BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 4, 2025

CALL TO ORDER – A regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Deuntay Diggs, Chairman, at 5:00 p.m.. on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 in the Board Chambers, George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford VA.

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

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

INVOCATION

Ms. Vanuch led the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Yeung led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

CHAIR REMARKS

Mr. Diggs said that February was Black History Month; during this month they celebrated Black History and recognized its integral part of their larger Stafford community and American history. He said that he was looking forward to the grand opening of the Stafford African American Heritage Trail later this month, produced by a partnership between Discover Stafford and Tour Stafford. He said that the trail consisted of 23 stops throughout the County that told a more comprehensive story of Stafford's Black history. He said that Vice Chair Allen and he were collaborating on a video featuring a couple of these stops, which would be shown at their next board meeting. He said that this was part of Stafford's continued efforts to tell the history of all of their residents more completely.

Mr. Diggs said that last weekend, their Board had held its annual advance meeting, where they had completed strategic planning for the year. He said that he would like to thank the staff members who worked to support them in this endeavor. He said that he also wanted to thank his fellow Board members for their dedication and collaboration as they worked together to move their community forward in a unified manner.

Mr. Diggs said that recently, Stafford County Fire and Rescue's Public Information Officer and Fire Life Safety Manager Katie Brady and Falmouth Volunteer Fire Department Volunteer Chris Smith had been deployed to support the National Capital Region Incident Management Team in response to the tragic mid-air collision over the Potomac River on January 29, 2025. He said that this heartbreaking event had claimed the lives of 67 individuals aboard both aircraft, which had gone down approximately half a mile short of runway 33 at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in Arlington, Virginia.

Mr. Diggs said that they extended their gratitude to Ms. Brady, Mr. Smith, and all public safety personnel and support teams involved in the response. He said that at this time, he asked that they observe a moment of silence to honor the lives lost in this devastating incident, as well as the victims of MedJet's Flight 056, which had crashed in northeast Philadelphia last Friday. He asked that everyone stand and observe a moment of silence.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS AND APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR AGENDA

William Ashton, County Administrator, said that he had no new information since last Thursday when the agenda was released.

Mr. Diggs said that he had one other announcement to make. He said that the Verizon line was currently not functioning. He said that Verizon was working to repair the issue. He said that the Board meeting was available online at StaffordCountyVA.gov for those who wished to view the live meeting.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Bohmke, to approve the regular agenda.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

ITEM 1. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE JANUARY 7, 2025 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

ITEM 2. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE JANUARY 21, 2025 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES

ITEM 3. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPOINT SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE TO THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

ITEM 4. ~~COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; ADOPTION OF THE BOARD'S 2025 CODE OF PERFORMANCE~~ (Item requested to be pulled by Dr. Yeung)

ITEM 5. CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; R25-24; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH ARDENT COMPANY, LLC FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROUTE 1 AT TELEGRAPH ROAD AND WOODSTOCK LANE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECTS

ITEM 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; P25-02; PROCLAMATION HONORING AND RECOGNIZING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

ITEM 7. COMMUNITY FACILITIES; R25-17; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO APPROVE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES WITH ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS OF VIRGINIA, INC. FOR THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF SECURITY PRODUCTS AND RELATED SERVICES

ITEM 8. ~~DEVELOPMENT SERVICES; R25-38; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO APPROVE A CONTRACT AMENDMENT FOR FIRE REPAIR CONSTRUCTION SERVICES WITH KBS EARTHWORKS, INC. FOR THE ST. CLAIR BROOKS STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT~~ (Item requested to be pulled by Supervisor Bohmke)

ITEM 9. DEVELOPMENT SERVICES; R25-39; PETITION VDOT TO INCLUDE DECATUR ROAD AND QUARRY ROAD WITHIN THE AQUIA OVERLOOK SECTION 4 SUBDIVISION INTO THE SECONDARY STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

ITEM 10. DEVELOPMENT SERVICES; PETITION VDOT TO INCLUDE ROTUNDA WAY, ELMSLEY LANE, DRISCOLL LANE, MOUNTAIN PATH LANE, GRISHAM RAOD, AND PIMA COURT WITHIN WINDING CREEK SECTIONS 1 AND 2 SUBDIVISIONS INTO THE SECONDARY STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

ITEM 11. PLANNING AND ZONING; RECEIVE AND ACCEPT THE PLANNING COMMISSION 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

ITEM 12. REGISTRAR; R25-08; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT TO PURCHASE AN ELECTRONIC POLLBOOK MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

ITEM 13. SHERIFF; R25-21; ACCEPT, BUDGET, AND APPROPRIATE THE FY25 VIRGINIA STATE POLICE HELP ELIMINATE AUTO THEFT (HEAT) EQUIPMENT REIMBURSEMENT GRANT TO PURCHASE CLEAR AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READER SOFTWARE

ITEM 14. UTILITIES; R25-18; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO APPROVE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES WITH 72 HOUR LLC DBA NATIONAL AUTO FLEET GROUP TO FURNISH AND DELIVER VEHICLES, RELATED EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES

ITEM 15. UTILITIES; R25-23; BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE UTILITIES RESERVE FUNDS AND AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A WORK ORDER WITH S-WORKS CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION FOR THE MECHANICAL BAR SCREEN INSTALLATION LOCATED AT THE RAPPAHANNOCK REGIONAL JAIL

<u>ITEM 16. UTILITIES; R25-37; AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE CONTRACTS FOR UTILITIES ON-CALL WATER AND SEWER MAINTENANCE, REPAIR AND CONSTRUCTION SERVICES</u>

Ms. Bohmke requested that item 8 be pulled from the consent agenda.

Dr. Yeung requested that items 4 and 8 be pulled from the consent agenda.

Mr. Diggs asked if Dr. Yeung would like to address Item 4.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Mr. English, to approve the consent agenda as amended.

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

Dr. Yeung said that during the retreat, also known as the advance meeting, the Board had agreed to establish an investigatory process to follow when considering removal of a board, authority, committee, or commission member for cause. She said that given that they had recently updated the bylaws policy guide, she was wondering why the code of conduct was still listed under consent. She said that she was not aware if they had signed it yet, and she was not certain if they intended to sign it or why it was included in the consent agenda today.

Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney, said that the Code of Performance was before the Board today because the Board had not yet adopted it. She said that this issue had been brought up at the first organizational meeting, where it had been taken to the work session. She said that no changes had been made, and the bylaw changes would be revisited at a future meeting. She said that by action today, the Board approved the Code of Performance, and the Clerk would then distribute it for signature at a future time when the Board was available.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to appeal to her colleagues to consider a more efficient approach to handling minor administrative questions, such as this one, in the future. She said that instead of pulling them off consent, she suggested that they call staff to address these issues, thereby avoiding delays in the meeting.

Dr. Yeung motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve Item 4, Code of Performance.

Ms. Gary said that she will not be voting in support of this item. She said that her reason is that she does not believe the Board is adhering to the contents of this document, and she could not uphold it with the concerns she still has about the actions she has observed over the past few months.

The Voting Board tally was:
Yea: (6) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Vanuch, Yeung
No: (1) Gary

Mr. Diggs asked if Ms. Bohmke would like to address Item 8.

Ms. Bohmke said that Item 8 is Development Services; authorize the County Administrator to approve a contract amendment for fire repair construction services with KBS Earthworks for the St. Clair Brook Stream Restoration Project. She said that Emily Torrey and other staff had done a phenomenal job on this stream restoration project. She said that John had been involved in the project's initial stages before he left, and his work had been truly impressive.

Ms. Bohmke said that it had been a significant undertaking. She said that she was not here to criticize the project; however, she did have a few questions. She said that she had asked Mr. Ashton about some concerns, and the fire marshal was present to address others. She said that when reviewing the background report, it appeared that there were $324,000 of additional expenses in a new purchase order.

Ms. Bohmke said that her question was regarding what appeared to be a tremendous amount of money. She said that she was not aware, nor were her colleagues when she asked them, that there had been a fire over there last March. She said that the fire marshal was not aware of it either. She asked if staff could provide some information about the fire and why the repair costs were so high.

Ms. Bohmke said that the renovation was only 9,000 square feet, and she was unsure if it was a previously existing fire that was being addressed. She said that she would like to know why the cost was so significant, even though part of it was being covered by a grant, because ultimately, it was still their tax dollars at stake here in the state.

Emily Torrey, Assistant Director of Engineering, Construction and Environmental Programs, said that she was also concerned when she received this information. She said that the reason for the high cost is that the fire burn scar is situated in the middle of the project, and access to the project is extremely challenging. She said that Ms. Bohmke is familiar with the park, and she knows that getting construction equipment into the valley to access the project is difficult and requires significant grading. She said that as a result, they essentially have to re-grade the area to reach the project site.

Ms. Torrey said that additionally, the cause of the fire remains unanswered. She said that unfortunately, they do not know what caused the fire. She said that it occurred around the same time as the wildfires on Route 95 in March 2024. She said that it was a particularly dry period, and the fire was likely sparked during that time. She said that a crew responded to extinguish the fire, and an incident report was created. She said that however, the fire marshal was not called, as there was no structural damage. She said that the fire appeared to be a normal, contained blaze that was successfully extinguished.

Ms. Bohmke said that given the fire, she wondered if they could have potentially sought damages from their self-insurance fund located in Richmond.

Ms. Torrey said that she had asked Jack Powell to join the process and they had created an incident report for insurance claims. She said that she was not aware of the answer to that question, but she could confirm that they had created a report for it.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they moved forward with this item, would they still be pursuing the insurance, or was that a matter that had been settled and was no longer relevant?

Ms. Torrey said that she would look into it. She said that she was unsure.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to follow up on the same questions she initially raised. She said that regarding Item 8, she too wanted to know why there was a fire and if there was any fire insurance that could be utilized. She said that the mention of a correction action plan was concerning to her, as it implied that there may be issues that needed to be addressed.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to know more about this action plan and whether it was something they needed to respond to. She said that the $324,000 increase was a significant amount, and she believed it warranted further investigation. She said that she was not sure if this was an urgent matter, but she wanted to request that the Board consider holding off on passing this until they received more information and answers.

Ms. Torrey said that she would look into the insurance claim. She said that she did not have the answer to that question. She said that the title of the fire plan was the corrective action plan. She said that their consultant and engineer had developed the plan for them to undertake the fire repairs. She said that they had conducted an inspection and created engineering drawings that outlined the necessary steps to repair the damages.

Dr. Yeung said that it was not as if they were limited by a cap due to a mistake. She said that rather, it was a corrective measure to address the fire itself.

Ms. Torrey said that was correct.

Mr. Diggs asked if this matter was urgent.

Ms. Torrey said that it was not urgent; however, it was imperative that they address the pollutant load removals required by their municipal separate stormwater system permit. She said that specifically, a portion of these removals were due to be completed in Fiscal Year 2024, so they were currently meeting the 80% requirement associated with that. She said that they had until Fiscal Year 2028 to complete the remaining 20% of the loading removals, which gave them some time to finish the project. She said that however, the project was originally scheduled to be completed a year ago, and as a result, they were still in the process of addressing the original timeline.

Ms. Bohmke said that as Ms. Torrey was aware, the original project was valued at $784,000. She said that she was trying to understand the plan for the area adjacent to Brooks, where the steep road was built. She asked if they would they be utilizing that same area again.

Ms. Torrey said yes, they were.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was struggling to comprehend the cost reduction, as they were now spending $324,000, which seemed to be almost equivalent to redoing the entire project. She asked if Ms. Torrey could please explain the specific repairs that the contractor would be undertaking.

Ms. Torrey said that the repairs required them to replace the entire matting that was destroyed by the fire, as well as the vegetation that was also destroyed. She said that when the fire occurred, it destroyed the vegetation, the stabilization, and the root structure that had developed. She said that following the fire, the site experienced multiple flooding events, which further destabilized the area and caused erosion. She said that to address these issues, they would need to repair the site.

Ms. Torrey said that according to the contractor's cost estimate, approximately $100,000 was allocated for stabilization measures, which she believed could be reduced. She said that she was unsure of the extent to which this could be reduced, but there was potential to reduce some of the costs associated with stabilization and vegetation. She said that the total cost for vegetation was approximately $25,000. She said that it was possible that they could explore grant funds with the Department of Forestry to help cover this cost. She said that the remaining costs, totaling $275,000, included $20,000 for mobilization and demobilization from the site, as well as grading to return the site to its original center.

Ms. Bohmke said that since March of last year, when the fire occurred, staff had been working with EWG on a revised plan for this implementation. She asked if EWG had been creating their document on this topic, which explained why it had taken this long.

Ms. Torrey said that yes, Timmons was their engineer, so she had been working with Timmons to develop the plan for the repair, as well as with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEW) to try to increase the amount of funding they could provide under the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) grant. She said that their SLAF grant agreement had been signed back in June, and when DEQ sent them the agreement, they had increased their cost slightly to compensate them for the fire damage.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was uncertain, but she felt that if they could revisit this proposal in two weeks, possibly with additional information, they might be able to negotiate more flexibility in the contract amounts. She said that given the 9,000 square feet of space and the challenges of the location, it seemed like this deal was overpriced. She said that perhaps because the other party had them in a position of vulnerability, she was uncertain, but she was would work with the Board's will.

Mr. English said that he was wondering if it would be possible to obtain pictures before and after the fire. He said that having those images would provide a visual representation of the situation and help them understand the extent of the damage. He said that given the significant amount of money involved, he believed it would be beneficial to have a clear understanding of the situation.

Ms. Bohmke motioned, seconded by Mr. English, to defer Item 8 until the next Board meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

No: (0)

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

1. Shannon Fingerholz, Hartwood District, said that their County schools were currently working on their budget. She said that she would like to express her gratitude to the Board for the progress made over the past year, particularly with the new infrastructure. She said that it was not easy, and it was contentious, but they did make progress. She said that now, they needed to continue that progress. She said that their students, teachers, staff, and community required a quality school system.

   Ms. Fingerholz said that quality meant having decent-paid staff, well-maintained buildings, and adequate materials. She said that these all required funding. She said that as the largest employer in the County, with approximately 31,556 students, they had a significant challenge to overcome as a community. She said that the budget was comprised of federal funds, which accounted for about 1% to 2% of funding, with the rest being comprised of state and local allocations.

   Ms. Fingerholz said that she had heard that more money was needed from the state, which sounded great, but what was not explained to constituents was where that money came from. She said that regardless of whether it was state, federal, or County funds, it ultimately came from taxpayer pockets. She said that if it was from business taxes, it was because that company received money from someone else in the consumer chain. She said that if it was from state taxes, it was because it was taken out of paychecks. She said that they were the consumers, and those were their paychecks.

   Ms. Fingerholz said that to make ends meet, individual schools relied on fundraisers, community events, donations, and other contributions from the community. She said that this year, she was asking the Board to take ownership of their educators and students, and not obscure the fact that the money was coming from their community. She said that they needed to stop using smoke screens and call a spade a spade.

   Ms. Fingerholz said that the School Board and administrators were not asking for the money because they wanted to be frivolous; it was because they wanted their children to have the best chance at succeeding while keeping them safe from the risks associated with steam pipes bursting and falling through the floor of classroom trailers, which had happened in her daughter's school. She said that the request would be substantial, and she respectfully asked that when it was presented to the Board, they would have the integrity to accept the responsibility and approve it.

2. Kristin Maxson, Falmouth District, said that concerning number three in their packet today, there is no name representing the Parks and Recreation Department. She said that pages 2, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, and 26 of the Parks and Recreation's Advisory Commission are empty and should read "These pages are left blank, intentionally." She said that this refers to the January 16, 2025 agenda.

Ms. Maxson said that Stafford County shares the sorrow with the survivors of January 29 as they stand humble in the sorrow they share as they go on their daily activities today. She said that at 1816 Richmond Highway, where 100 feet of land was trespassed upon, 30 trees from her property were cut down, and she has not been served and the trespassing was not warranted. She said that she called Richmond and has not received any information. She said that there was nothing official; proposed she was told. She said that she had not been served.

Ms. Maxson said that they should please take note that the packet minutes state that Stafford Tech Campus has 10 site plans to be submitted in two months, but there was no formal agreement, just an email. She said that Stafford County has not seen a project of this scale, and the impact on the public was stated as low. She asked when the truth would be revealed. She said that the project started in 2020 and still has not been finalized with a sound agreement. She said that residents should not be at the mercy of developers.

Ms. Maxson said that on page 40 of 206 in their packet today, the Zoning Administrator position has been vacant for a year and a half, as stated on page 42. She said that last week, agendas were not being dated, so a printout of a reference agenda had no date. She said that also, packets are referencing the wrong date. She said that Friday, January 24, 2025, 10:00 Board of Supervisors meeting was named January 28 Board of Supervisors meeting.

She said that it was 15.25 megabytes and 144 pages. She said that it was another document in the January 28 packet with the same name, 2.10 megabytes and 58 pages. She said that this was a critical issue because, over the course of four days, there were numerous meetings covering land use, annual advance meetings, Chesapeake Bay committees, architectural committees, coastal committees, grievance committees, and zoning appeal meetings. She said that when calling this issue in, they did not seem to have a concern.

3. Cliff Heinzer, Aquia District, said that he did not need to remind the Board of Supervisors that they were in budget season, and it was even more challenging this year due to the election. He would like to discuss their performance in the most critical aspect of their County, which was educating their youth. He said that this was how they built their future. He said that he, like many others, reviewed online rating services to gauge their progress.

   Mr. Heinzer said that this year, he used School Digger, which had a good track record for Stafford. He said that unfortunately, they had dropped to 74 out of 130. He said that this was not acceptable. He said that he also looked at WalletHub, which used a matrix to evaluate schools. He said that the matrix had two axes: one for prosperous communities and less prosperous communities, and the other for well-funded schools or not. He said that he was sure they were aware that they consistently fell into the box labeled "prosperous community, but not well-funded schools."

   Mr. Heinzer said that he would like to address the concerns they would likely hear from constituents this year. He said that he would like to remind them that, according to recent aggregate census data, people over 55 in this country controlled approximately 70% of the wealth. He said that when they shifted the burden to working families, who were struggling to pay mortgages, car payments, and raise children, it was unfair.

Mr. Heinzer were essentially passing costs to those who were least able to afford them. He said that this was particularly concerning in Stafford, where many of them had the benefit of defined benefit plans, so they were the ones who could afford to pay, and he would like to remind them of that. He said that finally, he would like to bring up one last issue. He said that as always, it was challenging in an election year, but he believed it was essential to acknowledge that they bore the responsibility for their work.

Mr. Heinzer said that they did significantly more work than many of their constituents were aware of, and he did not think they had received a raise since 2009. He said that it was time for Supervisors to be adequately compensated, and he would like to do everything he could to ensure that they could secure this in the budget this year. He said that he thanked them for their time and asked them to think about the future of Stafford.

4. Florrie Williams, Garrisonville District, said that she had a complaint regarding sinkholes, an issue has been ongoing since 2018. She said that as they could see from the pictures, she has documented the progression of the sinkhole, from its initial appearance to the present. She said that unfortunately, the situation has worsened to the point where, during heavy rainfall, children can use a rubber raft to swim or pedal around in the water.

   Ms. Williams said that she was deeply concerned that the basin installed by VDOT at the foot of her property, which was located near the end of her property line, was not functioning properly. She said that the forceful water flow pushes the grate up, and she feared that a child could fall into the basin. She said that the erosion has become severe, with the sinkhole now only three feet from her basement window. She said that she was constantly on edge, watching the window during heavy rainfall, worried that the sinkhole will overflow and flood her home.

   Ms. Williams said that she was also concerned that the sinkhole could undermine her foundation. She said that she was sitting on top of a bag of dynamite. She said that the electrical transformer fell into the sinkhole a few years ago, but Dominion did not move it. She said that the only thing still there was the gas pipe, but she was still worried about the structural integrity of her property. She said that she was not alone in this experience; she has spoken to neighbors when a similar issue arose during Mark Dudenhefer's tenure.

   Ms. Williams said that she was surprised to learn that the sinkhole at 355 was repaired by Stafford County, while her sinkhole remains unresolved. She said that she was struggling to understand why she was being treated differently, and she was left wondering if her age or racial background are factors in this decision. She said that however, her neighbor beside her, Susan, is white, and her property is also experiencing the issue. She said that this problem extends from the street, and VDOT would not be willing to resolve an issue far from the street.

   Ms. Williams said that it affects the entire property, all the way down to the creek, Austin Run. She said that she had a worker come to her house for some work, and he nearly fell into the hole. She said that due to the hole, she was unable to access one side of her house. She said that she was respectfully asking the Board of Supervisors to please take action and help resolve this issue before someone lost their life.

5. Caitlin Goodale-Porter, Garrisonville District, said that she wanted to briefly inform the Board that she had dropped off an invitation for Mr. Ashton earlier today. She said that the Stafford Veterans were hosting a gathering on Friday evening at 5:00 p.m. at Full Distance Brewing, where they would be celebrating the Congressional Gold Medal awarded to the World War I Hello Girl Army Signal Corps contracted soldiers who returned from France in 1919.

   Ms. Goodale-Porter said that it had been over 100 years since they received this recognition, and while it was a long-overdue acknowledgment, it marked a significant step forward. She said that the granddaughter of one of the recipients would be visiting from the Manassas area, and she hoped to see many of them there to share in the celebration and cake. She said that this was a small victory for their community, and she encouraged them to remember that they did occasionally have cause to celebrate. She said that she looked forward to a pleasant evening at Full Distance Brewing, a veteran-owned business, on Friday at 5:00 p.m.

6. Al Wilson, George Washington District, said that he was present today to discuss his disappointment in the Fredericksburg Area Management Planning Organization (FAMPO) and specifically the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). He said that he watched the MBI consultant brief TAC, and he was astonished by the lack of questioning the consultant received. He said that they did not ask many critical questions about the consultant's work. He said that for instance, he would have asked, "what was the basis for the cost analysis, and what factors determined the cost of each option?" He said that no such questions were asked by TAC. He said that he would have asked, "what is the average annual daily traffic on Celebrate Parkway once it becomes a bypass over the bridge?"

   Mr. Wilson said that VDOT currently estimates that 70,000 vehicles travel from Route 17 to I-95 South, and approximately 40,000 travel from Route 17 to I-95 North. He said that considering the bypass traffic from Celebrate, which is expected to occur in 2050, he questioned how the consultant's projections would account for this added traffic. He said that he lives in Celebrate by Del Webb, and his community may own or acquire one of the stormwater management systems, Pond 9, which receives runoff from Celebrate Parkway. He said that if the bypass traffic from Celebrate Parkway affects Pond 9, he wondered if the County would require the residents to dredge the pond, an expensive operation that he believed should not be borne by his community.

   Mr. Wilson said that he had doubts about the validity of the survey, as it did not initially include a no-build option; the no-build option was added two days after the survey went live. He said that they could not add survey questions once the survey was live, as it disrupted the flow of the survey. He said that in his previous experience with survey design, he learned that this was a fundamental principle. He said that he was puzzled as to why they did it.

   Mr. Wilson said that furthermore, it appeared that the only options presented to the communities and residents were those that required a bridge to be built over the Rappahannock River, which undermined the validity of the survey. He said that he would like to request that members of the Board who are part of the policy committee review the hard questions and ask those hard questions of the consultant.

7. Howard Rudat, Rock Hill District, said that he wanted to bring to the Board's attention a matter that had been ongoing since their last meeting. He said that at every meeting of this Board, they instructed the public to remain courteous to the members of the audience and the Board. He said that however, he would like to know at one point were members of the Board instructed to be courteous to the public in their comments. He said that on December 17, 2024, he sat through a presentation where Ms. Bohmke made a statement that this Board had investigated him, in his role as Chair of the Stafford Democratic Committee, and Supervisor Gary, and as a result, accused him of colluding with Supervisor Gary prior to the removal of Mary Becelia from the Library Board.

   Mr. Rudat said that moving forward to their January 21, 2025 meeting, where not only did Supervisor Bohmke repeat her accusation, but Supervisor Vanuch joined her and echoed the allegation. He said that what transpired between those dates was crucial to this story. He said that after the Board meeting on December 17, he offered to provide Supervisor Bohmke with proof that the allegations against him were false. He said that however, she refused to discuss the matter with him, so he submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to determine what information this Board had uncovered during its investigation. He said that in response to that FOIA request, each member of this Board stated they had no information regarding any investigation.

   Mr. Rudat said that interestingly, the same FOIA response revealed that members had received a copy of the Fredericksburg Advance article from December 18, which contained the very proof he had offered to Supervisor Bohmke, showing that he never had any conversation with Supervisor Gary prior to the July meeting where she made the motion to remove Mary Becelia from the Library Board. He said that this raised a significant question: either Supervisor Bohmke knowingly made a false statement at the December 17 meeting about him, or one or more members of this Board were not forthcoming in their FOIA response, a violation that could result in a civil penalty of up to $2,000.

   Mr. Rudat said that furthermore, what made Supervisor Vanuch's comments more shocking was that she stated the response to his FOIA request was being released that very week, meaning she knew that the fact that no investigation ever took place was about to be made public and chose to make a false allegation. He said that he was perplexed as to why some Board members failed to exhibit courtesy towards the public and their fellow Supervisors. He said that this Board must recognize that courtesy is a two-way street.

   Mr. Rudat said that at the January 21 Board meeting, Supervisor English expressed his desire to resolve the Library Board issue, allowing this matter to move forward. He said that as long as some of his colleagues prioritized politics over people, this Board would continue to be mired with issues, lack the teamwork that Chairman Diggs had rightfully demanded, and struggle to focus on the critical issues facing Stafford. He said to Chairman Diggs that he wished him fair winds, following seas, and the patience of Job as he took on the Chairmanship in 2025.

REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Bohmke – reported that the Supervisors should have received an email from Dean Lynch, the Chairman of the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), regarding some positive news from Richmond. She said that the House and Senate Appropriations Committee are supporting legislation that would restore funding for support positions, totaling $222 million. She said that this is a significant development, especially since the support cap was put in place in 2009, following the Great Recession. She said that if the state funds this initiative, it would be very beneficial for education.

Ms. Bohmke said that $52 million has been allocated for special education. She said that she also spoke with Anthony Toigo today, and there may be additional funding for education on the horizon, although she will not report on that further at this time. She said that they will have more information later. She said that she would also like to draw their attention to a few local projects. She said that Kyle Bates from the Fredericksburg residency for the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will be presenting on several initiatives in Stafford County, specifically for the Falmouth District.

Ms. Bohmke said that one project of note is the crosswalk design at Primmer House, which aims to improve safety in the Leeland Station area. She said that they are also working on a project for Harrell Road and Forbes Street, which should be completed this summer, making the right-hand turn onto Forbes Street safer. She said that the Leland Station project was ongoing, and a public hearing is scheduled for 2025. She said that for more information on the Leeland Road improvements, she recommends visiting VDOT's website and searching for their Fredericksburg residency projects.

Mr. English – in reference to Ms. Williams' public comments, he believed it had been about 20 years since there was an incident in Hampton Oaks on the hill, where a house fell in. He said that he was not sure if anyone remembered that incident, but he did recall the County stepping in to help. He said that it was a tragic event, as the construction company initially backed out, claiming it was not their fault. He said that he was bringing this up now because he was concerned about the potential risks, especially if it were his own home. He said that she looked great for 85, by the way.

Mr. English said that he would also like to mention Michael Mews, who had over 30 years of experience with Stafford County and Social Services. He said that Michael had done an outstanding job, despite the challenges he faced on a daily basis. He said that he would like to recognize his efforts, but Mr. Mews had asked not to be acknowledged. He said that he wanted to inform the group about a meeting held by the George Washington Regional Commission on January 27.

Mr. English said that he would like to remind everyone that a regional housing assembly workshop was scheduled for February 12 at 1:00 at 406 Princess Anne Street. He said that the meeting would focus on addressing the affordable housing issue, which was a pressing concern. He said that the meeting was open to the public, and he encouraged anyone interested to attend. He said that was all he had to report.

Ms. Gary – expressed her gratitude and acknowledged that she had been less involved lately. She said that she had been part of many different boards and committees and commissions, and she truly enjoyed it, but it had been quiet, so she did not have much to share today. She said that she thought what she wanted to do was encourage everyone.

Ms. Gary said that they were living in a dystopian era in their country and communities, and it did not matter which side they were on; it just felt overwhelming to many people. She said that she was going through that herself as well, and she wanted to take a moment to encourage everyone to take care of one another, to reach out to their neighbors, and to be kind. She said that they could not stress this enough.

Ms. Gary said that being kind, being honest, and doing the right thing, no matter what, was essential. She said that if they made a mistake, going back and trying to fix it was also the right thing to do. She said that she tried to live by these principles, and she thought people understood that. She said that she just wanted to close by highlighting that she had a lot of hope for this Board. She said that she was grateful for Mr. Diggs' leadership, and she knew there were obstacles ahead, but she grew up in Springfield, Virginia, and it was very different when she was in school in the 1990s, especially in terms of what was taught and the dynamics of their community. She said that getting to be here and raise her children here felt like time travel, because she saw all the changes.

Ms. Gary said that they did not want to become like Northern Virginia; they were Stafford, and they needed to develop differently. She said that however, seeing the transition and how things had changed over time gave her hope. She said that they did face challenges, but she thought they were going in the right direction. She asked that they please take care of each other and continue to do the right thing.

Ms. Vanuch – announced to the residents of Lynhaven Lane, she had reached out to the County Administrator to provide an update on the status of the service district road repairs in two weeks. She said that for those unfamiliar with the situation, prior to her joining the Board of Supervisors, her predecessor Supervisor Mauer had created a service district with the residents of Lynhaven Lane to bring their road up to VDOT standards. She said that the residents would pay an extra tax, and the County would work with VDOT to bring the road up to state standards.

Ms. Vanuch said that unfortunately, there were a few residents who were refusing to grant access to their property, and they were unable to use eminent domain on a service district property. She said that as a result, they were at a crossroads and were working with staff to find a solution. She said that they planned to provide the residents who had paid into the service district with information on those who had paid but not granted access, in order to try to come to a mutually beneficial agreement. She said that if they were unable to reach a solution, they may need to consider refunding the money, which would create complexities due to residents having moved from the area. She said that their County Administrator would need to investigate this further and provide an update.

Ms. Vanuch said that she also wanted to address Ms. Williams' public comments and ensure her that VDOT's Transportation Manager, Kyle Bates, could provide her with further information. She said that they also established a grant program for floodwater damage to driveways and roads, and she believed they had allocated $100,000 to this program every budget cycle. She said that if she would like more information, please reach out to Dr. Yeung. She said that this information may be relevant if she applied under that category, so she wanted to bring it to her attention.

Ms. Vanuch said that as budget season approached, she would like to express her gratitude to her fellow conservative Board members, Mr. English and Ms. Bohmke, whom she had met at the retreat. She said that they had made it clear that they did not want to see a budget presentation that would result in a tax increase for their residents this year. She said that over the past three years, this Board had raised taxes by nearly 30%, which she believed was excessive. She said that as a result, they had requested that the County Administrator bring forward a budget proposal with no tax increase for their residents. She hoped that this request would be presented.

Dr. Yeung – addressed the Zoning Ordinance for vaping. She said that they had a brief discussion about this during their retreat, and she believed that the Department of Planning and Zoning intended to revisit vape products. She said that she thought they had discussed this on November 7. She said that as a result, the Board had voted to task the Planning Commission with developing an ordinance and bringing it back. She said that she was requesting that they include two key elements in this ordinance, if the Board so desired.

Dr. Yeung said that first, they should consider requiring a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) when a permit was submitted to Planning, in conjunction with the development of the ordinance. She said that secondly, they should adopt the state ordinance, which prohibited vaping shops within 1,000 feet of child care facilities or schools. She said that currently, there was one such shop on Mine Road, which was operating without a permit. She said that she believed this issue warranted further review. She said that if the Board agreed to add these elements to the Planning Commission's proposed ordinance, she would greatly appreciate it.

Dr. Yeung said that in addition to asking Planning and Zoning to review the ordinance for vaping, she would also like them to require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for companies or individuals seeking a permit to operate a vaping shop. She said that they already had a state ordinance that prohibited vaping shops within 1,000 feet of a child care center or school. She said that she believed they should adopt this state ordinance to ensure consistency.

Dr. Yeung said that currently, they were not adopting this, which meant they would have the same restriction as the state, prohibiting vaping shops in these locations. She said that unfortunately, vaping shops were already popping up in various locations, and some of them did not have the necessary permits.

Ms. McClendon said that she was attempting to locate the direction previously provided by the Board, but if the Board had already provided direction, she believed the additional guidance provided today could be duly noted and considered in the request that had already been submitted.

Ms. Vanuch said that she had researched the matter beforehand. She said that the Planning Commission was granted unilateral authority to create an ordinance at their discretion. She said that as a result, they allowed the Planning Commission to edit the ordinance, add any additional information, and provide recommendations and supporting research to them after their investigation. She said that Dr. Yeung should discuss these additions with her appointed Planning Commissioner.

Dr. Yeung said that regarding Ms. Williams' public comments, she had received concerned phone calls from her regarding this stormwater issue since she took office. She said that she had called her every week, every month, and had heard from her daughter as well. She said that the stormwater program in place today was not effectively helping the individuals it was intended to assist.

Dr. Yeung said that the money allocated to the program seemed to be sitting idle, and residents from 68 and 70 Blossom Wood Court were in dire need of assistance. She said that they were, in fact, one of the few applicants for their program, yet they were unable to meet the match requirement. She said that she was asking the Board to review the program and make it work for their residents. She said that she knew that Culpeper and some other counties had different criteria for using the funds. She said that she was wondering if they could consider changing their criteria to allow the County to take care of this issue without the need for a match.

Mr. Ashton said that to clarify, the current program structure was a reimbursement model, not a matching grant. He said that this meant that once the funds were approved, they had to be expended first, and then the reimbursement was made.

Dr. Yeung said that this was the issue; many individuals lacked the necessary resources for that initial expenditure. She said that she was asking the Board to consider changing this criteria to better assist these individuals.

Ms. Gary said that many of them had been concerned about this issue, and she recalled that Dr. Yeung had discussed this from the beginning of her term. She said that she also had someone who was struggling with similar issues and did not quite meet the qualifications. She said that unfortunately, they had to expend a significant amount of their own money, but it was not enough.

Ms. Gary said that she would be in favor of bringing this to a work session to examine the current situation and explore ways to make it more accessible to people who could not afford or qualify for the existing options. She said that scaling it differently could be a viable solution. She said that she would support that approach, not necessarily changing the existing program, but perhaps adding some modifications or tweaks to make it more accessible for a wider range of people. She said that she believed that would be a good thing to consider at some point soon.

<u>Ms. Allen</u> – echoed Ms. Gary's statement, as she recently had a similar issue in her state where her constituents' basement level was flooding, and Mr. Bates and their Transportation team did an excellent job of addressing the issue. She said that she believed bringing this to a work session and providing staff with guidance would be beneficial, as she felt there was a financial aspect to consider, but they also needed to establish a process that allowed staff to work in tandem with VDOT to identify and resolve these issues.

Ms. Allen said that they did not want to spend money on a problem that did not get resolved, or make it worse by focusing on the minutiae rather than the totality. She said that she thought a work session would be a good opportunity to gather feedback on how to tackle these issues, as the significant amount of development in the County over the past few decades, as well as their unique topographical challenges.

Ms. Allen said that for example, in the past, Anthony had to address flooding issues on the Griffis side due to development behind homes. She said that she believed this was a problem that would continue to arise, and they needed to find a solution. She said that it was essential to determine whether this was a budgetary issue or not. She said that ultimately, the pictures were not great, and she was concerned about the impact on her residents. She said that she believed they needed to find a way to help them stay in their homes.

Mr. English said that he thought it was great that they were talking about the larger issue, but Ms. Williams' concern was one they should rectify soon. He said that he agreed with having a work session for the ongoing issues, but they must quickly address Ms. Williams' concerns because the photographs made it appear dire.

Mr. Diggs said that he agreed with Mr. English. He said that he believed this was an emergent issue, requiring their immediate attention. He said that he also concurred with having a work session.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to request information from Mr. Santay regarding the grant program. She said that he could please email the Board the total amount of grants they had awarded to date, as well as some of the challenges they had faced in the past. She said that she vaguely recalled discussing this with him about a year ago, and she would appreciate any insight he could provide. She said that perhaps they could determine if there was a surplus of funds available, which could simplify the process.

Ms. Vanuch said that she believed this issue was present in every district, and they must be cautious to establish a clear process to avoid opening up unnecessary requests. She said that she had also emailed Mr. Bates to get an update on VDOT's position, as their road appeared to be the source of the flooding issue. She said that she would like to know VDOT's stance on this matter as well.

Ms. Bohmke said that she agreed and she recalled when they implemented this program. She said that she wanted to reiterate that they all had individuals in their district who faced similar situations. She said that therefore, they must be cautious and thorough in their analysis. She said that they should examine potential grants from VDOT at the state level, as well as grants available through the SLAF program. She said that she believed it was essential to conduct thorough research on available opportunities for this individual and others like her. She said that additionally, she was interested in investigating whether the funds allocated to this program had been utilized effectively.

Ms. Gary said that she would try to be concise. She said that when she first joined the Board, one of the major concerns was Brook Road. She said that they were also working on a grant related to that issue. She said that another topic that was discussed during that time was the coastal resilience master plan. She said that although the Governor changed, she believed it was essential that the Board revisit this and make it a legislative priority.

Ms. Gary said that they had developed their own plan here, but she would like to know if they had made progress on that. She said that there was some delay in implementing it due to coordination with various entities, so she would like to emphasize the need to continue moving forward with this initiative. She said that perhaps they could schedule a work session to address this further.

Ms. Gary said that in the meantime, she would like to request that the Board advocate for state resources to support coastal resilience, as many coastal counties and localities struggled to address these issues on their own. She said that she would be happy to accompany them to Richmond to push for this allocation. She said that they should work together to find a resolution and make progress as soon as possible.

Dr. Yeung said that she appreciated her colleagues' input. She said that she also wanted to build on Ms. Bohmke's comments and extend her appreciation to Senator Lucas from the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee, and Pastor Luke Torian from the House Appropriations Committee for their efforts in advancing critical investments in K-12 education. She said that specifically, she wanted to thank them for securing the $222.9 million in funding to eliminate the support cap, which would provide essential services for their students.

Dr. Yeung said that this investment in special education funding was a significant demonstration of their commitment to supporting students with unique needs. She said that as they observed Black History Month, she took a moment to acknowledge the families of those who lost their lives in the recent mid-air crash, and to honor the memory of a Howard University alumnus and law professor who was also a member of their community. She said that she would like to leave them with a thought on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Dr. Yeung said that it was not just about serving the needs of Black and Brown communities, but it included individuals with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, and other conditions, as well as rural white Americans with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those with neurodivergence and mental health disabilities. She said that they must strive to create a more inclusive environment that valued the needs of everyone, not just a select few.

Ms. Allen said that she wanted to follow up on the several transportation projects that were coming to their area. She said that as they had seen today with the consent agenda, the first major one was the Woodstock project. She said that for residents on the Widewater side, they could expect to see movement on this project in the next few months, which would likely result in significant traffic disruptions. She said that although the work would be done during non-working hours, this was part of a larger project aimed at improving the intersection and Woodstock.

Ms. Allen said that in the coming months, they could also expect to see other projects in the district. She said that she also wanted to take a moment to wish Brion Southall success in his retirement. She said that when she first joined the Board, one of the staff members who was particularly helpful to her was Mr. Southall, who was not only knowledgeable but also genuinely kind and supportive. She said that he had been an excellent employee and the County was grateful for his service. She said that she hoped he enjoyed his well-deserved retirement. She said that she looked forward to seeing him at one of the Parks and Recreation activities when he was not working.

Mr. Diggs – announced that in honor of Black History Month, he would like to share a quote from Dr. Mae Jemison, the first African-American woman astronaut, who said, "Never be limited by other people's limited imaginations." He said that this resonated with him.

Mr. Diggs said that they had discussed the Kennedy Dam in the Lake Carroll Service District, and its current failing state. He said that as they sought grants, they were also considering the impact on the long-haired bat population. He said that the issue was that they were uncertain about the estimated cost, but if they waited for the estimate, they risked missing the window for the bats, which would prevent them from removing the trees necessary for the project. He said this would delay the project another year.

Mr. Ashton said that it would be delayed a year. He said that the issue was that the project had two parts. He said that the removal of trees had an April 1 deadline due to the long-haired bats, and the stabilization of the dam's base must be completed after the tree removal. He said their concern was that they would exceed the budget for Lake Carroll.

Mr. Ashton said that in contrast, Lake Arrowhead was in better shape, and they were less concerned about its costs. He said that however, if the stabilization project for Lake Carroll exceeded its budget, they would be committed to stabilizing the face and would have to use existing funds to do so, which would limit their ability to address the dam issues.

Mr. Diggs said that he thought they were in a good financial position if the project came in at $1.2 or $1.3 million. He said that if the cost exceeded that, there would be issues.

Mr. Ashton said that another consideration was that they did not have a sufficient contingency built into this model. He said that given the age of the dam, this could potentially create other problems as they dug deeper into the project. He said that typically, projects of this nature would have a larger contingency fund rather than a smaller one. He said that they would like to have the funds available to cover any unexpected expenses that may arise during construction.

Ms. Bohmke said that she requested more information on this topic so she could make an informed decision. She said that she had a few questions regarding this matter, and she said that she would like to address them as soon as possible without prolonging the meeting. She asked if it would be possible to schedule a work session on this topic or add it to an existing work session item.

Ms. Vanuch said she would recommend revisiting the proposal at the next Board meeting under staff reports, allowing them to receive the necessary details before the work session the following week. She said that she understood their concerns, as they had experienced similar challenges in Lake Arrowhead with the dam project. She said that after a five-year delay, the project had ended up being twice the original budget, necessitating the pursuit of a grant. She said that this complexity had led to a significant cost increase.

Ms. Vanuch said that she believed there was value in considering this approach. She said that she had requested bi-weekly updates regarding the project's progress, with a deadline to remove the trees by April 1. She said she wanted to ensure they were making those deadlines.

Mr. Ashton said that they initially considered presenting both bids simultaneously, but they released Lake Arrowhead to move forward with this year's bat season, and now they were trying to determine the best course of action for Lake Carroll.

Mr. Diggs said that there was often an expectation from constituents to move quickly, and they needed to balance that with providing a realistic picture. He said that his concern was that if the dam failed, it would have significant consequences. He said that he had walked the area several times and observed that if it failed, it would impact Kings Highway, potentially damaging at least one residence and possibly two. He said that when discussing the fiscal burden or cost to the County, a dam failure would be a major issue. He said that they had been aware of this situation for some time, and considering the ongoing flooding issues, road cracking, and other problems in the area, this was his concern.

Ms. Allen asked for clarification about the April 1 deadline.

Mr. Ashton said that they wanted to bid both projects together, as one of the reasons for this was to take advantage of economies of scale. He said that they were willing to bid them separately to ensure that they completed Lake Arrowhead as soon as possible. He said that if they were to bid them simultaneously, they hoped to help drive down costs and mitigate some of the budget issues they were currently facing. He said that they were not overly comfortable with the budget being in place for Lake Carroll, even in this scenario.

Ms. Gary asked if they could consider doing two-on-two discussions instead of bringing it back to a meeting for an update. She said that she was not sure if they needed a full Board meeting for this.

Ms. Vanuch said that they had to take action as a Board, and it was regarding a service district. She said that the challenge was that if the project came in over budget, there were two options: the service district fee could increase, and the residents could pay for it, so it did not necessarily have to fall on the taxpayers. She said that it was essential that residents were informed of this and the associated costs. She said that she wanted to ensure that they were clear that it did not have to fall on the Stafford County taxpayers; it fell on the service district, which was exactly what she had been told for Lake Arrowhead.

Ms. Vanuch said that alternatively, they could drain the dam if it was at risk of failure, and that was also the plan for Lake Arrowhead if they were not successful with this round of grants. She said that the state would intervene if it deemed the situation too hazardous, and that was where they were with Lake Arrowhead. She said that if they were not successful, they would have to bring in the service district representatives to discuss draining the dam.

Ms. Vanuch said that there were other options to consider, and she thought they needed to examine the financial aspects of it and what the service district could absorb. She said that they could also adjust the service district fees independently during the budget process.

Mr. Diggs said that part of the conversation he had with constituents was that they were willing to pay the fee, but they would like the Board to extend the duration of the fee and keep it the same, as they were already experiencing financial strain at the current rate. He said that there were 11 properties around the lake, and he believed nine of them were actually paying the fee.

Ms. Vanuch said the item could come back at the next meeting, but she would appreciate recommendations from staff on their current status with the state and potential alternatives. She said that specifically, she was wondering if the state could require the drainage of the dam, and what alternatives might be available to extend the duration of the service district.

Mr. Diggs said that he wanted to address a final point for transparency and accuracy. He said that during their strategic planning, it was not just the conservative members of the Board who discussed taxes and concerns about increasing the tax burden on citizens. He said that all of them acknowledged that they had increased taxes over the last three years, and that it had been a burden for their constituents.

Mr. Diggs said that this was not a conversation led by conservatives or any one individual on the Board. He said that in fact, six of them had previously discussed this issue and were on the same page. He said that he wanted to emphasize that as they moved into this budget season, he did not want their discussions to devolve into partisan rhetoric, but rather for them to work together to address the issues at hand.

Mr. Diggs said that as mentioned by his colleague, they had asked the County Administrator to bring in a budget with zero tax increases. He said that they would review this proposal and assess what adjustments they could make to maintain the level of services they currently provided while moving forward. He said that they would adjust accordingly, while also being mindful of the tax increases they had over the past several years and the concerns of their community.

Ms. Vanuch said that to be fair, three supervisors supported no tax increases, two supported no increases but were considerate of County funding needs, and one said that it depended on school funding.

Mr. Diggs said that he wanted to clarify this point because it was what could create community angst and lead people to perceive them as dysfunctional. He said that when they discussed the tax increase, they all shared the goal of protecting their constituents and avoiding a significant tax increase this year. He said that they could acknowledge that if certain needs arose in the community, they would need to reassess and consider alternatives. He said that he wanted to emphasize that they were all concerned about this issue and had a thorough discussion about it, resulting in a unified stance: they did not want to raise taxes on their constituents this year. He said they would continue to prioritize their constituents, County employees, and the County's progress.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney, said that she had nothing to report.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

CAPITAL PROJECTS QUARTERLY REPORT (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

UPDATE ON BEAD AND VATI GRANT FOR BROAD BAND

Andrew Spence, Chief Information Services Officer, said he would provide an update on the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) that they undertook in 2022, and he was happy to report that it was extremely successful. He said that they began with Comcast Cable Communications to bring service to approximately 634 homes in the Rock Hill and Hartwood District, and the project was successful in extending 49.6 miles and connecting over 682 homes.

Mr. Spence said that this project had a total budget of around $5.8 million. He said that the breakdown was that the state contributed approximately $3.4 million, while they contributed $1.5 million and Comcast contributed just under $1 million. He said that a positive aspect of this project was that they were able to collect over 60 private easements throughout the entire project.

Mr. Spence said that when they asked why there were so many easements in Stafford, they held several community meetings and conducted extensive community outreach. He said that they were ultimately successful in collecting the necessary easements and connecting all these homes. He said that unfortunately, a couple of homes refused to grant access and were removed from the project. He said that there were still people in the community who did not want internet.

Mr. Spence said that the grant process was so successful that it was recommended by the state when they used ARPA funds to facilitate the funding of this grant. He said that a former U.S. Treasury Secretary joined them to celebrate this project, and Ms. Bohmke also joined them to share in the momentous occasion. He said the next exciting development in broadband was BEAD, a broadband equity access and development program. He said that BEAD was a federal grant program, and it was worth noting that it was a federal law that was passed to provide Virginia with $1.4 billion in funding.

Mr. Spence said that he had included some information about the process, which involved a series of proposals being evaluated by the federal broadband board. He said they had begun the process. He said that the unique aspect of this program was that it differed from the VATI grant program, which was applied for by the County, whereas the BEAD program was applied for by internet service providers. He said that if one looked at the Virginia map, they would see letters of intent received by ISPs for specific jurisdictions.

Mr. Spence said that over 12 companies had expressed interest in participating in the BEAD program for Stafford County alone, including major providers like Cox, Comcast, and AT He said that it was worth noting that the information about homes that had been connected was proprietary, so ISPs were not required to share this information. He said the state had asked ISPs to provide voluntary information to help build a map, which could be found on the Commonwealth Connection website.

Mr. Spence said that approximately 4% of the County remained to be connected, with the dots on the map representing individual homes. He said that as part of the BEAD process, the locality's role was to provide ISPs a letter of support. He said he had spoken with several ISPs and made it clear from the County's perspective that they would only support letters or applications that aimed for universal coverage. He said that they were nearing the end of the long mile, and their goal was to get the last mile connected, and they needed a partner who could help them achieve this.

Mr. Spence said they had received their first letter of support, which the County had provided. He said that the focus of this program was to cover those residents who were currently unserved, and once they had achieved that, they would move on to underserved areas, where residents had only one option for connectivity. He said that while there would always be work to be done, Stafford had made significant progress in the past several years.

Mr. English asked if residents had to take any action.

Mr. Spence said that they did not have to do anything. He said residents could visit dhcd.virginia.gov/bead and find additional information.

Mr. English asked if they would release a PSA.

Mr. Spence said that they had released information, but they were waiting until the end of the application round to provide further details. He said that as a result, he had some concern regarding this matter at present. He said that the application window closed on March 1, after which all other milestones in the timeline were still to be determined. He said that he did not have specific information on what would happen next. He said that they were hoping that the rest of the timeline would be filled in, allowing them to provide a more comprehensive overview to the community.

Ms. Gary asked if the program could be impacted by recent federal funding cuts.

Mr. Spence said he could confirm that the funds had been distributed to the jurisdictions, and they were now equipped to proceed. He said that the only requirement was that they submit a series of proposals, which were then evaluated and approved. He said that Virginia's proposal was the third to be approved nationwide. He said he was not aware of anything that would be impacted at this time.

Dr. Yeung said that as a commissioner in 2012, she had the opportunity to work with Verizon to bring technology to underserved communities, and she hoped that this collaboration would continue.

Ms. Vanuch said that she recalled in 2020, when they had prioritized broadband with the ARPA and CARES funding, and many of them on the Board had worked together to make it happen. She said that it was impressive that, four years later, they had made significant progress, and they were now just a step away from achieving full connectivity in Stafford County. She said that she was reminded of the challenges they had faced when many of their students had been doing school from home, and it was amazing to see how far they had come.

PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS BY AGENCIES

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION QUARTERLY REPORT

Kyle Bates, Residency Administrator, said that he wold begin with the Route 1 Cambridge Street over the Rappahannock River. He said that they had to close the northbound right lane following an inspection, and the findings were concerning, particularly with regards to the beams over the Rappahannock on the Falmouth Bridge. He said that their goal was to restore the bridge to the legal weight limit by the end of the winter season, as they worked towards resolving the emergency force account and addressing these issues. He said that the original project timeline was set for 2028, but with the current developments, there was potential for positive changes. He said that they would be reviewing the emergency work.

Mr. Bates said that the Route 644 bridge placement over Aquia Creek project featured a temporary one-lane bridge that was installed to maintain access for first responders in the area. He said that they had a project scheduled to begin in 2026 and complete in spring 2027. He said that they also had a secondary six-year plan project, which was set to begin as soon as the weather permitted in the spring months to apply an epoxy coating to the temporary structure, improving traction on the bridge. He said that he was aware that there had been past complaints regarding this issue.

Mr. Bates said that they had recently coordinated with Windsor Forest regarding the detour, which involved using Joshua Road instead of passing through the subdivisions. He said that they explained to them that there would be clear signage indicating the detour route, which would not be the subdivision. He said he could not prevent individuals from using public roads, but the posted detour would not pass through the subdivision. He said that the actual replacement project was scheduled to begin in 2026 and would be completed in 2027.

Mr. Bates said for preliminary engineering, they had Route 626 Leland Road widening. He said that this project involved widening Leland between Walnut and Julian, providing a two-way left turn lane, and installing sidewalks from Deacon to Julian. He said construction was scheduled to begin in 2028. He said that he had left this slide on the screen because they had included a rapid flashing crosswalk at Leland and Perth, which had been completed. He said that they had even produced a public service announcement video at this location, which he hoped would not only benefit this region but also the entire state, demonstrating how to use a crosswalk.

Mr. Bates said Route 752 Richards Ferry Road was a project that was part of the secondary six-year plan, which had been prioritized to widen a section of Richards Ferry between Jack Ellington Road and the end of state maintenance. He said that this project was completed last summer. He said the modular roundabout project was a VDOT state-funded project, which had been a unique opportunity for them. He said that since it had not been put out to bid, they had completed it in-house. He said that it was not often that VDOT got to undertake substantial projects, so this was exciting for their team.

Mr. Bates said that they successfully completed the project, and it was now fully operational. He said they did not need to dig up any asphalt to do the work because the modular pieces were bolted into the existing asphalt at a fraction of the cost of building a complete concrete roundabout. He said they would be monitoring crash data over the next year to two years. He said that from what he had seen so far, it was already showing positive results.

Mr. Bates said that at this intersection, there was a significant amount of asphalt to cross without protection, and now they had a one-lane roundabout with turn lanes. He said that for Route 623 Herald Road, they had issued a willingness to hold a public hearing in January, and they had not received any requests for a public hearing. He said that this meant they could proceed with right-of-way acquisition later this winter and early spring.

Mr. Bates said that the tentative construction date was expected to be in the summer to fall months, with the goal of completing the project before winter. He said that the outcome would depend on the progress of right-of-way negotiations. He said that he would continue to keep them updated as they approached the construction timeline.

Mr. Bates said that they had identified pedestrian improvements at several locations, including Primer House Road at Switchyard Court and Riggs, Plantation Drive at England Run, and Woodcutter Road at Mill Race. He said that they were planning to implement pedestrian improvements on Parkway Boulevard. He said that all of these projects were currently under design and were funded through the secondary six-year plan that they had worked on last year. He said that the design was nearing completion, and they were working to order the necessary equipment. He said that their goal was to have all of these locations completed by the end of the calendar year.

Mr. Bates said he did not have information on which project would be completed first. He said that they were working with their contractor to finalize the plans and would have a better understanding of the timeline as they progressed. He said that some other secondary six-year plan projects included the rural additions, which required the donation of right-of-way, such as the one on Hartwood Valley Court, funded in fiscal year 2025. He said they were also planning to move forward with the Rock Hill Church Road bridge deck epoxy project in the spring. He said that they were looking to implement traffic calming measures on Decatur Road, which had met the threshold for traffic calming, and they would be installing speed display signs.

Mr. Bates said that finally, they were planning the Holly Corner roadway improvements in fiscal year 2026, with a focus on wedge widening. He said they approached the mowing season in February, and he wanted to remind everyone that VDOT's best practice was to mow twice to three times, although some areas may prefer a more manicured appearance. He said that at this time, they did not have the funding to perform manicure mowing, and if they wished to explore this option for the next season, they must move forward with it and add it to the agreement. He said all of their routes were scheduled for maintenance two to three times a year. He said there were select areas where state-to-state connections required more frequent mowing, primarily for site distance.

Mr. Bates said they had the contracts for manicure mowing, with a price of $110,000 for the entire season from April to October, every two weeks. He said they were actively working to address resurfacing issues in subdivisions. He said that they had previously spoken about the importance of interstates, primaries, and they had made significant progress on high-volume secondaries. He said that they had secured eight subdivisions for the upcoming season, with some already underway, including Willow.

Mr. Bates said there were a number of other projects in the pipeline, including high-volume, mid-volume secondary routes and sections of I-95. He said that for those interested, the full report was available, which included the 2025 list in the back. He said that they had also submitted the 2026 requests. He said that while he could not guarantee that all submitted routes would receive funding, they were exploring the possibility of adding seven more subdivisions if they received level funding.

Mr. Bates said he would address the recent winter weather. He said that the first storm, which occurred on January 5, was particularly challenging due to extremely low and cold temperatures. He said that despite the challenges, they received widespread recognition for their efforts, including kudos from the state and local authorities, regarding the interstate, primaries, and high-volume secondaries. He said that in terms of the subdivisions, they were not able to treat them before the cold temperatures set in, and the frozen conditions made it difficult to get work done. He said they were ultimately able to get every road passable within 72 hours after the storms ended, which was their typical goal.

Mr. Bates said the extreme temperatures made it a long and challenging process. He said that the storm was particularly difficult, with temperatures dropping into the low teens, rendering plows and salt ineffective. He said that the outcome was a tale of two different responses, with high volume areas receiving praise and subdivisions receiving complaints. He said that despite the challenges, they were able to clear all roads.

Mr. Bates said that passable conditions were for emergency services. He said that they encouraged people to call 911, not VDOT, when they were experiencing medical emergencies. He said that the emergency response trucks were available to coordinate with the EOC to get assistance to those in need.

Mr. Bates said that he would like to review a few areas, starting with Blossom Wood. He said that he was familiar with the history of Blossom Wood Court, having worked in this area himself. He said that he had dealt with similar issues with each of the supervisors, and he would like to discuss the drainage problems they were experiencing. He said that water was not just running down the road, but also through the ditches and easements. He said that from his perspective, the issue at Blossom Wood was distinct from many of the other cases they had encountered.

Mr. Bates said that he understood the need to prioritize these issues. He said that there were numerous easements that were essentially in a "no man's land" state, and 86 Blossom Wood was a prime example. He said that the easement allowed VDOT to access the area, but only in the event of issues with the roadway. He said that they had mentioned the roadway flooding, but it was not a daily occurrence. He said that he recalled a picture from about eight years ago showing water in the cul-de-sac, which was caused by a clogged drop inlet, but they had addressed that issue.

Ms. Vanuch said that she had a question regarding the picture. She said that based on what was provided, it seemed that Mr. Bates was suggesting that the picture was an older image.

Mr. Bates said that he had not seen the picture. He said that there may be some measures they could take to alleviate the issue of water on the road, which was a commitment from VDOT. He said that he had been to that area on several occasions when it rained, and they did not typically have water on the road on a day-to-day basis, even with a decent rain. He said if a torrential rain were to occur, the picture may be more accurate. He said they were told that they could not enter the easement by the Attorney General's Office.

Mr. Bates said the house was located next to a significant pipe failure, which was a corrugated metal pipe that had rusted out. He said it was located off the right-of-way. He said that the pipe off Eustis was within the right-of-way, and VDOT repaired that portion. He said there were easements throughout the County with rusted corrugated metal pipes.

Ms. Vanuch asked who owned the pipe.

Mr. Bates said that it belonged to the person who purchased the property. He said he had the opportunity to speak with the property owner and would follow up accordingly. He had previously discussed potential paths forward with Dr. Yeung, and he was more than happy to collaborate with them as they assembled an advisory committee to explore further options. He said that as someone who had been involved from the outset, they had identified issues with several easements in "no man's land".

Mr. Bates said that Mr. English requested updates on the Truslow Road path. He said he visited the area and was not sure what the issue was. He said there were no trash cans maintained by the County or anyone else, and the path appeared to be in good condition. He said that litter was collected during the mowing cycle. He said an HOA may be able to address litter collection on a more frequent schedule. He said the path was maintained by the County, and it was in good shape.

Mr. English said he would provide some pictures to describe what he meant.

Mr. Bates said he was happy to reach out to residents directly. He said they also addressed some issues on Route 17, specifically the southbound lane, where the contractor had corrected the rumble strips, which were installed incorrectly. He said Cedar Grove was a permit project, and there was one for Westlake. He said they would work with the permit holder to ensure that any necessary repairs were made promptly.

Mr. Bates said that Ms. Bohmke brought up a couple of issues, and one of them was Hickory Ridge, a subdivision. He said that it was actually submitted for the 2026 resurfacing list. He said he did not have information on its funding status, but they would put it out to bid. He said that they looked at Teak Court, and they found a crumbling shoulder that needed repair.

He said the crews would address this issue within the next 30 days.

Mr. Bates said that Ms. Vanuch had mentioned a signal at North Stafford High School. He said that it was a delicate balance between the eastbound traffic on 610 and the left turns going into the high school in the morning. He said that after reviewing the intersection, he would not recommend altering the timing to accommodate the left turns. He recommended keeping the timings as they were.

Ms. Vanuch said that it was actually located in front of Eastern View, which was situated in the Rock Hill District. She said she would update the resident who complained with the information.

Mr. Bates said they had done some work on pedestrian-related projects, which included adding a clearance time to the intersection about two years ago. He said that it was a constant struggle to find a suitable signal, and it was also a capacity issue, which was why efficient design was crucial when it came to schools.

Mr. Bates said that Dr. Yeung had mentioned a one-way overpass off of Austin Ridge. He said that he had reviewed the plans from the development, which was a commercial project, and noticed that there was a one-way sign included when they approved it. He said that if it was not present, they would work with the developer to install it.

Ms. Gary thanked staff for their response to issues on Brook Road.

Mr. Bates said that was the first step. He said that they would work with the property owner to obtain a right of entry. He said that although they had provided a temporary solution, the correct fix required them to visit the property to adjust the slope.

Mr. English asked what the timeline was for the Falmouth Bridge.

Mr. Bates said that the goal was by the end of winter, by March.

Mr. English asked if leftover funds from snow removal could be used for mowing.

Mr. Bates said that the money had been spent. He said the snow budget was used up by the one storm.

Dr. Yeung said that she was reviewing the projects for Courthouse Road and Shelton Shop, and she noticed that there was a planned roundabout. She said that she wondered if they were replacing the existing roundabout with a traffic light instead.

Mr. Bates said that a roundabout was being considered for Mountain View in Shelton Shop, while Courthouse would have a traditional intersection. He said there were three intersections along Shelton Shop, and the Courthouse Road intersection would remain a signalized intersection. He said there would be a roundabout at Mountain View.

Dr. Yeung asked if there was funding for new roads. She said that they lacked funding for existing roads, and they were having issues fixing the roads.

Mr. Bates said that from a maintenance standpoint, he believed that their maintenance plan had been effective. He said that they had a resurfacing schedule in place and had been working to adhere to it. He said that their resurfacing schedule had done a tremendous job over the years. He said that in January, they had spent approximately $140,000 on patching potholes. He said that while some of these roads were to be expected, given their age, they were putting a significant amount of funding into the resurfacing schedules. He said that as a result, he believed they had made significant progress on the higher volume routes, and this improvement was starting to trickle down to the lower volume routes.

Dr. Yeung said her only comment was on the criteria for what constituted high-travel roads, particularly in small communities with schools. She said that this resulted in a disproportionate number of cars on the road. She said these were older communities like Hampton Oaks, which was 40 years old, and Settler's Landing, which was 50 years old. She said that she was unsure when resurfacing would occur in these areas, and she hoped she would still be alive when it did.

Mr. Diggs said he wanted staff to look into the right shoulder of 46 Bethel Church Road, which was collapsing.

Mr. Bates said that he would follow up.

CLOSED MEETING

Mr. Diggs stated that Ms. Gary had to leave the meeting to address a family emergency, but she would be calling in to participate.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to allow Ms. Gary to participate in the meeting remotely due to a family emergency.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (6) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Vanuch, Yeung
No: (0)
Absent: (1) Gary

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to authorize the closed meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (6) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Vanuch, Yeung
No: (0)
Absent: (1) Gary

Resolution CM25-03 reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board desires to hold a Closed Meeting for discussion and consideration of specific appointees of the Board; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 4th day of February, 2025, that it be and hereby does authorize discussion of the above matters in Closed Meeting.

CERTIFY CLOSED MEETING

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to certify the closed meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (6) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Vanuch, Yeung
No: (0)
Absent: (1) Gary

Resolution CM25-03 (C) reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY THE ACTIONS OF THE STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN A CLOSED MEETING ON FEBRUARY 4, 2025

WHEREAS, the Board has, on this the 4th day of February, 2025, 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 4th day of February, 2025, that to the best of each member's knowledge (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the Motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened, were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned its meeting at 8:01 p.m.

William H. Ashton, II
County Administrator

Deuntay T. Diggs
Chairman

From:	Wufoo
To:	Mark A. Kaminski; Andrew L. Spence; Taylor S. Dunn; Tifferney A. Williams
Subject:	Public Comment Form [#103]
Date:	Monday, February 3, 2025 3:08:39 PM

Name *	Darla Stencavage
Address *	12 Booth Court Stafford, VA 22554 United States
Email *	stencavage@yahoo.com
Election District	Garrisonville
Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) *	Buc-ee's

Online Comments: *

I read the recent Traffic Impact Analysis from the website. It is unclear whether all the local projects that have been approved and/or proposed in the last few months were included. Of particular concern are the changes to the Austin Ridge Logistics Center, the Courthouse Center, and some recent changes associated with the data centers. Moreover, the new Return to the Office order will have substantial impacts on the traffic and needs to included in any TIA. Additionally, I believe the following questions still need to be addressed and should be answered by the developer:

• Where is the information in the TIA (and where are the Staff comments) concerning the backup of vehicles waiting to get onto the property? The number of pumps plus parking spaces, along with the average time spent in the store, and projected cars/hour mean that cars would be left on the nearby roadways. (As previously stated, the miniscule amount of revenue received would not be worth the lost time, money, and possibly lives due to the associated traffic disruptions)

• Where is there a comparison of the times and LOSs when school buses and young drivers are going to/from school? How would this be mitigated?

• There are lots of proposed changes required and included, but who is paying for those roadway changes? Just looking at New Kent County (not to mention other Buc-ee's developments) many of the costs for those roadway "improvements" end up coming back to the citizens of the county and/or Commonwealth. Where is a breakdown of the costs and proffers that Buc-ee's would cover and those that they would expect for us to pay for?

• How can Stafford County even consider adding something that would result in the Level of Service (LOS) dropping to a LOS F around our hospital? When every second matters for the health of your loved one, traffic volumes and delays like this could result in lives lost!

• Where are the costs for the increased requirements for law enforcement officers and emergency response and the associated negative impacts due to the poor LOSs this would create? With LOSs like these, we would expect to have more accidents, more road rage incidents, and more increases in the response time required for emergency and law enforcement. Additionally, where is the accounting for the citizens' time and money lost due to those poor traffic conditions?

From: Wufoo
To: Mark A. Kaminski; Andrew L. Spence; Taylor S. Dunn; Tifferney A. Williams
Subject: Public Comment Form [#102]
Date: Monday, February 3, 2025 2:53:03 PM

Name *	Cherie Smith
Address *	18 booth court Stafford, Virginia 22554 United States
Email *	Cheriesmith32@gmail.com
Election District	Garrisonville
Topic (please see the Public Hearings page for specific topics coming up) *	New traffic impact study needed

Online Comments: *

Hi and thank each of you for your service. With the new Administration mandating federal workers to report back to office it is warranted that a new traffic impact study be conducted that would change the numbers for a commuters in and out of the area proposed by Buc-ee's.

I believe at this time those numbers will be significantly higher saying that now all federal workers have to report to work therefore bringing more congestion to both I-95 south and north exit 140 Courthouse Route 1 and the surrounding areas such as mine Road and Austin Ridge thank you