opportunity to speak, and he would like to do this in the next 30 days after the budget.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was not opposed to the idea, but it would likely have to be in the last week of April due to May events.

Ms. Gary said that she had held a couple of town halls and people were not showing up and being upset about this. She said that she could invite school staff to the next one, as she had already invited her counterpart on the School Board to her future meetings. She said that they could have the discussions regarding how they shared the information, but it was not really that big of a deal.

Ms. Allen said that she was okay with waiting in the spirit of finding common ground. She said that they had all had to sacrifice and make tough decisions through the past two months, so waiting two extra weeks would not delay the school process. She said that she was okay with something at the end of April at Brooke Point so that families affected by the process can come out and speak.

Mr. Vosburg said that regarding the timing, the Board was scheduled to adopt the CIP on Tuesday, which was where they would impact the placement of Elementary School 19. He said that in terms of addressing the timing, they would have to change the CIP if they were going to wait a couple of weeks.

Ms. Bohmke said that they had previously adopted CIPs in June.

Ms. Light said that there would be a definite budget impact during Fiscal Year 25. She said that as a result, there would be budget appropriation in the capital projects fund within the school's capital projects fund for Elementary School 19. She said that if the Board decided to postpone this action and not allocate the budget for Elementary School 19 at that time, they could do so. She said that however, since this would exceed 1% of the total budget, it would necessitate a public hearing. She said that they would advertise a public hearing, after which a budget appropriation would be brought before the Board at a later date.

Ms. Allen said that upon considering that information, she retracted her previous statement about spending $30,000 on advertising something that people can discuss at the public hearing.

Ms. Gary said that this was something no one at her town halls had shown up to complain about.

Ms. Bohmke said that there were four Supervisors in support of moving forward with Elementary School 19 in the CIP. She said that voting against this item meant one must vote against the CIP.

Ms. Light said that it would also be taken out of the budget.

Ms. Bohmke said that was correct. She asked what other items in the CIP should be discussed.

Ms. Light said that they were included in the materials they had provided because they significantly impacted the Fiscal Year 25 budget. She said that the Board's decisions regarding the budget and the Capital Improvement Plan were imminent. She said that staff was happy to address any other questions people may have about the CIP.

Ms. Bohmke said that there was a project in the CIP for this upcoming fiscal year for converting the tennis courts at Pratt Park to pickleball courts. She said that she would recommend that they consider allocating funds from a contingency fund or another source to expand the other court to six pickleball courts. She said that regarding the $919,000 allocated for the skate park at Brooks Park in this year's CIP.

Ms. Bohmke said that currently, there was $643,000 budgeted for the skate park in the current fiscal year, which was not shown as an expenditure; therefore, she assumed it was in an encumbrance. She said that this amount was listed under Fiscal Year 26, but not in Fiscal Year 25. She said that she had asked Mr. Morris who put $919,000 in addition to $600,000 for the initial skatepark in the CIP. She said that she did not know of anyone on this Board who agreed to that.

Ms. Light said that the CIP requests were primarily developed by departments. She said that Parks, Recreation, Community Facilities, and Tourism conducted a lot of community surveys and get input from the community. She said that this was from that input. She said that in the 2022 citizen survey, for Parks and Recreation facilities overall, they were lower than average than the amenities provided, which spoke to some of the amenities for citizens.

Ms. Bohmke said that she felt like they had other community needs for activities such as volleyball and gymnastics. She said that after they built this facility at Brooks Park that she had worked very hard on with Supervisors Thomas and Coen, she would like to see those dollars reallocated to some other projects where they had needs. She said that she would like the entire Board to have that conversation.

Dr. Yeung said that she would be voting against the CIP. She said that she would pull out the funding because the growth of students in Garrisonville, and the area northeast of I-95, required a new school if there was infrastructure. She said that they may have a total of thousand students, but they needed buses and infrastructure for these children to attend. She said that she would be voting against that.

Dr. Yeung said that regarding Pratt Park, she had asked for the bathrooms to be updated. She said that she had walked to Pratt Park for the past three weeks and noticed a bathroom was out of order. She said that they needed a bathroom at Pratt Park. She said that some may prefer additional recreational facilities like pickleball, volleyball, or gymnastics, but basic bathroom maintenance is crucial for public spaces. She said that although Pratt Park was not within her district, she believed that addressing this issue should be a priority for Stafford County.

Ms. Bohmke said that she believed that was included in the CIP.

Dr. Yeung said that the bathroom had been broken for years. She said that she had talked about a safety issue at Woodland. She said that nobody said anything. She asked if Mr. Morris had an update on that.

Mr. Morris said that he would have to confirm with Ms. Light, but he believed funding was available for resurfacing the Woodland pool in the FY25 proposed budget 3R list. He said that there was additional funding in the outyears for some other things at Woodland as well.

Ms. Light said that in FY26, there was $307,000 allocated for Woodland pools to replace decking. She said that there was another Woodland pools renovation in FY32.

Mr. Diggs asked Ms. Bohmke had suggested they not move forward with the project for the skate park.

Ms. Bohmke said no. She said that there were two different projects.

Mr. Morris said that he would like to provide some background information. He said that for approximately ten years, they had needed to upgrade the skate park at Brooks Park. He said that about six years ago, they had allocated funds for this project in the CIP, which was now proposed for Fiscal Year 25. He said that they had held community meetings to design the skate park, during which users had requested a second phase. He said that they had suggested adding a bowl and other elements beyond what was currently done. He said that the second phase was included in Fiscal Year 26, totaling $919,000.

Ms. Bohmke said that FY26 was not in the outyears.

Mr. Morris said that he meant that the item was not funded for this current year. He said that the Board could move the project if they chose to do so.

Mr. Diggs said that this clarified things for him. He said that it was one of the most utilized spaces he had seen.

Ms. Bohmke said that she agreed. She said that she had advocated for it for many years, meeting with the representatives of the skate parks and participating in meetings to learn about it. She said that she was very surprised to see almost $1 million one year after they had a skate park.

Mr. Diggs said that he understood that. He said that he had a question about the Ferry Farm Trail. He said that he was accosted last night about that, so he would like to know where that was in the CIP.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was very far out, according to her information.

Ms. Light said that the funding was in FY34 and was $2,650,000.

Ms. Bohmke said that a conversation their Board should have was about what projects had more impact to the community. She said that she was not saying that the skate park proposal was not important, but it was a conversation their Board needed to have. She said that she would also like to see the trail improved.

Ms. Allen said that regarding pickleball, the potential project she mentioned could expand pickleball opportunities in the County as well.

Ms. Bohmke said that part of the reason pickleball was so inexpensive was that it utilized existing foundation, so their expenses would not involve starting from scratch.

Mr. English said that at Curtis Park, they may have pickleball there, but he believed they needed to resurface that. He said that he had heard someone had gotten hurt up there. He said that he had already reached out to staff to assess the situation.

Ms. Gary said that she had a question about expanding the pickleball project and making more courts. She asked where they funds would be sourced from and what was the amount for the projects.

Ms. Light said that the current cost for two courts was $159,000. She said that for three courts, it would be an additional $80,000, for a total of $238,500.

Ms. Gary asked where those funds would come from.

Ms. Light said that they were likely allocated from the capital projects reserves, which was from the prior year's fund balance.

Ms. Bohmke said that there was an outstanding item regarding the light at Falmouth.

Ms. Allen asked if they followed the Sheriff's recommendation of not requiring the two court deputies, could they free up that money for VDOT and the traffic light.

Ms. Light said possibly, based on what the traffic light would cost. She said that Fire and Rescue had some costs related to that from a while ago. She said that this item could be brought to the Board outside of the budget process. She said that it would require a budget appropriation at a later date, but they knew that funding was available in the Volunteer Fund for Fire and Rescue. She said that it could come back at a later date when Fire and Rescue had the opportunity to approximate a cost.

Ms. Allen asked if they were not including the two court deputies. She asked if they could use the funding towards the VDOT mowing.

Mr. English said that he would ask GWRC about using funds from GO Virginia. He said that it was a safety issue, so he would check to see if it applied.

Ms. Bohmke asked Chief Cardello if they could use the Volunteer Reserve Fund for this type of expense.

Chief Cardello said yes, they could. He said that he would like to meet with VDOT, because it was three or four years ago when VDOT had told them they could do it, but VDOT would not pay for it. He said that he could not recall the figure it would cost, but he would bring back information to the Board.

Ms. Vanuch asked if they used the Volunteer Reserve Funds, it would still have to go through the budget.

Ms. Light said that it would not be a part of the budget, but would come before the Board as an item to budget and appropriate at a future date or resolution.

Ms. Vanuch said that she recalled discussing this matter at the Public Safety Committee and did not recall why they did not move forward with it.

Chief Cardello said that he believed it was cost factor where they wanted to try something else first that was much less. He said that they did two at WaWa and YMCA, where they installed special arrows.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Chief Cardello considered this a safety issue.

Chief Cardello said that he did.

Mr. Vosburg said that he wanted to confirm that the Board was amenable to staff bringing back this item separate from the budget, including an updated cost estimate. He said that they would craft it so it would be funded from the Volunteer Reserve Fund. He said that they would also incorporate the cut of the second court deputy but adding in the VDOT costs for the manicure.

Ms. Vanuch asked where the canine retirement fund was.

Mr. Vosburg said that it was about $14,500. He said that it could be worked into the budget.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Chief Cardello could discuss the fire marshal position and its duties.

Chief Cardello said that the position would be for conducting inspections in multiple types of County occupancies.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was a small amount of money. She asked if they were converting from part-time to full-time.

Chief Cardello said that he would defer to Chief Grainger.

Chief Grainger said that it was uniform master technician position that would be assigned to the fire marshal's office to do routine standard inspections. He said that they were not an investigator deputy fire marshal, but a lower-level position. He said that the reason it was $22,000 was because there was a revenue offset based on them doing additional inspections, and this lowered the total cost of the budget.

Dr. Yeung asked what happened to the position that they had discussed where a person was going on maternity leave.

Chief Cardello said that they had scheduled interviews for that position for April 10. He said that it was in process.

CLOSED MEETING

At 8:35 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to adopt Resolution CM24-11 to authorize closed session.

Ms. Bohmke confirmed that the motion passed unanimously by voice vote (7-0).

Resolution CM24-11 reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board desires to hold a Closed Meeting for (1) discussion of recruitment for the County Administrator position and related employment matters; 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 28th day of March, 2024, that it be and hereby does authorize discussion of the above matters in Closed Meeting.

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

At 8:49 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to adopt Resolution CM24-11(C) to certify the closed meeting.

Ms. Bohmke confirmed that the motion passed unanimously by voice vote (7-0).

Resolution CM24-11 (C) reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY THE ACTIONS OF THE
STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN A CLOSED
MEETING ON FEBRUARY 6, 2024

WHEREAS, the Board has, on this the 28th day of March, 2024, adjourned into a Closed Meeting in accordance with a formal vote of the Board and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Stafford County Board of Supervisors does hereby certify, on this the 28th day of March, 2024, that to the best of each member's knowledge (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the Motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened, were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to waive the Board's by-laws.

Ms. Bohmke confirmed that the motion passed by voice vote (6-1), Ms. Gary dissenting.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to approve Resolution R24-145, to appoint Mr. Greg Meadows as Interim County Administrator and Clerk of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors, and ratifying a contract with the Berkeley Group, LLC.

Ms. Bohmke confirmed that the motion passed by voice vote (6-1), Ms. Gary dissenting.

<u>Resolution R24-145 reads as follows:</u>

A RESOLUTION APPOINTING F. CRAIG MEADOWS AS INTERIM STAFFORD COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR AND CLERK OF THE STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, AND RATIFYING A CONTRACT WITH THE BERKLEY GROUP LLC

WHEREAS, the Board has received and accepted the resignation of County Administrator Randal E. Vosburg, effective April 5, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to appoint an Interim County Administrator and Clerk of the Board to fill the duties of the position until a permanent administrator can be selected (Services); and

WHEREAS, the Berkley Group LLC can provide the Services; and

WHEREAS, the Services can be cooperatively procured through a contract between the Berkley Group LLC and the City of Lexington, Virginia, dated October 5, 2022, with an initial term ending October 4, 2023, with five automatic one-year renewal terms; and

WHEREAS, the County has already entered into a contract pursuant to Stafford County Rider Agreement No. 24032, which due to the expected expenses incurred for provision of the Services, requires approval by the Board; and

WHEREAS, the Berkley Group LLC submitted a work order to provide the Services by F. Craig Meadows and the Board reviewed the work order, including the scope of services and fees, and found it to be reasonable; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to enter the work order and fill the position, as described herein;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 28th day of March, 2024, that it be and hereby does ratify Stafford County Rider Agreement No. 24032, with an initial term beginning on August 22, 2023 and ending October 4, 2023, with five automatic one-year renewal terms and authorize payments in the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars ($200,000) or more for local government support services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chairman is authorized to execute a work order with the Berkley Group LLC to provide interim county administrator services, consistent with the terms discussed with the Board in closed session; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Board appoints F. Craig Meadows as the Interim County Administrator and Clerk of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors, effective April 6, 2022 (Effective Date); and

BE IT STILL FURTHER RESOLVED that before the Effective Date, on Wednesday, April 3, 2024, Mr. Meadows shall begin a paid transitional period, but shall have no power or authority to act until the Effective Date.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:51 p.m., Chairman Bohmke adjourned the March 28, 2024 Stafford County Board of Supervisor’s work session.

Randal E. Vosburg
County Administrator

Meg Bohmke
Chairman