BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 17, 2024

CALL TO ORDER – A regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Meg Bohmke, Chairman, at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17, 2024 in Board Chambers, George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford VA.

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

Also in attendance were William Ashton, County Administrator; Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney; Taylor Dunn, Deputy Clerk; various staff members; and other interested parties.

INVOCATION

Mr. English led the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Vanuch led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

CHAIR REMARKS

Ms. Bohmke said that she would like to extend her congratulations to the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism and Facilities Department for a wonderful tree lighting event. She said that although she was unable to attend, Vice Chairman Allen reported that it was a great time of fellowship and fun for the residents, with over 2,600 people in attendance. She said that she was aware that it was a very cold day, but 'tis the season, unlike the day they were having today. She said that speaking of holidays, their offices would be closed on December 23 through December 25, 2024, and January 1, 2025 for the holidays. She said that the courts will have different days off, so please visit the County's website to find out which offices are closed.

Ms. Bohmke said that the R-Board and the landfill will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's. She said that the Regional Landfill and Belman Recycling will close at 12:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. She said that if they had not yet nominated someone for the Florence D. Helms Award, please visit the Parks and Rec website to make a nomination. She said that the award recognizes those who have gone above and beyond in volunteer activities in memory of one of Stafford's most inspiring park volunteers, Florence Helms. She said that volunteers are crucial to the County's mission of serving residents; without them, they could not provide the breadth of service they do.

Ms. Bohmke said that as she mentioned earlier, this is the Board's only meeting in December and her last as Chairwoman for this year. She said that she would like to thank her fellow Board members, staff, and all the members of the public who have spoken and attended meetings. She said that this has been a great year of moving Stafford forward, and she is very appreciative of their efforts. She said that they will end the year with a redesigned State of the County, so she encourages them to watch each episode as it comes out at the end of this month.

Ms. Bohmke said that now, she would like to read a statement. She said that the Stafford County Board of Supervisors wishes to formally acknowledge and address the decisions surrounding Mary Basilea's recent removal from the Central Rappahannock Regional Library Board. She said that upon further investigation and review, the Board has determined that certain information initially presented during the decision-making process was inaccurate and misleading. She said that in light of this, the Board intends to take steps to amend the official meeting minutes, including removing the word "misconduct" as it does not accurately reflect the circumstances or the basis of the decision.

Ms. Bohmke said that the Board is committed to ensuring that all actions are taken based on accurate and verified information and to conducting a more full and thorough investigation of any claims presented. She said that moving forward, they will continue to prioritize transparency, accountability, and fairness in all matters before them. She said that it is unfortunate that the Board trusted the information provided by Supervisor Gary in closed session to be true and accurate. She said that thank you for understanding as they strive to improve and uphold the community's trust.

ADDITIONS – DELETIONS AND APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR AGENDA

William Ashton, County Administrator said that there were two deletions to the agenda. He said that Item 20 on the consent agenda, to authorize the County Administrator to execute a contract with S-Works for the bar screen project at the regional jail had been delayed until after the first of the new year due to procedural issues that needed to be addressed.

Mr. Ashton said that the second item to be deleted at the Chair's request was the commendation resolution of Langley Flight Foundation, which was supposed to be presented by Delegate Paul Milde, but he had other commitments. He said that therefore, they were rescheduling it to be on the General Assembly session and then invite him back.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to adopt the agenda as amended.

The Voting Board tally was:
    Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
    No: (0)

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
No: (0)

ITEM 1. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE OCTOBER 22, 2024 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN WORK SESSION: GENERAL FUND MINUTES

ITEM 2. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE NOVEMBER 7, 2024 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES

ITEM 3. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE NOVEMBER 19, 2024 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES

ITEM 4. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE NOVEMBER 20, 2024 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS GENERAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATION DINNER MINUTES

ITEM 5. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; R24-333; ENDORSE THE VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES' (VACO) 2025 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

ITEM 6. CAPITAL PROJECTS; R24-348; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A TASK ORDER WITH GANNETT FLEMING, INC. TO PERFORM CONSTRUCTION PHASE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THE SWITCHGEAR REPLACEMENT PROJECT AT THE AQUIA WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY

ITEM 7. CAPITAL PROJECTS; R24-368; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A LETTER OF NO PREJUDICE WITH VIRGINIA PUBLIC RAIL AUTHORITY (VPRA) TO START DESIGN TASKS TO RELOCATE OR REPLACE WATER AND SEWER LINES IMPACTED BY THE POTOMAC CREEK THIRD TRACK SOUTH (SIDING A) PROJECT

ITEM 8. CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; R24-364; AUTHORIZE THE INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF TWO "WATCH FOR CHILDREN" SIGNS, ONE ON APPLING ROAD (SR-1560) AND ONE ON ASHBROOK ROAD (SR-1563), IN THE COLONIES AT PARK RIDGE SUBDIVISION

ITEM 9. CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; R24-365; AUTHORIZE THE INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ONE "WATCH FOR CHILDREN" SIGN ON CARNABY STREET (SR-1590) IN THE AUSTIN'S LANDINGS SUBDIVISION

ITEM 10. CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; R24-366; AUTHORIZE THE INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ONE "WATCH FOR CHILDREN" SIGN ON TREE HAVEN LANE (SR-800)

ITEM 11. DEVELOPMENT SERVICES; R24-370; PETITION VDOT TO INCLUDE WAYPOINTE COURT WITHIN WAYPOINTE SUBDIVISION INTO THE SECONDARY SYSTEM OF STATE HIGHWAYS

ITEM 12. FACILITIES; R24-352; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A WORK ORDER WITH CENTENNIAL CONTRACTORS ENTERPRISES, INC. TO REPLACE THE FLOORING AT THE PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

ITEM 13. FACILITIES; R24-363; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH MILLENNIUM POOLS AND SPAS LLC TO RESURFACE AND REPAIR THE WOODLANDS POOL AND LAGOON

ITEM 14. PLANNING AND ZONING; R24-369; BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE $487,500 FOR THE PURCHASE OF CONSERVATION EASEMENTS THROUGH THE PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (PDR) PROGRAM ON TAX MAP PARCEL NOS. 25- 38 AND 56-112C

ITEM 15. UTILITIES; R24-247; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A TASK ORDER WITH SULLIVAN, DONAHOE, AND INGALLS, A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION, FOR ENGINEERING AND SURVEYING SERVICES FOR THE CHATHAM HEIGHTS WATERLINE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

ITEM 16. UTILITIES; R24-248; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO APPROVE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES WITH SYNAGRO-WWT, INC., FOR THE TRANSPORTATION AND DISPOSAL OF BIO-SOLIDS FROM LITTLE FALLS RUN WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY

ITEM 17. UTILITIES; R24-250; RATIFY A CONTRACT WITH W.W. GRAINGER, INC. FOR INDUSTRIAL AND BUILDING SUPPLIES WITH RELATED EQUIPMENT, ACCESSORIES, SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

ITEM 18. UTILITIES; R24-270; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH PARKSON CORPORATION FOR REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT AT COUNTY WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES

ITEM 19. UTILITIES; R24-285; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO ADVERTISE A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO STAFFORD COUNTY CODE, CHAPTER 25, DIVISION 2, "WATER SUPPLY EMERGENCY ORDINANCE," TO UPDATE PROVISIONS TO PROTECT THE COUNTY'S WATER SUPPLY

ITEM 21. UTILITIES; R24-343; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A TASK ORDER WITH WHITMAN, REQUARDT AND ASSOCIATES, LLP FOR ENGINEERING DESIGN AND INSPECTION SERVICES FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE GRAFTON WATER STORAGE TANK

ITEM 22. UTILITIES; R24-358; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO ADVERTISE A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER GRANTING A PERMANENT UTILITY

EASEMENT TO DOMINION ENERGY VIRGINIA ON COUNTY-OWNED TAX MAP PARCEL NOS. 29-28 AND 29-29

ITEM 23. UTILITIES; R24-360; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A WORK ORDER WITH SAGRES CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION FOR THE CHATHAM LANE WATERLINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION OF COMMENDING RESOLUTION TO THE LANGLEY FLIGHT FOUNDATION

The presentation was postponed.

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

1. Al Watkins, George Washington District, said that he wished everyone a happy holiday season. He said that approximately a month ago, he spoke here before them regarding the proposed Rappahannock River Bridge crossing, specifically discussing some information that had not yet been made available to the public. He said that he had hoped that this information would have been presented at the November 20 Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO) public meeting; unfortunately, it was not.

   Mr. Watkins said that as a result, the general public filling out surveys that request their preference for the bridge and parkway option were missing crucial pieces of information that could significantly impact their choices. He said that given the complexity of this issue, it would be impractical to attempt to convey this information within the three-minute time frame allocated for public comment. He said that he looked forward to the opportunity to present this information to the Board in a more detailed and thorough manner. He said that he was confident that requiring as much information as possible would enable a more informed decision-making process.

2. Monica Carolan, Garrisonville District, She said that she appreciated the opportunity to express her concerns and opposition to Buc-ee's proposed location on Austin Ridge Drive. She said that she firmly believed that the residents of Austin Ridge and surrounding communities would be negatively impacted by the mega gas station. She said that her husband and she had lived in Stafford since 2003 and moved into the Austin Ridge subdivision in 2009. She said that she had no issue with Buc-ee's; her opposition lay with the proposed location and the traffic it would bring to their community.

   Ms. Carolan said that during a recent road trip to South Carolina, her husband and she visited the Buc-ee's in Florence. She said that the visual of the mega gas station from the interstate was overwhelming, with 120 gas pumps and a large footprint. She said that it was a busy Saturday afternoon in October, so the gas station was extremely busy, with customers at the pumps, vehicles lining up, and people eating in their cars. She said that the convenience store was packed, and it felt like an amusement park inside. She said that she had to line up to use the women's restroom.

Ms. Carolan said that one of her key takeaways was that the Florence Buc-ee's location was not near any housing areas. She said that the 24-hour flushing toilets would put a significant strain on their water supply and decrease household water pressures. She said that although Buc-ee's advertises no trucks or semis were allowed to park on their properties, she observed numerous trucks parked on the streets surrounding the Florence Buc-ee's, so she guessed the truckers just walked over to the convenience store.

Ms. Carolan said that she wondered where they would park if they had a Buc-ee's location here – perhaps along Austin Ridge Drive or in the new Embrey Mills shopping area. She said that that was a concern for her. She said that there were also so many vehicles, RVs, and trailers at the center when they visited. She said that it was crowded, and she could only imagine how busy it would be at the height of summer. She said that she believed that the large number of vehicles Buc-ee's would attract to their roads would have a significant impact on local traffic navigating through their area.

Ms. Carolan said that Austin Ridge Drive and Courthouse Road were thoroughfares that provided access to the local hospital, schools, and residents' homes, access for residents to enter 95 and access to many new businesses in the area. She said that additionally, if a soccer tournament or a swim meet were happening at the Rouse Center, it would create a severe traffic nightmare. She said that their area was already notorious for heavy traffic congestion along Interstate 95. She said that she thought it likely would be that Buc-ee's would add to that dilemma.

Ms. Carolan said that the Embrey Mills Development had brought back two regular-sized gas stations and introduced some welcome new businesses to the area, including a fantastic cinnamon roll store. She said that she found it difficult to imagine these or any of the new local businesses wanting to compete with a mega gas station. She said that in conclusion, she did not think this location was suitable for Buc-ee's and she suggested they preserve Stafford's reputation as the birthplace of George Washington, rather than the place along 95 with the Buc-ee's.

3. Terrell McCandrew, Falmouth District, said that he said that he was here to address the situation with Mary Becelia as well. He said that first, he would like to take them back about a year and a half ago, to a time when this chamber was quite agitated about two budgetary issues with the library that were incorrectly conflated into one. He said that members were upset, with one member expressing frustration that the Board of Trustees would not listen to her, and another member referencing the wisdom of a Spotsylvania supervisor who they had not elected.

   Mr. McCandrew said that another member even suggesting that perhaps the Executive Director, a lifelong public servant before retirement, should be considered for removal, even though she had made the library what it is today. He said that moving forward to July, Mary Becelia had been serving on the Library Board of Trustees for over a year and was dedicated to her role. He said that he had known Ms. Becelia and her family for nearly two decades and had the utmost confidence in her.

Mr. McCandrew said that however, to her surprise in July, she was removed from the board. He said that he understood that this decision was made in a closed session. He said that while they did not want to discuss personal matters in public, he found it peculiar that nobody spoke with Ms. Becelia beforehand. He said that he appreciated Ms. Bohmke's previous comments regarding transparency, but he was surprised that Ms. Becelia was not consulted. He said that her removal was followed by a unanimous vote, and an opportunity to reconsider was later defeated five to two.

Mr. McCandrew said that subsequently, Ms. Becelia and her family attempted to contact Board members through various means, including phone calls, emails, and a registered letter, but received no response. He said that his main point was that he was wondering if this was how they treated volunteers in Stafford County, or if there was an underlying agenda at play. He said that he firmly believed that Mary deserved a more heartfelt apology. He said that he did not understand why the library situation was so difficult, but he believed they could do better here in Stafford.

4. Kristin Maxson, Falmouth District, wished everyone merry holidays. She said that numbers 17, 19, and 21 on the agenda did not specify district or location for utility upgrades in utilities. She said that number 25 driveway obstruction is violated by the cable companies as they parked their equipment right in the driveways and are doing current construction. She said that the soft shoulders can cause tire blowouts against the rough asphalt, and the road can sink. She said that as a result, tires can pop when trying to get back onto the road because the asphalt is rough.

   Ms. Maxson said that she hopes they will install gravel, but it does not look so. She said that she would also like to address the issue of carts before horses, which caused public confusion regarding calendars and working timeframes. She said that perhaps there were misspoken words and got confused on November 9, 2024 meeting minutes. She said that she gave apologies if misspoken words upset the chamber hearing; transparency and free speech are essential democratic essentials of what they know today from their forefathers. She asked how is 2024 carts before the horses, or the 2025 horses, would be handled without collision.

   Ms. Maxson said that next, arbitration of Stafford land banking, which is unfolding in the current land records, unfolding conflict data and value discrepancies with names of interest. She said that nationwide, a reset was directed on August 17, 2024. She asked how can the common land owner be fairly represented. She said that bond switching is just not the common Stafford citizen conduct with the yearly changes on page 107 of 446 pages. She said that regarding the STC project, she wanted to know if there was a missing pictorial slide. She said that with no agreement forward, no projections as stated by the Board, the STC project concerns planning and zoning.

   Ms. Maxson asked if the "T" stands for "target." She said that the document utility date, dated May 19, 2024, responds to the search as a tag. She asked if this translated as Stafford Targeted Community. She asked who knows; it was just a guess. She said that without contextualization, it is difficult for the public to understand the Stafford County for the public which it serves, so transparency is important. She said that that word was used on page 22 of 446. She said that she wished them a happy holiday and wonderful new year.

5. Don Gray, George Washington District, said that there was a property located on the east side of Celebrate Parkway, just south of the FBI building. He said that earlier this year, residents of Celebrate by Del Webb expressed concerns about the development at this site. He said that approximately four months ago, Supervisor Diggs was invited to address the residents and provide information about the property and its potential impact on their community. He said that he appreciated Supervisor Diggs' presence at their meeting.

   Mr. Gray said that during this meeting, Supervisor Diggs stated that ingress and egress to the activities at this property would only be through Commerce Parkway, and that there would be no access to Celebrate Parkway, thereby minimizing the impact on Celebrate Parkway traffic. He said that however, last week and earlier this week, the developer had been constructing a road at the south end of this property and removing curb and sidewalk to provide access to Celebrate Parkway. He asked: Did the developer mislead the Board of Supervisors regarding access to Celebrate Parkway? Is there a document outlining the developer's permitted and prohibited activities? And why were Stafford County residents being reassured that their concerns were unfounded, only to later discover that their concerns were valid?

6. Nancy Rueter, Garrisonville District, said that she wished everyone a happy holiday season and a happy new year. She said that she would like to briefly address two topics. She said that first was the situation with the Library Board. She said that she appreciated Ms. Bohmke’s apology. She said that reflecting on something she had worked on with her fifth-grade students, she thought it might be relevant to consider George Washington's Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior as they moved forward.

   Ms. Rueter said that at 16, George Washington copied 110 of these rules by hand, based on French Jesuit principles from 1595, which served as his guiding principles and, by example, those of this new nation. She said that she would like to highlight rules 45, 50, and 89 as they considered this situation with the Library Board and Ms. Becelia, as well as the Board of Supervisors. She said that Rule 45 read that being to advise or reprehend anyone, consider whether it ought to be in public or in private, presently or at some other time, and what terms to do it, and in improving, show no sign of chalor or anger, but do it with all sweetness and mildness.

   Ms. Rueter said that Rule 50 read, be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any. She said that Rule 89 read, speak not evil of the absent, for it is unjust. She said that she believed these principles had been addressed, and she appreciated that. She said that she thought it would be good for them to hear George Washington’s words; they were so connected with him. She said that the other topic she wanted to discuss was that she was reflecting on the situation with Buc-ee's.

   Ms. Rueter said that recently, they had discussed data centers and their impact on their community. She said that now, residents of Virginia would face an additional $23 monthly charge to Dominion Power. She said that they had talked about the data centers and their concerns, and here they were with impacts. She said that her word for them was that the intersection chosen for Buc-ee's was not good, it was not a good neighborhood for the development, and it was not beneficial for their community in Stafford. She said that she thought they needed to take a moment to reflect on the decisions they had made and carefully examine the situation at Buc-ee's.

7. Joe Brito, Rocky Run Road, said that he was here to discuss the environmental impacts of Option A of the river crossing. He said that as they could see on this slide, Option A presented significant concerns. He said that the stream and river impacts totaled 1,639 linear feet, and the orange color code indicated the highest level of impact, which he believed would be problematic, particularly with the waterfall. He said that the England Run waterfall was barely visible, but Option A would cross many streams at ground level, resulting in direct impacts to the streams with the culvert pipes.

   Mr. Brito said that the main stream going up went through the Belmont project. He said that the Belmont project's proposed corridor route ran directly through a resource protection area, which he feared would lead to siltation of the waterfall and create a lot of problems. He said that it would be difficult to run a corridor there next to the stream in the resource protection area. He said that the proposed overpass on Sanford Drive would further exacerbate the issue by raising the ground level and placing 20 feet of dirt in the resource protection area. He said that the main stream, which flowed north of Sanford Drive, would also be impacted, with every stream crossing resulting in significant environmental harm.

   Mr. Brito said that the top portion of the slide showed the streams, most of which were intermittent, but the main stream's crossings would have a devastating impact. He said that the bottom portion of the slide illustrated the potential consequences, with the waterfall becoming obscured by silt. He said that he was concerned that Corridor A would render the waterfall inaccessible. He said that Corridor B-2 was being pushed into the resource protection area, further threatening the environment. He said that provided was a better image of the waterfall, showing how clear the water was currently.

8. Molly Denham, Hartwood District, said that she would like to start by wishing everyone a wonderful holiday season and thanking everyone who helped plan and organize the tree lighting ceremony. She said that her family and she had a great time, and it was greatly appreciated. She said that it should be no surprise that she was here to advocate for their schools, especially since they were presenting twice tonight.

   Ms. Denham said that for over a decade, the school system had been underfunded, neglected, and left to function in conditions that no community should accept. She said that as a member of the CIP Advisory Committee, she had seen firsthand how poor governance and past decisions had placed the community's school system in an untenable situation. She said that the reality was that the schools were falling apart. She said that buildings were in disrepair due to a lack of funding for proper preventative maintenance.

   Ms. Denham said that the schools were overcrowded due to the increasing population. She said that the teachers, school administrators, and staff were significantly underpaid for the monumental task they placed before them. She said that they were the backbone of the education system working tirelessly to teach and guide their children, yet many were forced to stretch their own personal resources to provide basics for the children's needs. She said that the lack of true investment in them was an insult to their dedication and a disservice to their children's future. She said that these issues were not only unacceptable but also an impediment to the quality education she wanted for her child.

Ms. Denham said that past comments questioning the honesty and integrity of the school system's requests had only bred further division and gets them nowhere. She said that they could not afford to continue down that path and she urged the Board of Supervisors to really listen and understand the desperate needs of the schools, and work with the School Board instead of against them. She said that budget season was just around the corner, and they would face difficult decisions. She said that she did not envy them, especially since she knew they had people like her constantly hounding them at meetings to address the community's needs.

Ms. Denham said that however, she could certainly guarantee that they could not make good decisions if they closed their minds to the needs presented by the school staff. She said that they needed their leadership and, more importantly, they needed them to prioritize the well-being of the children, teachers, and community. She said that they were grateful for the new high school and the two new elementary schools, but in all honesty, they were a drop in the bucket compared to the overall deficit the entire school system currently faced.

Ms. Denham said that unfortunately, the small incremental increases provided by this Board over the past couple of years had not made a meaningful impact in addressing the significant challenges our school systems faced. She said that the Board of Supervisors' support and full funding of their schools were crucial in demonstrating to their children that their education was valued, to their educators that they were respected, and to their community that the Board was committed to investing in its needs. She said that as this Board had previously stated, and she wholeheartedly agreed with, they could do better for Stafford.

9. Jodie Blakely-Webb, Falmouth District, said that she had been a resident of Stafford County for about 27 years now. She said that she wanted to provide her support for Mary Becelia. She said that she could not be as eloquent as George Washington, so she would be brief in her comments. She said that she appreciated the apology, but wished that it had not come to this point. She said that if they wanted community volunteers, they could not ask for anyone better than Ms. Becelia. She said that they needed transparency and be careful about the words that they stated in public records.

10. Alaine Callender, Falmouth District, said that she came in late so she had missed some of the previous comments. She said that she was here in support of Mary Becelia, a neighbor of hers who she had known for several years. She said that she was a person of integrity and professional in every way. She said that she was an ideal person to serve on the Library Board. She said that she knew that when she moved here over 40 years ago, one of the first things she did was get a library card for the Rappahannock Library, and she suspected Ms. Becelia had done the same thing. She said that she brought up two high-achieving young people who attended UVA and were very successful. She said that she knew some of the fondest memories

she had of her mother was when she took her to the public library as a child. She said that in her strong support of the library, she believed there was no one better to serve on the Library Board than Mary Becelia.

11. Clayton Calvert, Falmouth District, said that he is Mary Becelia's husband, as well as a father, educator, and veteran. He said that when he swore his oath to the Constitution many times, he never thought that he would eventually be doing what he could to protect his fellow citizens, specifically his own wife, from adversaries who were domestic, let alone from elected public servants and neighbors who were tarnishing her name with false accusations. He said that he had been supporting Mary throughout this ordeal since she first learned that the Board of Supervisors had removed her from the Library Trustee Board. He said that she was informed of this through a phone call from the trustee chair, not from anyone on this Board.

    Mr. Calvert said that this was just the beginning of their refusal to communicate with her, a woman whose reputation they were more than willing to sully. He said that it was troubling that this declaration of essentially a guilty charge was made without representation for the accused, witnesses for the defense, or provisions for an appeal. He said that some of them may say that this charge is only for misconduct, but he wondered how many of them on this Board had filled out an SF-86. He asked if any of them knew what an SF-86 was. He said that an SF-86 form is for acquiring government security clearance. He said that the word misconduct is listed 23 times in that document. He said that it could be an impact on one's livelihood and even impact national security.

    Mr. Calvert said that Mary and he had lived in Stafford County for decades, raising two children there and planning to remain in the area for many years. He said that when Mary was appointed to the Library Trustee Board in January 2023, she was honored to give back to the community and the institution that means so much to her. He said that one thing many of them may not know is that Mary started a mother-daughter book club in 2012 and a mother-son book club with her son a few years later. He said that both groups lasted for several years. He said that Mary had already been taking her children to the library, teaching them to love books.

    Mr. Calvert said that on their son's 100th day of school for first grade, he brought in a poster board listing 100 books he had already read by the time he was halfway through the first grade. He said that he was now biased, but he firmly believed that there was no one with more genuine care for her fellow citizens and the library than Mary. He said that Ms. Bohmke articulated some words that could be construed as apologetic in tone, but it falls far short of what had been said to Mary. He said that to all of them who were present tonight who had been ill-used, if not betrayed, by the actions of this Board, Mary was owed, at the very least, an apology for the misrepresentation and distress that the Board of Supervisors has caused her.

12. Robert Calvert, Falmouth District, said that he is a lifelong citizen of Stafford. He said that he is the son of Mary Becelia and was present to speak on her behalf. He said that the last time he saw a member of this Board in a formal setting was in 2023 when Supervisor Bohmke spoke at his Eagle Scout ceremony. He said that she mentioned that she hoped that he and his fellow Scouts who were also receiving their awards would consider careers in public service.

Mr. Calvert said that he had actually been doing just that. He said that however, after the apology Supervisor Bohmke just delivered, he was very discouraged. He said that over the past several months, he had been granted an unexpected lesson in the functioning of their Board of Supervisors, thanks to this Board and its actions towards his mother, Mary Becelia. He said that what he had seen had shaken him and his faith in local government, and the words spoken tonight by Supervisor Bohmke had not made him feel much better.

Mr. Calvert said that his faith in their local government had been damaged, and he suspected that theirs had too, by seeing this political body, made up of people who were literally their neighbors, acting in a manner that had been profoundly damaging to one of their constituents, someone who was entirely innocent. He said that being unfairly accused of wrongdoing could just as easily happen to anyone who stepped up to volunteer for their County. He said that perhaps this is why the seat his mother had held on the Central Rappahannock Regional Library (CRRL) Trustee Board had been empty for over five months.

Mr. Calvert said that the Supervisor who initiated the unjust removal of his mother from the Library Board had, since his mother went to the press with her story in a final attempt to clear her name, seen the light and now said, quoting from her statement published on November 27, 2024, "when Ms. Becelia declined to relinquish her seat on the Library Director Search Committee, a role appropriately assigned to her on the Trustee Board, some of my colleagues wrongly labeled this as misconduct. Her refusal was within her rights and responsibilities as a trustee, yet I motioned to remove her, albeit for a different reason, and the Board had unanimously voted to remove her from the CRRL Trustee Board. It was now clear to me, after consulting outside counsel and reviewing Virginia law, that this decision was not only unjust, but also illegal."

Mr. Calvert said that his mother was the last person he would ever imagine to be caught up in a situation like this because she was a good, decent, and rule-abiding person. He said that again, if it could happen to her, it could happen to any civic-minded person who volunteered their time for their County, or at least it would have been more likely if she had not stood up to the local governing body and reminded them of their duty to the citizens of this County. He said that he was truly proud of his mother and, although he was now taller than her, he would always look up to her. He said that he thanked everyone who came out this evening to support her and their family, and he wished everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

13. Howard Rudat, Rock Hill District, said that "doveryay no proveryay" is a Russian proverb meaning "trust, but verify." He said that each Board member is guided by this proverb every time someone stands at this podium and presents business before the Board. He said that they trust the presenter, but they verify what they are saying is true and accurate. He said that had they applied these same standards during the July 10 special meeting, when they labeled Mary Becelia as having committed misconduct and voted to dismiss her as the citizen appointee to the Library Board, no one would have ever heard of Mary's name outside of her family, friends, and colleagues.

    Mr. Rudat said that they did not verify, they simply trusted, and by doing so, they became the judge, jury, and executioner of Mary Becelia's good name and reputation. He said that even with Virginia being a Dillon's Rule State, they had the authority to allow Mary to be part of that July closed meeting. He said that it was puzzling why the Board would not have wanted to hear Mary's side of the story before acting. He said that by going on public record stating that she committed misconduct, they could have affected her current job or any future position she sought. He said that the Board of Supervisors' failure to verify what they were told made her personal life public, and they had no right to do that.

Mr. Rudat said that when given the opportunity to explain the Board's action, they released a statement to the media that said, in part, "While the Board respects Ms. Becelia's contributions and appreciates her perspective, the Board must also uphold its commitment to the broader goals and standards that guide our organization. The Board made a decision that preserves the responsible and effective governance of our community partnerships. We remain committed to the best interest of Stafford County and all its citizens." He asked what that even means, and how what they did to Ms. Becelia was in Stafford County's best interest.

Mr. Rudat said that the Board then thought the best way to solve the problem was to present Ms. Becelia with a settlement agreement that provided no details on the restitution the Board planned to make to her, clearly stated that the County admitted no wrongdoing, and asked Mary to sign away her Sixth Amendment rights. He asked if the Board had not already taken enough from her. He said that when the Board finally decided to schedule a special meeting to set the record straight, they either committed a rookie mistake or did something sketchy by omitting the topic from the public notice and therefore had to cancel the meeting.

Mr. Rudat said that here they were tonight, having heard an explanation rather than an apology from the Chair. He said that he would wait to see if other Board members used their comments to make a genuine apology. He said that he would wait to see the discussions on Agenda Item 31. He said that then, he would wait to see if the Board, in its new leadership in 2025, took action to codify procedures that ensured there was never again a resident of Stafford who volunteers to support their community, but instead punished by a Board of elected officials who blindly and thoughtlessly wielded their power.

14. Mary Becelia, Falmouth District, said that she thanked everyone tonight who came to support her, as well as those who had been at her side during the entirety of this ordeal, especially her husband and son, who had been her rock. She said that she had learned some powerful lessons over the past five months about local governance, about the rights and responsibilities that go along with citizenship, and about what it means to be brave. She said that none of this has been easy for her at all. She said that however, this is not about her; it is about all of them.

    Ms. Becelia said that it is about how a political body can go behind closed doors and recklessly accuse a citizen volunteer of wrongdoing without one shred of evidence, and then double down when offered the chance to set things right. She said that this was what happened in September when the Supervisor who levied the original accusation of misconduct at her attempted to walk it back in what she could only describe as a half-hearted manner. She said that perhaps that was why the majority of the Board voted against her motion. She said that it was a rare moment of bipartisan unity, and it was a shame that it was for such an ignoble purpose.

Ms. Becelia said that the Board did this despite Item 2 of their very own Code of Performance, Conduct, and Ethical Standards, which states: "members shall refrain from language that attacks the character or motives without evidence of other members of the Board, members of boards, authorities, commissions, and committees, and the staff or public." She said that this related to her as a member of a committee and a member of the public. She said that this was about seven people, six of whom could not have put a name to the face of the person they branded with misconduct, and five of whom had never met that person. She said that nevertheless, they were willing to accuse a fellow citizen of profound wrongdoing. She said that apparently innocent until proven guilty was not at play in these cases involving citizen volunteers.

Ms. Becelia said that furthermore, despite her many attempts, the Board would not answer her emails or the certified email she had sent, nor provide her with any explanation. She said that she was but an avatar for any citizen who gets caught in the crosshairs of motives and reasons that have yet to this day to be explained. She said that she suspected this body, if they bothered to think at all about the person they were targeting, thought that the person would fade away. She said that tonight, she was told there would be an apology. She said that there was not an apology; there was a statement.

Ms. Becelia said that she added this to the long list of disappointments that she had suffered at the hands of this Board. She said that she still had hope that this Board would do better by current and future citizen volunteers, but elected terms are short and memories are shorter. She said that soon there would be new faces on this dais who are barely cognizant of the situation that brought them here tonight. She said that it is up to the citizens of Stafford County to remain aware and vigilant about what their elected public servants are doing, and to speak out when they err. She thanked the community again.

REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Allen – reported that it was pothole season, and she knew the Board would be receiving a presentation from Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)'s Mr. Thorpe, but she had noticed some in her area so she wanted to say that if anyone saw significant potholes on VDOT roads or County roads, that they should please report them so they could be addressed. She said that if it was on private property, they should contact the property owner.

Ms. Allen said that it was very important that they maintain their roads, especially as temperatures dipped below freezing, so that they remained ice-free for residents, school buses, and emergency vehicles. She said that there was recently a burst pipe in her area as well, so she wanted to remind everyone to winterize their pipes so that people's homes continued to have hot water and so roads did not become icy in the early mornings for school buses and commuters. She said that lastly, she wanted to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, happy holidays, and happy new year.

Mr. English – thanked staff for their work in organizing the Christmas Tree Lighting event. He said that they did a fantastic job, especially the Sheriff's Office in terms of traffic control. He said that it was a cold night, and the event was held late, and a lot of people probably missed it, but it was a good event. He said that he wanted to thank staff for their hard work on it. He said that he was at Post 290 on Saturday for their Oracle ceremony, where five students applied and all did an excellent job. He said that he would like to thank Post 290 for allowing him to be involved in this event.

Mr. English said that he would also like to thank Fire Rescue for their coat drive, which resulted in delivering over 1,500 coats. He said that he had been keeping former Rock Hill Supervisor Bob Gibbons in his thoughts, as he did not have good news to share for him. He said that unfortunately, he was not doing well, and he would like to ask that everyone keep him in their prayers. He said that finally, he would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a great New Year.

Ms. Gary – reported that it was important to state that she did not give any misleading information or misinformation to the Board of Supervisors. She said that her yes was her yes and her no was her no; she took an oath when she took this office and she took her faith and that oath incredibly seriously. She said that she had done everything she could since the original motion, and when Ms. Becelia was removed, to take accountability and restore it as best as possible, which cannot be done fully, and she recognized that. She said that if it were that easy to get agreement and have trust, she would be wielding that magical power to fund schools, an RTA, and a workforce and affordable housing committee.

Ms. Gary said that they all had their own decisions to make, and she made hers. She said that she had apologized for the original decision she had made and tried to do the best she could, which she understood would never be enough to restore what everyone had gone through. She said that she would be remiss to move on and give her statements about her work from the past few weeks and ignore all the comments made, and she would not do that. She said that she thanked everyone for being here and for continuing to fight for the right thing.

Ms. Gary said that she would continue to do that to the best of her ability, and she appreciated their grace when she fell short, like they all do. She said that in that, Christmas was upon them, and for those who celebrated as she did, in the spirit of celebrating this idea that Christians believe that God came into this mess for them, which she still could not fathom some days, she encouraged everyone to do something they could all believe in, which is to seek justice, walk humbly, and try to do the right thing. She said that she hoped everyone was having a wonderful holiday, and if they were not, she hoped it improved.

Ms. Vanuch – welcomed Mr. Dunn and thanked him for attending his first Board meeting. She said that she was happy to have him as part of Team Stafford. She said that she wanted to express her sincere gratitude to their exceptional Parks and Recreation and Facilities staff for their outstanding efforts in hosting and organizing the Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony at the beginning of December. She said that people have no idea how much work goes into making that event a success. She said that the Parks and Recreation staff meticulously planned and coordinated, while the Facilities staff took care of the logistics, including hanging lights, setting up decorations, and ensuring everything was in place. She said that she wanted to humbly thank them for their tireless dedication and hard work, which made this year's event a resounding success.

Ms. Vanuch said that the Tourism Department also played a significant role, with their holiday lighting stickers and signs at community and County buildings. She said that this was the first time she had seen that, and she wanted to acknowledge their efforts. She said that she would also like to extend her gratitude to all the other staff members involved in the Christmas tree lighting. She said that she also wanted to thank their Fire and Rescue team for their hard work with their Santa runs. She said that Rock Hill would have their first Santa run this evening, which they did all throughout the County. She said that she wanted to thank all their volunteers and career staff who bring so much joy by bringing Santa through different neighborhoods in Stafford County.

Ms. Vanuch said that this was a truly special event, and she appreciated the countless hours and effort that went into making it happen. She said that it was a tremendous undertaking, requiring firefighters to don costumes they may not have anticipated wearing. She said that she would like to thank them on behalf of the Rock Hill District for their dedication. She said that next, she wanted to thank Ms. Bohmke, who was concluding her term as Chair of their Board. She said that she had done an outstanding job leading their Board this year, navigating the challenges of getting seven members working together. She said that she wanted to express her deepest gratitude for her selfless service, which had required countless hours and dedication. She said that she had done a phenomenal job, and she was truly thankful for her service this year.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to extend her gratitude to their Vice Chair, Ms. Allen, who did a fantastic job, and had worked together with Ms. Bohmke in a greatly bipartisan manner, and she appreciated the leadership they had both provided to their Board. She said that she would also like to take a moment to make a record comment regarding some of the public comments made about the Library Board removal. She said that she was not present at the September meeting, as she was out of town. She said that she believed someone had mentioned that the vote was five to two, but she was not a part of the closed session and did not participate in the vote on that date. She said that she simply wanted to clarify that information for the record.

Dr. Yeung – welcomed Mr. Dunn as the Board's Deputy Clerk. She said that she wanted to thank the Parks and Recreation Department; she loved the colors of the lights. She said that she also wanted to thank the Chair and Vice Chair for their service this year. She said that all of the Board members were aware of where she stood in terms of affordable workforce housing, but they were now moving onto homelessness. She said that she believed they had empathy around Thanksgiving and Christmas time, but this was an issue that was near and dear to her heart. She said that mental health, stability, and having a community was an essential combination.

Dr. Yeung said that some people had homes but did not want to be in them, so there were many different types of battles. She said that she commended Governor Youngkin for providing $22 million this year for affordable and special needs housing loans for 14 projects across the Commonwealth. She said that they did not have any projects to access funds to assist these localities, so she wanted to ensure this was something on the Board's agenda for the advance meeting. She said that she was not present on the day when the Board removed the newly-created affordable workforce housing committee, so she wanted to ensure that the issue was addressed.

Dr. Yeung said that the Board had agreed to integrate affordable housing into the full Board's work sessions, rather than as work of a separate committee, and staff would present actionable items and possible timelines to the Board at the next retreat. She said that she wanted to make sure this was on the agenda for that meeting. She said that her second request was to reconsider delaying the transportation impact fee. She said that this cost would ultimately be passed onto residents through higher home prices and may deter developers, builders, and businesses from investing here. She said that given the potential risk to the County, lack of precedent, and ongoing upkeep costs, they must proceed carefully.

Dr. Yeung said that she recommended allowing staff and the assigned work group to present their findings at the next work group meeting to ensure a well-informed decision. She said that she was thankful for the apology and statements given by the Chair and the Board today. She said that since they no longer had a bylaws committee, which she was previously a member of, she wanted the Board to consider entering into their bylaws that any persons, when being discussed in closed session, have the right to present. She said that this was under Article 2.2-3712, which pertained to closed meetings procedure and certification. She said that it would allow an individual to be present to speak their truth, and she believed the Board should consider this.

Dr. Yeung said that the Board did hard work; this was not just the day that they came to the dais to present. She said that all of them, either together or more than one person, were at these meetings, but sometimes she took the time to do this because it was important and she wanted all constituents to know the Board did more work than what meets the eye. She said that they had their delegation dinner recently, and she also went to Arlington for the 100 Black Women Celebration, where children were given the opportunity to receive educational grants. She said that she met the library director, Ms. Purdy. She said that they also had meetings with Economic Development.

Dr. Yeung said that they had the Riverside BACC celebration where they thanked their volunteers. She said that she also was at the River Basin Commission where they talked about the environment, water, and the important necessities for constituents. She said that she was at several meetings for OmniRide. She said that the Board members were all at the tree lighting. She said that she attended the Library Board now as the Board of Supervisors appointee. She said that there was an OmniRide ribbon cutting and she had coins to present to the Board of Supervisors. She said that there was a George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC) housing meeting, and she wanted to thank Mr. English for chairing that.

Dr. Yeung said that she also wanted to thank everyone else who had served on Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), Virginia Railway Express (VRE), and Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO). She said that lastly, they met yesterday with Abigail Spanberger, who was serving her final week in Congress. She said that she thanked her constituents and all of those who served and helped provide her with projects for her to sponsor and assist with. She said that she had helped invest $22 million in the Stafford area, so she appreciated all her work. She said that she finally wanted to wish everyone happy holidays.

Mr. Diggs – welcomed Mr. Dunn and thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for their leadership and work on the Board. He said that he invited the constituents in the George Washington District and beyond to their final town hall meeting, scheduled for December 19, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at Stafford High School. He said that this marked the completion of their four town halls for the year, and he encouraged them to attend and share their thoughts and concerns. He said that to the Celebrate Virginia community, he had previously spoken on an issue, specifically regarding the Belmont

Park project and the cement rezoning. He said that neither of these projects would have access to Celebrate.

Mr. Diggs said that what the community was seeing down there currently was that Parcel 1 and Parcel 2 were currently undergoing land clearing, and while they had been initially given access to Celebrate in 2021, no projects had been assigned to these sites at this time. He said that he wanted to assure them that he was committed to clearing up any confusion and providing accurate information. He said that finally, he wanted to address Ms. Mary Becelia directly. He said that they had talked about a lot of stuff in here, but honestly, none of it mattered. He said that without speaking for the Board as a whole, he acknowledged that his actions had caused harm to her and her family, and for that, he was deeply sorry and embarrassed.

Mr. Diggs said that they had been given information that was not accurate. He said that further, the reality was that he thought as a member of this Board, regarding the other six members sitting to his right, was that if he could not trust the other leaders of this community, then he questioned who at all he could trust. He said that they must think about that. He said that he was not worried about being sued; he wanted to make things right. He said that their titles meant nothing if they were not going to do what they were supposed to, which was support the community. He said that they were also members of the community. He said that he hoped that Ms. Becelia heard his sincere personal apology.

Mr. Diggs said that he was not speaking on behalf of the entire Board, but he did apologize for his actions in this situation. He said that if there was anything he could do to make it right for her and her family, he implored her to contact him. He said that he hoped that, despite this being a disappointment for her, it may serve as an opportunity for her to consider getting involved in politics and local government, with the goal of making things better. He said that the reason he ran for this office was because he wanted to make it better. He said that sometimes they would make mistakes and missteps, but they could apologize, stand strong, and continue working towards improvement. He asked her to please not give up. He said that they were all trying to do the best they can. He said that he wished everyone a Merry Christmas and happy new year.

Ms. Bohmke – reminded everyone that the new Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study on data centers was recently released by the state. She said that there is a wealth of information available, and the top three concerns are noise, water, and electricity. She said that one citizen pointed out tonight that Dominion power bills are expected to increase. She said that for those interested in learning more, simply searching for "JLARC data centers" will yield relevant results. She said that she also wanted to share some updates on the Concerted Care Group (CCG) open house she attended. She said that CCG is the new methadone clinic located near the Weis grocery store on Deacon Road in the Falmouth District.

Ms. Bohmke said that she met with the staff and was impressed with their facility and commitment to providing good care. She said that it's worth noting that CCG will not be conducting adolescent psychiatric services at this site, although they will be offering methadone treatment. She said that the Bowman Center methadone clinic will remain open, and CCG will be an additional resource. She said that she would like to clarify that these are two separate entities, and individuals may choose to use either one.

Ms. Bohmke said that she also wanted to express her gratitude to Daniel Smith, the new Superintendent of Stafford County Public Schools, who will be presenting to the Board shortly. She said that she appreciates the time he spent with her recently, and she values his approachable and thoughtful leadership style. She said that she is grateful for the opportunity to work with him and welcomes him to their community. She said that she also wanted to remind everyone that they have a VRE meeting scheduled for this Friday, which Supervisor Gary and she will be attending as the Board appointees.

Ms. Bohmke said that their ridership is still not at the desired level. She said that pre-pandemic, they were averaging 18,000 riders per day with VRE, and currently, they are at 6,500 to 7,000, depending on the day of the week and the time of the month. She said that their subsidy has increased by 8% this year, amounting to approximately $2.7 million. She said that she would like to discuss this with the Board, particularly as they approach budget season, to determine whether they should continue to contribute this amount or explore alternative options, such as reducing their subsidy, which would allow them to allocate more funds to their gas tax fund.

Ms. Bohmke said that this could enable them to move forward with some of their road projects that were of great importance to the community. She said that their right-of-way expenses had skyrocketed over the past couple of years, and she would like to explore the possibility of recovering some of these costs without jeopardizing anything with VRE. She said that finally, she wanted to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe holiday season.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney, said that she had no report at this time.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

William Ashton, County Administrator, said that in a moment, he would yield his time to their Intergovernmental Services Manager, who would brief the Board on a phone call he had participated in today, which was important for the community to hear and for this Board. He said that before he did, he would like to express his gratitude to Chair Bohmke for her service this year. He said that he wanted to acknowledge the kindness and professionalism Chair Bohmke had demonstrated during his interview process, particularly when he was transitioning from his previous employer.

Mr. Ashton said that Ms. Bohmke had been gentle, kind, and easy to work with, making the process much smoother. He said that he believed Ms. Bohmke's greatest achievement this year was successfully integrating their new County Administrator, which was no easy feat. He said that he appreciated Chair Bohmke's help and guidance. He said that now, he would turn it over to Mr. Toigo to discuss the highlights of the phone call he had participated in today.

Anthony Toigo, Intergovernmental Affairs Manager, said that one of Stafford County’s legislative program initiatives for the public to know this year was recovering the expenses to local governments associated with the Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption. He said that for those who did not know, Stafford County was exonerating 8% of its real estate tax base due to the program, a total of about $20 million that would otherwise go to their General Fund for roads, schools, and other public services. He said that it was a benefit the Board had stated they wanted to keep for their veterans, so the goal in their legislative ask was for the state to recognize the cost localities were bearing and to reimburse them in some way.

Mr. Toigo said that he was pleased to report that there was strong support from all of Virginia's local government associations, including the Virginia Municipal League (VML), Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), and the Virginia High Growth Coalition to advance their effort. He said that Stafford County had been a leader on this issue because they were the most impacted in the state. He said that they were now seeing other localities and these associations express interest in joining the effort and helping them. He said that this was a positive development.

Mr. Toigo said that during their call today, Ms. Bohmke and he discussed and strategized about what some legislation might look like. He said that there were some competing schools of thought because cities were affected differently than counties such as Stafford, but there were plenty of options at their disposal. He said that the local government organizations would be working directly with Senator Locke from Hampton and Delegate Sewell from Prince William to advocate for reimbursement legislation, which could be either full or partial reimbursement for localities losing over 1% of their real estate tax base.

Mr. Toigo said that the challenge to the state was how much this would cost, with estimates ranging upwards of $100 million. He said that VACo, VML, and other organizations were working to pin down a more precise figure, but it was a significant cost. He said that locally, his firm, Advantus, was working with Senators McPike and Cole to tie some of the reimbursement back to K-12 education funding, as previously discussed with their Board. He said that Delegate Cole planned to introduce legislation that, when the state recalculated its local composite index next year, would remit the reimbursement to all exempted property, currently not accounted for.

Mr. Toigo said that by removing exempted property from this program, Stafford's local composite index would theoretically decrease, resulting in a gain of more K-12 education funding. He said that Senator McPike was also exploring legislation that would reimburse localities over 1%, with the funds being redirected towards K-12 education. He said that although everything was still in draft form, once they had concrete legislation, they would present it to the Board.

Ms. Bohmke said that she appreciated Mr. Toigo providing the update. She said that after their call today, she had asked Mr. Ashton if there was any way Mr. Toigo could give a management summary because she wanted the Board to be aware. She said that when they started back up, the General Assembly would be back in session, and budget season would be very intense.

Mr. Toigo said that for the Board’s information, he would be presenting legislative updates to the Board on their B-day schedules. He said that they were trying to get Lauren or Kathy from Advantus as well, but in lieu of a legislative committee, they wanted to have that time. He said that they would keep those updates brief and provide time for questions. He said that he was happy to be here.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to thank Mr. Toigo for the information because they had been fighting for this for a long time. She said that she also wanted to say that she had Senator Lucas' ear, so if there was anything succinct they could provide her in a packet, she would be happy to assist with that. She said that she ran into her at the legislative forum recently at George Mason.

Mr. Toigo said that that was great information. He said that Lauren and Kathy with Advantus would be giving the Board weekly email reports, so they would receive the draft legislation as part of that. He said that once the legislation was drafted and public, she was welcome to share it further.

Ms. Allen said that there seemed to be unanimous support, which was typical before the General Assembly considered the long-term implications to the budget. She asked, if there was support for investing the reimbursement into K-12, how soon would they be able to start factoring that into their budgetary calculations for their local schools.

Mr. Toigo said that from a legislative perspective, it would depend on the effective date of the legislation. He said that the standard was January 1, 205 or July 1, 2025, but he would defer to Ms. Light for any additional information.

Andrea Light, Chief Financial Officer, said that typically, the local composite index (LCI) was reviewed every two years, so she would imagine it would depend on how they wrote the legislation. She said that they would just be reconfiguring the allocation of funds, so they would be supporting their local school systems in a different way with the same dollars.

Ms. Allen asked if they would be giving them more money and the legislation was dated July 1, 2025, would there be a way for them to amend the budget mid-year to accommodate those funds to the schools.

Ms. Light said absolutely. She said that the schools would receive more funds if the Board had the opportunity to look at that revenue source and appropriate additional funds to the schools.

Ms. Gary said that it seemed they were working the angle with the LCI. She asked if there was any other budget amendments anyone was looking at. She said that they had talked about a lot of different topics since the delegation dinner.

Mr. Toigo said that in terms of budget amendments, any state reimbursement would require a corresponding budget amendment. He said that although he had not seen any proposed amendments yet, it was likely that Senator McPike would propose a budget amendment, given his seat on the Senate Finance Committee and his experience. He said that the challenge for Senator McPike and other legislators was determining the statewide impact of the amendment and its local effects.

Ms. Bohmke said that another important aspect of this was that they did not want to rely on a single solution that would limit their options and potentially trap them into a predetermined path. She said that they wanted to explore multiple approaches to ensure they were not missing out on potential solutions. She said that this comprehensive plan was a great starting point. She said that for some localities, increasing taxes at the rate of the veteran tax exemption was not a sustainable long-term strategy. She said that it could lead to a mass exodus of residents from the Commonwealth of Virginia as they sought more affordable tax systems. She said that to address this, they needed to educate their legislators, many of whom lacked local government experience. She said that they were also discussing ways to bridge that gap.

Mr. Ashton said that he had nothing further to report to the Board. He said that he wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS BY AGENCIES

ITEM 24. FY2024 AUDIT RESULTS AND ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT

Randy Helwig, Finance Director, said that Michael Garber, their manager from PBMares Audit Firm, would be providing the report this evening.

Michael Garber, Partner with PBMares, said that they had completed the audit for the County, issued the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and management letter, along with other supporting documents. He said that to provide a high-level overview of the audit, they had issued an unmodified opinion on the County's financial statements, which was the positive outcome. He said that this meant that they had not identified any material misstatements or reasons to modify the opinion. He said that they had also issued separate reports on internal control and compliance, as well as a single audit report on the County's federal dollars. He said that all of these reports were clean, with no findings.

Mr. Garber said that they had been able to follow their audit plan, identifying risk areas and auditing those areas. He said that they had been able to complete the audit without finding any additional issues, which was a good outcome. He said that during the audit, all of their observations, inquiries, and requests had been met with timely and complete responses, which had helped them issue the unmodified opinion on the County's financial statements. He said that overall, the audit was extremely successful, with only one audit entry this year. He said that this was extraordinary for an entity of this size.

Mr. Garber said that the entry was minor and had already been identified by the Finance team, involving a recategorization of a recording of a lease, and was not material. He said that there were additional reports that needed to be completed, including those required for Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) through the R-Board and the landfill, as well as reports to the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) in the state and the submission of the single audit report to the federal government. He said that all of the additional items were included outside of the ACFR. He said that they were either complete or scheduled to be completed on time, and none of these items should be late.

Mr. Garber said that everything should be finished by the given timelines. He said that as a reminder, it was easy to focus on the ACFR, but there were many other subsidiary pieces to the audit as well. He said that with that, he did not have anything else to cover. He said that he believed that all the necessary information had been provided to the Board in advance in PDF form. He said that he was happy to answer any questions or comments they may have.

Dr. Yeung asked if they had a 2023 audit available. She said that she had been trying to do comparisons but could only find the 2022 audit, which had been delivered in January 2023. She said that she did not see a 2023 audit, but they had one for 2024.

Mr. Garber said that yes, there was a 2023 audit. He said that he had delivered it last year at the Board's December meeting. He said that it could be provided to the Board.

Dr. Yeung said that that would be great. She said that her other question was for staff regarding the vendor management policy discussed in the previous one, specifically regarding multi-factor authentication. She said that her question for this year, 2024, was regarding the government accounting standards that were supposed to be in 2022 but were still showing up on the 2024 particular report. She asked if there was a reason for that.

Mr. Garber said that in the management letter, when the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) issued new pronouncements, they typically provided a two- to four-year implementation period. He said that as a result, they included the new pronouncement in their letter to ensure management and the Board were aware of the upcoming standard. He said that this was why it appeared as a repeat from one year to the next. He said that once they implemented the new standard, it would be removed from the letter.

Dr. Yeung said that she was bringing this up because she wanted to know if staff required any additional resources to complete these tasks. She said that during budget season, it was common for them to identify needs, such as personnel or systems, to facilitate progress. She said that she wondered if there was something that staff needed from them to help move these projects forward.

Mr. Helwig said that they would not need anything for GASB.

Ms. Allen said that Mr. Helwig had taken on this position during a tumultuous time in the country, with all the federal dollars, upcoming construction, and procurement processes they had done. She said that to have several years of unmodified opinions on their audits, it was a sign of good leadership in keeping them afloat. She said that the public may be unaware that they had substantial oncoming Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) debt that was long overdue, but they were coming, and one of the things they were able to take advantage of was having good credit management, which only comes from having good financial management. She said that she wanted to take the time to acknowledge that the staff managing their finances had helped their credit remain stable so they could borrow the necessary funds to complete community projects.

ITEM 25. TRI-COUNTY/CITY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT, PRESENTED BY MADISON MORGAN, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Madison Morgan, Education and Outreach Coordinator with Tri-County City Soil and Water Conservation District. She said that she was pleased to present the annual report, which covered the period from July 2023 to June 2024. She said that due to scheduling constraints, this was the best time for her to present this to the Board, and she appreciated them having her present tonight. She said that she would like to extend her gratitude to the two Stafford directors in attendance, Mr. John Howe and Mr. Daniel Goodale-Porter.

Ms. Morgan said that the Tri-County City Soil and Water Conservation District worked with producers and farmers to implement the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program, which aimed to promote practices such as cover crop management, livestock exclusion, and other conservation methods. She said that their goal was to preserve and protect their natural resources, including the Chesapeake Bay, and to make their communities healthier and stronger. She said that their mission was to provide leadership, education, and technical programs to assist all resource users in conserving, sustaining, and improving soil, water, and related resources. She said that their vision was to be recognized as a community leader in soil and water conservation, focusing on action and partnerships to achieve this goal.

Ms. Morgan said that she would like to highlight their FY24 budget, which showed that their main operating revenue came from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program, as well as DCR operating funds and local government contributions. She said that on the other hand, that their greatest expense was also the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program. She said that they were proud to say that they were able to effectively utilize these funds to implement best management practices (BMPs) and help as many producers as possible. She said that they also appreciated the support from the community, state agencies, and local governments.

Ms. Morgan said that the following graphs illustrated the impact of their efforts in Stafford County through various BMPs. She said that in Stafford County, they had provided $183,657.20. She said that based on the County's budget, they provided a little over $40,000. She said that they were very grateful to have been able to put that money back into the County and support their producers. She said that in Stafford County, they were utilizing 3,504 acres of land utilizing best management practices, mostly through cover crop practices.

Ms. Morgan said that their cost share breakdown, as they could see, showed that most of the funds they were using through the Ag Cost Share Program were going towards cover crop practices. She said that they were implementing precision nutrient management and nutrient management practices. She said that the breakdown of contracts showed that they had a total of seven producers, each with multiple fields signed up. She said that this represented a total of over 10,000 acres of cover crops across the district, including Stafford, Spotsylvania, King George, and the City of Fredericksburg.

Ms. Morgan said that they also protected 6,410 linear feet of stream banks. She said that their total amount cost-shared with producers was $958,345.98. She said that they were excited to share these great amounts across their communities. She said that in terms of education and outreach, they had one designated program in Stafford, but they hosted multiple events across the County, primarily targeting a regional audience. She said that their small farm outreach program, for example, was hosted at the Patawomeck Tribal Center, where they had regional partners and community stakeholders present on behalf of community conservation, directly related to agriculture and natural resources.

Ms. Morgan said that they had established themselves as a partner with local schools, with a focus on education programs directly in the classroom. She said that they had various education programs, such as those they had implemented, and had been discussing careers with seniors and other initiatives. She said that she was thrilled to share these highlight and they would continue to grow their education programs. She said that another notable achievement was that they had awarded $1,000 through their L. Gordon "Link" Linkous Scholarship program, sent two students to youth conservation camp, and had one participant in the youth conservation leadership institute. She said that they had also started a new cohort, and the current participant was a Stafford County resident.

Ms. Morgan said that the next slide encompassed their staff training, which demonstrated the District's commitment to supporting the County and bettering the district. She said that at the end of FY 24, they had three staff members, resulting in 291 combined training hours. She said that currently, they had four staff members, with five coming soon. She said that their staff included an education and outreach specialist, a district manager, two conservation specialists, and an administrative professional. She said that this brought their total training hours to 291, with 28 certifications gained across three staff members.

Ms. Morgan said that these certifications included conservation plan writing, project learning tree, and other relevant skills. She said that they were proud to partner with Stafford County and other organizations, such as the urban conservation cost share program. She said that in addition to agriculture, they worked in their parks, and currently had a Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) in Brooks Park, which was thriving. She said that they were here to support the schools, producers, and the community, and she was grateful to the County for their continued support.

Dr. Yeung said that she was unsure if this was related to the Conservation District, but she recently learned that the 4-H Program was no longer available.

Ms. Morgan said that 4-H would be handled through their extension office.

Ms. Bohmke asked if Mr. Howe would like to address the 4-H Program.

John Howe, Falmouth District, said that the 4-H Program was offered through the Virginia Cooperative Extension Office. He said that there was a local 4-H agent and technician who conducts the programs.

Dr. Yeung asked if they had not lost the program.

Mr. Howe said that no, they had not lost the program. He said that at one point, the 4-H agent position was vacant, but it was now filled.

Ms. Bohmke thanked Ms. Morgan for the Conservation District's partnership and work for the County. She said that she was glad the new Superintendent for their schools was present to hear about their educational partnerships.

ITEM 26. VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION WINTER WEATHER REPORT, PRESENTED BY ANDREW THORPE, ASSISTANT RESIDENT ENGINEER

Andrew Thorpe, Virginia Department of Transportation Assistant Resident Engineer, said that Kyle Bates sent his regards; Kyle was currently at home with his new baby, so he was sure Mr. Bates would be looking forward to seeing the Board soon. He said that as they approached the holiday season, they had increased potential for winter weather events. He said that tonight's presentation was an overview of their winter weather program and snow removal operations, providing the Supervisors with information to help answer any questions they may have and utilize the resources VDOT provided.

Mr. Thorpe said that the VDOT Fredericksburg District covered 14 counties, including the Fredericksburg area, the Middle Peninsula, and the Northern Neck. He said that their district was diverse, particularly when it came to winter weather, as conditions could vary significantly from one area to another. He said that for example, the conditions at Gloucester Point were quite different from those in the Hartwood or Rock Hill areas. He said that even within Stafford County, they could see varying conditions from the west side to the east, and their storm removal plans reflected this.

Mr. Thorpe said that within their residency, which included Stafford, Spotsylvania, and Caroline Counties, they maintained 328 lane miles of interstate highway along I-95, 639 lane miles of primary roads with route numbers less than 600, including Route 1, Route 17, Route 3, and over 4,000 lane miles of secondary roadways. He said that secondary roadways were a significant concern, particularly in Stafford County, where development was ongoing and new subdivisions were being added to the state system each year. He said that they also performed snow removal at all 12 of their commuter lots, with several located in Stafford County.

Mr. Thorpe said that they maintained 511 bridges and large culverts, and within their residency staff, they had approximately 120 VDOT employees, all of whom had a winter weather assignment, as well as some district staff that they used to augment. He said that when it came to equipment and materials, statewide, VDOT had set aside $220 million this year for snow removal, which was consistent with previous years. He said that within their residencies of the three counties he mentioned, they had 42 pieces of state-owned, VDOT-employed snow removal equipment.

Mr. Thorpe said that they had over 705 pieces of hired equipment, including contractors that they hired on each year, working a range of equipment such as large tandem-axle dump trucks, motor graders, and pickup trucks. He said that notably, over 260 of these pieces were located in Stafford County, working on both primary and secondary roads. He said that on the interstate, they had 167 pieces of hired equipment, totaling over 900 pieces of snow removal equipment in their three counties. He said that this process began very early, with their staff working with contractors since mid-July to prepare for the winter season. He said that they conducted a contractor dry run last

Thursday, bringing some contractors in to review information, familiarize them with priority routes, and ensure they were ready for the season.

Mr. Thorpe said that in terms of materials, they had over 29,000 tons of salt, sand, and mixed abrasives available to improve road conditions and safety, as well as 58,000 gallons of salt brine, which would be crucial in their snow removal efforts. He said that to prepare for the winter season, they relied heavily on their forecast. He said that every morning, he checked the 10-day forecast to see if there was a possibility of snow on the horizon. He said that if snow was approaching, they worked closely with their forecast partners, including the National Weather Service and DTN, a meteorology contractor with VDOT.

Mr. Thorpe said that they received daily, if not multiple times a day, weather briefings from these sources to ensure they were preparing the right response for the forecasted storm. He said that once they had a better understanding of the storm's trajectory, they developed their mobilization plans. He said that they had preset plans in place for the off-season, which they could quickly access and implement once they knew the specifics of the storm. He said that for smaller events, they typically mobilized 12 to 18 hours prior to the storm's start, while larger events may require them to start preparing even sooner. He said that their goal was to ensure their contractors were equipped, stocked, and pre-deployed, so they could quickly respond to the storm.

Mr. Thorpe said that they staged trucks along major routes, particularly the primary roads in the area and along I-95. He said that all employees were prepared to work together, regardless of their role, to support the snow response. He said that it was an all-hands-on-deck process for them. He said that he also mentioned pre-treatment earlier, which he would discuss further in a moment. He said that regarding incident command and communication, over the past few years, they had placed a strong emphasis on establishing open lines of communication with their local partners, particularly their first responder agencies, such as Fire and Rescue, Sheriff's Office, State Police, and Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) at the state level.

Mr. Thorpe said that to that end, in the last few years, whenever they entered a level three storm or higher, meaning two inches of snow or more was forecasted, they would open their residency building and ensure they had open lines of communication with all their local partners so that if any issues arose during the storm, those lines of communication remained open. He said that their goal was to facilitate efficient and effective communication with all partners, and they held regular briefings with them, typically every six hours or so.

Mr. Thorpe said that pre-treatment brine was one area they received frequent questions about. He said that brine was essentially a saltwater solution. The purpose of brine treatment was to get a head start on the storm, which may begin up to 72 hours before the storm started and was dependent on the storm's forecast. He said that to achieve this, they aimed to maintain pavement temperatures above 20 degrees. If the temperature was lower, the brine may immediately turn to ice, which was not their goal. He said that they also considered the possibility of rain, as it may wash the brine off before the snow even started.

Mr. Thorpe said that the decision to apply brine was made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account various factors such as weather forecasts, the storm's expected start, and whether they already had salt on the roads. He said that if they had already treated roads with salt from a previous storm, the additional brine may not be effective, so they may not apply it in that situation. He said that they prioritized critical locations, including major highways like I-95 with its interstate ramps, bridges, and overpasses, as well as their available time. He said that they also focused on primary roads and high-volume secondary roads, such as 610, which they considered a high priority.

Mr. Thorpe said that their approach was tiered, with I-95 and its ramps, bridges, and overpasses being their top priority, followed by their primary roads, and roads that led to public safety facilities, such as fire stations, rescue stations, hospitals, and other major public safety facilities, to ensure that first responders had maximum access. He said that their goal was to reach as many people as possible as quickly as possible. He said that their commuter lots were contingent on the timing of the storm, with different response strategies depending on whether the timing of a storm, so there may be a different response on a Saturday morning versus a Monday morning.

Mr. Thorpe said that once conditions permitted, they began plowing subdivisions from their lower-volume secondary roads. He said that in these subdivisions, drivers picked up assigned maps with subdivision labels, and plowing typically began with two inches or more of snow on the ground. He said that however, they often found that plowing with less than two inches of snow could cause more damage than benefit. He said that therefore, they prioritized plowing main subdivision streets first to open access for emergency vehicles. He said that crews then returned to plow side streets and cul-de-sacs once the main roads were accessible.

Mr. Thorpe said that their goal was to reach the most residents as quickly as possible, taking into account areas with hills, curves, and intersections, which were often hotspot areas. He said that they focused on deploying resources to known issue areas to make them passable, which they defined as an eight to 10 foot path clear for emergency vehicles. He said that initially, they may not have cleared the entire road or edge to edge, but their goal was to open up access for emergency vehicles. He said that they may make a relatively small pass the first time through and return to clean up later.

Mr. Thorpe said that frequently asked questions included: What time would a plow reach my street? He said that their goal was to make all roads passable in 48 hours for routine storms, but this could take longer with significant snowfall. He said that it was challenging for them to provide a specific time frame for when plows would arrive, as it depended on the storm's severity, the area being hit the hardest, and their prioritization of tasks. He said that they would do their best to provide as much information as possible. He said that another question was: As someone living on a cul-de-sac or side street, why are the roads plowed first? He said that their priority was to access as many people as possible as quickly as possible, so they focused on higher volume roads, even within subdivisions.

Mr. Thorpe said that another question was: What if I have a medical emergency during a storm? How will an ambulance reach me? He said that he had heard this question before, and he always advised people to call 911. He said that the VDOT team was skilled in many areas, but providing medical care was not one of them. He said that they tried to keep all lines of communication open with their local first responders, so if the first responders told VDOT they were having an issue getting to someone, they would redeploy resources to make that the utmost priority to ensure public safety.

Mr. Thorpe said that another question was: Why doesn't VDOT put down sand and salt before it snows? He said that the challenge was that it would likely blow off the road due to traffic and wind. He said that they use salt brine to attach to the road, but they could not always do that in every situation. He said that another question was: Why does the plow push snow in front of my mailbox or the end of my driveway? Can VDOT come back to remove the snow? He said that they tried to avoid doing that whenever possible, and certainly avoided creating huge piles of snow right in front of a mailbox or driveway, but unfortunately, given the work they were doing, it was unavoidable that some snow would be deposited back in front of a driveway.

Mr. Thorpe said that they did not have the resources to return and remove snow from every driveway in the County. He said that their focus remained on getting access to people. He said that to avoid double work, VDOT instructed residents to shovel snow from the end of their driveway either after the plow passed or, if necessary to do it before, it was recommended to direct the snow to the right side of the driveway, allowing the plow to pass without pushing the snow back into the driveway.

Mr. Thorpe said that he wanted to provide additional information and resources. He said that as mentioned before, they had additional staff assigned to monitor snow conditions for quality control. He said that they strived to ensure their contractors were in the correct location, performing their duties, and being responsible stewards of taxpayer funds. He said that within the last few years, they had implemented automatic vehicle locators (AVLs), which included GPS units on all contracted equipment. He said that this helped them ensure the response was going as it should, everyone was where they needed to be, and helped them audit after the event. He said that the public could actually see these GPS units when they entered a level three storm or higher, via the VDOTplows.org website, so they could see where the plows were working in the area.

Mr. Thorpe said that residents and drivers could help by being prepared, staying off the roads whenever possible, and monitoring forecasts closely was essential. He said that teleworking or adjusting commutes could also be beneficial. He said that when driving in the snow, it was essential to give their crews ample space to complete their work. He said that they should also ensure that they have sufficient gas, wiper fluid, proper tires, and other necessary items available. He said that after the storm, they should follow the driveway shoveling tips and be patient; they would reach everyone.

Mr. Thorpe said that for additional information and resources, visit VDOTplows.org or 511, which provides up-to-date road conditions throughout their counties. He said that at a minimum, they update those conditions every six hours. He said that if the conditions are changing, they update them even more frequently. He said that they have staff dedicated to ensuring those roadway conditions remain current, logging any road closures, tree downings, and other relevant information. He said that they utilize a variety of social media sources, including their VDOT Fredericksburg District Facebook page. He said that the platform is an effective tool for disseminating information.

Mr. Thorpe said that another key resource he would like to highlight is the 1-800-4-ROAD number, their 24/7 customer service center. He said that during a storm, they augment staff at this customer service center, and their local office monitors incoming requests. He said that if individuals have waited 48 hours beyond the storm's end and believe their road had been missed, they can reach out to VDOT through this number to confirm whether the road has been missed or if VDOT crews are still working to address it. He said that for any questions the Supervisors may receive from constituents, he would recommend directing them to this number, even for issues like potholes after the event, this resource would be particularly valuable.

ITEM 27. STAFFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS FY26-35 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PRESENTATION

Daniel Smith, Superintendent of Schools for Stafford County Public Schools, said that today marked the seventh day of his tenure, and he was looking forward to meeting each of the Supervisors and discussing their plans in the coming weeks and months. He said that he would like to thank them for the opportunity to provide an overview of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) needs this evening. He said that given his recent arrival, he wanted to provide a brief background and then hand over the presentation to Chris Fulmer, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer.

Dr. Smith said that Stafford County Public Schools was experiencing consistent enrollment growth, with a projected increase to over 36,000 students over the next decade. He said that to address this, they had developed a comprehensive CIP as a long-term budget and planning tool. He said that this plan outlined the construction of new schools and necessary renovations to existing facilities, driven by the need to accommodate the growing student population and maintain adequate learning environments. He said that the FY26-35 Capital Improvement Plan had been extensively reviewed and discussed by the School Board, which had unanimously approved it on October 8, 2024. He said that they had shared the CIP documents with staff to share with the Board.

Dr. Smith said that they were here tonight to share an overview of their School Division CIP needs with the Board. He said that they looked forward to collaboration and working alongside them to understand these needs and ensure that their school system could meet the educational needs of their rapidly growing community. He said that if they had any questions after tonight's presentation, he would be happy to work with Mr. Ashton to provide any additional information they may need.

Chris Fulmer, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer for Stafford County Public Schools, said that they were still very busy and working very closely together, but he definitely enjoyed his time in working in a new capacity. He said that they did not really slow down, and were as they approached the Capital Improvement Plan and budget season, he was looking forward to the Governor's budget release later this week and potentially some additional information regarding schools. He said that although they were not discussing the operating budget tonight, they would be discussing the Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Fulmer said that he would like to start by thanking Dr. Smith for the introduction and joining Stafford County Schools, as well as thanking the Board of Supervisors for their hard work and dedication over the past few years, and he appreciated the effort they had put into understanding the needs of the school division. He said that while they did not have many new projects, they would be recapping some of the same projects that were coming up. He said that some of these projects were already funded, but would be coming up in the next few years, while others had not yet made it into the Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Fulmer said that the School Board had been clear that they did not want to make significant changes, but they had experienced some additional growth. He said that he would like to thank the Board for their support, particularly with the three schools currently under construction, the Drew Middle School design underway, and several other projects funded in the Capital Improvement Plan. He said that the timeline was evidence of the hard work that had gone into this process. He said that it was not something that could be accomplished overnight, just like the County staff did not pull together their CIP and budget overnight. He said that there was a significant amount of work that went into it.

Mr. Fulmer said that their staff had begun working on the next year’s CIP all the way back in the winter, while still finalizing the prior year's budget and CIP. He said that they had been meeting with the Finance and Budget Committee (FABC) and joint school working committees to discuss these projects. He said that they had also had closed sessions with the Board of Supervisors to discuss their land search for some of these projects. He said that he appreciated their willingness to listen and be open to discussion throughout this process. He said that this brought them to today's presentation, which would be followed by a discussion with the Board of Supervisors in January.

Mr. Fulmer said that some of the key changes from last year's CIP to this year included few new projects, adjustments to existing projects, and the removal of certain projects. He said that specifically, they eliminated the high school-only bus access roads, which would be discussed further in the presentation. He said that they also removed the Activities and Aquatic Center and combined the public day school with the Rising Star Early Childhood project to create a more efficient approach to building these projects. He said that by combining these two, they could gain efficiencies and reduce costs.

Mr. Fulmer said that they removed the Stafford Plaza bus parking project, which was previously a standalone project, and incorporated it into the Elementary School 18 project, which had sufficient funding to cover the parking lot expansion. He said that they did that as an add-alt to the bid, and since there were additional funds, they were able to execute that. He said that they also consolidated their critical systems into a single, prioritized list, as recommended by the Board of Supervisors and the Department of Education. He said that this single list replaced the previous separate lists, and it included the critical systems that were previously on a separate list.

Mr. Fulmer said that overall, their CIP was a significant undertaking, but it represented a reduction over prior years, and it reflected their continued growth. He said that they added over 300 students this year and projected to add about 500 more next year, with a total of close to 6,000 students over the 10-year period. He said that as they continued to grow, their goal with the CIP was to ensure that they did not fall behind in their planning and development.

Mr. Fulmer said that looking at the projected costs of $600 million over the first five years, followed by an additional $800 million later, he noted that the first five years included projects that were already approved, such as the disbursements for their high schools and elementary schools, including the Drew Middle School project. He said that the last five years would include the High School 7 project, which was a significant chunk of money.

Mr. Fulmer said that he would give some quick updates on three of their major ongoing projects. He said that High School 6 was still on track and within budget. He said that the pictures showed that they had made significant progress, including walls, paving, curbing, and gutter work. He said that they were close to completing the roof, which would help solidify the timeline. He said that once the roof was in place, they could move forward with interior construction. He said that the athletic fields behind the school were also nearing completion.

Mr. Fulmer said that the Elementary School 18 site, which had a ribbon-cutting ceremony a few months ago, was starting to take shape. He said that they had installed and inspected the building pad and were planning to lay footers this week, which would lead to the foundation being constructed. He said that furthermore, they were adding Stafford Plaza Drive, which cut through from Truslow Road to Route 17. He said that on one side of that was their High School 6 project, and on the other side was their Elementary School 18. He said that with Elementary School 18, they had projected savings of $10 million. He said that he wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the work of their Facilities, Planning, and Design teams, as well as their architects.

Mr. Fulmer said that last year, they had come to the Board and to request additional funding for their elementary schools, primarily due to the market's cost per square foot. He said that he was pleased to report that they had been able to maintain their cost per square foot below the state average. He said that as a result, they had been able to incorporate those savings into their budget. He said that for Elementary School 18 and 19, the use of the elementary school prototype had allowed them to save money on design funds, construction costs, and overall efficiency. He said that they had savings on both the 18 and 19 projects.

Mr. Fulmer said that they had also communicated in their joint school work sessions that they also expected to use some of those projected savings on the Drew Middle School project, which he would discuss in more detail shortly. He said that Elementary School 19 was not yet as far along, but the rendering provided showed what 18 and 19 would look like, as it was a prototype. He said that there would be some slight changes due to the actual land and site plan, but overall, the design would be similar to Elementary School 18. He said that their budgets for both schools were similar, but they were also able to come in under the state average for cost per square foot.

Mr. Fulmer said that the Drew Middle School project, as discussed with Mr. Towery a few weeks ago, had design funds that they would need to consider. He said that when they built the current CIP, they assumed that the sites would switch, so they did not budget for land costs. He said that the off-site increases were higher due to the different land site selection, which is why they saw those numbers. He said that the third number regarding increased contingency funds was really if they were to come in at the state average.

Mr. Fulmer said that if costs continued to rise and they could not come in under market again, their plan was still to build another very efficient design that was easy to construct. He said that this design would feature straight walls, which they were seeing in their bids for Elementary Schools 18 and 19, as well as the high school, it would be cost-effective. He said that they were seeing cheaper construction costs due to this design, and it was not a compromise on quality; it would still last many years. He said that by making it easier to build, they were attracting more competition, which would help them secure better prices.

Mr. Fulmer said that they planned to apply this approach to the Drew Middle School rebuild and had already contracted with the same architect who guided them on 18 and 19. He said that they were aware of their goals and would work with them to achieve an efficient design. He said that they expected to come in at a lower cost than the initial estimate of $6.5 million for additional contingency. He said that this was contingent on the market continuing to rise and their cost per square foot remaining low. He said that if costs increased, they may need those additional contingency funds.

Mr. Fulmer said that they were trying to get ahead of this by informing them now, similar to their experience with 18 and 19, where they did not anticipate the savings. He said that he wanted to ensure the Board of Supervisors and the School Board were aware of the potential for increased costs, and they would continue to coordinate with the County and VDOT during the design phase to minimize off-site costs. He said that the Hartwood Elementary School project, with a replacement date of 2028, was currently in the County's approved Capital Improvement Plan, and they planned to use the same prototype design to save funds.

Mr. Fulmer said that they knew this design was efficient and cost-effective, so they wanted to apply it again to the land they already had proffered in the Westlake subdivision. He said that over the last few years, they had been unsure of the timing of the Westlake subdivision, but it seemed that it was now under construction and moving forward. He said that they were adding 18 and 19, which would provide an additional 2,000 elementary school seats across the County, but with the Westlake development currently under construction in the southern part of the County, they would need to add additional capacity at Hartwood to ensure seats were available for the growing student population in the Westlake subdivision.

Ms. Bohmke said that the Westlake subdivision was approved back in the 1980s. She asked how many homes they were planning on constructing in the subdivision. She said that it was 600 or 800.

Mr. Fulmer said that they had the projected number of students added at each level that he could provide to the Board.

Ms. Bohmke asked what their estimated buildout was for that project. She said that it was probably 10 years, depending on what happens with the economy.

Mr. Diggs said that Mr. Fulmer had mentioned the need for a new elementary school. He asked how that fit into the conversation regarding an elementary school in Embrey Mill. He asked if this new school would be built before that one.

Mr. Fulmer said that he had relevant information on that topic on a slide, which he would get to in a few minutes.

Mr. Fulmer said that Hartwood would stay down in the south because they were replacing the existing building, but Elementary School 20 was planned for the Embrey Mill site.

Ms. Bohmke said that the question it seemed the Board was interested in was if they had that much growth, understanding they need to replace Hartwood Elementary, they wondered why they were not building the next elementary school for growth, which would be in Embrey Mill.

Mr. Fulmer said that this was why they did 18 and 19 first. He said that Hartwood was funded as a rebuild prior to those, and the School Board requested the Board of Supervisors to move up the 18 and 19 projects above Hartwood. He said that by doing that, they added 2,000 seats, and with the additional student growth in the Westlake subdivision, they could rebuilt Hartwood with an additional 450 seats in that building. He said that Hartwood was one of their oldest schools with a very limited capacity, so the additional seats would almost double the size.

Mr. English asked if adding more students to the old Hartwood Elementary School would have an impact on the school's well.

Mr. Fulmer said that when they rebuild the school, they would rebuild it on public water and sewer.

Ms. Bohmke asked Mr. Fulmer to continue his presentation.

Mr. Fulmer said that the next item was the Rising Star replacement and day school. He said that in the prior year's CIP, they had a public day school that would be a standalone building. He said that they evaluated that option and realized they could be more efficient by building Rising Star and the day school together. He said that this would allow them to centralize administrative offices and a kitchen, sharing resources and gaining efficiency, ultimately saving taxpayer dollars. He said that their plan was to expand their public day school.

Mr. Fulmer said that currently, at the Drew site, the school served about 25 students. He said that they aimed to add 46 additional seats, bringing in more students from private day schools and serving them in their public day school setting, which saves recurring operating dollars compared to private day schools. He said that they would do this at the current Drew Middle School site. He said that their plan was to rebuild Drew. He said that they were working on whether to rebuild or build Rising Star and the public day school site on the existing Drew site, leaving the Drew building to be torn down, or to tear down the Drew building and rebuild on its current placement. He said that they were currently in the scoping phase of that design.

Mr. Fulmer said that the proposed opening date aligned with Rising Star Replacement in the County CIP, but the combined project increased the overall cost by about $17.8 million, primarily due to the added public day school. He said that however, this increase was offset by the elimination of the other public day school and the savings from bringing in students from private day schools. He said that their staff believed that the best atmosphere for serving those students was in their public day schools, not private day schools. He said that other items still in the CIP included the North Stafford Fine Arts Wing, which required an additional programming study to better understand design costs and what that would look like.

Mr. Fulmer said that due to the age of North Stafford, it was an undersized fine arts classroom with limited capacities, which had been a priority for several years. He said that it was now outdated, and they needed to explore expansion options. He said that they previously discussed Elementary School 20, which was proposed to open in August 2030, aligning with the Rising Star and Hartwood replacement. He said that if they were to replace Hartwood in August 2028, they would need to start planning design dollars in the next fiscal year. He said that Elementary School 20 was designated for the Embrey Mill proffered site.

Mr. Fulmer said that a joint facility for fleet services was another upcoming project. He said that they were currently performing a minor renovation at the fleet services facility, adding bays to accommodate work, but it remained vastly undersized and could not accommodate modern buses. He said that they still proposed adding an additional facility in the north to better serve Sheriff's deputies and other personnel. He said that the southern site posed significant challenges, including lengthy commutes for bus maintenance and inspections, which could ultimately lead to increased operating costs in the long term if they did not have an additional fleet facility in the north.

Mr. Fulmer said that some other transportation projects, including the removal of a high school bus access road, required close collaboration with County staff and VDOT. He said that this initiative expanded beyond parking lot renovations at their schools. He said that they had been exploring high school access road improvements for several years, and some of their schools faced significant challenges or high costs. He said that the Stafford High School entrance, for example, was already being addressed with plans from the County and VDOT regarding Enon Road. He said that these adjustments should help alleviate gridlock at the entrance.

Mr. Fulmer said that although the addition of High School 7 and redistricting of students would provide temporary relief for a couple of years, they would still face significant student enrollment at their high schools in the future. He said that in addition to the fleet facilities in the north, they had some bus parking lots in their CIP. He said that upon reviewing a few of their sites, they believed they could utilize some of the current County and school land at Colonial Forge and Mountain View to add bus lots.

Mr. Fulmer said that to summarize, their current situation was that they had over 300 buses in their fleet but only about 193 parking spaces. He said that the remaining buses were spread out across their elementary schools, middle schools, and other County locations, resulting in security concerns. He said that this lack of organization caused delays, particularly during the summer and throughout the year, due to vandalism on their buses.

Mr. English asked why they did not allow the bus drivers to take the buses home. He said that it would be a solution until they could get something else done. He said that it would be more secure at the bus driver’s house. He said that he had heard people say that if the bus driver called in sick, then someone would have to go retrieve the bus, but otherwise it seemed like it would solve the current problem.

Mr. Fulmer said that it was a good question. He said that they still had some bus drivers who took their vehicles home, but they did not allow new bus drivers, so the ones who were grandfathered in and had been taking them home for years still did so. He said that this was a smaller number compared to the grand scheme of things. He said that he mentioned it earlier, but they did not have enough spare buses ready to go for their substitute drivers to show up and be able to hop on a bus.

Mr. Fulmer said that if a driver called out last minute and they had a substitute driver waiting at transportation, they now had to take 30 minutes to drive them to a house, get them on that bus, and then start that bus's route, which meant that bus was an hour late to its first stop. He said that this situation highlighted the potential need for additional parking spaces as they moved forward. He said that it was something they wanted to make sure everyone was aware of, and they did not want to forget the importance of having designated bus spots. He said that they were already adding them at ES18, which was part of the project and underway, and they were also looking at the potential of adding them at Colonial Forge and Mountain View, and possibly the High School 7 site.

Mr. Fulmer would like to mention their critical systems and renovation projects. He said that these were part of their large capital CIP, but this work was not optional. He said that these projects worked their way off of their 3R list and onto their major capital list because of their size. He said that their high schools were huge, with a $20 million project to replace all the major mechanical work. He said that currently, they were breaking these up over phases, but if they were not funded as part of large capital, they had to shift back onto their 3R list, so they would still have to continue to fund them.

Mr. Fulmer said that this brought them to the 3R list. He said that they were not done yet, but he would like to take a moment to thank the Board again. He said that this was an area where they had seen the need last year as part of the CIP process and had heard the School Board and staff, and he had been able to provide additional funding for their 3R list. He said that they had additional one-time funding of $6 million in 2025, and they also set aside $3.5 million for their emergency repairs.

Mr. Fulmer said that he appreciated the commitment and setting aside those funds, which had already been immensely helpful, and their emergency repair money was later on the agenda to start pulling down some of that for some of the work they were conducting. He said that on their 3R list for FY25, they had a total of $17.5 million with those one-time funds. He said that typically, they were in the range of $7 to $8 million annually, but as he had discussed before, they needed to aim for $20 to $25 million. He said that they had proposed a gradual increase in funding, starting from a lower number and then gradually raising it to achieve a more sustainable funding level.

Mr. Fulmer said that each year, the funding increased by a few percent, with an additional couple of million dollars. He said that it should be noted that their funds could not be allocated solely to one category of projects. He said that they had multiple projects ongoing, such as the HVAC unit at Stafford Middle School, and they needed to distribute their funds across different categories. He said that their large capital and 3R lists were interconnected, meaning that if projects on the capital list were not funded, they would shift to the 3R list, affecting the overall cost of their Capital

Improvement Plan and 3R lists. He said that historically, they had had to delay other projects to accommodate the funding for these large projects.

Mr. Fulmer said that the current recurring funding of $7 to $8 million, while sufficient for one or two projects per year, only phased a portion of those projects. He said that in this case, the $7 to $8 million would only fund phase three of the Stafford Middle School project and fund the final phase of the Park Ridge Elementary School mechanical project. He said that these projects were substantial, and they required additional funding to sustain them. He said that however, the $7 to $8 million of recurring funding only covered a small portion of the costs, leaving nothing for roofs, athletic fields, and other essential projects.

Mr. Fulmer said that for example, they had several tennis courts across the division that were currently shut down due to the lack of funding to replace them, making them unsafe for use. He said that their track had been shut down the previous year. He said that the additional funding they had received enabled them to get it back up and running the previous year. He said that with that in mind, he would like to open the floor for questions. He said that if they had any questions now or thought of them later, they were encouraged to reach out to Mr. Ashton, who would ensure that they were forwarded to him and Dr. Smith, allowing them to address them at the January meeting.

Ms. Gary asked if slide 19 was referring to Rising Star.

Mr. Fulmer said that yes, it was.

Ms. Gary said that she understood it was in horrible condition; she visited recently and saw the roof there. She said that this was also where they had issues staging the children to get ready to get on the buses because there was no cover.

Mr. Fulmer said that yes, there was an emerging issue they had been dealing within the last week. He said that they had actually roped off a section because it was not structurally safe to have the children underneath the awning. He said that currently they were trying to find the best short-term solution to keep that part of the roof up and standing.

Ms. Gary said that last time she was there, the water fountains were having issues as well. She asked if this was still an issue.

Mr. Fulmer said that he did not recall it being specific to the water fountains. He said that they were having water issues due to a water main break by Gary Melchers, and because of the resulting issues with the water pressure, it was affecting the water at Rising Star.

Ms. Gary said that she recalled the water fountains were covered and could not be used.

Mr. Fulmer said that they conducted routine water testing, including legionella and lead. He said that he was unsure of the current status of Rising Star but could follow up with that information.

Ms. Gary said that she was unsure if it was unsafe, but was interested in catching up on the issues.

Ms. Allen said that regarding the critical repairs, she wanted to ensure she understood the school's procedures and processes. She said that in her opinion, there had not been a significant way for them to know the severity of certain projects until it was too late, and then they were told that it needed to be fixed immediately, along with the required funding. She said that to help her make better decisions regarding adequate funding, was there a possibility of creating a critical status rating system, such as a color-coded system that would allow them to notify the County of the severity of the issue. She said that they had previously discussed the possibility of audits or inspections, and he said they were working with the County to implement this process.

Ms. Allen said that she believed it would be beneficial to have a standardized process while they were onboarding new facilities onto the CIP, as well as a clear timeline for addressing critical issues. She said that this would give them a sense of urgency and allow them to plan financially for the next year and beyond. She said that additionally, it would provide a visual representation of the critical projects and their timelines. She said that her second question was regarding the aquatics and activity center. She asked if Mr. Fulmer could explain why it had been removed from the plan.

Mr. Fulmer said that it was more of a County project than a school project, although the school division could utilize it for their swimming programs. He said that it did not appear as a high priority with all the other things on their list.

Dr. Yeung said that she would not go into details regarding the list, specifically getting the $600,000 back. She said that her question was regarding the most emergent ones they had. She said that the roof issue Ms. Gary just mentioned looked like an emergency, so she was wondering if they should be fixing that as an emergency issue.

Mr. Fulmer said that yes, that would likely come back on a list at a future Board meeting once they find the solution.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted a list, based on the audit she spoke about in 2023, that provided the items the audit had shown as emergent issues they needed to get off the list. She said that regarding Embrey Mill, she would like to know if staff was recommending Embrey Mill for Elementary School 20, or if the School Board voted for Embrey Mill to be Elementary School 20.

Mr. Fulmer said that it was on the School Board's approved CIP, so they voted to approve that project.

Dr. Yeung said that Westlake would have 600 homes, but Embrey Mill had 1,827 homes. She said that with the elementary school there, many children could walk to school rather than take the bus. She said that Falmouth had seven schools and Garrisonville had six schools. She said that however, Garrisonville had the largest number of students living in any district, not including the projected students.

Mr. English asked if Mr. Fulmer or Mr. Towery could provide a three-month update to the Board of Supervisors to let them know what they had accomplished. He said that a brief update with a checklist would be great.

Mr. Fulmer said that yes, they could do that. He said that a lot of projects were limited to the summer timeframe, so the projects funded last year may not actually start until this upcoming summer because they got the contracts lined up and issued in March or April. He said that as soon as the kids left school, they started the major 3R projects and building. He said that he wanted to comment because Dr. Yeung and Ms. Allen brought up that they did have the facilities site index, and they had audits performed by an outside agency which were made available online. He said that they updated them every few years because they could not do all schools every year, but it rotated so that they would get about five schools done each year. He said that they analyzed the conditions and equipment in all buildings, which informed how they constructed their 3R list and the large capital list. He said that the impending projects for failing systems would be the highest-rated priority on the 3R lists.

Ms. Bohmke said that it would be helpful if Dr. Smith could communicate with Mr. Ashton about how the Board of Supervisors could look at their list on their own time.

Mr. Fulmer said that they could do that, although it might be something they need to create. He said that these were 50-page documents for every school and facility building they had. He said that he could find a way to share it with them.

Ms. Allen asked if they could compile that information so they could have a visual of the information. She said that she knew they received the critical ones, but she would like to see the timeframe for when they would have to deal with the less critical projects.

<u>ITEM 28. COUNTY ATTORNEY AND SHERIFF; REPORT ON COUNTY'S PARKING REGULATIONS AND DRIVEWAY OBSTRUCTION</u>

Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney, said that this was a brief update to the Board. She said that at their October 1 meeting, the Attorney's Office was asked to investigate whether the Board has the authority to establish distance requirements between parked cars and driveways. She said that the Board does have state code authority to establish distance requirements, and the County was currently using that authority to prohibit parked vehicles from being in front of public or private driveways, as stated in Section §15-51(A).

Ms. McClendon said that if the Board would like to set actual distance requirements in that code section, it would require a code amendment and a public hearing. She said that when examining this topic, they reviewed peer localities, which are included in their Board package, and most of them prohibited parking in front of driveways, similar to Stafford. She said that for a few localities that did have distance requirements, they set it between 5 to 10 feet.

Ms. McClendon said that the Sheriff's Office was responsible for enforcing this provision of County code, and if a vehicle blocked a driveway, the driveway user could simply call the Sheriff's Office, and they would enforce the code provision. She said that with regards to the current code section and consulting with the Sheriff's Office, they believed that public safety was secured by the current County code regulations. She said that if the Board had any questions, she could answer them, and Major Dembowski with the Sheriff's Office was also present.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the Sheriff's Office received a lot of these calls regarding cars being close to driveways.

Major Jason Dembowski said that no, they did not receive them about cars close to driveways, but they did receive them about cars blocking driveways. He said that the code section clearly defines that situation, so it was an easily enforceable action when a driveway was blocked. He said that it had become more challenging for their office because they had to buy measuring devices for all deputies responding, because they had to measure the distance to determine whether they were actually in violation and then photograph those distances. He said that it created an expanded workload for their deputies, who were already under a heavy workload.

Dr. Yeung said that she brought this item forward because she lived in Hampton Oaks, but the issue was also prevalent in Embrey Mill. She said that some of the houses there were right next to each other, so people blocked each other's' driveways. She said that five feet was not a bad number. She said that in terms of Hampton Oaks, it was the whole area. She said that people wanted to drop off their kids and pick them up, so the whole area had a significant number of cars blocking mailboxes and driveways. She said that enforcing the code would be a deterrent, so they would not have to actually measure the distance. She said that giving a ticket would provide revenue and help people learn the lesson.

Major Dembowski said that the Sheriff's Office did not ticket for revenue as a practice. He said that if people were blocking the driveway, the current code section already covers that issue. He said that within a distance of a driveway would not be necessary in that case, and the Sheriff's Office already supported the current code section. He said that they were opposed to changing the current code section to include a distance within a driveway. He said that the curbings were usually not marked yellow and were neighborhood curbings. He said that if they were blocking a driveway or mailbox, it was currently a violation of the code, so residents could call the Sheriff's Office to investigate. He said that they were unsupportive of changing the language to be within so many feet of a driveway due to the challenge of enforcement.

Ms. Vanuch asked if Dr. Yeung had communicated to the Sheriff's Office about the current issues in her district's neighborhoods so that they could do some spot enforcement when time allowed.

Dr. Yeung said that the school system and Hampton Oaks had done that. She said that she did not want to take this off the table because the information was here. She said that she would like the Sheriff's Office to come out to the Hampton Oaks area and assess the situation firsthand. She said that she could also send them to where it was happening in Embrey Mill, and perhaps that would change their mind. She said that she did want the Sheriff's Office as a partner in approving this, rather than the Board approving it and giving more work to their staff.

Major Dembowski said that once the code was changed, the work would be there. He said that if they chose one specific area, the Sheriff's Office could work on that. He said that however, once they changed the entire code, it applied everywhere.

Dr. Yeung said that she understood. She said that she would not insist on doing this right now, but did not want to take it off the table entirely. She said that first, she would like the Sheriff's Office to come out to the areas in her district to see how to address the situation.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 29. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; R24-41; CONSIDER DESIGNATING ADDITIONAL HOLIDAYS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2025 FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES

Ms. Bohmke said that this item had been previously discussed at the last Board meeting, where it resulted in a tied vote. She said that per the Board's by-laws, the item was before the Board again. She said that staff had sent two different emails outlining how their holidays compared to those of the City of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, Prince William County, and the state.

Ms. Vanuch said that she and the Chair had communicated about bringing this back in previous years, voting based on revenues and the performance, voting on the half days closer to the time that it would be taking place to ensure they had a policy in place for coverage within County departments and so not everyone was taking off the entire week. She said that this was a concern she had based on constituent complaints about getting responses to things the week of holidays.

Ms. Vanuch said that Mr. Diggs or Dr. Yeung had requested the days tally, which showed their employees received three additional days off per year compared to some peer localities. She said that during her time on the Board a few years ago, they had recalculated vacation accrual times to ensure their employees received a significant amount of time off.

Ms. Vanuch said that she was not suggesting they deny this request outright; rather, they should consider the current economic uncertainty and workforce changes. She said that it would be prudent to maintain their employees' normal days off, with the additional half days voted on closer to the Thanksgiving break and Christmas break, as they had in the past. She said that she respectfully requested the Board's support on this matter.

Mr. Diggs said that he had requested the numbers, and he appreciated Ms. Vanuch's perspective. He said that he and Dr. Yeung had also discussed this matter. He said that one of the key factors they should consider was establishing a minimum staffing standard if the County was open. He said that when citizens visited and there was no staff present, he thought they could address this issue through this mechanism. He said that examining the proposed calendar's dates and days off, the state authorized 15 days per year, while their proposed County calendar offered 17 days. He said that this was only two days above the state's authorization and one day less than last year's authorization.

Mr. Diggs said that when considering recruitment and retention, he kept coming back to this point. He said that he believed it was essential to provide staff with the opportunity to plan ahead. He said that if they implemented a staffing standard, they could hold staff accountable through mechanisms other than performance evaluations. He said that he understood Ms. Vanuch's mention of the fiscal considerations, which gave it a complete picture. He said that he would like to see them move forward with it for staff's sake.

Dr. Yeung said that she and Mr. Diggs had had this conversation. She said that Mr. Diggs had requested different data points. She said that she had asked to see the past 10 years, for example, when they did offer time off. She said that in the past 10 years, they only gave the full Thanksgiving day off, while Christmas was given three times over those 10 years. She said that this illustrated that it depends and was not the same Board as now. She said that she deeply valued their employees, she wanted to ensure that their contributions were recognized as valuable.

Dr. Yeung said that she believed the best way to reward them was through a review in the pay scale, which they had done in the past years and more so than in the past. She said that she knew that last year, they received a 6% increase, and she believed they needed to examine the pay scale and reward them with the funding they were asking for, comparing it to the pay scales in the north. She said that by offering additional days off in addition to the ones they already earned, they were essentially saying they could not do justice with their pay scales, so here was another day off. She said that to her, this approach may not be fair.

Dr. Yeung said that the County already provided three additional days beyond the state and neighboring counties, along with excellent health care, retirement benefits, and OPEB. She said that over the past few years, they had prioritized salary matches for both the Sheriff's Office and County employees, which was the practice she thought they should look at. She said that adding holidays tied to specific seasons could unintentionally exclude those with different religious beliefs.

Dr. Yeung said that as a Christian, she believed religion should be recognized and respected equally. She said that it did not seem like they were doing that here. She said that they must consider the needs of their residents, and closing government offices disproportionately impacted those who relied on their services and did not otherwise receive time off. She said that it was critical that they remain accessible and prioritize sustainability, equitability, and ways to support their workforce.

Mr. English said that he did not understand why they would be fighting over this. He said that if they were trying to be the best they could be, they could not keep comparing themselves to northern Virginia. He said that they could be the best they could be as Stafford County. He said that giving this to the employees was not a big deal; they had done it in the past. He said that he had been here for over 40 years and knew they had always done that. He said that adding two half days and one full day, especially this December when the holidays fall on a long weekend, getting people out of here was something he could support.

Mr. English said that he was supportive because the employees did a fantastic job here and he did not see a reason to take something away from them. He said that if they were trying to be the best, giving two extra days would not cause a problem. He said that if the argument is that it was a lot of money to give to employees, he felt that they needed to keep employees in Stafford and this was a good way to do that. He said that he would be amenable to taking another look at the budgetary impacts in June to see where they were standing financially. He said that this gave them six months to plan, so that was not off the table either.

Ms. Allen said that clearly there was some consternation and she did not want this to be a closed vote. She said that as a Board making personal decisions, it needed to have majority unity. She said that she would feel more comfortable if Mr. Ashton was able to put together a game plan once they knew what the budget looked like, then return in June before their summer recess to determine the best course of action. She said that the administration could determine how to ensure they were adequately staffed and address the different religious needs for their staff, potentially coming up with two or three different options. She said that she did not want this to be a 4-3 vote on something that should have unanimity.

Ms. Vanuch motioned to approve Resolution R24-41, minus the two half days, the day before Thanksgiving and the day before Christmas Eve.

Ms. McClendon said that to clarify, this resolution was only doing what they were taking out of the calendar. She said that the holidays were already established, so if they did not want to give the holidays in the resolution, then they did not need to pass the resolution.

Ms. Vanuch said that she wanted to pass the calendar.

Ms. Bohmke said that they had already done that.

Ms. McClendon said that they did not have to pass the calendar. She said that the personnel policy of the County had the state holidays already adopted for the County, so those were already set.

Ms. Vanuch said that that was perfect. She asked about the additional floating holiday.

Ms. McClendon said that yes, that holiday would need to be added.

Ms. Vanuch asked about the extra day after the 4th of July.

Ms. McClendon said that that day was not currently in this resolution. She said that she would need to strike the first paragraph, removing the half day before Thanksgiving and the half day added to Christmas Eve.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to approve Resolution R24-41, adding the floating holiday, and with the expectation that Mr. Ashton would put together a minimum staffing standards policy, bringing that back before the Board in June 2025 for the Board to vote on adding the extra two half days for the day before Thanksgiving and the day before Christmas Eve.

Mr. Diggs said that he wanted it to be clear for the public and staff that there was a requirement for the County Administrator to bring this item back in June.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was part of Ms. Vanuch's motion. She said that they would have the floating and the other two holidays would be considered in June when Mr. Ashton returned with a minimum staffing standards for the various holidays, also addressing the Board regarding their revenue projections.

Dr. Yeung said that this year, the employees would have the day off.

Ms. Gary asked if Ms. Vanuch could restate the motion for clarity.

Ms. Vanuch said that her motion was to approve Resolution R24-41, striking the sections in the first paragraph, and removing the half day on the day before Thanksgiving and the half day before Christmas Eve, and directing the County Administrator to work with staff to create a minimum staffing standards plan prior to June 2025, present that to the Board when this item comes back with budget reconciliation to ensure they could afford to grant those days off. She said that the Board would then vote to take those half days off for staff at whichever June meeting the item would be prepared for.

Ms. Gary said that she appreciated the clarification. She said that she wanted to comment that she supported the holidays and agreed with Dr. Yeung regarding the flexibility of holidays for people who may want to use them differently.

Mr. Diggs said that regarding the minimum staffing, he was wondering if this meant they did not want the County to be without personnel here at any time.

Ms. Bohmke said that no, it was just on those specific holidays.

Ms. Vanuch said that no, her perspective was regarding the week. She said that staff might want to know ahead of time so they could take the whole week off when they had Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday off. She said that if they took off Monday and Tuesday, then they got the entire week off. She said that they needed to make sure that not everyone was taking the entire week off on Monday and Tuesday and that there were minimum staffing standards to keep the government running on Monday and Tuesday so they were not essentially shut down the entire week.

Mr. Ashton said that it was something he had done before, and they needed to ensure that they had adequate leadership within the building, in addition to staff. He said that often, this was handled in a decentralized manner at the operational level, but they could develop a structure to provide adequate leadership, such as a manager or director, in the building in that section, along with the necessary staffing to serve the public.

Ms. Bohmke said that she heard everything everyone said, and all of the comments were well-said. She said that as it related to retention and hiring, which was very important, she thought it was essential to acknowledge that they could not overlook the benefits that had increased significantly. She said that benefits that used to account for 20% of someone's salary now accounted for more like 40%. She said that their County offered excellent benefits, and she did not think they should forget that. She said that this was an integral part of the overall package of coming to Stafford County. She said that with that said, she believed they had had a productive and fair discussion.

Ms. Bohmke called the vote on approving Resolution R24-41, striking the sections in the first paragraph, and removing the half day on the day before Thanksgiving and the half day before Christmas Eve, and directing the County Administrator to work with staff to create a minimum staffing standards plan prior to June 2025, present that to the Board when this item comes back with budget reconciliation to ensure they could afford to grant those days off. She said that the Board would then vote to take those half days off for staff at whichever June meeting the item would be prepared for.

The Voting Board tally was:
Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
No: (0)

ITEM 30. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; R24-349; CONSIDER BUDGETING AND APPROPRIATING CAPITAL PROJECT RESERVES SET ASIDE DURING THE FY2025 BUDGET PROCESS FOR UNPLANNED SCHOOL MAINTENANCE REPAIRS

Andrea Light, Chief Financial Officer, said that during the Fiscal Year 2025 adopted budget, the Board requested setting aside $3.5 million in fund balance for school emergency repairs. She said that at the October 24, 2024 Joint Schools Working Committee, school staff presented a list of unanticipated maintenance costs they had incurred. She said that the school's Interim Superintendent, now the Chief Operating Officer, had requested reimbursement from the set-aside of $611,065. She said that she was available to answer any questions the Board may have regarding the budget appropriation and the location of those funds, and school staff was here to discuss the projects in more detail if they had those questions.

Dr. Yeung motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to approve Resolution R24-349.

The Voting Board tally was:
Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
No: (0)

ITEM 31. ADDRESS REMOVAL OF FORMER STAFFORD COUNTY CITIZEN APPOINTEE TO THE LIBRARY BOARD AND RELATED ISSUES

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to strike “misconduct” from the record, retract the Board’s finding and vote of misconduct regarding Mary Becelia on July 10, 2024, and authorize the Clerk to strike through the same in the minutes of the July 10, 2024 meeting.

Ms. Allen said that speaking on behalf of herself and her district, she was sincerely apologetic for any personal harm or distress the Board may have caused Ms. Becelia and her family. She said that she hoped the County could move forward and learn from this.

Dr. Yeung said that in the beginning she had already mentioned how she felt, and she was very hurt that this had happened to Ms. Becelia. She said that they had spoken and she had gotten to know her as a person of integrity and good standing in the community. She said that she had never heard a bad word about her, even before she knew her, and she stood up for her. She said that she believed that an individual should be able to be present to answer to their own truth. She said that with that, she apologized also. She said that she hoped that this could be the beginning of closure.

Ms. Gary said that she wanted to reiterate Dr. Yeung's point about allowing space for someone to speak when issues like this arose in the future. She said that she believed this would be very helpful. She said that earlier, she had made some statements, and she hoped they were conveyed despite Mary not being present at the time. She said that she did not have anything else to add, other than expressing her gratitude to her colleagues who had taken responsibility for this matter. She said that she was grateful to those who showed indignation about the process and wanted to take action.

Ms. Gary said that there had been a lot of discussions, and they all knew who those people are. She said that these decisions were complex and often made quickly, sometimes resulting in mistakes. She said that she would not take up any more of Ms. Becelia's time, because she had already been in here too often and spent too much time having to deal with this. She said that for that, she was sorry and had no other words than that. She said that she was glad that they could do something about it and hopefully put some parameters in place to have real accountability of this Board in the future.

Mr. English said that he wanted to personally apologize to Ms. Becelia and her family. He said that if he were in her husband's position, he believed he would be taking the same actions. He said that he was deeply sorry for the impact this had had on them. He said that he acknowledged that they made a mistake, and he hoped that they could learn from it and prevent similar situations in the future. He said that he sincerely apologized on his behalf, and he felt deeply sorry for the distress this had caused them, particularly her son, who had spoken publicly about his desire to make a difference. He said that he believed that individuals like him, who were passionate about creating positive change, needed to be empowered to do so, and he was truly sorry that this had happened to them.

Ms. Vanuch said that she also wanted to say she was really sorry about the process. She said that hearing about how Ms. Becelia had been informed about the situation was not the Board's intention, and she was very sorry about that process in which it had to be conveyed. She said that she had reviewed her emails, and she did not receive any communication from Ms. Becelia, because otherwise she would have reached out to her. She said that she was not sure what else the Board could say. She said that she believed that they were taking the necessary action to remove the misconduct from the record.

Ms. Vanuch said that she had learned that when they went into closed session, as Mr. Diggs said earlier, they must trust the information they received from committee appointees, but she would definitely be second-guessing that information and ensuring a thorough investigation. She said that after Ms. Becelia brought forward her comments, they had initiated an investigation, and she thought she would hear more about it after they took this vote.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to make one final statement for the record. She said that she wanted to inform Ms. Becelia and her family, as well as the public, that there was a discussion held between herself and the Chair regarding how she would be informed about this matter. She said that she specifically requested that the Board would reach out to her, and she was assured that this would occur after some pressing. She said that however, that did not happen, but it was supposed to. She said that she believed it was essential to have this on the record, as she was told that it would occur, and she was sorry that it did not.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was also sorry for the process. She said that she and Ms. Becelia actually lived in the same neighborhood, but had never had the opportunity to meet her. She said that there were various reasons why she was not allowed to contact Ms. Becelia that she would not discuss publicly, but she would apologize for that. She said that Ms. Gary was correct that she was supposed to reach out to Ms. Becelia via email, and she did not. She said that it was something important that she dropped, and she took responsibility as the Chair for that. She said that she hoped they could put this all behind them and do better.

Ms. Bohmke called the vote to strike "misconduct" from the record, retract the Board's finding and vote of misconduct regarding Mary Becelia on July 10, 2024, and authorize the Clerk to strike through the same in the minutes of the July 10, 2024 meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:
Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
No: (0)

A RESOLUTION TO CENSURE SUPERVISOR MONICA GARY

WHEREAS, the Board has the authority to discipline its members for engaging in disorderly behavior and misconduct, pursuant to Virginia Code §15.2-1400D; and

WHEREAS, the Board had established a Code of Performance, approved on January 2, 2024, in which each member endorses and conveys to each other and the public their commitment to conduct the business of Stafford County in a professional and dignified manner; and

WHEREAS, on July 10, 2024, the Board relied on information provided by Supervisor Monica Gary to take action and remove the Stafford County citizen representative on the Central Rappahannock Regional Library Board of Trustees; and

WHEREAS, upon further investigation, the Board now believes that the information it received from Supervisor Gary was inaccurate; and

WHEREAS, during the Board's investigation of the removal in the closed session meetings held on November 19 and November 20, 2024, Supervisor Gary acted unprofessionally and without integrity, in violation of the Code of Performance, as further described below; and

WHEREAS, on November 19, 2024, the Board removed Supervisor Gary as the Stafford County Board representative on the Library Board; and

WHEREAS, as a result of Supervisor Gary's action, the Board's commitment to creating an environment promoting a high level of public confidence and trust in Stafford County government has been called into question; and

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon the Board to take action and to censure and further discipline Supervisor Gary to address the inappropriate behavior and to begin to rebuild and restore the public's trust; and

WHEREAS, the procedures followed by the Board and discipline taken herein have been progressive in nature and in line with the Code of Performance;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 17th Day of December, 2024, that it be and hereby does publicly censure Supervisor Monica Gary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board denounces all behaviors and actions demonstrated by Supervisor Gary that violated the following provisions of the Code of Performance: (3) maintain an attitude of courtesy towards colleagues, County staff, and the public during meetings, discussions, deliberations; (4) be tolerant, allowing colleagues, County staff, and the public sufficient opportunity to present their views and perspectives; (5) be respectful and attentive, avoiding comments, body language, or distracting behaviors that convey a message of disrespect or a lack of interest; (6) the use of abusive, intimidating, or threatening language and gestures directed at colleagues, County staff, or the public; (9) discharge the duties and responsibilities of the office in an impartial manner, without fear or prejudice towards any person or group; (11) maintain and keep confidential closed session information and information disclosed to the Board under legally permissible confidentiality agreements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as a result of Supervisor Gary's actions and violation of the Code of Performance, the Board removes her assignment from and representation on all boards, authorities, commissions, and committees to which she was appointed to by the Board; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Supervisor Gary is strongly encouraged to review and adhere to the Code of Performance and to conform her behavior to the standards agreed to therein; and

BE IT SO FURTHER RESOLVED that further infractions in the Code of Performance and disorderly behavior and misconduct may result in additional discipline and reprimand, as permissible by Virginia law.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to approve the Resolution R24-367 to Censure Supervisor Monica Gary.

Ms. Gary said that this was retaliation. She said that it was illegal under federal law, as it was when she was removed from the Library Board for making her colleagues look bad, which was discussed in closed session. She said that the actions that occurred during closed session, where she was told she was being removed because she was no longer trusted, were not a valid reason to remove someone from a Library Board. She said that this was a clear violation of Virginia code. She said that as a result, she was allowed to share this information. She said that she was also informed by another supervisor that she was voted off the Library Board by that supervisor solely for political purposes, allowing them to serve in her place.

Ms. Gary said that this was also illegal under Virginia code. She said that another supervisor, after she thought they had reached a situation that would allow her make these apologies that should have happened a long time ago, and also to her colleagues for not being as clear as she could, but there was not misleading or wrong information that she had given to them. She said that she was also told, after she thought they had reached a resolution, that there needed to be some punishment. She said that that was retaliation from Supervisor Vanuch, and this broke the Civil Rights Act, a federal law, and that was being done now.

Ms. Gary said that this was retaliation because she had come out in public, using her right to free speech to address the Board's actions behind closed doors, which were illegal and should never have happened. She said that what they were witnessing now was an abuse of power, and if she had to be the only person to stand up here and deal with it, then she was happy to do that, because it was not about her. She said that it never should have been about her; it was about dealing what happened to Ms. Becelia. She said that she was happy to put her neck on the line. She said that if what she dealt with for doing that was this, then she would go home and sleep at night because she was doing the right thing no matter what.

Ms. Gary said that it was very unfortunate that the public's trust had been broken because the Board broke it. She said that the public did not trust because this Board was not trustworthy, and had shown themselves not to be so. She said that this was not an isolated incident. She said that regarding abuse, she had not been abusive or aggressive towards anyone on this Board. She said that it was completely inappropriate, and at the same time she was getting reports of staff being yelled at a Christmas party by Supervisor Vanuch, saying “get the god damn lights lit right now.”

Ms. Vanuch said that that was an absolute lie.

Ms. Gary said that she would continue speaking. She said that she had free speech, which Ms. Bohmke had cut before with shortening their time to speak, calling recesses, and shut off her microphone repetitively.

Ms. Bohmke said that she could speak, but she must remain on topic.

Ms. Gary said that she was staying on topic. She said that the topic was that the only abuse and lying going on here was not coming out of her mouth. She said that it was completely unacceptable, and this Board would not be accountable.

Dr. Yeung said that mistakes happened to all of them, especially when they made decisions they regret. She said that the situation has escalated to the point where they are apologizing to the same person who served them on the Library Board. She said that nevertheless, she would not make two wrongs make a right. She said that she did want to restore this wrong by ensuring that individuals serving their County had the ability to present if they have actions or complaints against them. She said that in this case, it would be misconduct. She said that she mentioned this earlier today and wanted to make sure she mentioned it again. She said that there is an Article 2.2-3712 that they could utilize. She said that she hoped her colleagues would think about this and bring it forward next year during their advance meeting.

Ms. Vanuch said that she wanted to correct the record, because Ms. Gary's allegations are an absolute falsity and lie. She said that she believed they had a little picture of what they got back in closed session where she was throwing out heinous accusations about Ms. Becelia's behavior. She said that unfortunately, they learned a lesson, which was that it was very inaccurate and very untrue. She said that for that, she very much apologized.

Ms. Bohmke said that she had something she wanted to read before they vote. She read "before they cast their vote today on the censure of Supervisor Gary, she believed it is imperative for the community to understand the results of the investigation and information that was provided to our Board. In July and again in September, Supervisor Gary provided misleading information to the entire Board. Upon further investigation, it was brought to the Board's attention that Supervisor Gary reached out to the Chair of the Stafford County Democratic Committee, asking for a new appointee recommendation to the Library Board before the Board of Supervisors took any actions on the removal of Ms. Becelia in July.

"Shortly after, our Board was provided misleading and inaccurate information from Supervisor Gary, and the Board voted to remove the library appointee. The Democratic Chair notified Supervisor Gary that the Library Board member removed was in fact a Stafford County Democratic Committee member. Based on the investigation, this notification to Supervisor Gary is essentially what led her to changing her mind and requesting the Board to reappoint Ms. Becelia. In September's closed session, the Board clarified with Supervisor Gary and asked if Ms. Becelia's actions had changed from what she shared in July; she said no.

"That behavior shared with the Board can be characterized as disrespectful and unprofessional behavior. Based on that information, the Board still felt what was being told to the Board by Supervisor Gary was in fact misconduct and were unwilling to overturn the previous decision. It was not until a couple of weeks ago that the Board's continued investigation uncovered these motives from Supervisor Gary were political in nature and related to her upcoming re-election, and gain in support from the Democratic Committee in her upcoming election. And the misconduct she previously shared with the Board was a fabrication from Supervisor Gary. Appointments to committees and commissions should never be made based on political affiliation requirements or traded for support."

Ms. Vanuch called the question, noting that Ms. Gary would not vote on this item.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (5) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Vanuch
No: (0)
Abstain: (1) Yeung

Ms. Bohmke asked if Dr. Yeung could state her reason for abstention for the record.

Dr. Yeung said that as she stated before, she regretted that this mistake happened, but two wrongs did not make a right. She said that she believed that at this point in time, they had a solution they could put in place. She said that she was not voting to censure Ms. Gary; she believed it was a necessary decision to remove her from the Library Board itself, but she could not support any other actions, including censure.

CLOSED MEETING

At 8:17 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to adopt Resolution CM24-33 to authorize closed session.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
No: (0)

Resolution CM24-33 reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board desires to hold a Closed Meeting for (1) consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff regarding entering a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds and discussion of terms or scope of such contract, which is a specific legal matter requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel and where such discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the Board, (2) consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff regarding the acquisition of land for a County services facility, which is a specific legal matter requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel and where such discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the Board, and (3) consultation with legal counsel pertaining to Stafford County v. Courthouse Square, LLC, case number CL20-3826, where such consultation or briefings in open meeting would adversely affect the litigating posture of the Board; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711 (A)(3), (A)(7), (A)(8), and (A)(29), such discussions may occur in Closed Meeting;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 17th day of December, 2024 that it be and hereby does authorize discussion of the above matters in Closed Meeting.

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

At 9:08 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to adopt Resolution CM24-33(C) to certify the closed meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
No: (0)

Resolution CM24-33 (C) reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY THE ACTIONS OF THE STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN A CLOSED MEETING ON DECEMBER 17, 2024

WHEREAS, the Board has, on this the 17th day of December, 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 17th day of December, 2024, that to the best of each member's knowledge (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the Motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened, were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. Diggs, to approve Resolution R24-362, A Resolution Authorizing the County Administrator and the County Attorney to execute any and all documents necessary to settle Stafford County Board of Supervisors v. Courthouse Square, LLC, case number CL20-3826.

The Voting Board tally was:
Yea: (7) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary, Vanuch, Yeung
No: (0)

ADJOURNMENT
At 9:10 p.m., Chairman Bohmke adjourned the December 17, 2024 Stafford County Board of Supervisor's meeting.

Willam H. Ashton, II
County Administrator

Meg G. Bohmke

Meg Bohmke
Chairman