BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 6, 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, May 6, 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

Mr. English 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 due to a fiber cut, Comcast and Cox streaming services would not be available for viewing on TV, so he would ask everyone to please visit their website to view the meeting's live stream. He said that last week, they had hosted a joint town hall meeting with the School Board, which was a successful event with the community. He said that nearly 100 engaged residents had attended to discuss topics such as data centers and schools. He said that the open and mutual dialogue was excellent, although time did not allow for a full review in this setting.

Mr. Diggs said that he would like to thank everyone who attended on a weeknight and for their dedication to the community. He said that he also wanted to thank his Vice Chair, Tinesha Allen, their School Board Chair, Maureen Siegmund, and School Board Vice Chair, Maya Guy, for their participation in this effort. He said that this was a positive and collaborative partnership, and he looked forward to future opportunities like this.

Mr. Diggs said that they also collaborated with the schools last week on a joint job fair, particularly aimed at those who had lost federal jobs. He said that the response was incredible, with over 200 participants. He said that he was pleased that they could work with the schools on this event to demonstrate their commitment to the community. He said that he was confident that this event would lead to excellent new employees in Stafford County.

Mr. Diggs said that last week, he had the opportunity to cut the ribbon for three new park features: an inclusive playground at Duff Park, an exercise and agility course at Pratt Park, and a skate park at Brooks Park. He said that he would like to thank the parents and educators who helped plan the inclusive playground. He said that they could not have done it without their support. He said that he also wanted to thank his colleague Meg Bohmke, former Parks Director Brion Southall, Mark Eyestone of Magic Bullet Skate Shop, Don Patterson, the Skate Brooks Project, and all the artists who sold art to support the new park. He said that their help and grassroots commitment made a significant difference for the youth and the skater community.

Mr. Diggs said that he was excited to announce that Wi-Fi access points were being installed at several of their park locations. He said that the Rouse Center Pool, Embrey Mill Pavilion, Mark Lindsay Pool, Chichester Park, Concessions Area, the Woodlands Pool, the Gymnastics Center, the Rowser Building, and the Courthouse Community Center were part of this ongoing collaboration between their IT and Parks Departments. He said that the County would communicate with patrons as Wi-Fi became available in various areas.

Mr. Diggs said that recently, they had introduced a new service for Utilities customers, an outage map on their utilities web page. He said that users could check if there was an issue in their neighborhood by viewing the interactive map. He said that they were continually seeking ways to better serve their customers and community, and this tool would be very useful. He said that early voting for the Democratic primary began on Friday, May 2.

Mr. Diggs said that it should be noted that there was no Republican primary. He said that to remind everyone, early voting or voting took place at the General Registrar's Office located at 124 Old Potomac Church Road. He said that voting was not available at the Government Center. He said that the General Registrar's webpage on the County’s website had more information.

ADDITIONS – DELETIONS AND APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR AGENDA

William Ashton, County Administrator, said that they had three additions to the Consent Agenda. He said that first was a Capital Projects Transportation project for the Board to consider authorizing the County Administrator to execute a contract with M&F Concrete Incorporated for the construction of the Staffordboro Sidewalk Project. He said that the Proposed Resolution R25-97 and award were attached to the addition.

Mr. Ashton said that also, staff would like to add the County Administration item, April 9, 2025 Board of Supervisors meeting minutes. He said that lastly, there was an item for the Board to consider authorizing the County Administrator to execute a contract with Digitech Computer LLC to provide EMS Ambulance Transport Billing Services. He said that the Proposed Resolution R25-87 was also attached.

Ms. Bohmke motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve the additions to the Consent Agenda.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

ITEM 1. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE THE MARCH 11, 2025 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES

ITEM 2. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE THE MARCH 12, 2025 JOINT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES

ITEM 3. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE THE MARCH 18, 2025 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES

ITEM 4. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE THE MARCH 25, 2025 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES

ITEM 5. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE THE APRIL 01, 2025 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES

ITEM 6. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPOINT JACK ROWLEY TO THE GERMANNA COMMUNITY COLLEGE LOCAL COLLEGE ADVISORY BOARD FOR A TERM ENDING JUNE 30, 2029

ITEM 7. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; REAPPOINT PATRICIA COPELAND TO THE RAPPAHANNOCK EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES COUNCIL BOARD IN A VOLUNTEER EMS SEAT REPRESENTING STAFFORD COUNTY FOR A THREE-YEAR TERM

ITEM 8. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPOINT MR. BRIAN OGLE AS THE CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVE ON THE FAMPO/BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNEXPIRED PORTION OF THE TERM ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2026

ITEM 9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING MAY AS ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH; PROPOSED PROCLAMATION P25-06

ITEM 10. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING MAY 18-24, 2025 AS EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK IN STAFFORD COUNTY; PROPOSED PROCLAMATION P25-07

ITEM 11. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION TO DESIGNATE STAFFORD COUNTY AS A STROKE SMART COUNTY; PROPOSED PROCLAMATION P25-23

ITEM 12. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION COMMEMORATING THE BEGINNING OF STAFFORD COUNTY'S OBSERVANCE OF AMERICA 250; PROPOSED PROCLAMATION P25-24

ITEM 13. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY; AUTHORIZE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES WITH EXPRESS TECHNOLOGIES, INC., DOING BUSINESS AS EXPRESS TEK, FOR CABLING AND OTHER NETWORKING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-99

ITEM 14. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT AMENDMENT AND APPROVE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES WITH INFOR PUBLIC SECTOR INC. FOR THE COUNTY'S HANSEN PERMITTING SYSTEM AND ENROUTE COMPUTER-AIDED DISPATCH SYSTEM; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-128

ITEM 15. FACILITIES MAINTENANCE; RATIFY A CONTRACT WITH BFI WASTE SERVICES, LLC, DOING BUSINESS AS REPUBLIC SERVICES OF FREDERICKSBURG, EXECUTED ON MARCH 31, 2025, FOR REFUSE REMOVAL AND RECYCLING SERVICES; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-114

ITEM 16. FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE; RATIFY EXPENDITURES FOR THE UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER SUPPLY AND AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO APPROVE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES, ALL WITH MAGNA5 MS LLC FOR OTHER NETWORK PRODUCTS; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-134

ITEM 17. FINANCE; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO ADVERTISE SEPARATE PUBLIC HEARINGS TO CONSIDER (1) THE ISSUANCE OF WATER AND SEWER REVENUE BONDS BY PUBLIC SALE IN CONNECTION WITH UTILITIES EXPANSION OF AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COUNTY'S WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM AND (2) THE ISSUANCE OF DEBT THROUGH THE VRA FOR THE STATE'S CLEAN WATER REVOLVING LOAN FUND FOR LITTLE FALLS RUN WATER TREATMENT PLANT; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-103

ITEM 18. FIRE AND RESCUE; AUTHORIZE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES WITH MULTIPLE VENDORS FOR THE PURCHASE OF PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT, UNIFORMS, TOOLS AND GEAR FOR DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE AND THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-98

ITEM 19. PROCUREMENT; RATIFY A CONTRACT WITH STAPLES CONTRACT & COMMERCIAL LLC, EXECUTED ON APRIL 11, 2025, FOR OFFICE SUPPLIES AND WORKPLACE CATALOG SOLUTIONS; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-119

ITEM 20. SHERIFF; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO ADVERTISE A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE COUNTY CODE, CHAPTER 15, "MOTOR VEHICLE AND TRAFFIC" TO ESTABLISH A TRAFFIC SIGNAL ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM IMPOSING MONETARY PENALTIES ON OPERATORS OF MOTOR VEHICLES WHO FAIL TO COMPLY WITH TRAFFIC LIGHT SIGNALS AND TO PLACE AND OPERATE PHOTO SPEED MONITORING DEVICES IN SCHOOL CROSSING AND HIGHWAY WORK ZONES TO RECORD VIOLATIONS AND IMPOSING

MONETARY PENALTIES ON OPERATORS OF MOTOR VEHICLES WHO HAVE A VEHICLE SPEED VIOLATION; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-112

ITEM 21. SHERIFF; AUTHORIZE THE STAFFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE TO FILE AN APPLICATION FOR THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SAFETY ANSWERING POINT ADDITIONAL NEXT GENERATION 911 FUNDING GRANT

ITEM 22. UTILITIES; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO ADVERTISE A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO STAFFORD COUNTY CODE, CHAPTER 15, SEC. 25-3, "VIOLATIONS OF CHAPTER GENERALLY – NOTICE" AND ARTICLE II, DIVISION 2, "WATER SUPPLY EMERGENCY ORDINANCE," TO UPDATE PROVISIONS TO PROTECT THE COUNTY'S WATER SUPPLY AND ADOPT THE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT PLAN; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-116

Mr. Diggs said that Supervisors had requested to pull items 3, 14, 19, and 20 from the Consent Agenda.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to approve the Consent Agenda without items 3, 14, 19, and 20.

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

Mr. English said that he had received a response from one of his constituents regarding an error in the meeting minutes. He said that on page 31 of 71 of the draft minutes from March 18, the line should read "Commissioner of Revenue" instead of "Commissioner of Veterans Affairs." He said that he simply needed to confirm that the correction would be made.

Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney said that staff could receive direction from the Board to look into it, then bring the item back to the Board for approval with the corrected minutes.

Mr. English motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to defer approval of the March 18, 2025 Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes until the next Board meeting.

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

Dr. Yeung said that she had a quick question regarding Item 14. She said that she thought that they were renting the gymnastics center. She said that she would like to know if the cabling costs associated with this rental were already included in the agreement and if Wi-Fi was already available in the facility, and if there were any specific issues that needed to be addressed.

Andrew Spence, Chief Information Services Officer, said that he believed Dr. Yeung's question pertained to Item 13, specifically their hands-in and in-route products, which included both their internal services and public safety offerings. He said that Item 13 was related to their Wi-Fi cabling for Express-Tek, with the goal of expanding those services through the park systems.

Dr. Yeung said that her question was actually referring to the Wi-Fi expansion in the courthouse, Rowser Center and the Gymnastics Building.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to reconsider the Consent Agenda.

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

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve the Consent Agenda without Items 13, 19, and 20.

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

Mr. Spence said that regarding Item 13, for the gymnastics center, they were upgrading their current Wi-Fi appliances and network because they were outdated. He said that they had already begun this process at the Government Center and planned to replace only their equipment at the gymnastics center. He said that the new equipment would be available for use at any other location if needed.

Dr. Yeung said that she appreciated the explanation. She said that she just wanted to make sure they could pull that out when they were ready.

Dr. Yeung motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve Item 13, Proposed Resolution R25-99.

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

Dr. Yeung said that regarding Item 19, she was wondering when the last time was that they put in a bid for different companies. She said that she would make sure to get the necessary items, but she understood that Staples could be expensive. She said that she would like to know why they needed a contract with Staples.

Brad Quann said that in the Procurement Division, they utilized cooperative contracts, which meant they did not put office supplies out for bid. He said that instead, they partnered with a national cooperative source that they had a historical relationship with, to secure nationwide pricing and volume discounts. He said that the cooperative approach helped them achieve the desired cost savings and they did not put the supplies out for bid.

Dr. Yeung motioned, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve Item 19, Proposed Resolution R25-119.

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

Ms. Vanuch said that regarding Item 20, the Sheriff and Major Dembowski were present at today's meeting, so she thought it would be a great opportunity for them to provide a brief update to the Board. She said that she knew their department had been doing an phenomenal job, and this had been a significant amount of behind-the-scenes work to get to this point. She said that since the public had not had a chance to see this information presented at a Board meeting before, she wanted to take advantage of this moment to pull it off of consent and have the Sheriff share their updates with everyone before they proceeded to the public hearing.

David Decatur, Sheriff of Stafford County, said that during their Public Safety Committee meetings in 2023, they had discussed the feasibility of implementing speed cameras and traffic light cameras. He said that they had begun researching the topic and assigned Deputy Russo as their point man for the traffic safety unit. He said that they had conducted the research and testing in 2024, utilizing data from six different camera companies placed in school zones to gather data on the feasibility of addressing the issues they were facing.

Sheriff Decatur said that through this research and data collection, they had identified some problems and issues. He said that to move forward with traffic signal enforcement, they needed to mirror the state code, which required a County Ordinance to be passed. He said that this ordinance necessitated a public hearing, and if the Board collectively decided to move in this direction, that would be the next step.

Sheriff Decatur said that however, it was essential to consider the County's growth and limited resources, which restricted the number of school zones they could physically monitor to ensure safety. He said that their top priority was traffic safety, and they aimed to reduce or eliminate serious accidents and fatalities. He said that leveraging technology was a key strategy in achieving this goal. He said that in using these cameras, if the community and the Board agreed that it was a good direction, it could be a good place to start by implementing it at a few of the schools. He said that from there, they could assess the cost and how things progressed, and then potentially expand to other locations.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the Sheriff would be presenting information at the public hearing.

Sheriff Decatur said that yes, they would.

Ms. Vanuch asked if they could share the historical information and data their department had collected, including the number of speeders detected during testing, revenue projections, safety aspects, and suggestions for schools that the Sheriff believed were relevant to moving forward with this project.

Sheriff Decatur said that yes, they would provide that information. He said that to give an example, during the testing phase on Route 1, they collected data on Drew Middle School over a five-day period. He said that the cameras were operational for one hour during the day and later in the afternoon during school hours. He said that during those times, the cameras tracked 18,481 violators.

Sheriff Decatur said that this meant that approximately 10,000 people were exceeding the posted speed limit by 10 miles or more in that area. He said that Colonial Forge was another location where they observed 11,500 violators. He said that there was data that clearly indicated they had a problem, and he believed that leveraging technology could be a solution. He said that if they all agreed, they could discuss it further during the hearing.

Ms. Gary said that based on her recollection, it had been over a year since this topic first arose in committee. She said that at that time, the Sheriff had brought up a concern that he did not mention today, which was related to the importance of maintaining those one-on-one connections with the community. She said that after going through the process and working with various companies, she would like to know if the Sheriff felt that his current process as department leader would complement a project like this, or if it might potentially hinder it.

Sheriff Decatur said that he believed this initiative would be a complementary addition. He said that the fact that their County was experiencing rapid growth, with the addition of new schools and challenges with recruitment and hiring, created a significant need for effective neighborhood management. He said that without a system in place to monitor and address these responsibilities, it was likely that issues would go unreported.

Sheriff Decatur said that he thought this type of enforcement would work well in addressing these concerns. He said that it was crucial that they prioritize transparency in their approach, as there were both benefits and drawbacks to this type of enforcement. He said that it was essential that they address any misconceptions about the motivations behind this initiative, which he wanted to clarify was not a revenue generator for the County.

Ms. Gary asked if Sheriff Decatur could elaborate on that specific point.

Sheriff Decatur said that they had a multi-faceted approach to traffic safety enforcement, which included awareness, prevention, and enforcement. He said that to educate the community, they planned to issue warnings for a 30-day period before enforcement would begin. He said that they would also provide maps showing the locations of the cameras, ensuring that the public was aware of the efforts and the reasoning behind them. He said that it was essential to convey that their goal was to promote safety, not to create a speed trap. He said that they aimed to modify behavior among those who consistently exceeded the speed limit.

Ms. Gary said that she recalled a few discussions she had with some involved individuals at the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), specifically regarding the public perception that these speed enforcement cameras may seem like a potential revenue generator, which was an incorrect assumption. She said that this meant that localities should not promise anyone that it would generate revenue, nor that the public should assume a locality was implementing this measure in order to make money off of bad behavior.

Sheriff Decatur said that they had examined the numbers, but they still needed to conduct further research. He said that the feasibility of this initiative was largely dependent on the scale of implementation. He said that they were considering focusing on areas that had shown results based on the data, identifying the optimal locations for cameras, and scaling the program to meet their needs.

Sheriff Decatur said that it would ultimately require additional personnel, as the system would need to be verified by a sworn deputy and the number of violations would need to be monitored and processed. He said that this was why they proposed starting with a smaller pilot program. He said that for example, Fairfax County initially implemented three cameras and had since expanded to three more. He said that they believed that starting with a smaller scale and monitoring its effectiveness before expanding would be a prudent approach.

Ms. Gary said that her conclusion was that the goal was to be neutral, making the streets safer without incurring significant expenses or diverting funds from the community without changing behavior.

Sheriff Decatur said that that was correct.

Ms. Allen asked if the cameras would be used during the times when kids were getting on their buses in the mornings. She said that she was aware that one of the concerns regarding Route 1 or Courthouse Road was the potential for traffic to come to a complete standstill due to drivers slowing down drastically to avoid being ticketed by the cameras. She said that in these main corridors, it could become a serious issue. She asked if they had discussed this with the Virginia Department of Transportation to ensure that, for example, the Drew Middle School area of Route 1 should not be compromised by drivers slowing down. She said that she wanted to ensure these cameras did not cause greater harm to the traffic flow.

Sheriff Decatur said that it was a great question. He said that one of the partnerships they had to work with was VDOT. He said that depending on the location of the camera, it could be placed in a movable or fixed position. He said that since they may be placing them on VDOT property, they would need to have an agreement with them regarding the placement of the cameras. He said that as part of this partnership, they would ensure that VDOT was comfortable with the arrangement.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to approve Item 20, R25-112.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

No: (0)

PRESENTATIONS

There were none.

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

1. Kristen Maxson, Falmouth District said that on April 9, 2025, during the work session, the video was missing 25 minutes of material and was marred by echo and poor word recognition by their software, likely resulting in a significant portion of the content being lost. She said that unrelated materials, such as the video "Not Today Greaseball," were also attached, and the introduction of the 2024 budget with former County Administrator Meadows speaking, appeared to be an error. She said that as a result, the public did not have access to approximately 25 minutes of the work session.

   Ms. Maxson said that she also had a question regarding work sessions: could they perform resolution and ordinance votes with a hearing and also capture the words of the meeting adjourned at the end of the meeting? She said that this was concerning for the public, particularly those who could not see the online meeting due to cable cuts. She said that on page 198 of 508, paragraph 5 in today's packet for May 6, in trying to describe land dumping of good land use parcels on Route 17, being at 10K an acre, the public presentation got screwed in translation, and she apologized for that. She said that presentation of large value differences in land sales showed no sense of why land records showed discrepancies in great differences, numbers, and lack of transparency.

   Ms. Maxson said that in support of James property, the hardship that property owner witnessed was horrific. She said that she was honored to hear his testimony. She said that cross I-95 and Route 1 East, page 447 of today's packet, landfills and solar energy for lease, the people had to pay for their landfills and they paid for the bonds. She asked if there was a chance that people could bring their trash without having to pay if there would be a lease to all of this land. She said that it would seem wise for the public. She said that the water safety emergency ordinance, R25-16, the data centers were approved without the utility management plan, and now it was two years later.

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

2. Al Watkins, George Washington District, said that he was here today as one of the representatives from Stafford on the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO) Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC). He said that in a little over a month, the FAMPO Policy Board, comprising elected officials from the City, Spotsylvania, and their own County, would be asked to determine a preferred choice for a much-needed new river crossing and parkway. He said that this large-scale regional undertaking would require effective communication, cooperation, and compromise between the three jurisdictions to achieve that goal.

   Mr. Watkins said that at the April 21 FAMPO Policy Board meeting, the committee he was a member of, known as CTAC, had presented its preferred option for the river crossing, along with the reasons behind it. He said that this choice resulted from extensive discussion and research of the findings from the FAMPO's hired consultant, Michael Baker International. He said that the CTAC option purposefully diverged from the original five options in an effort to engage all jurisdictions in creating a more impactful solution to alleviate the region's ongoing transportation problems. He said that the CTAC presentation, lasting over seven minutes, was followed by a short presentation by the consultant, resulting in approximately one and a half hours of engaged discussion by Policy Board members.

Mr. Watkins said that it was heartening to see the give-and-take between those members. He said that the consultant had emphasized that the CTAC option was indeed feasible. He said that on several occasions, members of the three jurisdictions had expressed a desire to hold work sessions with their Boards to discuss this project and choose from the existing options, including the alternative proposed by CTAC. He said that he was not certain when this Board would engage in discussion regarding the river crossing process, but time was of the essence. He said that as a representative of this County and the Citizens Advisory Board, he wanted to assure the Supervisors that he was available to participate in any work sessions or meetings, with their permission, and to present if necessary.

Mr. Watkins said that as they were aware, events and issues often had a limited window for action. He said that by preparing to make decisions that would impact their communities, they could ensure that they endured. He said that at the FAMPO Technical Advisory Committee meeting yesterday, new information had been revealed that may or may not affect the river crossing decisions. He said that CTAC hoped to be of service in assisting the Stafford Board of Supervisors in arriving at this crucial decision.

3. Julia Lewis, Falmouth District, said that she would like to extend her gratitude to Mr. Diggs and Ms. Allen for collaborating with the School Board Chair Ms. Siegmund and Vice Chair Ms. Guy to host the Town Hall meeting last week. She said that it was extremely informative, and audience members had ample opportunity to ask questions and express their concerns, receiving responses from both the Supervisors and the School Board members.

   Ms. Lewis said that one question asked about the School Board's proposed purchase of the building on the agenda for tonight's vote revealed that the requested funds actually belonged to the School Board, not taxpayer dollars. She said that she could empathize with the School Board's frustration, as she recalled her own experience as a teenager, earning money through a paper route and managing her own finances. She said that unlike the School Board, she did not need to seek permission to spend her own money.

   Ms. Lewis said that however, the School Board was being forced to do so tonight. She said that while the Board may not agree with the choices made by the seven elected officials, it was essential to honor the School Board’s request. She said that also during the town hall, several attendees expressed concerns about data centers, inquiring about who paid for infrastructure, the structure of tax incentives, and the use of purple pipe for water recycling.

   Ms. Lewis said that some were also worried about a proposed data center project being placed just 165 feet away from a neighbor. She said that she could relate to this concern, as she too had expressed her own concerns about the new Drew Middle School project, which involved a parking lot with lights that would be on from sundown to sunrise, only 35 feet away from a neighbor and across the street from another neighbor. She said that this issue was particularly problematic, as the School Board required an additional $6 million in funding from this Board to rectify the hazardous 45-degree intersection on Cliff Farm Road.

Ms. Lewis said that this extra funding would enable the school to be built closer to Leland Road and across the street from its own property, creating a larger buffer and alleviating concerns about neighboring properties. She said that most importantly, this would make the intersection safer for the 1,100 kids, buses, and family cars picking them up. She said that last week's town hall modeled collaboration, and she appreciated the olive branches extended by the County's Board and the School Board, which allowed both parties to have a voice and share perspectives.

Ms. Lewis said that she would love to see this expanded to include other departments and VDOT. She said that she acknowledged the significant work involved for staff. She said that she appreciated Deputy County Administrator Ms. Krauss and her team for facilitating and organizing this. She said that she also wanted to thank Ms. Gary, Superintendent Dr. Smith, and several other School Board members for attending. She said that collaboration and teamwork were the best way through, and ultimately, they were One Stafford. She said that she would like to see more of this type of collaboration in the future.

4. Bob Roulette, Falmouth District, said that it had been a year ago tomorrow night when this Board had voted to deny the reclassification and conditional use permit for the age-restricted community on Cliff Farm Road. He said that this property, now referred to as Oak Knoll property, was the same property that was now being considered for the site of the Drew Middle School rebuild. He said that he would like to begin by expressing his happiness for the Flippos, who were finally able to sell their land.

   Mr. Roulette said that not only that, but they would retain the house and three acres, allowing their mother to continue living there. He said that he believed this was a positive outcome for the Flippos and, by extension, for their community. He said that he thought they could all agree that the state of Drew Middle School was well recognized, and it was in dire need of replacement. He said that as someone who had had three children attend Drew nearly 10 to 15 years ago, he could attest to the school's age and condition.

   Mr. Roulette said that unfortunately, the concerns they had voiced regarding the age-restricted community on Cliff Farm Road were similar to those they had regarding the Drew Middle School rebuild. He said that specifically, they were concerned about adequate road improvements, traffic congestion, and the impact on their local rural residential community, including light and noise pollution. He said that the greatest concern at present was the proposed location of the school site, which would be situated near existing residential properties, including Mr. Deer's house. He said that he was pleased to report, however, that they had been working closely with Mr. Mr. Towery and his team. He said that they had been diligent in listening to the residents' concerns and had been working collaboratively with them to address these issues.

   Mr. Roulette said that this positive communication was a welcome development. He said that the primary concern was that some of the requested changes may come with a cost. He said that they believed the benefits would be substantial, extending to the community, the school, and the public at large. He said that these changes would be making the roads safer, more accessible, and building a school that harmonized with the existing community. He said that the public appreciated the Board's continued support. He said that they acknowledged the significance of the Drew Middle School rebuild and asked that they continue to provide support and involvement as they addressed these issues moving forward in the rebuilding of Drew Middle School..

5. Tim Deere, Falmouth District, said that he was likely to be the most affected by the school. He said that he believed the school was a necessary and positive development. He said that he thought it was a suitable location, as schools often required this type of area. He said that he was generally okay with the situation. He said that he did have one significant concern. He said that the northeast side was positioned directly in front of his house, 200 feet from his front door, and it was currently a 35-foot by 300-foot brick wall. He said that he wanted to express his concern about this aspect. He said that he was aware of the safety issues with the curve in the road, but he would prefer to see a soccer field in that area instead.

   Mr. Deere said that he understood the importance of considering costs, but safety was a major factor for him. He said that he did not want to be perceived as a squeaky wheel for no reason, but he believed this issue would significantly impact the value of his home and its curb appeal. He said that a soccer field would be much more pleasant to see, with kids running around. He said that he would greatly appreciate that. He said that finally, he wanted to congratulate Mr. Diggs and Ms. Allen for their elections to Chair and Vice Chair, respectively.

6. Rick Edmond, Garrisonville District, said that he served as president of the Manners Homeowners Association (HOA) in Park Ridge. He said that he was here to discuss the sinkhole issue on Blossom Wood Court, which was currently on the agenda for tonight's discussion. He said that he was here to support this issue and wanted to emphasize that it was not just a local concern, but a potential threat to any community with a similar drainage system.

   Mr. Edmond said that as a community situated at the bottom of a hill, between two houses, the 1993 drainage system failed in 2018, resulting in a large sinkhole that was growing in size. He said that if left unaddressed, this sinkhole posed a significant risk to the two adjacent houses, specifically those at 66 and 68 Blossom Wood Court, which could lead to condemnation. He said that he understood that this was not solely an HOA issue, but rather a concern that affected the entire community.

   Mr. Edmond said that as the HOA, they lacked the necessary funds to address this issue, as approximately 50% of their dues were allocated towards the upkeep of the Masters of Park Ridge facilities, including the soccer fields. He said that however, he firmly believed that something must be done to fix this issue. He said that the consequences of inaction would not only affect his community, the Manners, but also potentially other communities with similar drainage systems. He said that he urged the Board to consider this matter and explore any possible solutions to mitigate this issue, as he feared that if left unaddressed, it would become a recurring problem for Stafford County in the future.

REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. English – said that he regretted to inform the public that he had lost a constituent, Linda Beach, who had passed away on April 22. He said that she was the dictionary definition of a southern lady, and she was a beloved member of the Hartwood community, where she had lived for many years. He said that his thoughts and prayers were with her son, Corey, and daughter, Jennifer.

Mr. English said that he wanted to bring to the Board's attention that by delaying the County employee raise until January, those employees were losing money. He said that he proposed that the Board consider implementing a health insurance holiday for the employees to make up for it. He said that he was not sure what the cost would be or what the next steps would be, but he believed it was essential to do something because they should not be making their employees lose money. He said that he suggested that they revisit this topic at the next meeting and explore possible solutions with the County Administrator. He said that he would appreciate the Board's support in implementing this measure, as he believed it would be a positive step in a challenging time for their employees.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would need a lot more information before supporting that request. She said that they had done a health insurance holiday before, and some people received between $1,500 and $5,000.

Mr. English said that he was looking at six months.

Ms. Vanuch said that different people would be receiving different benefits, and this would be more than the delayed implementation of the raise. She said that the provision of parity between County employees and public safety personnel was intended to address the issue of public safety receiving their anniversary pay earlier. She said that now, it seemed they may be potentially creating a parity issue again by not extending the same benefits to one group as they are to the other. She said that she had some questions regarding this matter.

Mr. English said that he would like to poll the Board on the matter.

Mr. Diggs said that there appeared to be a difference in expectations between public safety and the general government. He said that public safety was accustomed to a certain standard, whereas the general government had been accustomed to a different standard, which seemed to be tied to specific dates, such as July 1. He said that what he thought was happening here was that they were now seeing a convergence of expectations, and the general government was concerned that this was a deviation from their normal procedure. He said that he believed this was the issue they were discussing.

Donna Krauss, Deputy County Administrator, said that there were various options available. She said that as Ms. Vanuch mentioned, they had implemented similar measures in the past. She said that when she spoke with Mr. English, her intention was to delay implementing the increased premiums rather than providing employees with additional compensation. She said that instead, they would be deferring the increase in premium costs for six months, which was a relatively smaller amount of money.

Ms. Vanuch asked if this would apply to all employees.

Ms. Krauss said that when the question arose, she conducted a preliminary review and assessed the costs for every employee.

Ms. Allen said that to Ms. Vanuch's point and the Chair's point as well, she would support it only if it was limited to general government. She said that this was because, as the Chair had hinted, public safety was accustomed to their step process, so she viewed that to be a little different. She said that she would entertain the idea if she knew the cost associated with implementing it for general government.

Ms. Allen said that if they were to apply it to all departments, the cost would likely far exceed the potential savings from delaying raises. She said that if the intention was to address the County government side, she understood that perspective. She said that she did not believe it would have the same effect for public safety personnel due to their step process. She said that additionally, it would apply to a smaller pool of employees.

Ms. Krauss said that it was at the pleasure of the Board for staff to provide the numbers for both options, allowing the Board to review them and make a determination.

Ms. Bohmke asked Ms. Krauss how much money it would be in total.

Ms. Krauss said that she preferred not to discuss this at this time. She said that she did not have the necessary information in front of her. She said that if the Board decided to move forward, assuming there was consensus, staff would be glad to bring it back and prepare information for the Board regarding the potential costs. She said that it also would depend in the way they wanted to execute it.

Ms. Bohmke said that she believed it was a slippery slope when they just recently voted on their tax increase and the budget. She said that there was another item they would be discussing in closed session in just a short amount of time, so she did not think it was prudent to pursue this. She said that additionally, it may set a perceived precedent for future years when costs continued to rise. She said that she hesitated pursuing this approach, especially if it was weighing public safety against general government. She said that if it was important, it should have been brought up during their budget sessions.

Dr. Yeung said that she did not believe in giving additional time off. She said that she had expressed her concerns about this issue before. She said that people already had days off, and health insurance was expensive. She said that she was hearing public safety and general government being divided, but she would not do that. She said that what they were forgetting was that the Board had recently come from One Stafford, and the schools were sitting at 1.75, but now they were considering increasing this.

Dr. Yeung said that if they were not going to provide everyone with an increase, they should not increase anyone. She said that they already had the budget, and no one had called her to discuss this further. She said that they were sitting here in the open, and it did not feel good to say no. She said that if someone had taken the time to call her and ask to discuss this, it would have been a different story.

Ms. Vanuch said that the health insurance cost had increased by $1.45 million, the cost of the public safety pay raises was approximately $726,000, and the general government pay increases were around $755,000. She said that considering the health insurance holiday would far outweigh the potential cost of a pay raise, she agreed with Dr. Yeung that it was essential that they have a consensus on this matter before moving forward. She said that as they had already done with the budget, they had made some tough choices to reduce costs.

Ms. Vanuch said that if they were going to discuss this, it should be during the budget public hearing when the Board would advertise the transient occupancy tax (TOT) and meal tax increase. She said that this would have budget implications, and it would be a significant cost. She said that the fact that the Sheriff's Office and Fire and Rescue Department received pay increases only at their anniversary date highlighted the need for parity.

Ms. Vanuch said that if they implemented the County government pay increase on January 1, it was essentially the same as the Sheriff's Office and Fire and Rescue Department's pay increases. She said that in the past couple of years, they had been generous to employees, with an 8% pay raise last year, effective July 1. She said that the Sheriff's Office received a pay raise effective January 1, along with another interim pay increase.

Ms. Vanuch said that they may pay a little more in health insurance this year, but they received a significant check back in health insurance benefits two years ago, and the County had consistently refunded that money if the health insurance projections came in high. She said that in the past, they had refunded that money and provided bonuses during the COVID-19 pandemic. She said that given this history, she was strongly opposed to opening up this budget and exploring ways to find additional funds.

Ms. Vanuch said that they were already operating very closely to their projected numbers, even at the tax rate approved at the last meeting. She said that she believed it was dangerous to consider adding non-budgetary numbers to the discussion, and the implications for next year's budget would be significant.

Mr. Diggs said that he believed that if Mr. English wanted to bring something forward, it was essential that he discuss it with the Board first. He said that he thought they should be transparent and have these conversations in the open, rather than behind closed doors. He said that as he listened to this conversation, he was aware that the employees were also hearing what they were discussing, and it could have a negative impact on them.

Mr. Diggs said that he was well aware that this budget season was difficult for everyone, including constituents and the government. He said that however, they must also consider the employees' perspective, as it was not just about what their employer had done in the past, but also about what they were doing in the present. He said that in this competitive market, they needed to find ways to retain their employees in Stafford County, as they were competing with other jurisdictions, perhaps more now than with the federal government.

Mr. Diggs said that he perceived Mr. English's suggestion as a way of thanking their employees for serving Stafford and as an acknowledgement of the pay cut they would be experiencing until January 1. He said that it did not matter so much how the Board perceived these decisions as much as how their employees perceived it. He said that it was tough, regardless.

Mr. English said that he would like the Chair to poll the Board regarding staff coming back with some figures to support their discussion. He said that it would be helpful to have some data, even if they did not need to vote on it. He said that that was where he would like to focus his efforts. He said that he understood that they all had their own opinions, but he had been informed by employees that they had concerns, and he would like to address those concerns. He said that he was not bringing this up because of budget constraints, which was a separate issue. He said that he believed that this proposal was only for a half-year period, and he would like to see some numbers to make an informed decision. He said that he did not feel the need to personally contact each Board member to express his concerns, as he had heard similar sentiments from various sources.

Mr. Diggs asked if Mr. English was interested receiving numbers that applied only to general government or also to public safety.

Mr. English said that he would be supportive of looking at both options to best understand the situation.

Ms. Gary said that she appreciated Mr. English's perspective and understood the concerns of staff, but she worried that this approach would cause more turmoil that she did not want to put anyone through. She said that she could not support it at this juncture, but she wished they could have done this previously.

Mr. Diggs confirmed there was consensus from the Board to not direct staff to compile information about a health insurance holiday.

Mr. English said that that was okay, and he appreciated everyone's consideration. He said that he would like to add another point regarding their next year's budget. He said that this was just for discussion, but he would like to request that they conduct a performance audit, not as a criticism of the staff, but to gain a better understanding of where the County's money was being spent. He said that he thought it was essential that they find out what was working and what was not, and identify areas where they could make adjustments to optimize their spending.

Mr. English said that he was not suggesting that the staff was not capable of doing this, but rather that they needed an objective assessment to ensure they were using their resources effectively. He said that he proposed that they either have the staff conduct the audit or hire an outside firm to provide an independent review. He said that this would allow them to identify any inefficiencies and make informed decisions about their budget for the upcoming year. He said that he believed this was a necessary step to ensure transparency and accountability to their citizens, and he would like to hear the Board's thoughts on this matter.

Dr. Yeung asked Mr. English if this was something he would like to see before the Board's advance meeting next year. She asked what time period he would like to have this audit done by.

Mr. English said that he believed it should be done way before the next budget season. He said that he believed it should be done for each department, and they should identify areas where they may be missing the mark, where they are spending their money, and where they can cut costs. He said that he would like to identify areas where they may be spending their money inefficiently. He said that he believed they owed it to themselves to examine these areas.

Ms. Allen said that she believed that staff provided several iterations of quarterly budget updates, covering revenue and expenditures. She said that those updates were an opportunity for the Board to ask questions and express concerns. She said that she thought it would be beneficial for the Supervisors to work together to structure workshops during these updates, so they could engage with staff and ask questions before the information was presented. She said that this way, they could ensure that they were getting the information they needed as the fiscal year progressed. She said that she was not sure if having a third-party auditor would be effective. She said that auditors typically examined variances, processes, and procedures, rather than just reviewing all information available.

Ms. Allen said that she had concerns about the feasibility and value of such an audit for a local government. She said that her suggestion would be to have a conversation with Mr. Ashton, as he had mentioned to them at the end of one of their Board meetings. She said that he had discussed potentially trying a different budget session format for budget season. She said that he was also exploring ways to make the budgetary process more interactive, an idea he was already implementing with Ms. Light, Ms. Krauss, and Mr. Spence. She said that it might be beneficial to have a further conversation with the County Administrator about this process.

Mr. English said that he was mainly interested in hearing the Supervisors' opinions on the matter. He said that his concern was not specific to their staff, but rather to their processes as a whole. He said that he had grave concerns about the financial challenges they would be facing in the coming year, and the Board had the responsibility of vetting all their processes.

Ms. Vanuch said that she was going to talk about this issue more during Board comments, but since it came up, she would discuss it now. She said that she was going to propose appointing constituents from her district to review the Rock Hill Department of Government Efficiency and then conducting a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for all receipts and contracts. She said that perhaps this was an approach they could take to engage constituents.

Ms. Vanuch said that she agreed that a third-party auditor would be beneficial, and maybe doing a Request for Proposal (RFP) process could be a viable option. She said that as a Supervisor, she could not begin to explain the numerous contracts they had that were over the time they were supposed to be completed by, whether the spend was over or under the budgeted amount, whether the County had saved any funds, whether they had executed the right kind of contract, and whether they had learned any lessons.

Ms. Vanuch said that she believed that in other areas, such as with big corporations, department budgets could be a source of waste in how they spent their money on certain things. She said that additionally she thought they should review staff salaries and benefits to ensure they were executing them efficiently. She said that she proposed doing an RFP process to a third-party auditor to review all the contracts, receipts, and department budgets, and then providing the results to the public for them to review and hold them accountable. She said that as things were currently, she could not confidently tell her own constituents that they were spending every dollar wisely.

Ms. Vanuch said that she had no doubt they were doing so, but there was little evidence to substantiate it. She said that for example, she had no idea about the status of the dog park in Rock Hill, which had been under construction for almost a year. She said that it was frustrating that she had no information about that project. She said that she was not sure if they were executing the most efficient contracting processes, and she thought there were ways to save money in that area.

Ms. Vanuch said that she also believed that a second phase of this project could be a shared services recommendation from a third-party organization, where departments like Information Technology (IT), Communications, Human Resources (HR), and others could serve the schools, Sheriff's Office, Fire and Rescue, and County government more effectively together. She said that this concept was being explored by her predecessor on the Board. She said that they could capitalize on the contracting between different organizations when building new infrastructure.

Ms. Vanuch said that she believed more oversight would be beneficial. She said that she did think it would be a strain on staff to pull all the contracts and receipts, so she would be interested in issuing an RFP or a Request For Information (RFI) to consultants to see what the costs would be and how they would shape the scope. She said that it was free to do an RFP or an RFI. She said that by doing so, they could learn a lot and align their expectations with those of the consultants. She said that she would support something like that.

Dr. Yeung said that she must clarify Ms. Vanuch's statement about RFPs and RFIs, which were not free. She said that consultants had to come in and talk to staff for hours.

Mr. Diggs said that as he listened to this discussion, he felt conflicted. He said that the first thing that came to mind was, which he did not think anyone here was intentionally doing, and they were indeed accountable to their constituents, but each governmental department had its own duties. He said that their County Administrator had been put in place to handle a lot of this work. He said that he had been thinking about this issue a lot, particularly because he had heard a lot of suggestions from constituents as well as social media posts calling for a DOGE or audits to be done to validate whether the government was spending tax money appropriately.

Mr. Diggs said that part of that was whether they had made a sound decision in hiring their County Administrator, and he believed that they did. He said that he trusted Mr. Ashton when he brought information and answered the Board's questions honestly. He said that he understood the need to listen to constituents and act on their behalf, but there was a fine line there. He said that furthermore, the Board had just agreed they did not want to open up the FY26 budget again and reinvestigate budgetary things, so he felt that the budgetary implications should be considered, too.

Ms. Allen said that she had two main concerns. She said that firstly, every time they considered raising taxes, she wondered if they would request a budgetary examination. She said that this would become an ongoing expense. She said that if they only did it once, they could not be certain that they were being held accountable for every penny. She said that it would only work if they did it every year to satisfy constituents.

Ms. Allen said that secondly, she believed they did not need to hire someone to handle this task. She said that instead, they could establish standards and policies through the County Administrator and have conversations to request regular budgetary updates from each department. She said that they could post these updates online, providing constituents with access to the information they needed. She said that she had never thought that they were wasting money or that their staff was coming to them with inaccurate information. She said that rather, she believed it was better to equip their existing staff with the necessary tools and let them develop plans through the County Administrator, rather than outsourcing this task to be completed every year.

Ms. Bohmke said that people had discussed a myriad of things in response to Mr. English's suggestion, but she would like to discuss procurement and contracts as expenditures. She said that this information was easy to find in the Procurement Department and they had access to it. She said that she liked Ms. Allen's comment that they had a great County Administrator who was well-paid and received many direct reports from departments. She said that there was no reason the Board could not establish policies for department heads' to reference and administer. She said that she had previously requested information about how many employees they had who still worked from home, and she still did not know the answer.

Dr. Yeung said that she had also asked that question, and the County Administrator had informed her that they were working on identifying the total number as well as ensuring those employees were accountable for the work they were doing from home.

Ms. Bohmke said that the County had four years of budget data on OpenGov, which clearly showed the increase in government spending over the years. She said that the Board could ask Ms. Light to compile numbers for the last 10 years, as she had access to this information. She said that each budget line and page now indicated what changes had occurred, including increases in compensation and staffing.

Ms. Bohmke said that this information was readily available, but it could be challenging for them and the public to fully grasp the long-term implications. She said that she had an article here that she planned to discuss later, which highlighted the same concerns they were addressing today; however, the article was from 2008.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was very intriguing that the same conversations they were having right now were the same as that year. She said that she appreciated Mr. English bringing this up, but she was hesitant to allocate funds for this initiative, as she believed they had the necessary resources in-house to pursue it if that was their desired course of action.

Ms. Vanuch said that the purpose of an RFI was to outline their expectations, and then have vendors provide a detailed roadmap on how they would implement it. She said that this roadmap would allow them to inform their staff on how to proceed. She said that their staff needed clear information, as they often did not know what to ask for. She said that she would like to see detailed receipts of department budgets, including specifics on how the allocated funds were spent. She said that for example, when a department's budget was listed as $750,000 annually, it was unclear what that money was actually being used for.

Ms. Vanuch said that the line item level of transparency was essential for setting policies and identifying gaps. She said that she believed an RFI would be a valuable tool in achieving this transparency, as it had no cost, required no staff consultation until after they began identifying potential vendors, and allowed vendors to provide a detailed roadmap. She said that this would enable them to make informed decisions and set policies that addressed their specific needs, without adding to the County Administrator’s workload.

Ms. Vanuch said that furthermore, an RFI would eliminate the need for constituents to perform the FOIA requests, which were an even greater burden on their staff. She said that she believed this was a necessary step to prove to their residents that their local government was being open and transparent.

Ms. Allen said that some Supervisors had already clearly stated what they preferred to see as part of this process, so it appeared they could go ahead and provide Mr. Ashton with direction, such as when they began preparing the next year’s budget to have Ms. Light prepare certain things for every department.

Ms. Allen said that as long as the directions and feedback were clear, she was confident Mr. Ashton was capable of fulfilling the Board’s requests. She said that even if it was an RFI that provided an external roadmap, the County’s staff would still need to go back and do the work. She said that their own staff were skilled and likely had the necessary information to provide the roadmaps themselves, and it seemed premature to send out an RFI when they had not asked staff at all yet. She said that now would be the appropriate time to give the County Administrator the Board’s suggestions for what they wanted to see and provide back to their constituents.

Mr. Ashton said that this conversation was timely because later tonight, they would be holding a closed meeting, where the Board would be conducting his six-month review, observations, and discussing potential future actions. He said that he would be presenting some ideas and would like to gauge their stance on them. He said that in that closed session, he would appreciate it if the Board could share their thoughts on how to move forward with those ideas, so he could better understand their perspective and work together to shape their future plans.

Ms. Gary – said that she wanted to discuss the Route 1 and Courthouse Road project that was upcoming. She said that they had a community meeting scheduled, and she hoped to be able to attend the end of it. She said that however, there was also an event for the Sheriff Department’s awards, as well as an annual event with the school division, so she would try attend the community meeting afterwards. She said that she had requested that Mr. Ashton and staff work closely with the businesses in the area, as she had received an email expressing concerns about access to their businesses.

Ms. Gary said that although most of the work would be done at night due to traffic flow, she said that she would appreciate it if staff could keep her informed about any progress so she could have those conversations. She said that she wanted to thank County Transportation staff for their support at the Brook Road project meeting. She said that it had been very informative, and they had completed the video and posted it. She said that she had also arranged a meeting with someone from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) planning to discuss the preservation area's impact on the situation. She said that they would bring that back to the group in the near future.

Ms. Gary said that she wanted to mention a couple of other items. She said that prior to their meeting, she had a discussion regarding proffered consultants to expedite the process, as their Planning and Zoning Department was currently burdened with many tasks. She said that she had been hopeful about the revenue they could generate from some of the approved data centers. She said that one of those had finally received comments, and it was scheduled to go to the Planning Commission as previously discussed. She said that there was also another data center, the Stafford Technology Campus, which had proffered a consultant, and she was not sure where they stood in that process.

Mr. Ashton said that they were still in the early stages of that process, as it had been recently approved in the fall of last year. He said that two other projects were currently moving forward with consultants. He said that they were still working on STC.

Ms. Gary asked if there was anything happening in conversations that would prevent them from considering the option of hiring a consultant sooner rather than later. She said that this option would not incur additional costs and could potentially generate revenue sooner.

Mr. Ashton said that the Board would be discussing this information in the upcoming closed meeting.

Ms. Gary said that she appreciated the response. She said that, although her local participation had been quiet, she had been attending some regional meetings to stay informed and engaged. She said that she was grateful for the opportunity to do so. She said that, although there were no VACo meetings scheduled until the fall, the first meeting was scheduled for August for the steering committees.

Ms. Gary said that she would continue to serve on the transportation and education steering committees for VACo, and she had followed Ms. Bohmke's lead and become more involved in the National Association of Counties (NACo), which she appreciated. She said that she was now part of the Environment, Energy, and Land Use Steering Committee for NACo, as well as the Veterans and Military Services Committee.

Ms. Gary said that she wanted to share these opportunities to serve and influence policies, particularly those that they may not typically participate in. She said that Ms. Bohmke had been a valuable mentor, and she had been learning from her approach to building relationships and achieving results outside of the board room. She said that she was grateful for the experience and looked forward to continuing to be involved.

Ms. Vanuch – said that the Lake Arrowhead maintenance dam project had been opened up for bid, with the project award slated to occur by the July 1 Board of Supervisors meeting. She said that she wanted to ensure everyone was aware of this and would review the agenda in June to confirm it met the July 1 Board of Supervisors meeting agenda. She said that the award contract for the Lake Arrowhead service district dam repair should likely be on the consent agenda, and the project was expected to begin in August or early September, lasting approximately three months.

Ms. Vanuch said that this project would bring both the small and large dams at Lake Arrowhead into compliance with state law. She said that a potential full or partial lane closure may be required for Lakeview Drive across from the dam as part of the project, and staff would work closely with the contractor, VDOT, and the community to ensure public awareness and understanding of this requirement.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to bring up the Mountain View dog park project, which had encountered several issues. She said that the contractor had failed to ensure full grass coverage of the grassy area, prohibiting the park's opening. She said that staff was working with the contractor to schedule additional hydro seeding, but their equipment had failed. She said that the water fountains were scheduled to be completed by April 30, and she would appreciate an update from the County Administrator about the status.

Ms. Vanuch said that the last section of fencing had been installed on April 30 as scheduled. She said that they were currently withholding bond on the contractor until 90% vegetation coverage was achieved in the disturbed areas. She said that she would appreciate an update on when that would happen and whether it would be at the cost of the County or the cost of the contractor, considering they had failed to grow grass there, even with all their spring rain.

Dr. Yeung – said that she would like to thank Kyle Bates for the email he sent her yesterday. She said that there were some streets in Garrisonville that would be covered. She said that however, the map he sent her was difficult to decipher, with street names that were difficult to see. She said that she had asked Matt Lehane for assistance and clarification. She said that hopefully, Cathedral Street would be included in the coverage. She said that she had attended several events recently, including the executive committee meeting for the Regional Health Assessment (RHA). She said that she also had a tour with her colleague at the Blackjack property.

Dr. Yeung said that she also attended the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) meeting, the Central Rappahannock Library (CRL) meeting, FAMPO, the GOVirginia sixth annual summit, the Fredericksburg Gala Awards, George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC), a Goodwill meeting and facility tour. She said that she also attended the advanced ribbon cutting in Rock Hill. She said that one event that she wanted to highlight was the Community Health Forum, where Alison Balms-John presented critical data on population health in Stafford County and surrounding areas.

Dr. Yeung said that she had explained that population health involves assessing and monitoring the health of essential public health services, such as Mary Washington Health Care and the Rappahannock Area Health District. She said that these organizations collaborate to assess and address the health needs of communities. She said that for example, they provided the County with daily and monthly data on COVID-19 cases. She said that additionally, they would be responsible for tracking data regarding measles outbreaks. She said that unfortunately, their staff was significantly reduced by the federal government, and they were now operating with only one-third of their original staff. She said that this was concerning to her.

<u>Ms. Allen</u> – said that she wanted to first congratulate and give her best wishes to all of the Stafford County Public School students, including those who had already started and those who were taking their first SOLs. She said that she knew it could be a stressful time, and she was reminded of this every night by her middle schooler. She said that she also believed it was an incredibly important time, and she encouraged everyone to stay hydrated and go into the test with confidence, but without undue stress.

Ms. Allen said that she had mentioned earlier when the Sheriff was present that being good neighbors was crucial. She had said this before in her comments, and she would like to reiterate it now. She said that it was 2025, they could not continue to repeat how they must be good neighbors. She said that when they just had such a difficult budget season, during which many people stated how they did not want to see increases in certain areas, it was difficult to justify when people were not being good neighbors.

Ms. Allen said that it was disconcerting to see drivers speeding through school zones, major arteries, or areas like the Griffis area's Glenwood Forest subdivision. She said that this behavior put people at risk, forced the County to address potential transportation issues, and required them to expend more resources and respond to incidents. She said that as members of this community, she did not understand why some individuals felt the need to drive recklessly.

Ms. Allen said that this behavior was unacceptable and unfair to those who were contributing to the community through their taxes. She said that they should not have to be reminded of the importance of safe driving, and the Sheriff should not have to resort to speed traps and cameras to ensure the students' safety and the safe navigation of school buses. She said that they already faced challenges on their roads in Stafford County, largely due to the design of their roads. She said that they did not need any additional strain on the system. She said that she kindly requested that everyone in Stafford be respectful of the rules of the road.

Ms. Allen said that she understood that it could be tempting to want to get somewhere quickly, but getting there as fast as possible was not always the best option for the community. She said that she recently attended a Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) meeting and wanted to update the Board on the status of the OmniRide Commuter Choice Program.

Ms. Allen said that this program, which had been funding their Staffordboro buses from the Route 610 commuter lots to Washington, D.C., was up for funding again. She said that PRTC had approved it, and as a member of the subcommittee that works with Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVCT), she was waiting for the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to vote on it on June 5.

Ms. Allen said that once that happened and it was passed, they would have secure funding. She said that fortunately, everything appeared to be on track to ensure their commuter buses remained operational, especially with the federal government's return to work order. She said that this was significant because the program was entirely grant-funded, which not only saved the County money but also reduced traffic on their roads in the County.

Ms. Allen said that she would be attending an HOA meeting this upcoming weekend in Widewater Beach. She said that as the weather warmed up, it was a great opportunity for residents to reach out to the Board to engage with their community and answer questions. She said that she encouraged them to contact her. She said that after their recent town hall meeting, she was aware there were many questions and concerns in the public. She said that she could only speak for herself, but she encouraged the public to reach out now so that she could start scheduling HOA meetings and provide any necessary updates.

Ms. Allen said that additionally, she was informed that the Woodstock project for Transportation was already underway. She said that from now until the next two to three years, residents should be prepared for this project to be implemented at Woodstock. She said that today, the Board also approved the contract for the Staffordboro sidewalk today, which would soon begin. She said that clearly, Griffis-Widewater would have a significant amount of transportation improvements in the area for at least the next two years.

Ms. Bohmke – said that she wanted to echo Mr. Diggs' comments from the beginning of the meeting regarding the three parks they had opened at Duff, Pratt, and St. Clair Brooks Park. She said that it was clear that all three were well-used. She said that the agility course at Pratt was exceptional, and Duff Park was also impressive. She said that the skate park at St. Clair Brooks Park was particularly noteworthy, as it brought together people of all ages, including young children with helmets and older individuals who were skilled skaters. She said that this park was likely to attract visitors from across the region and become a popular amenity.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was located off Butler Road and was called St. Clair Brooks Park. She said that she wanted to extend her gratitude to the Parks and Recreation staff, particularly Brion Southall, who had dedicated over 30 years to Stafford County. She said that although Mr. Southall was unable to attend, his team had played a crucial role in making these projects a success.

Ms. Bohmke said that she also wanted to mention that the FAMPO policy committee had voted to bring back a work session or agenda item to discuss and explore different river crossing options, as previously discussed by Mr. Watkins during his public comment. She said that she had emailed the Board and staff after the meeting to request bringing the item back to the Board of Supervisors for their locality to review, either in a work session or as a regular meeting agenda item.

Ms. Bohmke said that regardless of the final decision, there would be additional analysis required, including a more comprehensive National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study that addressed environmental issues. She said that Marcy Parker, the residency head for VDOT, had mentioned, the chosen option would not be the only consideration, as other alternatives would also be evaluated. She said that they would bring this significant project back to the Board, as they had collectively agreed, even though they were appointed representatives, it was ultimately a Board decision.

Ms. Bohmke said that she wanted to recommend that CTAC present at that meeting, and she also believed it would be beneficial to hear from Joe Brito, a former supervisor who represented approximately 4,500 residents from the Hartwood area. She said that she had previously mentioned this in her email to them. She said that Mr. Brito had brought to her attention an agreement signed in 2001 with the silver companies and the Army Corps of Engineers, which would expire in October 2026.

Ms. Bohmke said that this agreement mentioned the river crossing and environmental issues. She said that she had previously emailed the Board and staff regarding this matter, as she discovered it while reviewing old files. She said that the item was discussed at the June 6, 2024, Historical Commission meeting in Stafford County. She said that she was eager to review the agreement and have the County Attorney analyze its enforceability.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would like to request that the Board be polled on a specific item, which had been discussed previously. She said that she was aware that Mr. Diggs had been quoted in the Potomac Local after the town hall, and it appeared that data centers had been a topic of significant discussion. She said that many people had expressed concerns about this issue, and she believed it was essential to revisit their performance standards, as outlined in the original ordinance, which addressed buffers, noise, and water.

Ms. Bohmke said that she had had a conversation with Stephen Apicella, the Chair of the Planning Commission, and they both agreed that it was time to re-examine their standards. She said that they had learned valuable lessons since implementing these standards two years ago, and she thought it was prudent for their Board to revisit their approach. She said that she would like to bring this issue back to the Board of Supervisors and ask the Planning Commission to re-evaluate their performance measures to determine if they needed to adjust their standards in any way. She said that she would like to request the Chair that the Board consider this item and work with the Planning Commission to address these concerns.

Dr. Yeung asked if there was a subcommittee on the Planning Commission.

Ms. Bohmke said that no; there was one previously when they were studying data centers, and they completed their work, then presented their findings to the Planning Commission. She said that it was similar to their ad hoc committees, as they had been disbanded when the work was complete.

Dr. Yeung said that she would like to discuss this with her own Planning Commissioner because she had not heard any concerns. She said that she could not vote on any related matters before then.

Ms. Vanuch said that she had a technical question regarding how Ms. Bohmke would like to proceed with bringing forward the item. She asked if Ms. Bohmke was suggesting that they would bring it forward on the Board’s consent agenda at the next meeting, then send it to the Planning

Commission to make recommendations. She said that in that case, the Planning Commission could make their recommendations for the Board to review, then send it back again to the Planning Commission for a final review and public hearing, then it would finally come before the Board for a public hearing.

Ms. Bohmke said that that was correct. She said that for example, one of the things she believed was essential to review was the inclusion of a 100-foot buffer. She said that she did not believe anyone thought a 100-foot buffer was enough when placing a data center next to a residential property. She said that she had previously not supported a data center because it would be situated less than 100 feet away from some of her constituents, while another data center she did support because she felt the location was appropriate and had sufficient buffers. She said that she felt it was the Board's duty to make sure they had the best standards for data centers.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would be in favor of allowing the Planning Commission to review the standards and provide recommendations to the Board. She said that it would allow the Commission to elaborate on the feedback and suggestions from the public and from the Planning and Zoning Department, if there were any.

Ms. Allen said that she was inclined to say no. She said that unless it was illegal, she did not feel comfortable dictating what use should be on a property as long, as it complied with their ordinances and regulations. She said that as a buyer in Virginia, the state's "buyer beware" policy applied, and she had been consistent in stating that. She said that if a buyer purchased a property and, in 10 years, a building was constructed next to it that they did not want, she was not comfortable saying that the building should not be there.

Ms. Allen said that the reality was that when a buyer purchased a property in Virginia, the surrounding properties may be subject to unforeseen developments and the neighboring properties could not control that. She said that she was a strong believer in property rights, and she would not waver from that stance on this topic.

Ms. Gary said that she had a few concerns that led her to feel that this should not move forward at this time. She said that Mr. Apicella, who was the Chair of both the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), was the one who was handling this request, and she was concerned that he had brought it to one Supervisor. She said that she did not feel it was appropriate to send it back to the Planning Commission after all the work that had already been done.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to take some time to discuss this with her Planning Commissioner and explore the implications. She said that it would be prudent for all of them to do that. She said that in addition to this, she had concerns about several other aspects. She said that however, she was not saying no indefinitely; she would certainly like to revisit it after more discussion.

Ms. Gary said that one issue she would like to revisit was the requirement of load letters with data center applications. She said that she believed it was reasonable to ask for this, as it would provide valuable information about the energy requirements of the development. She said that while it was not required by the state, the County could require it be provided in order for an application to be considered.

Ms. Gary said that at some point, they needed to have another discussion about the future taxes associated with these developments and how they would balance with the revenue they were trying to generate. She said that to avoid becoming like Loudoun County, they needed to establish a glide path for these developments. She said that at this time, she was not ready to proceed with this proposal. She said that she required a bit more time to discuss this matter with her Planning Commissioner, and she would like the other Supervisors to have that opportunity as well.

Ms. Bohmke said that to clarify, she was recently on the phone with her Planning Commissioner about other matters, and they started discussing data centers. She said that to her, this was a straightforward issue. She said that there was nothing suspicious or nefarious that Mr. Apicella mentioned to her, and it was no different from her own proposal being presented. She said that she would like to see this proposal move forward.

Dr. Yeung said that she understood the reasoning, but she would like to have more time to contemplate the request before saying yes or no. She said that she would like to discuss it with her own Planning Commissioner beforehand. She said that it was possible that Mr. Apicella suggested this to Ms. Bohmke without discussing it with the rest of the Planning Commission, so she wanted to make sure the rest of the Commissioners were aware and could weigh in on the item.

Ms. Bohmke said that she felt that Mr. Apicella's suggestion made perfect sense; otherwise, she would have disagreed and told him it was unreasonable. She said that by sending it back to the Planning Commission, they could determine whether any changes were necessary, and it was possible they may determine the standards were acceptable as-is. She said that she understood the other Supervisors' discomfort, but she felt it made sense, which was why she brought it forward.

Mr. Diggs said that he agreed the setbacks to residential properties were a concern, and he believed there may be other standards that need reviewed or adjusted. He said that there would be no harm in sending it back to the Planning Commission and he would like to see what their recommendations would be. He said that since there was not unanimous support, the item would come back on the Board's regular agenda rather than the consent agenda.

Ms. Gary said that to clarify, she was not ready to do this today but that did not mean she did not want to pursue it at all. She asked if, instead of putting it on the agenda to be voted on whether to send it back to the Planning Commission, they could discuss it in a work session. She said that she would like for this to be a more collaborative process than to immediately send the ordinance back to the Planning Commission. She said that she would like the opportunity to discuss the specific concerns to be considered when potentially amending the ordinance.

Dr. Yeung asked if it would be possible to discuss this matter in a joint meeting with the Planning Commission.

Mr. Diggs said that he appreciated the discussion from Board members, but he felt they must move the meeting along.

Mr. Diggs – said that he would like to acknowledge and thank Mr. Bates, their VDOT representative, who worked with them on issues with Bethel Church Road. He said that they had issues with the asphalt breaking away and destroying someone's tires, but after he reached out to Mr. Bates, the issue was resolved relatively quickly. He said that he also had the honor of attending the Inova Peterson Life with Cancer 2025 Lobster Extravaganza, a phenomenal event that raises funds for cancer research.

Mr. Diggs said that as someone who lost his mother to cancer in 2017, he was committed to supporting cancer-related causes. He said that he had also attended several other community events, including town hall meetings that included conversations about data centers, which were relevant to their discussion at the dais. He said that he had attended the Stafford Rotary Club meeting, where a young woman, Haley Kettner, shared her scholarship essay, "Be the Better Person." He said that the essay reminded him of the importance of conducting themselves.

Mr. Diggs said that the introduction of the essay read, "Some people don't even know about the four-way test, but don't worry – I'm here to tell you what it is and why you should follow it. The test has four aspect: Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned? You would think that everyone would follow these rules since they are seemingly so simple, but many people actually fail to follow them in their day-to-day life. I would like to believe this is because the human mind likes to blurt out things before even thinking about what the outcome of the action might be, or maybe it's because being around the wrong group of people can cause you to alter what you do, or alter how you think. I now think that I, myself, need to start taking these four rules into consideration and see what could happen from following them. I have learned that living with the four-way test rules by my side can help my day be more constructive as well as productive."

Mr. Diggs said that he was impressed by a phenomenal essay written by a middle school age child, which reminded him that children could teach adults valuable lessons, as stated in the Bible. He said that on a separate note, he said that this Sunday was Mother's Day, so he would like to extend his gratitude to all the moms present and those in the audience. He said that he would also like to share that they were participating in the Law Enforcement United Ride, a 250-mile bicycle ride from Chesapeake to Washington, D.C., honoring fallen law enforcement officers.

Mr. Diggs said that he and around 250 officers would be passing through Stafford on Mother's Day and would be at the Public Safety Building around 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. He said that anyone was welcome to come out and join them. He said that he turned 40 on May 9, so he would be attempting to ride 250 miles for his 40th birthday, and would likely complain about it afterwards.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

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

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

CAPITAL PROJECTS QUARTERLY REPORT (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

REPORT ON SOLAR OPPORTUNITIES AT THE R-BOARD

William Ashton, County Administrator, said that he had invited Phil Hathcock, Director of the R-Board, to discuss a potential solar project with the Board.

Phil Hathcock, Director of the R-Board, said he was present to provide some updates on their work. He said that about a year and a half ago, they began exploring the potential for beneficial uses of the closed landfill space at the R-Board, in conjunction with the City of Fredericksburg's closed Cool Springs landfill in Stafford. He said that in May 2024, they released an RFP seeking responses for solar arrays on these closed landfill spaces or other unused areas.

Mr. Hathcock said that they received four responses, and after reviewing them, their review committee, along with SCS Engineers, selected a best respondent, Community Power Group, a community power group from Washington, D.C. He said that in December, the R-Board passed a resolution of support for the project. He said that Community Power Group had proposed building solar arrays on the closed spaces at both landfills, including five megawatts at the R-Board site and three megawatts at the Cool Springs Road site, which was owned by the City.

Mr. Hathcock said that now, they were seeking direction from the Board of Supervisors to draft a lease with Community Power Group to move forward. He said that once the lease was drafted, it would be brought back to the Board for approval at a future date. He said that if the Board decided to proceed with this plan, after the leases were signed and drafted, Community Power Group would be able to navigate the zoning and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regulations, and begin construction.

Mr. Diggs asked if this project would result in locally-distributed solar power, or if it would be distributed directly into the greater power grid.

Mr. Hathcock said that was a very good question, and the answer was that it would be determined at a future date. He said that once Community Power Group had a lease in place, they would be able to apply for the shared solar project, similar to the one that had been recently approved for connection to the grid. He said that there was a possibility that there may not be sufficient capacity on the grid for the shared solar project, in which case it would be a direct connection to the grid.

Ms. Bohmke asked how much revenue would be generated from the lease.

Mr. Hathcock said that the revenue figures had not been determined yet and were tied to whether the project could be a shared solar program or a direct cell program. He said that the lease would have a study period, typically lasting around a year, to determine the best approach. He said that although preliminary work had been done, as outlined in the proposal, he estimated that the annual study period and lease would be around $2,000 for a year. He said once the array was constructed, depending on its type, would likely be between $2,000 and $3,000 per month. He said that as a result, this project would not be a significant revenue generator.

Ms. Bohmke asked why it was necessary to do a study period.

Mr. Hathcock said that a lot of engineering would be involved to ensure that the arrays were placed in the optimal location, whether they were fixed or rotating arrays. He said that the placement at the landfill site would be carefully selected to maximize power generation, and studies were conducted to determine the expected output. He said that this, in turn, affected the revenue they received.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they would not be paying anything during the study period.

Mr. Hathcock said that no; that would be negotiated as part of the lease agreement. He said that typically, it was a nominal fee during the study period, because the company was also not generating any revenue. He said that once the array was constructed, then the revenue sharing began.

Ms. Bohmke said that she apologized for the misunderstanding. She asked how many panels would be required for a 5-megawatt facility.

Mr. Hathcock said that he could not speak to that.

Ms. Bohmke said that she understood. She said that she was not opposed to it.

Ms. Gary said that she was in favor of the proposal. She said that she believed that they needed to explore innovative solutions to energy issues, given their current circumstances. She said that she appreciated Mr. Hathcock bringing this item to the Board and looked forward to seeing its development.

Mr. English said that he would like to see the study once it was completed.

Dr. Yeung said that to clarify, this land could not be utilized for many other purposes.

Mr. Hathcock said that that was correct. He said that this land was owned by Stafford and the City of Fredericksburg, specifically for the operation of the R-Board.

Dr. Yeung said that this would be putting a good project on this land that could generate solar energy to the community.

Ms. Vanuch asked if this project would preclude the County from using the site as a park in the future, similar to what Virginia Beach had done.

Mr. Hathcock said that yes, it would on that specific portion of the closed landfill.

Ms. Vanuch said that she felt was important to consider the fact that this land would be taken out of use for other County purposes.

Ms. Gary said that a decommissioning plan for the solar facility would allow them to use the land after a date specified. She said that they had to monitor the site for emissions for a certain amount of time because it was a landfill, and the solar facility would not be there in perpetuity. She said that it would be there for as long as the company wanted to keep the solar project there. She said that there would be nothing stopping them from stipulating that the site be used for something else after decommissioning.

Mr. Hathcock said that that was correct. He said that the length of the lease would be part of the conditional use permit, and would ultimately be the Board's decision.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to have some more details before supporting the installation, such as the length of the lease, the decommissioning plan, and whether the land would be usable afterward.

Mr. Ashton said that to clarify, that was the purpose of his poll of the Board. He said that they did not have any lease details right now. He said that this discussion was to see if there was Board support for Ms. McClendon's team to begin the process of negotiating the lease.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to start by asking about the length of the lease, the decommissioning schedule for the site, and what and when they could do something else with the land outside of the solar project. She said that she would also like to know about potential challenges that may arise in utilizing the land with the solar installation, taking into account the lease terms, such as a 50-year lease. She said that if that were the case, it may limit their ability to use the land in the future. She said that she would like to have this information before proceeding with any further studies or commissioning.

Ms. Gary asked how long the County had to monitor the site for emissions before they could use it for any other purpose.

Mr. Hathcock said that they must monitor it for at least 30 years after closure, so long as there were no emissions detected during those 30 years. He said that he appreciated Ms. Vanuch's points and would bring it up to the County Attorney.

Ms. Vanuch asked if more information could be provided regarding how long it would take after decommissioning to use the site for another purpose.

Dr. Yeung asked what the cost would be to make the site developable, if it were not used for a solar project.

Mr. Hathcock said that he was not an engineer, he did not think it would ever be advisable to build on top of a landfill. He said that the settlement issues that came with such a site were well-documented.

Dr. Yeung asked if the only option would be to use it as a park or something similar.

Mr. Hathcock said that he preferred not to speculate about what that may be.

Ms. Vanuch said that the Rose Casino was on Dumfries' old landfill.

Mr. Diggs confirmed there was consensus from the Board for staff to move forward with the request.

PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS BY AGENCIES

ITEM 23. DEVELOPMENT SERVICES; NEIGHBORHOOD STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM UPDATE

Paul Santay, Chief Director of Community Development, said that today he was accompanied by Emily Torrey, their Assistant Director of Development Services, and Julie, their Stormwater Program Coordinator. He said that a few months ago, he had spoken to the Board about several topics and had mentioned that they would revisit the update of their Neighborhood Stormwater Infrastructure Grant Program at a later date. He would also discuss Blossom Wood Court later in the presentation.

Mr. Santay said that he planned to briefly review the grant program's history, its purpose, and potential recommendations for its future development. He said that it would also include a discussion of Blossom Wood Court and other components. He said that Ms. Bohmke, Ms. Allen, and Ms. Gary had been part of the Stormwater Infrastructure Funding Implementation (SIF) Committee, which resulted in the creation of the grant program in 2020.

Mr. Santay said that at that time, one of the Board's strategic priorities had been to address the County's stormwater infrastructure challenges, which many residential property owners had experienced and continued to experience in various forms throughout the community. He said that the grant program was similar to the state's Stormwater Local Assistance Funding (SLAF) Grant Program, which was a reimbursement program for eligible stormwater capital projects.

Mr. Santay said that the concept had become a reality in 2019, when the state had provided the necessary authority for localities to adopt a stormwater maintenance fund to assist with the repair of potential drainage and erosion issues on private property. He said that in 2021, through Ordinance O21-54, the Board approved and established the Stafford's Stormwater Maintenance Fund and the grant program altogether. He said that the ordinance had been passed in FY22 and had allocated $100,000 towards the grant program. He said that since 2021, annual funding had been set aside to support the program.

Mr. Santay said that the grant program's purpose was to provide reimbursement funding to assist with costs associated with inspections, repairs, and maintenance of privately owned residential drainage systems and stormwater management facilities in the County. He said that eligible properties included HOA neighborhoods, non-HOA neighborhoods, and private property owners with public stormwater infrastructure. He said that the funding mechanism allowed for funding options from engineering reports and studies, as well as direct maintenance and repair of ditches and swales, and maintenance and repairs of actual stormwater management facilities.

Mr. Santay said that however, the grant program did not provide funding for non-residential uses, issues within the VDOT right-of-way, properties, private drainage infrastructure such as driveway culverts, private Best Management Practices (BMP) like rain barrels on the side of the house, new stormwater management facilities, or routine stormwater maintenance like grass cutting, weed removal, and woody vegetation removal. He said that as of now, with the grant program, 16 total applications had been accepted and received since 2021.

Mr. Santay said that of those, six projects had been approved, with five completed, totaling approximately $52,000 in reimbursements. He said that the locations of these approved projects were listed on the slide. He said that notably, the approved and funded projects had all been HOA-only initiatives. He said that although they had received other non-HOA applications, based on the grant parameters, those did not move forward. He said that therefore, all reimbursements had been to HOA projects.

Mr. Santay said that he would like to provide two examples of projects that received funding. He said that the Austin Ridge Subdivision in Garrisonville, a stormwater management facility built and designed according to the code, was not performing as expected. He said that the community experienced issues with the pond's drawdown, which became a maintenance issue.

Ms. Santay said that to address this, the community hired an engineer to explore alternative solutions, which they successfully implemented. He said that the project qualified for funding, and since 2023, the community had no issues with their stormwater facility. He said that the second example is in the Aquia District, Poplar Hills, sections one through three, another stormwater facility designed and built to code requirements, but still experiencing issues with sediment buildup and maintenance.

Mr. Santay said that the community hired an engineer to redesign and adjust the facility, which resulted in a more cost-effective solution. He said that the project qualified for grant funds, and they were awarded approximately $9,500. He said that with regards to the grant program, staff recommended completing the 2025 notice of funding opportunity and reviewing applications for year four. He said that staff recommended conducting a comprehensive review of the four-year program, including a cost-benefit analysis, to evaluate its effectiveness and compare it to the Board's new priorities and budget limitations.

Mr. Santay said that staff recommend finishing year four and returning to the Board with their findings, potentially including proposed changes to the grant program if desired. He said that some of the recommendations he briefly mentioned in the background report could be considered if the Board decided to utilize the grant funding program as they currently were using it to support some of the projects.

Mr. Santay said that he would not dismiss the possibility of abandoning the grant program if it did not meet the Board's expectations for stormwater funding. He said that the Board's idea of how stormwater funding could support community needs could be explored through alternative funding options to address the community's drainage and stormwater issues.

Ms. Gary asked if there was something about the process and application review seemed to favor HOAs over private homeowners, considering the only projects approved were those submitted by HOAs. She said that regardless, she would like to keep the grant program active.

Mr. Santay said that he did not think it was biased, but Homeowners Associations may have an advantage in this situation due to their financial resources. He said that compared to individual homeowners or neighborhoods without HOAs, HOAs had more access to cash and other resources.

Ms. Gary said that she would definitely like to continue discussing the details of the issue. She said that she would like to see how they could improve this process, perhaps by implementing a tiered approach or offering alternative options. She said that this would help level the playing field, allowing individual homeowners to compete with HOAs, which were generally better equipped to navigate the process.

Ms. Bohmke said that she agreed with Ms. Gary that they could consider amendments to the process. She asked how old the subdivisions that qualified for the program were when their stormwater facilities started failing, and if there were things the County or the property developer could have done better to prevent the issues from occurring in the first place. She said that she recalled stormwater issue in her district that was in fact solved once the problem was explained to the developer, who was able to fix it. She asked if the County could make improvements, or if those older developments' issues could have been prevented if something applicable had been included in the County's Stormwater Ordinance.

Ms. Santay said that he believed that the changes had already been implemented, at least in terms of design and review of stormwater facilities. He said that what they were looking at were facilities that were not designed in the early 2000s or 2010s, when stormwater management design and engineering standards were still evolving. He said that over time, different ideas, requirements, and regulations had emerged from the DEQ, leading to varying approaches to stormwater management.

Mr. Santay said that in the past five years, the County's standards had become more comprehensive, and they had taken a more holistic approach to evaluating the maintenance impacts on homeowners associations and stormwater management facilities. He said that this included considering the costs and complexities of funding and operating these facilities, both for individual homeowners and combined HOAs. He said that he could attest that, in the last five years, they had required more detailed design engineering from their partners, particularly in new subdivisions where these considerations had been thought through.

Mr. Santay said that developers and engineering partners were now selling a product that included not only the physical infrastructure but also the ongoing maintenance and operational costs. He said that this approach had led to a more informed and engaged community, and he believed they had made significant progress in addressing these issues. He said that he thought they had already initiated some of these changes a few years ago, and he did not expect to see the same flaws in stormwater management facilities that were designed 15 or 20 years ago. He said that he was always open to exploring options and alternatives the Board may have.

Ms. Allen said that she had been on the committee with Cindy Shelton, and her primary concern at the time, and it remained, was that the policy would disproportionately impact private property owners, while HOAs would be the primary beneficiaries. She said that she had advocated for a tier system to distribute funds, ensuring that private homeowners would not face an overly complex process.

Ms. Allen said that although they lacked support at the time, she hoped that now, as they reviewed the policy, they could consider alternatives. She said that she had an intern who had graduated from Mountain View and finished his first year at Vanderbilt University, and she had asked him to review policies such as this. She said that as young person in their government, he brought a fresh perspective, and she had asked him to provide feedback. She said that he had asked why the program was only available from April to August, which aligned with her previous concerns about the limitations of the current approach. She said that she believed it was essential to consider a rolling process, allowing for the program to be available 12 months a year, as they could not predict when a property owner might need assistance.

Ms. Santay said that it could be a rolling process. He said that he thought the reason they had established a specific calendar was to provide some structure to a program that they were initially unsure about the level of participation. He said that when reviewing grant applications, making phone calls, and engaging with the community, a rolling application was not necessarily a bad idea, but their team's manpower was limited. He said that knowing that there was a defined calendar meant that their staff could better utilize their time.

Ms. Allen said that perhaps they could consider a part-time position to assist in administering the program. She said that her other question was whether they had access to any additional federal or state funding that could help, such as what they did with Brook Road improvements.

Ms. Santay said that he was not aware of any funding that would be supported through the federal or state governments for a local program like this.

Emily Torrey said that the SLAF could potentially be used for grant funding. She said that her concern was that the logistics of obtaining funding from SLAF and then utilizing it solely for a grant program every year could be complex. She said that they could investigate this option further to determine its feasibility.

Ms. Allen said that she thought it was worth exploring the possibility of using any other grants to help with this. She said that this could provide access to more funds and potentially allow for different requirements to be implemented, which could help ease the fiscal burden for private homeowners and non-HOA areas. She said that the two main questions she had were related to the monetary aspect and the timeline. She said that unfortunately, the timeline was a complex issue that required additional staffing, but she believed there were other ways to help with the program. She asked if it would be possible to work with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to obtain a map for the rest of them in their districts, which would give them a better understanding of potential issues such as problematic subdivisions, stormwater management, and erosion.

Mr. Santay said that staff had been working on mapping out GIS assets for 15 years, and the GIS Department had been very helpful. He said that they already had studies done, including involvement from the Army Corps of Engineers years ago. He said that they had a significant amount of information on the condition of some of these neighborhoods, even going back 10 or

15 years. He said that this information was already available, and if they had specific requests or questions in the future, they could gather it for them. He said that it may take some time, but he believed they would already have access to most of it.

Ms. Gary said that Living Shoreline Grants specifically assisted homeowners along the shoreline, which the County would have to apply for on behalf of their constituents.

Mr. Santay said that there were other grant programs available to support environmental resources such as that. He said that he did not believe that this program would be eligible, as it was specifically for drainage infrastructure in public easements. He said that there were other opportunities available for funding environmental projects.

Ms. Gary said that she would definitely want to learn more about any grant opportunities that closely related to this item.

Mr. Diggs asked Mr. Santay to continue his presentation.

Mr. Chairman, moving forward with the Blossom Wood Court drainage issue, he believed the Board had been presented with information on this specific issue at various times. He said that as evident from the photos, the failure of the drainage pipe continued to erode the property between 68 and 70 Blossom Wood Court, and occasionally caused flooding that impacted the surrounding homes and the cul-de-sac. He said that since the drainage pipe, or what was left of it, remained in a public easement, and this easement was not specifically dedicated to an entity or an association, there had been no stipulation for Stafford County, VDOT, the HOA, or any other entity to take on the responsibility and liability of the easement.

Mr. Santay said that as a result, the underlying property owners were solely responsible for maintenance, which was the issue at hand. He said that the lack of a clear responsibility was part of the reason why this issue persisted, as no entity was willing to take on maintenance due to the lack of legal obligation. He said that staff had been dealing with this issue for at least seven to eight years, and staff had made numerous site visits, and by Dr. Yeung had championed recent efforts to gather information.

Mr. Santay said that in 2023, they received an application to address this issue, which scored extremely high and would be eligible for grant funding. He said that however, the grant program's current form did not assist with these types of issues, primarily because it obligated property owners or an entity to take on perpetual maintenance. He said that no one was stepping up to take on maintenance because it was a significant expense.

Mr. Santay said that among all entities or property owners, homeowners were unlikely to volunteer to take on maintenance responsibilities, as it was a requirement for receiving grant funding. He said that in this case, he would not expect homeowners to want to assume perpetual maintenance of the pipe once it was repaired. He said that another issue was that the grant program's reimbursement structure required an entity to pay for upfront costs, which could be substantial.

Mr. Santay said that hiring a contractor, mobilizing them, and paying for materials could cost tens of thousands of dollars. He said that this was money that homeowners and homeowners associations typically did not have. He said that the grant program's structure, however, limited the money to be issued by the entity as a reimbursement. He said that this created another hurdle with the grant parameters, and as a result, they were not seeing many entities, except for homeowners associations, get involved in the grant program.

Mr. Santay said that property owners were hesitant to take on the responsibility of repairing and maintaining the pipe, even if a project were to successfully navigate the application process through the grant program's parameters. He said that the grant program only provided a maximum of $25,000 in reimbursement, which was a cost share depending on the type of grant. He said that the County would pay for some of it through the grant program, while the rest would come from the property owners. He said that this was not favorable for these types of issues. He said that they were aware that, at least since 2018, the full repair cost was estimated to be around $62,000, which he imagined would be substantially higher today. He said that this was the main problem for this instance and many others that may arise sooner rather than later.

Mr. Santay said that given this, he would like to present two options to the Board that he had provided, and there may be a few more that staff could explore, although they may need to refine an idea and ensure it aligned with the legal opinion previously presented, particularly in terms of jumping into maintenance without proper planning. He said that the first option was to modify the grant parameters, which would involve increasing the award amount, making it a direct grant to an HOA or property owner, and changing the payment timing to allow for upfront distribution.

Mr. Santay said that this would be a more straightforward approach, as it built upon the current mechanism approved in ordinance O21-54 in 2021. He said that by designating specific dollars for repairs and approving the grant program, the Board could make it easier for property owners to access the necessary funding. He said that the second option would be to establish a new ordinance, which would require removing the grant program restrictions currently in place and potentially filing for a different alternative.

Mr. Santay said that however, taking on the liability of fixing the stormwater maintenance issue could have significant implications, including increased costs and potential liabilities. He said that in this particular case, funding public stormwater maintenance set a precedent that the Board must acknowledge and understand. He said that it could create conflict and confusion, as it raised questions about priority and which projects took precedence. He said that it was not completely outside of the Board’s control, but it would create an issue.

Mr. Santay said that additionally, they should consider the changes to their budget and the financial responsibility for undertaking a project like this. He said that furthermore, if the Board decided that the County should take over long-term maintenance commitment, that should be carefully considered. He said that taking on the maintenance of all public infrastructure, including residential infrastructure, would be a more complex issue, requiring a separate utility or capital projects team to handle tasks such as ditch and swale maintenance, riprap, and other projects. He said that this would come with significant funding and staffing requirements.

Mr. Santay said that more pressing, however, was the impact on their MS4 permit, which was a stormwater permit handed down by DEQ. He said that as Stafford County's obligation, it involved various programs aimed at cleaning the Chesapeake Bay and local waterways, including the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). He said that if they were to take on ownership or operation of the public stormwater drainage system, their service area would expand, increasing their obligation to remove pollutants from the Chesapeake Bay.

Mr. Santay said that this would likely result in additional projects, such as Brooks Park stream restoration, pond retrofits, and tree planting, which were worthwhile efforts, but would be costly to their already burdened Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He said that a notable example of their efforts in this area was the work they did in 2015 with DEQ, in collaboration with other localities in Virginia, to identify and define what an MS4 service area was. He said that initially, DEQ had identified all drainage systems in the community within their urbanized area, which would have cost them an additional $23 million in 2015 to clean up the Chesapeake Bay.

Mr. Santay said that they were successful in eliminating that requirement, and they were only responsible for their stormwater facilities and County-owned infrastructure. He said that he was sympathetic to these issues. He said that he had personally visited many of these sites, and he was sure many of the Board members had as well. He said that there likely was a solution available, but if the Board were to take on public infrastructure and public stormwater maintenance, it would raise numerous concerns for the community.

Ms. Bohmke said that the stormwater issue at Blossom Wood Court had been going on for a long time. She asked if the developer and builder of the property were ever contacted when the issue first arose. She asked if the developer or builder built there while ignoring there was a spring that would cause this erosion.

Mr. Santay said that he was not sure. He said that he did not have specific discussions with the design engineer, developers, or builders, but in all honesty, he would have guessed based on historical information and older pictures, the design and installation seemed to be correct. He said that it appeared that it was a failure of corrugated metal pipe, which they now knew did not perform well in Stafford. He said that at the time, it may not have been well known. He said that corrugated metal pipe had a limited lifespan and required regular maintenance. He said that it was the standard material at the time and was included in the design. He said that the County no longer required or allowed this type of pipe in their plans, opting instead for plastic pipes and alternative options. He said that while he thought that was a good question and he agreed it was possible that it could have been discussed, he was not aware of any communications between staff and the previous developer, builder, or design engineer.

Ms. Gary said that she was going to ask the same questions as Ms. Bohmke. She said that she was not certain how to proceed, because if they chose to use the grant program, someone must be responsible for it in order for the grant to be awarded. She said that if there was a way to change that in the process, it would still be unwise because they would be putting a lot of money towards something that would not be maintained in the future.

Mr. Santay said that the state code passed to allow for the stormwater maintenance fund and grant program had specific language regarding the distribution of funding. He said that according to the code, the funding must be directed to either the property owner or the homeowners association, if applicable. He said that this meant that even if the Board identified a contractor capable of handling the project, the code required that the funding be allocated to the property owner or HOA, which added another layer of complexity to this type of situation.

Mr. English asked if the money in the grant program could not be used to remediate this issue.

Mr. Santay said that he was not suggesting that this was not possible. He said that he believed it would contradict previous legal opinions that the Board and previous Boards had relied upon regarding taking on one-time projects like this to address a private issue. He said that although it was located on a public easement, it was not Stafford's responsibility, so he did not want to take a stance on the matter. He said that he did not want to put the Board in a difficult position, but it would go against precedent.

Mr. English asked if the County could solve the problem by installing pipes in the area without assuming responsibility for the easement. He asked if the County could lay the pipe for the property owners.

Mr. Santay said that it would not be possible. He said that the extent of what staff had been able to provide was that technical assistance and a willingness to help any entity get through it as quickly as possible. He said that this would be considered a maintenance project, which would not require a permit. He said that however, paying for materials or designating funding to fix this issue did put the Board in a bit of a difficult position.

Mr. English asked if this issue would be similar to the erosion problem faced in Austin Ridge a number of years ago.

Mr. Santay said that he recalled the project, although he was not certain how it unfolded or who was involved. He said that at the time, it was a completely different County Administration, which made it difficult for him to fully grasp the situation.

Ms. Vanuch said that Vista Woods had a similar issue with this corrugated pipe. She said that when they repaved the entire neighborhood, VDOT was able to replace many of the corrugated pipes that were causing flooding in the neighborhood because they were located in VDOT right-of-ways. She said that there were a few properties where the corrugated pipe was situated in the backside, and a few properties that were impacted by it, which were parcels of land that never transferred to an HOA because the developer never established one.

Ms. Vanuch said that as a result, nobody owned the land, nobody wanted to take responsibility or maintenance for the land, and these corrugated pipes were on that land. She said that this situation was identical to the one they were discussing here. She said that they had previously informed those residents that the County could not take on perpetual maintenance. She said that this would open that back up for those residents. She said that the estimated cost was in the range of half a million to $800,000, which would have a significant impact on the affected homes. She said that she wanted to flag this in regards to potential impacts.

Ms. Vanuch said that additionally, she wanted to follow up on a similar issue with the dams in Lake Arrowhead, which they had previously discussed. She said that while it was a challenge, they had been able to establish a service district to handle maintenance. She said that she wanted to inquire about the possibility of creating a service district specifically for Blossom Wood Court, which could result in creation of the service district, maintenance requirements, the service district could fund half of it through the grant program, and the County could do a match.

Ms. Vanuch said that she saw this as the only feasible option if the HOA did not want to take responsibility for the land. She said that before responding, she wanted to highlight another important lesson they had learned from the Lake Arrowhead issue. She said that when no one owned the land, obtaining easements to access it became nearly impossible. She said that even if they were to provide a grant to a homeowner and hire a contractor, the County would not be able to send someone to the land, and no one was legally authorized to enter the property.

Ms. Vanuch said that in Lake Arrowhead, they had to find alternative solutions, such as sending the properties to tax sale, having the service district purchase the land at a low price, and then acquiring it to complete the work. She said that this experience had taught them that if the land was not owned by anyone, coordination with the County Treasurer was necessary to update the tax records, which required the Commissioner’s Office to initiate the process of sending the property to public auction.

Ms. Vanuch said that this was a lengthy and complex process. She said that even if they were to provide the homeowners with $100,000 to fix the land immediately, everyone would still face significant challenges in accessing and addressing the issue due to the lack of ownership. She said that in this case, the service district may be the only viable pathway forward, but she would like to know if staff had considered this from a legislative perspective and ruled it out as an option.

Mr. Santay said that although he had not ruled it out, he had not placed it at the top of the list as an alternative. He said that service districts faced numerous challenges, and while they may solve one issue, they could also create another significant burden. He said that for instance, if a service district was in place for 30 years and payments were made for 30 years, it could be a substantial commitment. He said that it may be difficult to implement because other community members may not want to contribute when it was not on their own property.

Ms. Vanuch said that the key issue was determining who needed to sign off on it, and she believed they would require 80% signatures. She said that that was the only requirement. She said that she was open to exploring the idea further and was willing to pursue it. She said that Dr. Yeung and the residents could then reach out to the affected parties to gauge interest and see if it could be a viable pathway. She said that however, she did not see another feasible solution for the County to become engaged in finding a solution.

Ms. McClendon said that this request had been discussed before in 2018. She said that at that time, Deputy County Administrator Mike Smith had contacted her office regarding this matter. She said that in essence, service districts were intended for public improvements, allowing for more timely provision of public improvements by taxing residents who would benefit from the betterment of the property.

Ms. McClendon said that here, since stormwater was not considered a public improvement, they did not have service districts for this purpose in the County, as explained by Mr. Santay. She said that this meant that if they were to reclassify it as a public improvement, they would also need to address the other concerns Mr. Santay had raised.

Dr. Yeung said that there was an application that had been signed by two homeowners. She said that there were indeed more than two homes in this cul-de-sac; there were three residences. She said that when she first entered this office, Mark had already identified this issue and had resolved it by obtaining an easement in the adjacent cul-de-sac. She said that however, this easement remained unresolved. She said that as a Board member, she felt morally compelled to bring renewed attention to this matter, as it posed a dire situation for two elderly women on fixed incomes.

Dr. Yeung said that it was shocking to see that Verizon and Cox service boxes had littered this eroded culvert, but the service providers suddenly knew to remove their property when they realized it was being raised as an issue. She said that she had witnessed the water damage firsthand, along with Paul and Randy. She said that these residents were on fixed incomes and were unable to participate in the stormwater infrastructure grant program due to its high financial and procedural requirements. She said that she had initially raised this issue in February, and she was pleading again today.

Dr. Yeung said that they must take a stand and find a way to assist these residents. She said that there was no relief in sight; they were suffering in silence. She said that their program was intended to protect all residents, but it only reached those with HOAs and sufficient funding. She said that this was not a matter of inconvenience, but rather a matter of property damage and serious public safety. She said that the water was a safety hazard, especially when it rained, turning into a river that attracted children, including kids kayaking.

Dr. Yeung said that she urged this Board to lead by example and ensure that their grant program was low-barrier and provided the necessary assistance to vulnerable residents, reflecting its intended purpose. She said that they should not wait for a misstep or an accident to occur before taking action. She said that she urged this Board to protect the safety and welfare of all County residents. This included not just those who were part of homeowners associations, but also all residents, regardless of their ability to fund major repairs.

Ms. Allen said that she recalled from the time she was on the committee that created this grant program that she had stated explicitly that $25,000 would be enough to make a meaningful impact, and she had also stated that there would be extreme financial burden on individuals, particularly those on fixed incomes, who may not have the means to repay the costs. She said that as she reflected on this current situation, she believed it encompassed all the issues they had discussed in 2020.

Ms. Allen said that to move forward, they needed to address the ordinance, whether to keep it or modify it. She said that Mr. Santay had mentioned earlier that people had already used the program, so she was not in favor of scrapping it. She said that instead, she proposed increasing the threshold amount. She said that in her previous proposal, she had suggested a threshold of $250,000, which she believed was a reasonable amount considering the costs of projects.

Ms. Allen said that the next step was determining how to handle unique situations like this. She said that there was a distinction between a moral obligation and a policy obligation. She said that they must consider that they did not know the extent of potential properties that may require similar assistance. She said that they could not set a precedent that would obligate the County to provide owner restitution for the rest of their residents.

Ms. Allen said that one of the questions she had noted was regarding the MS4 program. She said that hypothetically, if they were to address the situation and fix the drain, she was wondering if the County would be responsible for maintaining a certain amount of streams and lakes within that area, as the County's maintenance of that pipe would be a nexus of a new maintenance area.

Mr. Santay said that he understood Ms. Allen was asking if they would be responsible not only for that single pipe, but the entire network of pipes within that area. He said that if they were maintaining one pipe but not the next, which was a few hundred feet away, it did not make sense. He said that this would create chaos regarding their service area and what it truly encompassed.

Ms. Allen said that her concern was that they needed to define that and find how stringent the Chesapeake Bay Act interpretations were for it. She asked if they could only pay attention to one pipe without addressing the network of pipes. She said that it would become an ongoing expense.

Mr. Santay said that the project was initially projected to take 15 years and carried a $23 million cost in their Capital Improvement Plan from 2015.

Ms. Allen said that she would estimate they should add a minimum of 10% to the original estimate, and in that case the total cost would be around $30 million. She said that she recalled that she had mentioned the service district during their first discussions years ago, and it was ruled out as a possibility because this type of work did not fit the definition for a service district.

Ms. Allen said that she felt that this did come down to a public decision, as government sometimes had to intervene in unique situations when something became untenable and the public expected a certain level of service. She said that this created a challenge, as it was difficult to balance the need to fix the issue with the expectation that everyone's house would be fixed. She said that she wanted to fix it, but she wondered if raising the award amount in the grant program would be the right type of action. She asked if it would be possible for them to forgive the grant amount for people on fixed incomes.

Mr. Santay that if they increased the amount for future disbursements, they could shift the cost share ratios from 50-50 to 100-0, where 100% of the funding came from the government to pay for the repair, eliminating the need for funding from the property owners of the HOAs.

Ms. Allen asked if the Board might consider tying the grants to income level. She said that they could allocate a certain percentage of the fiscal burden based on income level. She said that for example, if they met certain requirements, the percentage of the Board taking on the fiscal burden would not be 50-50, but rather 80-20. She said that it would allow them to argue that the project was for public use, even though it may be otherwise classified as private. She said that by tying the project to income level, they could potentially argue that it was more feasible for someone with a fixed income, such as an advanced-age individual, to pay a lower percentage of the debt, say $80,000, rather than the full amount.

Dr. Yeung said that she knew of other citizens who wanted to help with this situation. She said that she knew that the major costs of this type of repair were not in the material costs, but the cost of trucking and labor. She said that some people were willing to donate the materials, so they should just lower the threshold of repayment for low-income individuals.

Ms. Gary said that she did not think they would be solving this individual case today, but she did think there were some creative solutions. She said that she wanted to see what options there were to make the grant program more applicable for this type of stormwater issue, taking into account Ms. Allen's knowledge of the history of the committee and grant program. She asked if the Chair could poll the Board on working on the grant program more.

Ms. Vanuch said that the grant program and this particular issue were two distinct concerns, as even if they were to increase the grant program funding to $250,000, as Ms. Allen had suggested, the impacts on MS4 permitting would still be present. She said that this would potentially lead to a $30 million infrastructure cost for the County to maintain additional stormwater systems.

Ms. Vanuch said that she had some concerns regarding the legalities involved here. She said that from a taxpayer perspective within the community, she was not comfortable with the potential for increased MS4 regulatory requirements.

Mr. Santay said that regardless of the designation they chose for funding purposes, if the County assisted with the repair, it could potentially mean that they were now operating that system, which would set a precedent and expand their MS4 services.

Ms. Allen said that she was talking about giving the homeowners the money for the repairs, not for the County to take ownership of the system.

Mr. Santay said that if the money available in the stormwater maintenance fund was directly given to property owners based on the grant program parameters, which currently could not be done under the grant program parameters but may be possible, that money could be given to the property owners to make the necessary repairs. He said that in this scenario, the County would not be involved in owning or operating the pipe or drainage system, and this would not expand their service area.

Ms. Vanuch said that the property was not owned by anyone, which presented a significant challenge, making it difficult for them to provide the necessary funding.

Mr. Santay said that the easement was dedicated to public use, and as such, it provided a legal basis for an entity to perform maintenance within it. He said that the ownership of the underlying property rested with the property owners, but the easement sat on top of the property and allowed for maintenance.

Ms. Vanuch said that in her opinion, after hearing all of this, she thought that if this were her district, and Dr. Yeung saying that there were people who wanted to help, considering it was an easement and the residents wanted to get it fixed, she would take it outside of this process and explore a private partnership within the HOA. She said that if the HOA was willing to assume the perpetual maintenance of it, she believed this issue could be resolved outside of this process.

Ms. Bohmke asked how many Supervisors had worked on this issue at Blossom Wood Court. She said that there had been a number of them involved over the years. She said that she did not have any issues with reworking the program they previously discussed, bringing back the strengths and weaknesses. She said that she remembered their work on the project was mostly virtual, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and she did not know how to operate the computer. She said that she also remembered Cindy Lamb, who was on the Board at the time, and the issues she faced on Brook Road.

Ms. Bohmke said that she recalled Ms. Lamb being frustrated at the lack of solutions for Brook Road, and she had told her that it was the Board's responsibility, not just one Suepervisor's. She said that this was true because it was a public safety issue. She said that she felt the same way about this issue, and she believed they all needed to take responsibility for finding a solution. She said that she felt that if this was someone in any of their districts, they would want them to be taken care of. She said that she recalled a house that Keith Dayton and Mr. Santay's team had decided to fix the issue. She said that although the County Attorney at the time was very unsupportive, they did what they had to do.

Ms. Bohmke said that she thought the Board needed to take action. She said that if Dr. Yeung was saying that there were people in the community willing to help, they just needed someone to actually do the work. She said that she believed it was the Board's responsibility to figure out a way forward, considering the property owners' fixed incomes. She said that she was not sure what that solution was, but they needed to move forward. She said that in considering fairness for everyone, without having the full financial picture, t was always beneficial to have some level of buy-in from the property owner.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was not suggesting the property owner provide $25,000, but some amount to demonstrate their partnership in the process would be important. She said that this issue had been going on for way too long, and they must find a way out.

Ms. Allen said that the recommendations she proposed were not intended to burden the County. She said that it was necessary to increase the financial amount due to the exponentially higher cost compared to the program's intended purpose. She said that the second part of her suggestion was to create a relief that would adjust the repayment amount based on income.

Ms. Allen said that this concept was similar to the tax relief programs the County offered for the elderly and those who struggled to pay a certain amount. She said that for example, if a person met a certain income threshold, they may only have to pay 25% of the debt instead of 50%, or even 10%. She said that this approach, as Ms. Bohmke had mentioned, introduced a bit of financial liability, but it was tiered to help offset the financial burden.

Ms. Allen said that unfortunately, this system had become a roadblock to completing projects like this. She said that often, the financial roadblock was the primary issue, which could lead to an exponentially worse situation. She said that she believed it was better for them to have this system in place rather than doing nothing and allowing people to sit idle, only to face a mess of roads in their properties 10 to 15 years later. She said that that was her proposed solution.

Ms. Vanuch asked how much funding was in the grant program.

Mr. Santay said that the remaining amount would be approximately $48,000. He said that they would have a better idea once they reviewed the current applications.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would like to recommend that Mr. Santay to return with information about amending the grant program. She said that her biggest concern regarding the Blossom Wood Court issue was that any solution that came forward must be cleared by the attorney, and it should not have any negative impacts on their MS4 permitting. She said that if they changed the grant program and decided to proceed with the project, the question remained: who would be responsible for the work?

Ms. Vanuch said that the problem was that the HOA did not own the land, and if the property owner could not contract someone to do the work, it could lead to significant issues. She said that this might be a limiting factor that they needed to work through with the attorney. She said that the question of who would be responsible for the perpetual maintenance of the easement after the project was completed was also unclear.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the HOA would agree to take on this responsibility, or if it would be the maintenance of the easement itself. She said that to qualify for the grant, they would need all of this written out in clear, legally binding agreements, such as memorandums of understanding. She said that in her opinion, finding a pathway to this solution would require a collaborative effort from multiple stakeholders. She said that ultimately, the Board would need to delegate tasks and responsibilities, but she was aware that staff was very busy already.

Mr. Santay said that he was aware that an HOA representative was present. He said that he had been in contact with the HOA management company, who had spoken with their board about this issue. He said that this issue was well-known in their community, and they were aware that something needed to be done. He said that he would continue those conversations with them. He said that while it may not be a novel idea, it was worth exploring the possibility that, in the event of a repair, the HOA might be willing to take on a maintenance obligation. He said that however, he would recommend that the County not maintain this in perpetuity.

Ms. Vanuch said that she believed they were all in agreement on that point. She said that she thought the County could not initiate the work, as she understood it, because that would trigger their MS4 permits.

Mr. Diggs said that Ms. Bohmke had said it perfectly. He said that they would have to break precedent and demonstrate leadership in this matter. He said that he did not believe the County should take on the responsibility of maintenance for the stormwater pipe, nor expanding the MS4 permitting. He said that however, all of the Board members knew people who worked on these types of issues, so he was confident that they could help navigate this situation. He said that this was no longer a localized issue, but a Board-level concern that required swift action.

Mr. Diggs said that they must move with speed, even though nothing happened quickly in government. He said that it was very concerning to imagine living in one of the nearby houses and the dangers this stormwater situation posed. He said that he was concerned that if they did not act deliberately and with intent, they may lose control of the situation. He said that they needed to move fast and make decisions. He said that they needed revisit the grant parameters to ensure greater accessibility and also determine a new amount to increase its impact.

Ms. Vanuch said that she believed this should be a work session, and that it was a budget conversation for next year, as the budget had now been finalized.

Mr. Santay said that he would prefer not to wait for a Board meeting to discuss this further. He said that as staff, they had been pondering some of the issues involved. He said that Mrs. Williams and he had already had discussions about this matter. He said that he may also be able to speak with the County Administrator about a couple of specific points, and he could then pass them on to her as well.

Mr. Santay said that there was also public interest from the community in helping with this issue, and it may require some additional attention and effort from the community, the Williamses, and their neighbors. He said that he did not want to take any action on behalf of the County as a project manager unless he had explicit direction to do so, because that was necessary to ensure that all parties were aware of the County's position.

Mr. Diggs asked if the County had to have any role in the situation if he were to reach out to a contractor tomorrow.

Mr. Santay said that the only role he would like to offer was their technical assistance and support in scheduling meetings and verifying the accuracy of the plans. He said that his role would be at a high level, with minimal involvement in the permitting process.

Mr. Ashton said that it would be design guidance. He said that currently, there was no design for the repair.

Mr. Santay said that he believed the design was acceptable; it was the integrity of the pipe had failed, so a different pipe would be installed. He said that there were already several measures in place to address this issue. He said that it was simply a matter of who would undertake the work and execute the job, which had always been a challenge. He said that if he may discuss this further with Mr. Ashton over the next day, which he could then discuss with the Board, he believed that would be beneficial.

Ms. Vanuch asked if it would be possible to pause the grant program immediately to avoid expending next year's funds. She said that this project would directly compete with existing grants in the program, as the funds would be awarded and then become unavailable after the guidelines were changed. She said that as a result, contractors would be ready to begin work, only to find that there was no remaining money in the fund.

Ms. Gary said that prioritizing a project in this manner was a risky process because it implied that they were giving precedence to one project over others.

Ms. Vanuch said that it scored the highest out of everything submitted and would have been funded had she secured the matching funds and the amount had met their threshold. She said that she believed the grant program should be paused, so staff could continue to process the applications but not award any funds until they had better clarity on the outcome of this particular project.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to know what the implications would be if they were to expedite this process. She asked how it would affect the current applications.

Julianne Bussey said that currently, she was aware of a small HOA, Potomac Hills, which was relying on their applications for the grant program. She said that they were replacing all of their corrugated metal pipe, and it was extremely costly. She said that as a result, they would have five separate applications coming through for different segments of pipe that they had. She said that they only offered reimbursement up to two years after project completion.

Ms. Bohmke asked if this project would take all the remaining grant money.

Ms. Bussey said that the application opened on May 1, and although they had not yet submitted it, their pre-applications indicated that they would be highly eligible for funding if they were to complete the application and receive a score. She said that they would not be awarded until the next fiscal year.

Ms. Bohmke asked if it was possible they would be using all the available funding.

Ms. Bussey said that it was quite possible with a budget of $100,000.

Ms. Bohmke said that the next step would be to consider taking funds from the one-time, undesignated funds. She said that this would not affect the budget, as it would not be a recurring expense. She said that however, it would impact their reserves, which was why we had undesignated funds in the first place. She said that she would not take this lightly, and given their current situation, it may be necessary.

Ms. Gary said that she appreciated the suggestion. She asked if it would make sense to revisit the grant application process and the entire grant program to consider a tiered approach. She said that this would ensure that the HOA and private homeowners were not competing directly with the grant program. She said that perhaps they could adjust the process to allow the HOA to submit their applications separately, and then they could revisit the one-time funding at a later point, once the process was complete.

Mr. Diggs said that once it was funded, the property manager would handle the contracting process, ensuring it was completed, and the HOA would take over maintenance responsibilities, at which point they would be considered complete.

Mr. Santay said that it was possible, but they would need to adjust the grant parameters to make it work that way. He said that he believed they had already identified the necessary steps to move forward, and incorporating the thoughts and ideas from the Board would be invaluable for Mr. Ashton and him, as well as Donna, Julie, and Emily. He said that he was confident that they could develop a plan that Mr. Ashton could present to them in a timely manner that would cover the ordinance, the grant, and this one-time project.

Ms. McClendon said that she wanted to clarify their process a bit. She said that changing the grant program and changing the ordinance would likely need to be separate processes to move quickly. She said that ordinances required public hearings, which did add time to the process. She said that to ensure efficiency, she would recommend separating those processes from dealing with the ordinance itself and changing the parameters around the program and the one-time funding that was being discussed.

Mr. Diggs asked if they had to change both or if they could just change the grant program parameters.

Ms. McClendon said that the ordinance outlined the process through which the program is established. She said that if the Board wished to modify the grant parameters, she suggested the Board take that step. She said that they must also update the ordinance and incorporate those changes into the County Code. She said that she believed they could handle this separately. She said that the way the program was initially adopted suggested that it may not be the most suitable structure for future modifications, particularly in situations where changing the parameters was desired without necessarily altering the underlying ordinance.

Ms. Gary asked if there were any immediate actions that they could take today to expedite the process.

Mr. Diggs said that it appeared there were not.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they had a not-to-exceed amount. She asked how much money they estimated would be necessary to repair this land.

Mr. Santay said that in recent years, estimates had ranged from $75,000 to $100,000.

Ms. Bohmke asked if they should set a not-to-exceed amount of $105,000 for the repairs at Blossom Wood.

Mr. Santay said that those were estimates, and it had been a while since a similar estimate had been made.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM 26. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; CONSIDER BUDGETING AND APPROPRIATING SCHOOLS' FISCAL YEAR 2024 YEAREND SAVINGS FOR THE PURCHASE OF REPLACEMENT CHROMEBOOKS AND OTHER CLASSROOM COMPUTERS; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-107

Andrea Light, Chief Financial Officer, said that Item 26 was a budget appropriation of school year-end funds totaling $3.1 million for Chromebooks and computers. She said that Mr. Fulmer was present today, so she would like to introduce Items 27 and 28, as he would also discuss both of those. She said that Item 27 was a budget and appropriation of $2.5 million from land funds, which the Board had set aside for several years. She said that these funds would be used to purchase land for Drew Middle School, given the growing community's needs. She said that Item 28 was a budget appropriation of $2.95 million for the purchase of the Blackjack property, also utilizing school year-end funds. She said that Mr. Fulmer could address any questions the Board may have.

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to approve Proposed Resolution R25-107.

Dr. Yeung said that she would like to ask questions on behalf of the public. She said that she had some questions regarding elementary students and their Chromebooks. She said that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ratio was typically two students to one Chromebook. She said that they had increased this ratio since then. She said that she agreed with some individuals who had expressed concerns about Chromebooks for elementary students, and she believed they should not have them. She said that when they had discussed the various grants, including the Perkins grant, which had provided funding specifically for Chromebooks.

Chris Fulmer, Chief Operating Officer for Stafford County Public Schools, said that they also had Virginia Public School Authority (VPSA) technology grant funding from the state, as well.

Dr. Yeung said that one of the questions that arose was who was responsible for maintaining the Chromebooks. She asked if the funds allocated for the Chromebooks were also being used to cover maintenance costs.

Mr. Fulmer said that typically, those funds were only for the purchase of the Chromebooks. He said that the Chromebooks came with a warranty that extended for a couple of years after that. He said that the repair of the Chromebooks fell on the school division. He said that they did have a tech team that took Chromebooks to their tech repair shop, replaced the parts, and then redistributed the repaired Chromebooks back to the students.

Mr. English asked if there was an insurance program available for parents to purchase in case their child's Chromebook was lost, damaged, or stolen. He said that a parent had reached out to him, sharing a personal experience where she knew of two parents whose children lost their

Chromebooks, and the school did not take any action to recover the lost devices. He said that he was inquiring about a process in place for parents to pay a fee, such as $10, to insure their child's Chromebook, which would be covered in the event of loss or damage.

Mr. Fulmer said that he was not aware, but he could ask the technology team to provide details. He said that it appeared that they were exploring various options, including potentially leasing Chromebooks rather than purchasing them. He said that currently, they were focusing on addressing this issue in the short term, as it was a multi-year problem, to avoid a significant increase in costs in the future, particularly due to the purchase made during the COVID-19 timeframe. He said that the current lifespan of these Chromebooks was around five to seven years, and they were stretching them out as long as possible. He said that this extended lifespan was also causing breakage as the devices got older.

Dr. Yeung asked about implementing clear backpacks so students did not damage the Chromebooks.

Mr. Fulmer said that he believed that it was either last year or the year before that their middle schools had implemented a no backpack policy. He said that they subsequently pulled back on this policy and allowed it to become a school building-level decision. He said that initially, they had made this change due to safety and security concerns related to backpacks. He said that their middle schools did experience the highest breakage rates, and it was largely due to the age of their Chromebooks, which were the oldest computers they had. He said that middle school students were also more prone to damaging the devices. He said that they were aware of this issue and were working to address it.

Dr. Yeung asked how much additional funding the school division would need for Chromebooks if the federal government were to stop providing funding.

Mr. Fulmer said that currently, the funding was very limited, and he was not aware of any federal funding being utilized. He said that there was a Perkins grant of approximately $350,000, and they also had a VPSA technology grant, which was a state-level funding source. He said that therefore, the total grant funds being used were approximately $1.2 million, in total.

Ms. Bohmke said that she understood that when the schools prepared these purchases, they had a report or spreadsheet that outlined the elementary, middle, and high schools, and who needed what, which they then consolidated. She said that if the school division could provide the Board with the management summary box when Dr. Smith sent over the requests, the Supervisors would not have to ask as many questions. She said that this would streamline the process, allowing them to receive the information sooner and reducing the need for follow-up inquiries. She said that this would be greatly beneficial for everyone involved.

Mr. Fulmer said that he could certainly do that.

Ms. Vanuch asked what would happen if the Department of Education made a directive to transition out of virtual learning and reinstate textbooks for all learning.

Mr. Fulmer said that the school division would create a plan and move in that direction in order to meet a required directive. He said that that was a significant consideration, and it would also depend on the specific grade levels involved. He said that for elementary, middle, and high schools, the approach would be different for each. He said that currently, they had eliminated many textbooks across the schools. He said that notably, the Chromebooks and virtual options were significantly cheaper than the textbooks they had previously spent on. He said that as a result, reverting to textbooks would actually be an increased cost.

Ms. Vanuch said that she expressed concern about the one-time funding for this project and, as a result, decided to vote against it. She said that she believed that the funds could be allocated more effectively to support their school systems, particularly in regards to the 3R program. She said that when considering the complaints from parents and the need for regular maintenance, she thought it was essential that they prioritize this aspect of the project.

Ms. Vanuch said that in her opinion, carryover funds or debt service should be used to pay for the additional schools, as this would have a significant impact on their tax rate every year. She said that unlike some other states, they should not be looking to spend every last dollar at the end of the year and then try to budget their money more efficiently for the following year. She said that instead, they should focus on implementing measures that could help them save money in the long run regarding the 3R project. She said that therefore, she decided not to support this funding proposal.

Ms. Allen asked if any of this funding could be allocated for purposes other than those currently requested.

Mr. Fulmer said that it was one-time funds, so they could redirect it. He said that one of the reasons the Chromebook money was not included in their operating budget was that they knew they had limited funds. He said that this was a stopgap measure, similar to the general budget situation across the County. He said that understanding the limited funding, they used this as a short-term solution to fund and replace some of their older Chromebooks.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to make a comment regarding the virtual learning situation. She said that although her children were not learning virtually, they did use their Chromebooks for work purposes. She said that her four remaining children, two in high school, one in middle school, and one in elementary school, also used these Chromebooks, and they had not experienced any issues.

Ms. Gary said that she acknowledged that not every family may have the same experience, and some may be more disorganized or less diligent in their device care. She said that if her children did not have access to these devices, it would be extremely challenging for her to manage their schoolwork, especially for her students in advanced classes in the high schools. She said that her niece, in particular, had become quite reliant on her device, often working on it in the living room.

Ms. Gary said that she was grateful that they had access to these devices. She said that she understood the reasoning behind the shift from one device per two students to one device per one student. She said that sharing a laptop with colleagues on the Board would be difficult and weird.

She said that having firsthand knowledge of the benefits of virtual learning, as she had witnessed it in her own children's education and the way they were managed by educators and students, she firmly believed it was a valuable tool. She said that she would continue to support it.

Mr. Diggs said that this situation was simple to him. He said that they wanted their children to be at the forefront of getting a quality education, preparing them for college or trades. He said that if anyone took any classes, they understood that textbooks were more expensive than Chromebooks, and kids needed to learn how to use technology. He said that technology was everywhere, from using it to order food at McDonald's. He said that they claimed to be committed to excellence and wanted their children to have the best possible education, yet there was consideration of not providing funding for Chromebooks. He said that he would support this request.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

ITEM 27. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; CONSIDER BUDGETING AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS SET ASIDE IN THE COUNTY'S CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND FOR THE PURCHASE OF LAND FOR THE DREW MIDDLE SCHOOL REPLACEMENT PROJECT; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-106

Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to approve Proposed Resolution R25-106.

Ms. Bohmke said that she recently obtained an old newspaper from October 2008 while she was going through some papers. She said that she wanted to share this with everyone. She said that she believed she may have mentioned it before, but it said "SOS - Save Our School" regarding Drew Middle School. She said that at that time, they were discussing the possibility of closing Drew and Stafford Middle Schools. She said that Shirley Heim had just been built. She said that at the time, she was not a member of any board, but was involved as a concerned parent. She said that she recalled a news alert they sent out about a possible closing of Drew Middle School and Stafford Middle School.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was definitely in favor of the new Drew site. She said that what she wanted to emphasize was that there was never a perfect school site. She said that she had been thinking about this a lot, particularly after attending a small town hall meeting with Dr. Chase, where they discussed the potential impact on constituents in the area. She said that they did have concerns, and she had been considering the fact that many of their schools were built in the middle of communities. She said that she hoped that the school division could work with their residents.

Ms. Bohmke said that they needed to ensure that buffers were in place and that their residents were supportive. She said that they wanted the best for their community, and she believed they understood that the school was coming. She said that they would need to do some work at Cliff Farm and Leland Station to straighten that area out, but ultimately, they did not have many school sites.

Mr. Fulmer said that he would like to take a moment to express his gratitude to the community there. He said that they had been very supportive. He said that Mr. Towery had spent a significant amount of time with them, and they truly wanted to be good neighbors, regardless of the school site location. He said that Mr. Towery had worked diligently to hear their concerns and identify potential changes that could be made to the site to better meet their needs.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would like to share the rest of this article with them. She said that according to the article, Stafford's front page delays closure, as stated. She said that she would like to highlight a few key points. She said that administrators had proposed measures to save money and optimize space usage, in an effort to be more efficient. She said that many said that these cost-cutting measures would have had a limited impact on the school division's overall situation.

Ms. Bohmke said that for instance, Drew Middle School was at 43% capacity, while Stafford Middle School was also at 43% capacity, due to the recent opening of Shirley Heim Middle School, which had undergone a major renovation. She said that Drew Middle School had already been operating at about half capacity. She said that it was unclear when or if the School Board would redistrict middle schools to even out enrollments. She said that several School Board members had urged the public to ask the Board of Supervisors for more support for education.

Ms. Bohmke said that Nanette Kidby said that they absolutely required more local funding; it had gotten to the point where it was beyond ridiculous. She said that they also had a discussion about relocating Gary Melchers and Head Start to Stafford Elementary and Drew. She said that she would share the article in its entirety with the Board, but she basically wanted to note that all of the things they were talking about now were the same things they were dealing with back then.

Ms. Allen said that for clarity, she knew she had asked this before, but she wanted to confirm whether they were allowed to incorporate transportation costs, such as the estimated $5 million needed to fix that area, into their VPSA bonds or any other type of financing to help offset the additional cost of road improvements.

Mr. Towery said that he would like to confirm that they could make certain road improvements as long as they were correlated with the project. He said that this was a standard practice for their projects, and it was evident in their work on High School 6, where they were making improvements at the intersection with Truslow. He said that these improvements were part of the VPSA bonds.

Ms. Allen said that she wanted to clarify this point for their area, because people were concerned about the road being so narrow. She said that before she supported any proposal, she wanted to ensure that they had considered the potential costs of repairing the infrastructure, particularly in relation to the costs associated with the bond process.

Mr. Towery said that yes, that was the plan.

Ms. Allen said that she wanted the public to be aware that the improvements could be absorbed through the bond process as they put them out for public review.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the estimated cost would be higher than the $5 million figure.

Mr. Towery said that based on his understanding, the $5 million figure represented the potential cost of realigning Cliff Farm Road to a straighter section and relocating the intersection approximately 500 feet further west. He said that this estimated cost fell within the $3 million to $5 million range. He said that it was not currently included in their plan to move the intersection that far, but they were considering it as an option and were exploring whether it could be accommodated through this process.

Ms. Allen said that that was her only concern, which had always been, particularly in the southern parts of the County. She said that for example, at Telegraph, she had expressed concerns about their buses on Telegraph. She said that she did not want to see, as they built new schools and addressed secondary and tertiary roads with narrow, sharp angles and narrower easements, that they were not addressing this issue in the future. She said that that was her concern.

Mr. Towery said that in their initial budget estimates, the road was within their approved Capital Improvement Plan. He said that they were not anticipating moving it that far. He said that instead, they were exploring the possibility of accommodating it within the existing budget. He said that if they were unable to do so, it would be something that they would bring to the Board for consideration.

Mr. English asked why they could not build on the current Drew Middle School site.

Mr. Fulmer said that it was a small site, and due to the existing school occupying the space, they could not build on it. He said that as a result, they were attempting to flip it with Rising Star to build them concurrently.

Mr. Diggs called the vote to approve Proposed Resolution R25-106.

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

ITEM 28. BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT; CONSIDER BUDGETING AND APPROPRIATING SCHOOLS' FISCAL YEAR 2024 YEAREND SAVINGS TO THE SCHOOLS' CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND FOR THE PURCHASE OF TAX MAP PARCEL NO. 38C-5, LOCATED AT 42 BLACKJACK ROAD, FOR STORAGE; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-105

Dr. Yeung said that she did not feel it was appropriate to purchase this property when they had other existing County-owned and school properties. She asked if the technology, nutrition, and transportation needed to be together at one location.

Mr. Fulmer said that no, they did not.

Dr. Yeung said that they had many underutilized properties that should be evaluated for fulfilling this purpose. She said that when she looked it up, the value of this land was $1.3 million. She asked how much they were buying it for.

Mr. Fulmer said that the appraised value was $2.9 million.

Dr. Yeung said that she had not received a full explanation of the alternatives considered or why they were ruled out. She asked where the original space was.

Mr. Fulmer said that they had warehouse space located across the street from Route 1, from 2021 to 2022. He said that unfortunately, they were asked to vacate that space as the owner intended to use it for a different purpose. He said that they then found a warehouse space on Blackjack Road, which provided an excellent cost per square foot and a good deal. He said that they had been able to maintain that level for the last two to three years. He said that the staff and transportation training they offered were previously located in a very small conference room at their transportation office, situated off Wyatt Lane, near the bus fleet and garage. He said that that space was too small to accommodate a full class, so it was often overcrowded. He said that with the additional classroom space provided by the two warehouses, they would be able to relocate his bus driver and bus attendant training to this new facility.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to acknowledge the inconvenience that arose when relocating facilities, but she said that she did not believe that inconvenience alone justified a significant long-term capital investment. She said that in fact, she thought it was particularly important to prioritize addressing urgent needs across the school system, and she said that the school division's primary mission was education, not property management. She said that any purchase of this scale should be subject to the same level of scrutiny as any other capital decision. She said that therefore, she was putting this matter on hold for now.

Mr. English said that he did not think they needed to purchase this facility. He said that he would rather allocate the $3 million towards 3R projects. He said that he was concerned that buying this facility could lead to future problems, similar to the pipe issue at Rodney Thompson, where they did not have a contingency fund. He said that he understood both sides of the argument and found himself in a middle ground. He said that the school division was trying to save money, and he believed he would be able to secure funding. He said that however, he was hesitant to buy this facility because he feared it would become another 3R project 10 years down the line, requiring costly repairs or renovations. He said that given his previous discussions with Mr. Fulmer on this topic, he would not support this purchase. He said that he would prefer to use the $3 million to tackle low-hanging fruit 3R projects, getting them out of the way, and securing a more stable financial foundation.

Ms. Bohmke asked how often they would be using the training room for the bus drivers.

Mr. Fulmer said that they would begin classes at that location on a routine basis. He said that the duration of the classes would depend on how many students they had and when they started a new class. He said that once a class was established, students would spend 7 to 10 days there before moving on to behind-the-wheel training.

Mr. Fulmer said that he did not have the exact number of days, but they may be present for 4 or 5 hours per day. He said that it was unlikely to be 8 hours a day, and they may also consider a second shift in the afternoon. He said that they had discussed this on the facility tour, but he wanted to clarify that these individuals were not yet formal employees and were only undergoing training.

Mr. Fulmer said that as a result, they could not conduct these trainings during school hours, and they were not scheduled for after-hours sessions. He said that they were conducting these trainings during the day, which could sometimes be confusing given the presence of 30 schools and numerous classrooms. He said that however, due to the need to avoid disrupting school hours, they could not utilize one of the schools for these trainings.

Mr. Towery said that it was almost four out of five days of the week.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was having a hard time making a decision on this matter. She said that she had been considering the offices and facilities that Dr. Yeung mentioned, including the training room and warehouse space. She said that she thought about Rock Hill Elementary, which did not have a full school, and she wondered if they could repurpose some of the offices and warehouse space. She said that she had also considered using hotels for training purposes, as the cost of $3 million was substantial.

Ms. Bohmke said that her hesitation stemmed from her recent visit to Hartwood Elementary. She said that what she saw there, particularly the boiler room equipment and other facilities, made her realize that they could easily invest 3R funds into keeping that school operational until the new Westlake School was built. She said that she could not support this request, but she appreciated the school administration providing the Board with a tour of the facility.

Ms. Allen said that she had already discussed this issue during their work sessions. She said that looking ahead, as their population grew, they would soon be opening new schools, which would increase the demand for storage space. She said that the County also utilized this space, and her thought process had been that it would be $2.5 million now, but when they needed a larger facility in the future, they would not have control over the cost, and it would not be $2.5 million.

Ms. Allen said that she wanted to bring this to the Board's attention when making this decision. She said that they would have an ongoing expense for the schools. She said that if they calculated the math, within 10 to 15 years, this would pay for itself compared to continuing to pay a lease, which would exceed the amount in that time. She said that from a mathematical standpoint, it made sense to her, but they may not have the necessary votes. She said that nevertheless, she would support this decision based on these reasons.

Mr. Diggs said that he wanted to express his support for this initiative, which he believed was visionary. He said that as Ms. Allen had mentioned, it was essential to think about the future. He said that they had discussed this topic during previous work sessions, and he had the opportunity to visit the space today, observing the training and seeing the efforts firsthand. He said that the appraisal value of the space was $3 million, while they were paying $2.9 million. He asked how much the monthly rent was currently.

Mr. Fulmer said that they were currently paying $125,000 annually.

Mr. Diggs asked how much it would potentially increase when looking at other spaces.

Mr. Fulmer said that at the time, the best deal they could find was approximately $225,000 for a year. He said that he appreciated Mr. English's efforts in pushing them to explore alternative options. He said that they had since reviewed those options, and some of them presented a challenge. He said that for instance, the available space was 30,000 square feet, but it could not be divided into smaller sections to meet their needs. He said that as a result, the annual cost would be $400,000 or $500,000. He said that they had attempted to negotiate a smaller space, as the price per square foot was comparable, but only when renting a larger square footage.

Mr. Diggs said that when discussing fiscal responsibility and taxpayers, they essentially stated that they would no longer allow the schools to use this space and they must find an alternative location, which would add an additional $100,000 to the budget, which was not initially accounted for. He said that this did not align with the math, and it appeared that they would be setting them up for failure by pushing them into another space that would be more costly, which was not being responsible to their constituents. He said that he had looked into the matter and even spoken with personnel at the location today, and it was unfortunate that this was the outcome, but it was important to be realistic about their needs.

Ms. Vanuch said that she believed Dr. Yeung had brought up a valuable point about the trailers, particularly in light of the new schools that were coming online. She said that she agreed with Ms. Bohmke's and Mr. English's recommendation to spend the money on 3R projects. She said that she Chromebook money would be better spent on that purpose, too. She said that she thought it was essential that they invest in this area, as it was surprising to learn that the students would be staying at the specific Hartwood school until a new school opened.

Ms. Vanuch said that she would prefer that they allocate the funding to Hartwood. She said that she recalled that the cost to remodel the inside of the old Annie Moncure building was approximately $3 million, which was the same amount they would need to spend on a new property. She said that given that they already owned a building, it did not make sense to purchase another building when they could utilize the existing space to create a functional and usable area.

Ms. Vanuch said that she believed they should consider repurposing a building for conference rooms, classrooms, and other necessary spaces. She said that by doing so, they could make the most of their existing resources. She said that ultimately, her main concern was that they needed to prioritize their spending and allocate the funds to Hartwood, as it was the most pressing need at this time. She said that she suggested they explore short-term solutions, such as dividing the staff and implementing creative solutions, until the trailers became available.

Mr. Diggs said that the trailers were currently being used right now, so they were not available for this purpose. He said that they had discussed this in their work session. He asked what they would do in between now and when their new schools opened in August of 2026.

Mr. Fulmer said that when they opened the new Hartwood Elementary School, it would be rebuilt as part of the Westlake proffer. He said that the students would move to the rebuilt Hartwood Elementary.

Mr. English asked if it would be possible to defer this item.

Mr. Fulmer said that they had been under contract for approximately five months now, and the deadline to execute had been extended until May 15.

Mr. English said that he understood both sides of this argument, but his feeling was that this funding would be better spent on 3R projects and they could make use of their existing facilities.

Mr. Fulmer said that one thing he wanted to make clear about the trailers was that they were currently working on a trailer and modular exit plan, and a plan for what to do with the trailers once the new schools opened. He said that as they had approximately 60 classrooms spread across the County, one of the challenges with trailers was the cost of relocating them. He said that it was expensive to pick up and move the trailers, and the hookups and other necessary connections added to the expense.

Mr. Fulmer said that in fact, it could cost several hundred thousand dollars to relocate a trailer, and they must also repair the footers that were installed on the site. He said that to repair the footers and restore the asphalt to a usable state, there was an additional expense incurred. He said that he would propose that they would save a minimum of $125,000 per year. He said that firstly, this would help them balance their operating budget, as they were close to matching salaries with the Board of Supervisors. He said they still had a $700,000 funding gap to close. He said that secondly, they could use the $125,000 to fund 3R projects on a recurring basis, providing a steady source of funding for these projects.

Mr. English asked how much the offices in the back of the building were paying in rent right now and how much longer they would be paying.

Mr. Fulmer said that they were paying $38,400 per year, with a current lease that went through the next three years.

Mr. English said that they could work with the County to get rid of some other rental space.

Mr. Fulmer said that to clarify, they were not talking about office space, they were talking about warehouse space. He said that they could modify some parts of it to make the space more efficient and it could be used for County use as well.

Mr. English said that his question was whether this space would be sufficient to allow them to take in more rent-paying offices and potentially relocate some County offices there. He said that this was relevant because they were discussing shared revenues and other benefits. He said that if they could make this work, he believed it would be a positive outcome.

Mr. Fulmer said that he believed there was limited office space available that they were not occupying or utilizing space for training purposes. He said that Mr. Towery and he had previously reached out to County staff to explore potential dual-use of the warehouse space. He said that they had not yet discussed the office space in the front area, as there was limited space available. He said that as Ms. Bohmke had mentioned, there was not a significant amount of space available in the front area.

Dr. Yeung said that she was struggling to understand why the designs of the new school buildings did not include sufficient space for the uses recommended for this proposed property.

Mr. Fulmer said that they had a designated space in their Transportation Office that served as their IT repair shop. He said that located within this area were their network technicians, who handled the IT needs of the office. He said that this space was where they brought in damaged Chromebooks for repair. He said that they were already overcrowded at that location, however.

Mr. Diggs said that the issue he saw with this was that they were growing and running out of space, which was the problem they faced. He said that as he looked at it, it was clear that they needed to think about where they would put additional facilities to accommodate their growing needs. He said that they had emphasized the need for space to train for everyone. He said that he was concerned that if they did not plan ahead, the lack of available space would impact the quality of training. He said that they were currently experiencing a school bus driver shortage, and he believed they needed to think about the bigger picture when it came to their facilities and training programs.

Ms. Gary said that she was supportive of the request, which made sense financially. She said that she did not see any other viable options. She said that she did appreciate Mr. English's attempt to find an alternative solution, but considering the restraints they faced with options and time, she felt that even being 51% sure meant they were still supportive, so she would hope they would do the right thing and support this request.

Ms. Vanuch said that she felt it was unwise to purchase property that was assessed at $1.3 million for a high price like $3 million. She said that she felt that this process was being dictated by the current property owner forcing them into a timed purchase by withdrawing the option to lease the land. She said that she was not willing to pay that much for the land; they could do other things with the money and wait until the landowner gave them a more reasonable offer. She said that she understood the need to do this in a public forum, but it was a bad negotiating position from the County's perspective.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Ms. Bohmke, to deny Proposed Resolution R25-105.

Mr. Diggs said that for the sake of discussion, the Board had received a briefing on this topic in a prior session, and what Ms. Vanuch insinuated was not what happened here. He said that in this case, the property owner was actually planning to sell the property to someone else. He said that the school then the school asked him, to be given the first opportunity to purchase the property.

Ms. Vanuch said that while that was stated, it was not verified.

Mr. English asked if the school division could make the commitment to give some shared property for the County to use so they could reduce their rents.

Mr. Fulmer said that they had already made that commitment, and he intended to uphold it.

Ms. Gary made a substitute motion, seconded by Ms. Allen, to approve Proposed Resolution R25-105.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (4) Allen, Diggs, English, Gary

No: (3) Bohmke, Vanuch, Yeung

ITEM 29. FACILITIES MAINTENANCE; CONSIDER AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A WORK ORDER WITH CENTENNIAL CONTRACTORS ENTERPRISES, INC. TO RENOVATE STATION 10 – POTOMAC HILLS FIRE AND RESCUE, TRANSFORMING IT INTO AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES TRAINING CENTER; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-100

Darin Ramey, Director of Facilities and Maintenance, said that staff was present tonight to request approval for a project to renovate the upper level of Station 10, converting it into an EMS training facility. He said that the initial basis for this project was a 3R project for facilities, and in combination with Fire and Rescue, they would be working through the 3R project and ultimately provide them a facility for EMS training.

Ms. Bohmke motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to approve Proposed Resolution R25-100.

Mr. Diggs asked if Mr. Ramey could discuss the work that would be done and the associated costs.

Mr. Ramey said that the total cost for this project was $231,444. He said that the work being completed included the removal and replacement of approximately 3,800 square feet of flooring, as well as the ceiling. He said that LED lighting would be added to the building, and a couple of windows would be replaced. He said that for the training facility, four breakout rooms would be added for breakout classes. He said that Chief Cardello may be able to provide more detailed information on this project.

Ms. Allen asked how they would be fitting four rooms into that space.

Mr. Ramey said that they would not be huge; there would be two rooms on the front and two on the back of the building, with a seven-foot hallway in between. He said that there would be an AV area as well.

Mr. English asked what would happen if the project went over budget.

Mr. Ramey said that with their contract program, these were firm fixed prices.

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

PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS BY AGENCIES

ITEM 24. CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; SMALL PROJECTS NEXT STEPS – SSYP, WEDGE WIDENING, AND LOW-COST SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Matthew Lehane, Transportation Planning and Funding Manager, said that the next two years of transportation funding included $72 million for 25 projects. He said that most of this funding was allocated to major construction projects, but they also had smaller projects such as the Secondary Six-Year Plan (SSYP) and wedge widening. He said that they would discuss the SSYP, some additional small projects that fell outside of its scope, the wedge widening, and then follow up on the Poplar and Truslow Road project, which they had previously discussed at their work session.

Mr. Lehane said that this topic had been previously covered in the February work session for the SSYP. He said that this presentation would be presented at the public hearing at the next Board meeting for the SSYP with VDOT. He said that in addition to the SSYP, they had some additional small projects. He said that one of these was the Route 1 at Potomac Hills and Route 1 Corridor Improvement Smart Scale project, which had not received funding. He said that they recommended moving forward with some low-cost improvements costing around $500,000, which were reasonable and could be done with local funding since they had not received funding in Smart Scale.

Mr. Lehane said that they also had, as previously discussed, improvements for Brooke Point High School and Elementary School at Courthouse Road. He said that this project was related to the new elementary school and aimed to improve traffic flow, as recommended by VDOT. He said that they were currently working on a cost estimate, and they could move forward with this project depending on right-of-way needs, either with the SSYP or with local funding. He said that they also had some low-cost sidewalk projects that could be completed easily.

Mr. Lehane said that these included some small projects, such as the Plantation Drive at Lancelot Lane, which was part of the master plan, and 4th Street at Falmouth Elementary School and Sapphire Court, also part of the master plan. He said that two projects that likely did not require right-of-way were being presented today. He said that their goal was to generate the Board's interest in these projects, and then they would work with VDOT to assess their viability and determine if they could proceed. He said that they would also explore the actual costs associated with these projects and bring that information back to a future Board meeting.

Dr. Yeung said that she believed the Board should prioritize the Brooke Point and Elementary School at Courthouse Road project.

Mr. Lehane said that he could provide some additional information. He said that at this time, he did not have a cost estimate, as he was still waiting on VDOT to provide that information. He said that there was a possibility that this project could be completed through the SSYP, which would be determined by the need for immediate action.

Mr. Lehane said that once he received the cost estimate from VDOT, if the Board was willing to proceed, they would come back with all necessary information ready to go. He said that he wanted to clarify that there were no decisions required tonight. He said that these recommendations were provided by staff, and if the Board wished to move forward with other items discussed during their conversations with VDOT through the SSYP process, they could do so.

Ms. Gary asked if the Forbes Street at Falmouth Elementary School connection would improve connectivity for the neighborhood, allowing children to safely walk to the school.

Mr. Lehane said that would be a separate project. He said that in this area, they had two projects. He said that one was located on the south side of the elementary school, where there was a community of approximately 10 to 15 homes with a sidewalk, situated directly across from the school. He said that this project would involve installing a crosswalk across the road and connecting it to the school parking lot, allowing pedestrians to access the school property.

Mr. Lehane said that the project Ms. Gary was referring to was located at Thomas Jefferson Place and was being worked on in conjunction with the HOA, which had been approved by the Board as part of a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) application a couple of Board meetings ago.

Ms. Allen said that the stretch of Route 1 from Boswell Corner to Acadia Street was extremely dangerous. She said that in the past month, there had been multiple instances of medivac helicopters having to land on Route 1 in order to evacuate seriously injured people. She said that Route 1 and North Stafford must be addressed in order to make it safer and prevent it being shut down from accidents. She asked the Board to please consider prioritizing this project.

Mr. Lehane said that the Board would need to budget and appropriate at a later date. He said that tonight, they were seeking general buy-in from the Board on staff's recommendation. He said that they would then work with VDOT to develop agreements and documents for the project, as well as conduct detailed cost assessments and gather all necessary materials. He said that VDOT would administer these projects.

Mr. English said that he felt that the low-cost sidewalks near the Falmouth Elementary School were inappropriate because the street was too dangerous for children to safely use the sidewalks.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the Board was supportive of moving forward with all three projects if there was enough funding in the Transportation Fund for them.

Mr. Diggs confirmed there was consensus from the Board to move forward with all three additional non-SSYP projects.

Mr. Lehane said that they would be back at a future Board meeting with this information. He said that the wedge-widening program in March was approved by the Board with a budget of $13 million. He said that this budget would be allocated to 10 total projects for Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027. He said that they were currently working with VDOT on those agreements. He said that Telegraph Road was also approved for funding. He said that they would conduct a study to determine what other improvements could be made with the $1 million that would have been spent on the wedge-widening project.

Mr. Lehane said that the Board could consider alternative funding options, such as bonds through the Virginia Revenue Authority (VRA). He said that they had several data-driven projects remaining, including five roads: Brooke Road, Rock Hill Church Road, Courthouse Road, Enon Road, and Hope Road, with an estimated cost of approximately $6 million. He said that additionally, there were five other roads on their wedge-widening list, with an estimated cost of $1.4 million.

Mr. Lehane said that these projects had either one or zero road departure crashes, which is why they were on separate lists. He said that the question for the Board would be whether they would like staff to bring back further information on potential approval for accelerating any of these roads for Fiscal Years 2027 or 2028 within the next couple of budget cycles.

Ms. Allen said that she would recommend the data-driven option, as she would like to focus on those that have completed data collection. She said that the data-driven options, with no reported crashes, were not an immediate priority. She said that the $6 million group would be her top choice.

Mr. Diggs confirmed there was consensus from the Board to proceed with the five-data-driven projects estimated at $6 million.

Mr. Lehane said that regarding Poplar Road and Truslow Road, they had discussed at the February work session the possibility of changing the project from a turn lane project to a roundabout project. He said that the Board was generally in agreement, although Mr. English had some concerns noted. He said that they then reviewed this with their consultant to determine the cost of a roundabout.

Mr. Lehane said that the consultant prepared 30% plans for both a roundabout and a turn lane. He said that the cost for the turn lane project was $3.6 million. He said that they had discussed with the Board that they believed the cost of a roundabout would be only a few hundred thousand dollars more than that. He said that unfortunately, the actual cost was significantly higher, approximately $5.6 million.

Mr. Lehane said that at the February Board meeting, staff had discussed the idea of a roundabout as a better approach. He said that as shown on the screen, the data indicated that turn lanes resulted in a 72-person-hour delay reduction, whereas the roundabout yielded a 103-person hour delay reduction. He said that although the roundabout was a better project for congestion, the cost-benefit analysis revealed that it was not feasible due to the high cost.

Mr. Lehane said that they would proceed with the turn lane project. He said that this was a locally funded project with a budget of $3.6 million in the Capital Improvement Plan, with the goal of completing construction by FY27 or FY28. He said that to summarize the path forward, he would briefly recap. He said that the SSYP had received general Board support, which would be presented at the May 20 public hearing with VDOT. He said that the Board generally supported the additional projects, although staff would provide further information on the detailed costs and funding options at a later date.

Mr. Lehane said that wedge widening was discussed and generally agreed upon as a data-driven project, which would be considered as part of the next year's budget cycle. He said that the Poplar and Truslow project had received support for keeping it as a turn lane project, and staff would continue with that plan. He said that the SSYP must be approved in May, which would occur at the May 20 public hearing.

Mr. Lehane said that in their prior work session, had had displayed a slide that listed the topics to be discussed over the next six months. He said that they had already discussed 95% of those topics over the past couple of months, so they were well-prepared to move forward with the remaining topics.

Dr. Yeung asked what additional items the Transportation staff was working on that required assistance from the Board.

Mr. Lehane said that they were currently working through several items. He said that one thing he had discussed with Mr. Counsell the previous day and had not mentioned earlier was that they had received the engineers' estimates for the TAP program, the Mine Road and Greenspring project, and the Kings High Chatham Heights projects. He said that the Mine Road and Greenspring project had come in significantly higher than expected.

Mr. Lehane said that as a result, they would proceed with the project through TAP, but they would explore ways to reduce the cost. He said that they planned to revisit the project at a future Board meeting to discuss a modified version and how they could still fund the full set of improvements they were considering. He said that it was worth noting that a VDOT study was currently underway at that intersection and along that corridor, which presented several potential paths forward.

Ms. Bohmke asked about Kings.

Mr. Lehane said that VDOT still needed to review everything, and they would likely return for public hearings. He said that as part of their TAP projects, they were required to hold public hearings, which would take place at the August Board meeting. He said that there may be a discussion in June regarding this specific project, but TAP and revenue sharing would be revisited in August.

PRESENTATIONS AND REPOTS BY AGENCIES

ITEM 25. CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; LARGE PROJECTS NEXT STEPS – TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN PHASES 2 AND 3

Mr. Lehane said that now, he would be discussing planning studies under a million dollars that could lead to large projects worth several hundred million dollars. He said that tonight, they would discuss Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Transportation Master Plan. He said that the Board had requested staff to provide next steps for some of these projects, including required studies. He said that staff had had discussions with VDOT and their consultants and had prepared those next steps for review. He said that Phase 2 involved examining Route 1 at Garrisonville Road and Route 1 at Warrenton Road.

Mr. Lehane said that these were likely interchanges that required significant studies to move forward. He said that they were expected to take over two years and cost approximately $800,000 for Garrisonville Road and $500,000 for Warrenton Road. He said that they would be ready for Smart Scale Round 8 if the Board wished to apply at this time. He said that the question for the Board tonight was whether staff should proceed with procuring a detailed scope of work for these projects and bring it back for further discussion and potential approval at a future Board meeting.

Ms. Vanuch asked if this item needed to come back to the Board if they were all supportive of it today.

Mr. Lehane said that it could be added to the consent agenda. He said that they were requesting over $200,000, so approval would be necessary. He said that the next step involved additional options for master plan Phase 3. He said that as they had noted, Phase 1 encompassed everything they had been discussing, which was currently underway. He said that phase two included the midterm interchanges they had previously discussed.

Mr. Lehane said that Phase 3, however, was where they needed to focus on their long-term strategy to address congestion in Stafford County. He said that they had been referencing the NOVA-Stafford congestion white paper, which highlighted the challenges they faced. He said that the County was essentially "stuck" between Quantico to the north, Potomac to the east, Rappahannock to the south, and Fauquier to the west, with limited options for growth. He said that the question was, how could they effectively solve this issue?

Mr. Lehane said that they had discussed the possibility of working with a consultant to produce a white paper that identified potential improvements and the actual issues at hand. He said that this white paper would then be used to collaborate with the Board, elected officials, state, and federal agencies to secure additional funding and support for future projects that aimed to enhance maneuverability between northern Virginia and Stafford County. He said that the Board had been generally supportive of this idea during their previous work session, but he had not yet proceeded with it, as it was grouped with other master plan Phase 3 items.

Mr. Diggs asked if this would be part of their work with FAMPO.

Mr. Lehane said that no; this would be related to Quantico crossing items rather than river crossing items.

Ms. Bohmke said that throughout her time on FAMPO and the Board, she believed it was clear that they all acknowledged the need for more north-south roads in Stafford County. She said that she remained strongly in favor of connecting Mine Road to Centreport Parkway and extending Plantation Drive to Route 17, crossing the river, and then continuing on to Poplar Road. She said that she believed this network was crucial to the County's infrastructure.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was not convinced that a white paper was necessary, and she would need to be persuaded of the need for such a document. She said that she was open to alternative ideas, but she was not aware of any significant alternatives that would justify the expense. She said that the $15,000 seemed reasonable compared to the larger expenditures for other projects.

Mr. Lehane said that this brought up a relevant point. He said that according to the congestion white paper, the majority of the costs were attributed to the modeling work. He said that this was something that staff currently lacked the capability to perform. He said that therefore, the costs would be primarily due to the modeling work required to determine the actual database needs between the northern Virginia and Stafford areas.

Ms. Bohmke said that that would be fine, but she believed that they should prioritize a north-south project.

Dr. Yeung said that she wanted to emphasize the importance of prioritizing projects that directly alleviated daily congestion in their area, particularly along Route 1 and the Garrisonville Road I-95 corridor. She said that she supported moving forward with the $800,000 interchange access report, as it was a necessary step to access state and federal funding. She said that delaying this project would only put them further behind.

Dr. Yeung said that she also supported the $15,000 NOVA Stafford congestion white paper, which would help elevate their priorities with regional and federal partners. She said that she was cautious about committing up to $1 million for the broader western and northwest planning studies at this time. She said that these studies were valuable long-term efforts, but they must ensure that their current urgent needs, such as sidewalks and crosswalk improvements in Garrisonville, Aquia, and the surrounding area, remained funded and on track.

Dr. Yeung said that she was concerned that if they took on too many projects, they risked ending up in the red, and she believed it was essential that they demonstrated a clear sequencing of their efforts and protected their current investments. She said that to achieve this, she thought they needed to move forward in a step-by-step manner, based on the information and guidance provided, rather than spreading themselves too thin.

Mr. Lehane said that it was a good point. He said that the higher-level options came with a significant price tag, which was why they brought back alternative options for the Board to consider. He said that these alternatives could provide some data on how to proceed with certain projects while being more budget-friendly. He said that the estimated cost of building out the Mine Road South to U.S. 17 project was substantial, ranging from $500 million to $700 million.

Mr. Diggs asked if some of that would be proffered by developments.

Mr. Lehane said that yes, if the development was approved. He said that it was possible.

Mr. Diggs said that he agreed with Dr. Yeung that he was less convinced about the necessity of the west and northwest studies.

Ms. Gary asked if Mr. Lehane could elaborate on the western network planning.

Mr. Lehane said that the western network referred to the north-south road that would connect Mine Road, Center Parkway, Enon Road, and Plantation Drive, as well as Truslow Road. He said that the northwest widenings was part of Phase 3 of the master plan. He said that it included Mountain View Road, which was located near Mountain View High School, Shelton Shop Road, and Courthouse Road, completing the four-lane section out to Shelton Shop.

Ms. Gary asked if staff was requesting Board direction on one or both options.

Mr. Lehane said that they needed direction on one or both; they could be separate or together. He said that they would continue to discuss them as they proceeded with the master plan phases.

Ms. Gary said that she may need a bit more time to review the western network and its widenings. She said that she would like to see the studies for that network, as she believed they were crucial.

Bryon Counsell, Chief Engineer, said that the proposed road network for the western work was intended to solve several issues. He said that currently, when traffic on I-95 was severely backed up, the citizens of Stafford were unable to navigate the area. He said that this was one concern. He said that when I-95 was congested, residents tried to bypass it by navigating through Stafford County, but they faced difficulties due to Quantico and Rappahannock. He said that as a result, bailout traffic from I-95 also affected Stafford, causing problems for residents who tried to travel through the County. He said that these issues were largely caused by I-95 congestion, which was why the white paper aimed to augment a study from the 1990s and 1980s on a western bypass.

Mr. Counsell said that as the largest metropolitan area in Virginia without a bypass, Stafford desperately needed one. He said that to move forward with supporting this project, they needed to gather data, work with local, state, and federal elected representatives to secure relief, which may not be solely for Stafford's benefit in the long term but could provide some relief to smaller communities and citizens of Stafford, as well as alleviate traffic congestion, bailout traffic, and other traffic patterns that affected everyone in the area.

Ms. Gary said that she supported the plan, but felt they needed more time to understand the specifics of the options.

Mr. Lehane said that to ensure they were all on the same page, he would review the plan. He said that Master Plan Phase 2 would proceed with the procurement of those studies. He said that they would bring the approved studies back to the Board for approval at a future Board meeting. He said that it would take a few months to finalize the scopes of work. He said that Phase 3, based on the general support for the congestion white paper, they would move forward with that.

Ms. Allen said that she would support option 2 for the western network.

Dr. Yeung asked if staff could provide rough estimates of the potential project costs after the planning phases. She said that specifically, she would like to know the estimated costs for the western network.

Mr. Lehane said that for the actual projects, they had a general idea that was outlined in the master plan. He said that these estimates were based on a per-mile basis. He said that at this stage, that was the extent of the information they could provide. He said that they could compile this data and share it with them all at a future Board meeting when they returned. He said that they likely would return in August.

RECESS

The Board recessed at 10:03 p.m. and reconvened at 10:13 p.m.

CLOSED MEETING

At 10:14 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Ms. Vanuch, to enter closed meeting.

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

Resolution CM25-06 reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board desires to hold a Closed Meeting for (1) consultation with legal counsel pertaining to the Rappahannock Regional Jail Authority Agreement, which is a specific legal matter requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, and (2) discussion of the performance of a specific employee of the Board; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(1) and (A)(8) such discussions may occur in Closed Meeting;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 6th day of May, 2025, that it be and hereby does authorize discussion of the above matters in Closed Meeting.

CERTIFY CLOSED MEETING

At 11:49 p.m., Ms. Allen motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to certify the closed meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Resolution CM25-06 (C) reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY THE ACTIONS OF THE STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN A CLOSED MEETING ON MAY 6, 2025

WHEREAS, the Board has, on this the 6th day of May, 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 6th day of May, 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 11:49 p.m.

William H. Ashton, II
County Administrator

Public Comment Form

COMPLETE #137

CREATED

PUBLIC
Apr 15th 2025, 1:26:59 pm

IP ADDRESS

98.118.244.89

* Name

Jennifer Jensen

* Address

305 Chapel Green Road
Fredericksburg
VA
22405
United States

* Email

jd.gs.jensen@gmail.com

Election District

George Washington

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

Public School Budget - Teacher Salaries and hiring incentives

* Online Comments:

First I want to say that I fully understand that we must be sure we spend the tax payers dollars carefully. Stafford county Schools are experiencing a shortage in teachers primarily Special Education Teachers. In the interim they have been using a variety of either minimally qualified or not qualified individuals to fill the gaps. This has gone on for several years. There are numerous efforts to attract teachers to Stafford but the overall shortages in teachers is making it very competitive. Our Special Needs children are being severely impacted. Many severe children are not receiving the Free Appropriate Public Education they are promised through the IDEA Act. We are not meeting State Standards. I encourage the Board to consider raising teacher pay and to include incentive pay for those teachers that are teaching in an inclusive classroom. All teachers put in unpaid hours because they are dedicated and want the best for our children and we must recognize their sacrifice. I think that if money is tight then at least those employees in teaching and para positions should receive an increase.

Public Comment Form

COMPLETE #138

CREATED

PUBLIC
Apr 15th 2025, 2:23:47 pm

IP ADDRESS

72.83.224.35

* Name

Carrie Misyak

* Address

543 Apricot Street
N/A
Stafford
Virginia
22554
United States

* Email

ctlooney@gmail.com

Election District

Garrisonville

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

Fund our schools fully

* Online Comments:

There should be no higher priority right now in Stafford Court than funding our schools. Per a recent article in the Fredericksburg Free Press, "In a county where the median household income is $128,036 (2022 U.S.Census), Stafford's per pupil spending is $13,048 per student, placing it at 111 out of 132 localities in per pupil expenditure." That is unacceptable and cannot continue. Our schools are literally falling apart. All options need to be on the table to not only fully fund our schools, but to make up for the previous years that our Board has failed to provide our schools with needed funds. Raise taxes if you have to. Don't give tax breaks to data centers and Buc-ee's.

We need to provide the school with more than a "bare bones" budget. We have a lot of lost ground to cover. Based on our state rankings for county wealth, we should be one of the top 25 funded schools, not bottom 25. We should strive for excellence and to generate top tier schools. Instead, our schools are crumbling and class sizes are too large. Teachers who live in Stafford work in neighboring counties to get better pay.

Raise taxes if you must: I'd rather pay more taxes than be known as one of the worst school districts in Virginia. I'd rather pay more taxes if it means my children are attending some of the best schools in the state.

Public Comment Form

COMPLETE #139

CREATED

PUBLIC
Apr 15th 2025, 6:20:25 pm

IP ADDRESS

108.28.117.50

* Name

Aidan Taylor

* Address

14 Oakbrook Ct.
Stafford
Virginia
22554
United States

* Email

tayloraidanr07@gmail.com

Election District

Garrisonville

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

Tax rate/school budget

* Online Comments:

Good evening. My name is Aidan Taylor, and I am a junior at North Stafford High School. I am especially active in my school's band program, but our fine arts wing is aging and relatively unequipped as compared to the other Stafford County high schools. A few years ago, there were plans in the budget for the construction of a new fine arts wing for NSHS, but these never came to fruition, particularly due to its coincidence with the COVID-19 pandemic. As a student of North, where our instrument locker room has flooded with sewage and our theater program occupies an unsuitably small room, on the behalf of all of my classmates at North, I request that the Board again considers the construction of updated fine arts facilities at North Stafford High School. Thank you for your time.

Public Comment Form

COMPLETE #140

CREATED

PUBLIC
Apr 15th 2025, 6:51:00 pm

IP ADDRESS

108.45.28.77

* Name

Taylor Couch

* Address

8 Bridgeport Circle
Bridgeport Circle
Bridgeport Circle
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22554
United States

* Email

taylor.m.couch@gmail.com

Election District

Garrisonville

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

Fine arts budget

* Online Comments:

I think that there should be more funding for the arts at Stafford county. Many of the spaces for these classes are too small and need more space or don’t have enough funding to adequately teach these skills.

Public Comment Form

COMPLETE #140

CREATED

PUBLIC
Apr 15th 2025, 6:51:00 pm

IP ADDRESS

108.45.28.77

*** Name**

Taylor Couch

*** Address**

8 Bridgeport Circle
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22554
United States

*** Email**

taylor.m.couch@gmail.com

Election District

Garrisonville

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

Fine arts budget

*** Online Comments:**

I think that there should be more funding for the arts at Stafford county. Many of the spaces for these classes are too small and need more space or don't have enough funding to adequately teach these skills.

Public Comment Form

COMPLETE #141

CREATED

PUBLIC
Apr 15th 2025, 7:41:00 pm

IP ADDRESS

73.99.245.7

*** Name**

Finn Longworth

*** Address**

390 Long Meadow Drive
Fredericksburg
Virginia
22406
United States

*** Email**

finnlongworth@icloud.com

Election District

Hartwood

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

Fine art funding for NSHS

*** Online Comments:**

I'm a student at North Stafford Highschool, and the fine arts are a huge part of my life. All of our fine art programs, especially theater and orchestra, are severely underfunded. As a student in North's tech crew, I can attest to our lack of resources and how frustrating it can be. All we want is to be able to express ourselves and make something we can be proud of to share with our community, but our ability to do such pales in comparison to other schools in this county.

Public Comment Form

COMPLETE #142

CREATED

PUBLIC
May 2nd 2025, 12:34:15 pm

IP ADDRESS

174.196.134.61

*** Name**

Jacob Troobnick

*** Address**

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Fredericksburg
VA
22406
United States

*** Email**

camoj13@gmail.com

Election District

Hartwood

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

Pulse point

*** Online Comments:**

Would really like to see the pulse point app come back online. I had just found out about this app a few months ago. I kept the cpr alert on in case I could respond to a cardiac arrest if needed. I was in the stafford county volunteer fire dept for years and this app was one best things to happen. Would love to bring this back if possible.
Thank you for your time