BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA,
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 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 Thursday, November 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 (participating remotely); 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

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

Ms. Allen asked for a motion to allow Mr. Diggs to participate electronically.

Mr. English motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to allow Mr. Diggs to participate electronically in the meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

CHAIR REMARKS

Ms. Allen said that she would like to give a few Vice Chair remarks. She said that first, the Board would like to welcome their newest Deputy Clerk, Mr. Sukhi Purewal. She said that Mr. Purewal brought over 12 years of experience as a County Clerk. She said that on behalf of the County Board of Supervisors, she would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Purewal and looked forward to his service.

Ms. Allen said that she would also like to take this opportunity to remind everyone about the importance of supporting local businesses. She said that November 29 was Shop Small in Stafford, an initiative of Stafford Economic Development. She said that to participate, one could sign up for a digital passport, which would grant access to special promotions, featured products, and one-day-only savings on Shop Small Saturday. She asked everyone to remember to keep their receipts for a chance to win small prizes and for businesses to register to be featured in the digital passport.

Ms. Allen said that many of their 5,000 local businesses were owned by friends and neighbors, and for every dollar spent, 68 cents stayed in their local community. She said that shopping locally supported their schools, parks, and services. She said that for more information, they could email econdev@StaffordCountyVA.gov or call 540-658-5819. She said that they had a short message for the public from the Economic Development Department, as well.

Ms. Allen said that Veterans Day was November 11, and they had already started their annual celebration. She said that Stafford was participating in Operation Green Light for Veterans, a nationwide effort uniting Counties to support military veterans. She said that the initiative, led by the National Association of Counties (NACo) raised awareness about the unique challenges faced by many veterans and the resources available at the County, state, and federal levels to assist veterans and their families.

Ms. Allen said that the public could participate in a few ways, including stopping by the Government Center to pick up a free green light bulb to light their porches up green, using the hashtag #StaffordVets when posting pictures of their favorite veterans, or visiting StaffordCountyVA.gov/veteransupport to post pictures directly to their social wall of veterans. She thanked the public for showing their appreciation of their veterans.

Ms. Allen said that she would like to extend her congratulations to Deputy County Administrator Donna Krauss on her graduation from the Virginia Women's Municipal Leadership Institute. She said that the institute is a professional education program developed by Virginia women leading government and academic partners to provide connections, content, tools, and opportunities for women leaders. She said that Ms. Krauss was one of only 22 high-potential women from across the Commonwealth who attended eight monthly meetings to help strengthen scales for executive women in local government. She said that they sincerely congratulated Ms. Krauss on her dedication and accomplishment.

ADDITIONS – DELETIONS AND APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR AGENDA

ADD-ON TO PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS BY AGENCIES; TRI-COUNTY/CITY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT FY2025 ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTATION

William Ashton, County Administrator, said that there was an add-on to Presentations and Reports by Agencies: the Tri-County/City Soil and Water Conservation District's FY 2025 Annual Budget Report Presentation was scheduled for this evening's agenda.

Ms. Bohmke motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to adopt the Regular Agenda as amended.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

CONSENT AGENDA

ITEM 1. CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; AUTHORIZE THE INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF "WATCH FOR CHILDREN" SIGN AT THE ENTRANCE OF PLEASURE COURT (SR-1382); PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-272

ITEM 2. CAPITAL PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION; AUTHORIZE THE INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF A "WATCH FOR CHILDREN" SIGN ON BARBARA ANN DRIVE (SR-1623) AT THE ENTRANCE OF ARBOR GLEN SUBDIVISION; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-273

ITEM 3. CAPITAL PROJECTS UTILITIES; ACTING AS THE GOVERNING BODY FOR THE LAKE CARROLL SERVICE DISTRICT, AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH SAGRES CONSTRUCTION CORP. FOR THE KENNEDY DAM IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-286

ITEM 4. CAPITAL PROJECTS UTILITIES; (1) SUSPEND THE BY-LAWS TO VOTE ON THIS RESOLUTION, (2) BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE VIRGINIA CLEAN WATER REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS THROUGH THE VIRGINIA RESOURCE AUTHORITY, AND (3) AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH AMERICAN CONTRACTING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE, INC. FOR THE LITTLE FALLS RUN WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY UPGRADES PROJECT; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-287

ITEM 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION TO RECOGNIZE THE EFFORTS OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE IN HOSTING NATIONAL NIGHT OUT; PROPOSED PROCLAMATION P25-10

ITEM 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION TO RECOGNIZE NOVEMBER AS NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH; PROPOSED PROCLAMATION P25-20

ITEM 7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION TO RECOGNIZE NOVEMBER 1, 2025, AS FAMILY LITERACY DAY; PROPOSED PROCLAMATION P25-29

ITEM 8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION TO RECOGNIZE STAFFORD'S PARTICIPATION IN OPERATION GREEN LIGHT FOR VETERANS; PROPOSED PROCLAMATION P25-30

ITEM 9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT; PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING STAFFORD COUNTY'S CERTIFICATION AS A CRIME PREVENTION COMMUNITY; PROPOSED PROCLAMATION P25-32

ITEM 10. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE THE RENAMING OF THE STAFFORD REGIONAL AIRPORT TO WASHINGTON EXECUTIVE-STAFFORD REGIONAL AIRPORT; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-290

ITEM 11. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 23, 2025 BOARD

OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES

ITEM 12. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; APPROVE THE OCTOBER 08, 2025 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES

ITEM 13. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION; AUTHORIZE AND PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL FOUR HOURS OF HOLIDAY PAY ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2025 IN OBSERVANCE OF THE THANKSGIVING DAY HOLIDAY

ITEM 14. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON FOR THE STAFFORD VISITOR CENTER SERVICES AT GARI MELCHERS HOME AND STUDIO; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-234

ITEM 15. FACILITIES MAINTENANCE; RATIFY A CONTRACT EXECUTED WITH GARLAND/DBS, INC. TO PROVIDE, FURNISH, AND DELIVER ROOFING SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS TO VARIOUS COUNTY FACILITIES; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-263

ITEM 16. FACILITIES MAINTENANCE; RATIFY A CONTRACT EXECUTED WITH SOUTHERN AIR, INCORPORATED FOR PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE, REPAIR SERVICES, AND PARTS ON ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, ENERGY MANAGEMENT, AND HVAC EQUIPMENT AS NEEDED FOR VARIOUS COUNTY FACILITIES; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-267

ITEM 17. FACILITIES MAINTENANCE; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A WORK ORDER WITH CENTENNIAL CONTRACTORS ENTERPRISES, INC. FOR THE REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF ALL HANDRAILS AND GUARDRAILS AT THE GOVERNMENT CENTER COMPLEX AND STAINLESS STEEL; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-237

ITEM 18. PARKS AND RECREATION; (1) SUSPEND THE BY-LAWS TO VOTE ON THIS RESOLUTION, (2) BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO RENOVATE THE BASEBALL FIELDS AT CHICHESTER PARK IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2026 BABE RUTH WORLD SERIES, AND (3) AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH NOLAN THOMAS AND COMPANY, INC.; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-288

ITEM 19. PLANNING AND ZONING; REFER TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION A PROPOSED ORDINANCE TO AMEND STAFFORD COUNTY CODE SEC. 28-182, "ZONING PERMITS;" SEC. 28-185, "CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS;" SEC. 28-293, "SUBMISSION;" AND SEC. 28-348, "FILING OF APPLICATIONS TO THE BOARD; APPLICATION FEE" TO MODIFY REQUIREMENTS REGARDING PROOF OF NO DELINQUENT COUNTY TAXES PRIOR TO INITIATION OF CERTAIN ZONING APPLICATIONS; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-292

ITEM 20. SHERIFF; (1) SUSPEND THE BY-LAWS TO VOTE ON THIS RESOLUTION, (2) ACCEPT THE VIRGINIA OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TRIAD CRIME

PREVENTION FOR SENIORS GRANT, AND (3) BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE THE GRANT FUNDS; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-283

ITEM 21. UTILITIES; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH NOSTOS SS CONTRACTORS, LLC FOR THE REHABILITATION AND MIXER INSTALLATION OF THE GRAFTON ELEVATED WATER STORAGE TANK; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-261

ITEM 22. UTILITIES; AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH BOXX MODULAR INC. FOR MODULAR OFFICES; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-280

Dr. Yeung asked to pull items 4, 13, 14, 16, 18, and 22 to discuss separately.

Ms. Bohmke motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to adopt the Consent Agenda without Items 4, 13, 14, 16, 18, and 22.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Ms. Allen asked if Dr. Yeung would like to discuss Item 4.

Dr. Yeung said that there were a couple of items on Consent that were asking the Board to suspend the by-laws. She said that she was wondering how it was possible to suspend the by-laws on the Consent Agenda.

Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney, said that ultimately, these items were placed on Consent because they were deemed non-controversial. She said that in order to budget and appropriate funds during November and December of an election year, the Board must suspend the by-laws. She said that if these items passed unanimously, they would pass the necessary two-thirds vote, and the by-laws were already included in the resolutions. She said that therefore, no special action was necessary to bring them forward. She said that the Resolution could be adopted as presented, the by-laws would be suspended, allowing for budgeting and appropriation of funds as well as authorization of contract execution.

Dr. Yeung asked if staff could provide the total project cost associated with Item 4. She said that she did not see it in the materials.

Chris Edwards, Chief Operating Officer, said that the total cost was approximately $41 million. He said that they had initially sought funding from the Virginia Revolving Loan Fund about two years ago, with an estimated cost of around $29 million. He said that due to changes in the scope of work, the final cost ended up being $41 million. He said that this was why they required additional funding appropriated to bridge the gap from the original $29 million estimate to the current $41 million.

Dr. Yeung asked what would be the impact of this upgrade.

Mr. Edwards said that the majority of this project involved 3R work at their Little Falls plant. He said that the last time the plant underwent upgrades was around 2010. He said that this project would complete some upgrades, but the primary focus would be on 3R work to the facility as a whole, ensuring it operated in good condition.

Dr. Yeung motioned, seconded by Mr. English, to approve Proposed Resolution R25-287 as presented.

Ms. Bohmke said that she wanted to clarify that the total project cost was listed at the bottom of the first page, where it read $42,061,000. She said that it was in a box and did not stand out when reading, so she just wanted to note that it was included.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Ms. Allen asked if staff would like to address Item 13.

Mr. Ashton said that this item was added during the Chair and Vice Chair meeting. He said that staff had confirmed they would bring it back before the end of the year, and this was the last opportunity to do so.

Dr. Yeung asked what the total cost was for those four hours of pay.

Andrea Light, Chief Financial Officer, said that they were estimating approximately $65,000 from the General Fund.

Dr. Yeung asked if there was a way they could do it for 2025 or if it was for every year going forward.

Mr. Ashton said that it was written for this year.

Dr. Yeung asked if it was clear that this was not a continuous or long-term implementation.

Ms. McClendon said that the item in the Board's agenda authorized an additional four hours of holiday pay would be provided on Wednesday, November 26, 2025. She said that this provision was clearly stated as being limited to this year only.

Dr. Yeung motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to approve additional one-half day leave for County staff.

Ms. Vanuch she would not be able to support this item. She said that she knew that they had done this in the past, but not in other years. She said that this year, with the government shutdown and the use of taxpayer funds to provide an additional paid day off for their employees, while other localities were not offering this benefit, was a difficult pill to swallow. She said that, considering that the government was currently shut down and many of their residents were not receiving their paychecks, she found it challenging to justify spending $65,000 in taxpayer funds on this particular item.

Mr. English said that he believed that this had been done every year, as far as he could recall. He said that Ms. Krauss may be able to provide more context on it. He said that he did not remember there ever being a controversy.

Donna Krauss, Deputy County Administrator, said that staff did an analysis of this item last year when they last discussed it. She said that it had been at least eight years that the County had offered this holiday pay to their employees, but she would have to check to confirm whether it went back farther than that.

Mr. Diggs said that in terms of employees, he actually had the opportunity to interact with some of the employees currently on furlough. He said that he believed this was a commendable recruitment tool along with offering promotions and job opportunities for the County. He said that providing this holiday pay signaled that they prioritized their employees' wellbeing. He said that he understood Ms. Vanuch's perspective, but their employees were actively contributing to the community. He said that he thought this was a good chance to not only attract new employees affected by the federal government's current situation, but also to retain their existing employees.

Dr. Yeung said that she agreed that it was a recruitment tool, but they kept adding in single days without providing consistency. She said that in working for the federal government or any organization, employees already had scheduled off-days. She said that by adding more days to their employees' schedule, they may not be able to take off their regularly-scheduled vacation days. She said that she was wondering if they could redirect the $65,000 allocated for this item to Stafford Emergency Relief through Volunteer Efforts (SERVE) so that they could continue to provide food to those in need.

Ms. Gary said that she would support their employees. She said that she believed she had always done so, as they were the backbone of their organization. She said that the Supervisors may sit in this room and come and go, but it was crucial, particularly considering the current state of the federal government, that they provided continuity and stability here. She said that in her opinion, this was the right decision, and she was supporting it.

Ms. Bohmke said that this was a challenging issue, given the current government shutdown. She said that she appreciated Dr. Yeung's comments about the food bank, and she believed that the Board unanimously supported the $60,000 allocation and the authority granted to the County Administrator, with the understanding that the funds would be held in abeyance until needed. She said that she also appreciated Ms. Vanuch's comments. She said that for her, she wished for greater transparency regarding the fiscal impact of this item, as it was not clearly disclosed in the background report.

Ms. Bohmke said that without this information, it was difficult to understand the full implications of this decision, especially for those who were not present in the meeting. She said that she would like to know which employees in the County organization would receive this benefit.

Mr. Ashton said that it would benefit all staff employed by Stafford County.

Ms. Allen said that she would support the proposal. She said that they had already faced a difficult and challenging year as a country and a locality, and she believed providing an extra four hours for families to spend together was a valuable gift, especially during a time when those moments were precious. She said that considering the County had over 3,000 employees, she did not see $65,000 as a terrible fiscal burden.

Ms. Allen called the vote to approve the additional one-half day of holiday pay for County staff on November 26, 2025.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (5) Allen, Bohmke, Diggs, English, Gary
No: (2) Vanuch, Yeung

Ms. Allen asked if Dr. Yeung would like to discuss Item 14.

Dr. Yeung said that she was curious to know if visitors currently paid any fees.

Liz Barber, Director of Economic Development, said that no; the Visitor Center was open to any visitors. She said that there was also signage throughout the community to guide people to the correct location. She said that however, if they wished to participate in activities or shop in the gift shop or museum, that would be different.

Dr. Yeung asked if they received any performance metrics from the University of Mary Washington (UMW) on this project.

Ms. Barber said that they did not have performance metrics, but they did have reporting metrics. She said that as a result, they received quarterly updates, which included the number of visitors who attended the Center. She said that it was worth noting that these metrics came from the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), rather than the General Fund.

Dr. Yeung asked if it was possible for staff to share those metrics with the Board when they were received.

Ms. Barber said that yes, she would.

Dr. Yeung motioned, seconded by Ms. Bohmke, to approve Proposed Resolution R25-234.

Ms. Bohmke said that this item's background report did not specify whether the fees had increased or if this rate was the same as previous years. She said that she was familiar with this information. She said that to clarify, the Visitor Center was not a traditional visitor center, but rather all of the brochures showcasing the County's offerings in the gift shop at Gari Melcher's. She said that the gift shop was a wonderful place to purchase gifts at reasonable prices. She said that it was unlikely that they could sustain a gift store for $45,000 per year. She said that she was curious to know if the fees had remained the same or increased over the past couple of years.

Ms. Barber said that as far as she was able to research, the rate had remained the same and there had not been an increase.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Ms. Allen asked if Dr. Yeung would like to discuss Item 16.

Dr. Yeung asked if there was an attachment to this item that she did not receive.

Mr. Ashton said that there was a staff report for the item.

Ms. Bohmke said that she did not see it. She said that they were only provided with the background information.

Ms. Allen said that they did receive it; it included the amount.

Dr. Yeung said that there were several reports, in addition to this one, that lacked background information, including the two presentations. She said that typically, they received PowerPoints, but none were provided for this or the two presentations, including the budget and school. She said that as a result, she did not have sufficient time to study the material and ask questions.

Mr. Ashton said that there would not be a PowerPoint for a Consent Agenda item, as they typically did not have those. He said usually it was a simple Q&A if they pulled something from Consent. He said that he did have the background report for this item in his packet, so he was not sure why the Board members did not have that.

Ms. Allen said that the document stated the amount, which was an agreement to maintain their HVAC systems for $775,000. She said that she was unclear about the specific questions at this point. She said that it was stated that the projected annual expenditure was $600,000, while utility costs were expected to be $175,000. She said that as a result, the overhead costs of both departments had been combined into the $775,000, which appeared to cover the maintenance of their parts and services.

Dr. Yeung asked if that was the cost breakdown.

Darin Ramey, Director of Facilities and Maintenance, said that yes, that was the cost breakdown for the two departments. He said that their maintenance contract was generally less than $600,000 per year. He said that in the event of any breakdowns, major repairs, or other projects, those costs would be included in the contract.

Dr. Yeung asked if there were any sponsorship or partnership arrangements in place to help offset the costs.

Mr. Ramey said that no, there were not.

Dr. Yeung asked if they had an estimate of the expected number of visitors, including hotel stays, economic impact, or any other relevant data.

Mr. Ramey said that no; this item was specifically for their facilities, including the courthouse, fire and rescue stations, and all other general government buildings.

Ms. Bohmke said that she thought some information that could have been included in this item was information regarding the other bidders on the contract, as she knew they were riding on someone else's contract. She said that she thought the public should have transparency on what the bids looked like, and it was relevant to include. She said that they should consider including that for future items such as this.

Mr. English motioned, seconded by Ms. Bohmke, to approve Proposed Resolution R25-266.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Ms. Allen asked if Dr. Yeung would like to discuss Item 18.

Dr. Yeung said that she had no further questions on this item.

Ms. Bohmke said that she was a fan of the World Series that came to the County, and she thought it was great. She said that it was exciting that they were returning again. She said that this indicated that they had done a good job, but it was a significant amount of work. She said that she was a bit confused while reading the background report, so she would like to know the typical amount of tourism generated by this event.

Patrick Workman, Acting Director of Parks and Recreation, said that they collaborated with Economic Development, who estimated approximately $2 million in economic impact for this event. He said that there was a very large number of hotel stays during the 2014 tournament, and considering it was a stay-and-play tournament, they expected it to be fairly significant.

Ms. Bohmke said that she knew it was significant but did not see the number in the report. She said that she needed to know before she voted, so she appreciated the clarification.

Ms. Bohmke motioned, seconded by Mr. English, to approve R25-288.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Ms. Allen asked if Dr. Yeung would like to discuss Item 22.

Dr. Yeung said that she had a quick question regarding this matter. She said that according to the materials, the annual cost was $50,000 and it exceeded five years, meaning the total would be

$250,000. She said that they also mentioned wanting to purchase the modular box for $256,000. She was trying to determine the cost-effectiveness of purchasing the modular box versus renting it.

Mark Gundersen, Acting Director of Utilities, said that they had conducted a long-term economic impact analysis and found that purchasing temporary trailers was more cost-effective than renting them, as shown in the Board report. He said that this decision also provided them with the flexibility to modify the trailers, which was not possible with a rental unit. He said that they would have the trailers available for future projects, particularly at the site where they would be located.

Dr. Yeung said that she would like further clarification on the strategic goal alignment, which was stated in the report as "healthy growth."

Mr. Gundersen said that yes, the purpose was for them to have room for their employees to have working space, so that was why they indicated healthy growth as the strategic alignment.

Dr. Yeung motioned, seconded by Ms. Bohmke, to approve Proposed Resolution R25-280.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION OF A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING NOVEMBER AS NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Allen presented the Proclamation Recognizing November as Native American Heritage Month.

Jane Reed, Treasurer for the Patawomeck Indian Tribe, said that on behalf of Chief Bullock and the Patawomeck Indian Tribe, she would like to express their gratitude for this Proclamation recognizing Native American Heritage Month. She said that they were extremely proud of the work they had accomplished since opening their tribal center in 2019. She said that they would be delighted to have everyone visit their center, where they can learn about their native language and culture. She said that their center offered a unique opportunity to experience their heritage firsthand, through their established schools and community programs. She said that they invited the public to come and experience it, and they appreciated the County's support and recognition of their efforts.

PRESENTATION OF A PROCLAMATION TO RECOGNIZE THE EFFORTS OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE IN HOSTING NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Ms. Allen presented the Proclamation to Recognize the Efforts of the Community and the Sheriff's Office in Hosting National Night Out.

Sergeant Steven Curtis said that he appreciated the opportunity to accept this proclamation on behalf of the Sheriff's Office, and appreciated the acknowledgement of their work. He said that however, at the end of the day, when it came to the National Night Out event, it really had very little to do with the Sheriffs; the success of the event was largely dependent on the hundreds of exhibitors, participating organizations, nonprofits, and partnerships that came together, as well as the citizens and residents of Stafford County. He said that if no one attended, they would not have a reason to be up here.

Sergeant Curtis said that the event continued to grow in size and popularity. He said that they were close to reaching nearly 4,000 participating citizens this year, which was a significant turnout. He said that this was a testament to the community coming together and demonstrating that Stafford County was not as separated as some people may think. He said that the event had families, friends, and strangers enjoying the evening together. He said that it was a privilege and an honor for the staff at the Sheriff's Office to administer the event, and ultimately it was a win for all the residents and citizens of Stafford and everyone who participated in it. He said that they appreciated the support and participation of all those involved in the community.

A PROCLAMATION PRESENTATION RECOGNIZING NOVEMBER 1, 2025 AS FAMILY LITERACY DAY

Ms. Allen presented the Proclamation Recognizing November 1, 2025 as Family Literacy Day.

Sonja Johnson, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) State Literacy Chair and Martha Newton, Falls of the Rappahannock Daughters of the American Revolution, accepted the proclamation.

Ms. Johnson expressed her gratitude for the proclamation. She said that literacy was essential for all ages. She encouraged everyone to get out there and read to someone, or read their own books, to continue this legacy.

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

1. Molly Denham, Hartwood District, said that she would like to comment on last week's presentation regarding the 2040 vision. She said that the consulting firm did an excellent job identifying Stafford County's challenges with growth and identity; however, if anyone asked any residents about Stafford's identity, they would not really get an answer because they did not have one. She said that they were just a collection of neighborhoods supporting other Counties that did have an industry to support and had an identity.

   Ms. Denham said that she was disappointed that this Board's most animated discussion and response to the presentation was centered on the name of the local buses and regional agencies, while their real priority, defining Stafford's economic identity, was left untouched and barely mentioned by anyone at the dais. She said that to move forward, this Board needed to sharpen its focus and decide on what specific industries or sectors they wished to bring to their County. She said that this required putting action verbs into their sentences and turning away from vague vision statements and inspirational musings.

Ms. Denham said that as she believed that if one was not part of the solution, they were part of the problem, she offered three specific industries that she believed were worth pursuing. She said that first, she agreed with the recommendation to pursue cybersecurity and technology. She said that they had an incredible population of defense and tech-related professionals, and they were in a prime location between Washington, D.C. and Richmond. She said that while they may not be able to draw the larger Raytheon and General Dynamics, there were thousands of mid-sized firms that supported them and would welcome an affordable, well-connected community like Stafford as an alternative to Tysons.

Ms. Denham said that second, Virginia's medical research and manufacturing sector was booming. Eli Lilly, AstraZeneca, and Merck were all investing nearly $12 billion building three new facilities in Virginia. She said that each one of these facilities was within two hours of Stafford. She said that the County clearly missed the chance to land a major pharmaceutical giant like that, but given their relative location to all three of these facilities, they could attract a mid-sized contract research organization that supported them. She said that to combine this with Mary Washington University exploring the addition of a potential doctoral program, Stafford could become a national hub linking medical and health education, research, and technology.

Ms. Denham said that finally, they needed to better leverage their natural and recreational assets. She said that with the loss of the youth sports facility in Woodbridge last year due to a fire, their immediate area needed a replacement. She said that Stafford could become a regional sports and outdoor recreation destination, so they should encourage potential investment ideas like the one by Coliseum Sports Resorts to bring a sports recreational complex to the County. She said that in addition, they should work with their sports and recreation staff to better leverage their location, expanding outdoor recreation and attracting commercial partners to help build and operate recreational attractions.

Ms. Denham said that this would not only bring options to their community members, but if it was big enough and done right, they could attract others to their County. She said that they needed to move Stafford forward, and so far she had not seen any real plans to do so. She said that she hoped the Board would take these ideas into consideration.

2. Kristin Maxson, Falmouth District, said that the suspended by-laws should state a concern of emergency upon the public. She said that they had four or more resolutions of this occurrence on the agenda today, listed on pages 30, 62, 158, and 175. She said that it could not be assumed that all Supervisors supported this, and it should be separated out in the vote. She said that whereas, in the year members of the Board were elected, the Board should not take action or vote on budget amendments in November or December. She said that this by-law was intended to respect early voting, audit time, and the political nature of deterrents, as well as holidays.

   Ms. Maxson said that the agenda for today's meeting, page 61 of 257, contained minutes from September 23, 2025. She said that this work session was incorrectly labeled as a regular meeting, when in fact it was a work session. She said that the suspended by-laws regarding suspended items and time-sensitive matters were questionable to the public. She said that on this day, the agenda portable window for the meeting was unavailable due to the format showing the window not to appear, preventing the public from downloading the agenda. She said that at one minute and 48 seconds into the hearing, the County Engineer stated, "and the exact process I'll leave to the County Attorney's Office." She said that this left concerns about the process with less than a month prior to elections, without explanation of an emergency, and voting in a work session passing R25-216 for a project with no defined scope and budget cap.

Ms. Maxson said it was a shame to use a small project was being used to overextend the County's hidden agendas and leave the new elected staff with tight financial figures. She said that the engineering plan was non-legible to the public, and the financial design was to be determined under the road project brookroad.php. She said that new elective members and boards should take note of the example of RPA effective build on data centers, page 91 of 257 in today's agenda. She said that this study would have significance after October 6, 2025, when Chesapeake Bay passed a house on RPA sign line.

3. Shamgar Connors, Hartwood District, said that at the previous, chaotic nine-hour Board meeting, he listened to a fellow citizen's public comments that expressed concern about a single person being disrespectful in the way they spoke to the Board, but he could not find any proof of that when he reviewed the video of the meeting. He said that he wanted to reiterate his opposition to gay rights and community advocacy, including the County's endorsement of Pride Month this past June. He said that he also wanted to express his concern and opposition to School Board Chair Maureen Siegmund's statement addressing bathroom policies in their public schools, which may require further investigation.

4. Al Watkins, George Washington District, said that he wanted to bring to the Board's attention several pressing issues related to the future of the County, including the Belle Plains campground, the Garrison, Buc-ee's, and data centers. He said that today, he wanted to focus on one additional project that would have a direct impact on Stafford, Fredericksburg, and Spotsylvania County: the proposed Rappahannock River Crossing. He said that he would like to submit an eight-page presentation that highlighted the shortcomings of the current Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO) proposal moving forward did not meet the needs of their ever-growing region.

   Mr. Watkins said that this analysis compared the level of service modeling of 25 intersections in the region, completed by the FAMPO consultant. He said that those serving on the FAMPO Policy Board were likely familiar with this. He said that he had made a comparison of the LOS data from both the no-build option and the preferred Option C. He said that in simple terms, this examined the delays experienced by drivers while waiting at intersections. He said that when comparing the Option C bridge to the no-build option, the waiting times were reduced at 13 intersections along Route 17 in Stafford and along Route 1.

   Mr. Watkins said that however, at the other 12 intersections within the City and in Spotsylvania, there was no difference in wait times between Option C and building a bridge. he said that in fact, new choke points with longer delays were created in the southern region when building a bridge. He said that as the Board may recall, the FAMPO Citizens Advisory Committee had recommended a branch off of Option C that would connect to Route 3 in Spotsylvania County, providing greater benefit to drivers in the region. He said that this scenario had been discussed at the June FAMPO Policy Board, where Option C had been advanced as the preferred option.

Mr. Watkins said that the Policy Board had also emphasized the need to ease congestion in the entire region, specifically assisting Spotsylvania County, which would experience little or no benefit from a single solitary crossing. He said that back on September 6, 2022, this Board of Supervisors had sent a letter to FAMPO requesting research of potential route options for the Rappahannock River crossing, and the City of Fredericksburg did the same. He said that it had taken just two letters from those jurisdictions to initiate the studying process that now entered the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Mr. Watkins said that he was suggesting that Stafford and the other jurisdictions consider sending a letter requesting a small study that truly benefited the entire region, perhaps a solution similar to what FAMPO and the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) had envisioned for the area.

5. Karen Fox, Hartwood District, said that she would like to speak tonight about wastewater, reclaimed purple pipe water, and how these related to the data centers being approved in Stafford. She said that older data centers could be extremely water-intensive, and traditional open cooling systems could use millions of gallons of water every day just to keep servers from overheating. She said that this water must be treated, pumped, and discharged, placing a significant strain on the community's infrastructure.

   Ms. Fox said that as technology was evolving, many new data centers were now built with closed-loop or adiabetic cooling systems. She said that in a closed-loop design, the same water circulated inside sealed pipes and was reused, rather than being lost to evaporation. She said that in an adiabetic system, cooling was primarily done with air, and a fine mist of water was added only on the hottest days. She said that these approaches could reduce water use by 70% to 95% compared to older systems. She said that even with these efficient systems, the numbers added up quickly. She said that Stafford had already approved over 23 data center buildings.

   Ms. Fox said that if each one used approximately 40,000 gallons of water per day during the summer heat, that was close to one million gallons of water per day. She said that this was with efficient systems; older methods used far more. She said that the problem was that Stafford did not yet have working reclaimed or purple pipe water systems capable of delivering the necessary supply for these data centers. She said that the County's wastewater plants could treat roughly 18 million gallons per day, but this figure represented total wastewater capacity, not reclaimed water available.

   Ms. Fox said that building one new facility would not provide the necessary capacity for reclaimed water systems, even if it were to come online within five years. She said that before any more data centers moved forward, the County should ensure that data centers were using true low-water cooling systems and had an actual, proven source of reclaimed water. She said that this meant that the source must exist in reality, not just in plans or projections.

6. Connie Peebles Barrow, Rock Hill District, said that before she began, she would like to express her gratitude to the Board of Supervisors for their leadership over the past few months, with respect to the revised regulations and Comprehensive Plan amendments. She said that their efforts demonstrated a commitment to being leaders at the state and national levels, and she believed this would be a great opportunity to showcase sustainable, smart development.

   Ms. Barrow said that she would like to discuss a matter that had come to their attention regarding the Kraken loop. She said that she was not sure if anyone was familiar with the term, as she had to look it up. She said that the Kraken loop was Dominion Energy's plan for preparing the infrastructure for the proposed data center applications. She said that it appeared that they were already moving forward with this development, so the County should be aware of that. She said that the term "Kraken" originated from Scandinavian mythology, referring to a gigantic sea monster with tentacled arms capable of sinking ships. She said that while she appreciated the creative branding, she was not convinced it was the best analogy for Dominion Energy's role in pushing new infrastructure for the proposed data centers.

   Ms. Barrow said that this was an early stage, but there was a community meeting scheduled for this Wednesday, November 12, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Rowser Building. She said that additionally, a virtual meeting was planned for Monday, November 10 at 12:00 p.m. She said that there was a proposed 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line would span across from Caroline County, close to Courthouse Road on the east side of the County, then cross north towards Fauquier. She said that it was expected to be approximately 100 feet tall. She said that given its high voltage and potential impact on the environment, she was concerned about the electromagnetic frequencies (EMF) and the proximity to schools and residential neighborhoods.

7. Daniel Cortez, Aquia District, said that today he spoke as an independent voter, Marine Vietnam veteran, and private citizen, not one of the 18 national presidential appointees on the President's Advisory Commission on Hispanic Prosperity during his administration, but he still served him with loyalty, and as a gubernatorial appointee under Governor Glenn Youngkin. He said that as expected in off-year elections, the political pendulum swung opposite the incumbent administration. He said that he gave his congratulations to the victors, but wanted to acknowledge that considerably fewer voters showed up at the polls this time compared to the general election.

   Mr. Cortez said that sadly, this Board had had a tumultuous year. He said that some said it was the worst leadership in decades. He said that to clarify, he would not say that about Ms. Allen, who had been stellar. He said that the emotional and troubling public and private actions of the Aquia Supervisor remained disappointing, and he prayed for her wellbeing and prosperity in her future endeavors. He said that Governor Youngkin had recently demonstrated his great leadership by personally calling him and meeting with his family to discuss the racial insensitivity of the soon-to-be former House of Delegate member Paul Milde.

Mr. Cortez said that they had discussed what responsible action would be by Mr. Milde to atone for his troubling history as this Board's former chairman, when he refused to acknowledge Hispanic Heritage Month, which was required by federal law. He said that sadly, Mr. Milde had refused the Governor's encouragement to make things right, not just for the Cortez family, but for their entire Hispanic community, which made up over 16% of the vote locally. He said that this ultimately had cost him the election. He said that Mr. Milde, as well as his closest supporters running for delegate in Fredericksburg and in the Aquia District, had been soundly defeated. He said that this must have sent a message to those who supported candidates harboring what many may view as deep-seated racism.

Mr. Cortez said that he reminded Governor Youngkin that if Mr. Milde had been man enough to apologize responsibly, he would have encouraged forgiveness, shaken his hand, and maybe in time, he would have had his support. He said that he just prayed that he also sought professional help. He said that he wished the new Board next year well and asked good man Mr. English in the Hardwood District to be the voice of calm and wisdom to help keep order and discipline. He said that he also appreciated Vice Chair Allen's leadership as well. He said that he again thanked Governor Youngkin for his great leadership and remarkable advancements Virginia had made with him as Governor.

8. Rick MacGregor, Aquia District, said that he would like to congratulate Board members on their recent electoral wins. He said that Mark Twain once said, "It's easier to fool people than it is to convince them that they've been fooled." He said that he found this to be particularly true. He was amazed to see the proclamation given to the Native Americans tonight, not because he had any issue with Native Americans, but because he believed it was misguided. He said that he and his wife had reiterated to the Board at their public meetings that the Patawomeck Indian Tribe were not actual Indians; he had repeatedly asked their members for documented proof of their heritage.

   Mr. MacGregor said that he had yet to see any real documentation, which the County had also requested before approving their lease of land to the Tribe. He said that he was concerned that the people claiming to be Patawomeck were attempting to legitimize white people stealing the identity of Native Americans. He asked that the County reconsider supporting the Tribe, as it was perpetuating a lie. He said that until he saw documentation proving otherwise, he would continue to believe that they were white people.

9. Jerrilyn Eby MacGregor, Rock Hill District, said that since May, she and her husband had presented the Board with documentary evidence that the Patawomeck Indian Tribe was fake. She said that Stafford had long promoted and supported this group because they believed what the group had told them. She said that in 1996, Stafford leased a 6.5-acre parcel near Aquia Landing to the American Indian Society of Washington, not to the Patawomeck Indian Tribe because it did not yet exist; later the lease was transferred.

   Ms. MacGregor said that last May, this Board may renewal contingent upon the group presenting the records they told the General Assembly they had in 2010. She said that she believed the County was still waiting, but those records should have been on their desk the next morning if they existed. She said that however, her point was that they never existed. She said that in 2019, Stafford County leased the Duff Green House tract to the PITV, which now served as their tribal center. She said that last November, this Board honored the PITV for Native American Heritage Month.

Ms. MacGregor said that they did not know the truth then, but they did now. She said that tonight's Proclamation which included the fake Patawomeck Tribe was an insult to legitimate Indigenous neighbors and a reward for the white people who usurped a cultural heritage that was not theirs. She said that despite overwhelming proof that the PITV was not an Indian Tribe, Stafford continued to promote them. She said that in 2025, the Stafford Tourism Office promoted Bill Deyo's book signing and the shuttle bus between Ferry Farm and the tribal center, as well as the Patawomeck Museum and Cultural Center, noting that Stafford was proud to be home to this group.

Ms. MacGregor said that Stafford should not even acknowledge the PITV, as their intent should not be to enable white people to defraud people of color, but that was the result. She said that neither the Stafford nor King George Historical Societies supported the PITV because they were not real. She said that it was sad when their own historical societies refused to be their cheerleaders.

10. William Michael Ferris King, Griffis-Widewater District, said that he grew up in Stafford County and said that he returned about four years ago. He said that at that time, he had come into a sum of money and was able to step outside of the bubble he had been in. He said that the bubble of people and experiences they all created shaped the world they lived in. He said that he was here today because he wanted to discuss a 501(c)4, which was a type of non-profit organization that allowed for up to 49% of revenues to be spent on political advertising. He said that he had formed one of these types of non-profits, focusing on issue advocacy.

    Mr. King said that there were many things in the world they could be concerned about, and his concern was focused on people living on the streets. He said that he had spent a lot of time talking to people who were living on the streets, and in his discussions with them, he learned that every single person he talked to had been to Rappahannock Regional Jail. He said that he did not have nearly enough time to talk about this during his public comments, but he wanted to emphasize they were subjecting their citizens to torture. He said that they had all been in a bubble for so long that they felt they could not escape it, but this was ruining and destroying their communities. He said that this was obviously true, and all that anyone needed to do to realize this was to talk to people who had been there.

11. Jeff Adams, Hartwood District, said that he had done some calculations regarding data centers. He said that he had created a hypothetical 1000-by-500-foot data center and calculated that the land required would be 11.4784 acres. He said that after accounting for a 750-foot setback, the land needed would increase to 114.7842 acres. He said that in that case, only 10% would actually be used and the rest would be fallow. He said that he would like for everyone to consider that if a 200-foot buffer were established around the property, approximately 37 acres of trees could be planted.

    Mr. Adams said that at 40 trees per acre, this would result in over 1,500 trees, capable of producing over 100,000 pounds of fruit annually. He said that along with that, they could have sheep to graze the land. He said that with over 40 acres surrounding the data centers, that could accommodate about 300 sheep, selling each at $300 a piece. He asked the Board to recall that if they had an agricultural program in schools, it would pay for itself. He said that a high school student could raise 300 sheep at $300 each, earning $90,000 per year. He said that furthermore, 40 acres could be divided into 10-acre community gardens, each producing around $100,000 worth of product to support local food banks or other initiatives.

Mr. Adams said that he brought this issue up at the Ag PDR, because as a farmer, he believed this land was underutilized and could be repurposed for more sustainable and productive uses, such as planting walnut, persimmon, or pawpaw trees, establishing a harvestable crop.

REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Vanuch – stated that she did not have any reports, but she did want to address the October Board meeting, where they had voted on the data center setback ordinance. She said that she received so many emails and phone calls from residents regarding the rearrangement of the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. She said that she made an effort to respond to all of them, but felt it necessary to make a public apology. She said that she knew that some of the Board members had tried to keep it as it was originally, but she felt terrible for the constituents who had to wait until almost 2:00 a.m. and for the Planning Commissioners who stayed until well after midnight for that important vote.

Ms. Vanuch said that she was disturbed to hear residents express their disenfranchisement with their local government, feeling that the agenda rearrangement was done on purpose. She said that she was not trying to say that was true; she understood her colleagues' intent on rearranging the agenda, but she wanted to say that the reality was that people felt disenfranchised. She said that the entire Board was ultimately accountable for that, so she wanted to extend her heartfelt apologies to all the residents who had to endure that wait. She asked the public to please hear her when she said that their voices do matter, and without their advocacy, the results would have been significantly different and taken much longer. She asked them to please not give up and not feel disenfranchised.

Dr. Yeung – stated that as they entered this season of gratitude, she would like to take a moment to recognize the incredible small businesses that were the backbone of Stafford County. She said that specifically, in Garrisonville and Embery Mill, they had hundreds of locally owned shops, restaurants, and services that supported their families, create jobs, and kept their economy strong. She said that she encouraged their community to shop small, shop Stafford, and celebrate the entrepreneurships and entrepreneurs who made this County such a vibrant place to live.

Dr. Yeung said that she would also like to extend her congratulations to all the candidates who were elected and re-elected to positions across Stafford County. She said that she would like to welcome their new colleagues, Supervisor-Elect Maya Guy of the Aquia District, and Supervisor-Elect Kecia Evans of the Falmouth District. She said that she looked forward to working collaboratively as they continued serving their residents. She said that furthermore, she wanted to sincerely thank the families of Garrisonville for placing their trust in her once again.

Dr. Yeung said that it was an honor to continue representing them and she would always lead with service and remain focused on the needs and values of their community. She said that regarding her abstention vote or any other decision she made on this dais, she wanted to be very clear. She said that she did not vote based on popularity; she voted based on responsibility. She said that every elected official had three choices: yes, no, or abstain. She said that abstention was not a weakness; it was a valid and deliberate vote when the information was incomplete or the proposal lacked merit.

Dr. Yeung said that recently, two of her colleagues used her abstention as a political talking point, which subsequently led to her personal safety being put at risk. She said that their words on this dais mattered, and they could create real consequences. She said that if a colleague disagreed with her decision, the appropriate time to raise that concern was here in their Board discussion, not later as a personal attack. She said that they must model professionalism, especially because new Board members would follow the tone they set. She said that she would continue to use all three options available to her: yes, no, and abstention. She said that based on facts, transparency, and what was in the best interest of Stafford County, her integrity was not up for debate.

Ms. Bohmke – reported on some information from previous committee meetings. She said that first, she wanted to congratulate Mr. English and Dr. Yeung on their successful re-election to the Board. She said that she also wanted to congratulate Kecia Evans on winning the Falmouth District seat to replace her on the Board of Supervisors. She said that she had had the pleasure of knowing Ms. Evans since she appointed her to the Parks and Rec Commission, and she had seen her in action over the past six or eight years. She said that she had no doubt that Ms. Evans would do a great job as an elected official and enjoy the decisions she would make.

Ms. Bohmke said that she also had the privilege of wishing a happy 100th birthday to Rhoda, a member of the Stafford Baptist Church, who celebrated her milestone birthday at the Falls Run Community Center. She said that her family praised her faith as the key to her long life. She said that she would also like to thank the Station 12 Fire and Rescue team for their participation in the celebration, which included their trucks and sirens. She said that they were nearing the end of their search for a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Virginia Railway Express (VRE), and she would provide more information at their next meeting. She said that as a member of the executive committee, she wanted to let the public know that they were in the final stages of this process.

Ms. Bohmke said that for VRE riders, they may be aware that they had reinstated a step-up program with Amtrak, allowing them to ride Amtrak around Washington, D.C. for a few additional dollars. She said that this program had previously been in place but had been discontinued, and now was reinstated. She said that they were also making changes to VRE's service on January 12, 2026. She said that the Commonwealth of Virginia was building a new Long Bridge across the Potomac River, which would be a massive but necessary project to improve rail service. She said that in the past 32 years, many of the VRE delays were due to congestion at Union Station.

Ms. Bohmke said that with the construction for that project, some of the trains would be delayed by a few minutes. She said that another major project was the improvements at L'Enfant Station and the fourth track, working in conjunction with the Long Bridge project. She said that more information on these projects were available on the VRE website and the Virginia Department of Public Rail and Transportation (DPRT) website. She said that they received word from the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) that the Falmouth Bridge, connecting to the City of Fredericksburg, would undergo a full replacement. She said that for several years, they had only considered replacing the upper platform, and she had been advocating for a pedestrian and bicycle sidewalk across the bridge; however due to the cantilevers' limitations, it would have been challenging to support that design.

Ms. Bohmke said that thankfully, the Commonwealth Transportation Board had decided to reconstruct the entire bridge, which was a significant improvement. She said that they now had full funding for the project, which was not the case a year and a half ago. She said that she was thrilled that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Commonwealth Transportation Board had made this decision. She said that this decision was not unlike the Long Bridge project in terms of there being potential traffic delays, and VDOT would be sharing much more information as they finalized the design in the coming months.

Ms. Bohmke said that she wanted to emphasize that a notable aspect of this project was the 10-foot pedestrian and bicycle dedicated lane from Stafford County into the City of Fredericksburg. She said that notably, the Falmouth Bridge would not be closed, unlike the Chatham Bridge, which was closed for its reconstruction. She said that she wanted to report that she had attended a data center groundbreaking today and brought back a gift. She said that it was the Vantage Data Center, located in the Hartwood District, off Centreport Parkway, just south of the Amazon facility. She said that the data center spanned 920,000 square feet and would consist of three buildings.

Ms. Bohmke said that it was a great location, situated among other industrial buildings. She said that Vantage was headquartered in Denver and had completed projects on four continents. She said that they would be hiring many people for this project, and she would leave it at that. She said that the ribbon-cutting ceremony was a great success, thanks to their Economic Development staff. She said that finally, if anyone would like to share their opinion on the Rappahannock River Crossing, she encouraged them to visit the FAMPO website and participate in the discussion.

Mr. English – thanked the residents of Hartwood for putting their trust in him for another four years. He said that he appreciated their support and the time they took to vote for him. He said that he promised to continue serving them faithfully. He said that he would also like to extend his congratulations to Mr. Oats on his campaign. He said that he was impressed by his gentlemanly demeanor, and he believed that he conducted himself with integrity and kindness throughout the process. He said that he hoped this would serve as an example to how all campaigns should be run.

Mr. English said that he would also like to congratulate Maya Guy and Kecia Evans on their election wins. He said that he would also like to bring attention to the Mountain View Fire and Rescue's coat drive. He said that they had ordered 2,000 coats for children in the Stafford County Schools. He said that the coats would be provided through Operation Warmth, a partnership between Stafford County Fire Rescue, Mountain View Fire Rescue, Stafford County Public

Schools, and the community. He said that all funds came from general donations, and 100% of the proceeds would go towards purchasing coats for local children. He said that if they would like to donate, they could send a check to Mountain View Fire and Safety, Inc., with "coats for kids" on the memo line, to P.O. Box 2528, Stafford, Virginia.

Mr. English said that he would also like to remind everyone about Veterans Day, November 11, 2025, and lighting up their green lightbulbs for Operation Green Light. He said that he also wanted to echo Ms. Vanuch's comments about the reorganization of the Board's previous meeting agenda, which he did not support and wanted to apologize for. He said that he would also like to bring to the Board's attention a matter regarding a contract for a movie theater that was supposedly signed for the Garrison. He said that he would like to get consensus from the Board to revisit this matter and confirm the contract existed.

Ms. Allen asked if Mr. English was asking County staff to finagle a contract from the Pence Group.

Mr. English said that yes, he would like to see the actual contract.

Ms. Allen asked Ms. McClendon if the Board could request staff to see the contract.

Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney, said that yes, the Board could ask staff to obtain that document. She said that it was not a public document, so staff may not have it in their materials, but they could always submit a request through the County Administrator to the Pence Group and see what information they could provide.

Ms. Allen said that she would poll the Board to determine if there was consensus to ask staff to request that information from the Pence Group.

Ms. Gary said that she thought it was acceptable to ask. She said that for the record, she would like to reiterate that she would still support the project without the documentation.

Ms. Allen confirmed that there was consensus from the Board to direct staff to request that information from the Pence Group.

Ms. Gary – expressed her gratitude to some of her colleagues for bringing an issue to the forefront, and she appreciated that it was done in a respectful and non-partisan manner. She said that there was concern from the public regarding the changes to the agenda in their last meeting. She said that she had left a bit early due to personal matters, and she hoped she was forgiven for that. She said that she had believed that rearranging the agenda was the right thing to do at the time; however, she was not aware that one of the items they were hearing, the project brought up by Mr. English, would be as contentious as it was and would drag on for a while.

Ms. Gary said that she apologized to the public for not being more considerate of their time and fatigue. She said that it was disappointing to see people leave early, but she appreciated the dedication of those who came and those who stayed to make their voices heard. She said that she would like to encourage everyone to continue to make their voices heard through emails, phone calls, and in-person meetings. She said that it really did make a difference and allowed the Board to do their jobs better here. She said that she would also like to extend congratulations to all the newly elected and reelected officials, including her colleagues on the Board and those new to the group.

Ms. Gary said that she had had the pleasure of knowing Ms. Evans for the Falmouth District and Ms. Guy for her own seat in Aquia would both do a great job. She said that she had known them both for some time now and looked forward to seeing their work on this Board. She said that there was some confusion regarding her own candidacy, which she had withdrawn in support of Ms. Guy. She said that she had received some phone calls about why her name was not on the ballot, but she wanted to let everyone know she would be on the ballot for State Senate in 2027.

Ms. Gary said that she was no longer running as an Independent candidate and would instead be seeking endorsement as a Democrat, which aligned best with her political position in the context of the current federal government. She said that she would also like to mention that she would be attending the upcoming Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) conference, along with Ms. Bohmke and Dr. Yeung. She said that she was excited to share the information she gathered from the conference with Ms. Guy and to continue working with her to advance the County's goals.

Mr. Diggs – thanked Vice Chair Allen for presiding over the meeting tonight. He apologized for not being able to attend, as he was currently at a Homeland Security conference, and he would elaborate on that later. He said that he wanted to give his congratulations to Mr. English and Dr. Yeung on their reelection victories, as well as to Ms. Evans and Ms. Guy, whom he looked forward to working with. He said that he recently attended the Band Together event at one of their local high schools, and he was proud to see the community come together to provide food for families in need.

Mr. Diggs said that he would also like to highlight and recognize the constituents who spoke out about a constituent who expressed provocative views. He said that he wanted the community to understand was that when the Supervisors sat in the seats on the dais, as representatives of the government, they must respect freedom of speech, even when it was uncomfortable. He said that the community set the tone for what was and was not acceptable, and they had parameters and boundaries in place; however, it was inspiring to see constituents stand up and agree that they needed to show more respect and decorum.

Mr. Diggs said that he would also like to discuss mental health. He said that as he mentioned, he was currently at a Homeland Security conference, where they were exploring terroristic threats and the impact on the general public. He said that a lot of the information they had received had been shocking, even for experts in the field. He said that this had led him to emphasize the importance of mental health funding. He said that they needed to prioritize funding for organizations like Healing Station and others in the community, which they were unable to support in the past due to budget constraints.

Mr. Diggs said that he believed that having more mental health resources available could help prevent attacks and incidents that were occurring both domestically and globally. He said that he would also like to express his appreciation to Ms. Gary for her courage in the face of recent controversy and public scrutiny. He said that he wanted to thank her for holding her head high and for her dedication to the community. He said that he was praying for her and her family, and he was disturbed by the vitriol and negativity he had seen online and in person.

Mr. Diggs said that as a Christian, he believed everyone should strive to be kinder and more compassionate, especially in the face of adversity. He said that they needed to show compassion and empathy; when they saw that someone was struggling, they should not add to their burden. He said that he wanted to thank Ms. Gary for demonstrating the professionalism that he expected from leaders in the community. He said that he would like to address two additional points.

Mr. Diggs said that firstly, he would like to clarify the intention behind his vote to reorder the agenda. He said that he had cast that vote out of compassion for a community member whose wife had recently undergone surgery. He said that he did not intend to silence anyone's voice or deter them from speaking. He said that as leaders, it was their duty to look out for everyone, regardless of their title or profession. He said that he was disappointed to see some comments suggesting that his vote was motivated by personal reasons, rather than a genuine desire to support the community.

Mr. Diggs said that it was concerning that people blatantly stated that they did not care if someone's wife had surgery or not, and this lack of empathy was a sign that the Board as leaders needed to conduct themselves at a higher level in order to talk through these issues and reach a point of mutual understanding and respect for humanity. He said that similar to Ms. Gary, he had underestimated the time required for the conversation on the Garrison. He said that he had expected it to be a shorter discussion, given the project's long history and previous approval by the Planning Commission and the Board. He said that however, he was wrong, and he apologized to any constituents who were deterred from speaking later in the meeting.

Mr. Diggs said that he appreciated the feedback from other Supervisors, who had emphasized the importance of hearing their constituents' voices and valuing their input. He said that finally, he would like to emphasize the importance of being mindful of their words and actions. He said that after their previous meeting when they took up their data center ordinance, he received several constituent emails expressing concern and frustration with his cold and emotionless demeanor during the meeting. He said that he wanted to explain sometimes the behavior of Supervisors on the dais was due to issues happening behind the scenes rather than those facing the public.

Mr. Diggs said that during the meeting, he went into the back room and had a colleague state to him that as a result of his vote, they would hang it around his neck if he ever tried to run for reelection. He said that trying to process that statement from a colleague was difficult and he was not given an opportunity to react. He said that it was a very difficult situation to handle and he wanted to clarify that things could be more complex than they appeared to the public. He asked that everyone please be mindful of what they said and how they interacted with each other.

Ms. Allen – stated that as it related to the Board's previous data center vote, she would like to address the concerns that were raised, as mentioned by Ms. Vanuch, that some people felt disenfranchised and their voices were taken. She said that was not her intention. She said that she voted as she did because she understood the situation with the applicant and wanted to ensure his wife received the care she needed. She said that they did not move the other Schools item on the agenda, so staff had to present that information near 3:00 a.m. She said that she hoped this clarified that the reorganization was not intended to silence anyone; if she had intended to do that, she would have voted to move the Schools item ahead as well.

Ms. Allen said that she did not realize the impact as it appeared to be a simple request, and she considered it straightforward because the project did not seem complicated. She said that however, she recognized that it disappointed people and she apologized for any unintended consequences. She said that with that being said, she had a few reports. She said that tomorrow, she would be attending the 250th Anniversary Ceremony of the Marines at Quantico tomorrow. She said that next year was the 250th Anniversary of the United States, as well. She said that she wanted to tell all the Marines in Stafford County, Semper Fi.

Ms. Allen said that as they approached the holiday season, she encouraged everyone to remember the importance of home, family, and community, especially during difficult times in their nation. She said that regarding the Widewater Beach Association, she was pleased to announce that the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) had secured the paperwork to transfer the deed for the pond to the Homeowners Association (HOA). She said that she had forwarded the information to the HOA secretary, and they would schedule meetings to discuss the next steps and hopefully complete the process by spring next year.

Ms. Allen said that the construction project on Telegraph Road was ongoing, so she asked everyone to please be mindful of the narrow road and potential speed or sharp turns. She said that additionally, she would like to highlight the recent businesses that have opened in the community, including a bookstore at Stafford Marketplace. She said that supporting local businesses was crucial for commercial development and economic growth in the County. She said that she recently spoke with a constituent who was looking to open a small business in Stafford County, and she encouraged everyone to consider supporting local entrepreneurs.

Ms. Allen said that one of the concerns he shared with her over the phone was that Stafford had a reputation for certain issues. She said that he was also worried about whether there would be enough residents to frequent his establishment. She said that she encouraged all citizens to support the local businesses, especially during the holiday season. She said that they needed to diversify their economic base and not rely solely on restaurants and shopping, but they should support those that were here.

Ms. Allen said that Black Friday was approaching, and she urged everyone to spend as much as possible in Stafford County, as that money would be reinvested in the community. She said that additionally, there was an issue with logging on Widewater Road. She said she would like to thank Sheriff Decatur for his efforts in addressing this concern. She said that several residents had reported instances of illegal logging, and she reached out to the Sheriff the next day. He had two deputies stationed at the intersection area, where the suspected activity was occurring, starting as early as 4:30 am.

Ms. Allen said that the deputies were present for two consecutive days, but did not observe any activities outside of normal business hours. She said that although they did not see anything, it was possible that something did happen. She said that she wanted to assure residents that the County would continue to monitor the situation. She said that in Virginia, logging was allowed as long as the permits were valid. She encouraged everyone to reach out to the County if they had concerns about logging operations in their community. She said that they wanted to verify the validity of permits and ensure that they were operating within the terms of their permit.

Ms. Allen said that she appreciated the patience of all federal workers, acknowledging the very difficult circumstances they were facing at the moment. She said that she had friends who were federal workers, and she knew the toll this shutdown was taking on everyone. She said that this was the longest shutdown in the nation's history, and she wanted to assure them that the County was committed to supporting them. She said that she urged them to keep an eye on the County website and their staff was working hard to keep resources up to date. She said that she also wanted to acknowledge the efforts of the local churches and food banks, which had been providing essential services.

Ms. Allen said that she urged everyone to stay positive and know that they were thinking of them and praying for a swift resolution to this shutdown, so they could continue to provide for their families and themselves. She said that she also wanted to extend congratulations to all the newly elected and reelected delegates and Board members. She said that she looked forward to working with each and every one of them.

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

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

REPORT OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

William Ashton, County Administrator, said that he would be asking Ms. Andrea Light to present information for his report tonight. He said that they would start with the Five-Year Financial Plan, which was an important component of their budget planning and preparation. He said that it was essential to consider the four pillars of strategic alignment, including the Comprehensive Plan, the Strategic Plan, and the Five-Year Financial Plan, which in turn informed the next year's budget plan.

Mr. Ashton said that this information was vital to their budget blueprint, and Ms. Light would provide a detailed explanation in a minute. He said that as he had done the previous year when he worked on his first Stafford budget, this plan allowed them to consider the long-term impact of their decisions, not just for the immediate year, but also for years two, three, and four. He said that he would now turn the rest of the presentation over to Ms. Light, who would walk the Board through the details.

BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT: FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN PRESENTATION FOR THE GENERAL FUND

Andrea Light, Chief Financial Officer for Stafford County, said that as they would be reviewing their five-year financial plan, which included the opportunities and challenges ahead, as well as strategic investments and policy decisions that would shape the future of Stafford. She said that they had conservative and stable projections, which they believed would hold true within the next five years and their model. She said that they would examine funding strategies, mandatory increases, schools, technology, and partner agencies, as well as strategic investments based on the Board's Strategic Plan. She said that they were always open to direction and feedback.

Ms. Light said that she would begin with funding strategies. She said that provided was a layout of their General Fund revenues in millions over the next five years. She noted that this represented all of their revenue sources, excluding real estate and exonerations. She said that they could see the changes in their revenues over time. She said that within their Five-Year Plan, she had provided the change in their tax rate needed to sustain the plan through Fiscal Year 2031.

Ms. Light said that she would like to highlight a few points on this slide. She said that their estimated per penny was flattening out, and they did not expect to see economic growth in their real estate base, which was largely tied to the unfunded state mandate for exonerations. She said that the exonerations were expected to continue growing year over year. She said that looking at their funding sources, if they had a flat tax rate in Fiscal Year 27, they had $6.8 million from exonerations and $9.8 million from other sources, which left them with $3 million of new revenue for the Board's strategic initiatives.

Ms. Light said that as they moved forward through this budget season, they would have discussions with the Board to modify revenue strategies and create more sustainable revenue streams. She said that they may explore solar farm tax discussions, categories of personal property tax, and other revenue sources. She said that next, she would examine their expenditures over the next five years. She said that they would start with School Division operating and debt service. She said that the presentation slides showed the debt service increase for schools, assuming the projects continued at the same pace, timing, and expense as they were currently included in the Fiscal Year 26 or 35 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). She said that she wanted to highlight the operating impacts tied to the additional school openings.

Ms. Light said that in Fiscal Year 2027, they had $10.2 million, which was slightly different from the Schools' current projection of $10.8 million. She said that the difference was due to timing, as the Schools' numbers were last updated a year ago; however, it was part of the school Capital Improvement Plan and she intended to represent that. She said that they started with an estimated $10.2 million in Fiscal Year 2027, which increased in subsequent years due to inflationary impacts. She said that in Fiscal Years 2030 and 2031, they would see the impacts of building and operating Drew Middle School and Hartwood Elementary School.

Ms. Light said that their School Operating funding assumptions for Fiscal Year 2027 included an increase of $10.8 million, which would provide funding for the schools to open three new schools in Fiscal Year 2027. She said that the graph on the left-hand side of the slide showed the change in funding and the change in per pupil budgeted. She said that there would be a continuous increase as they moved forward.

Ms. Light said that they would also consider County-based mandatory changes, including a mid-year raise for general government employees in Fiscal Year 2026, which would impact their Fiscal Year 2027 increases. She said that they had increases in health insurance, which would be realized in Fiscal Year 2027. She said that they were close to $5 million in vacancy savings, but they anticipated that this would decrease over time due to attrition.

Ms. Light said that as the federal government continued to have layoffs, local governments may become more attractive, potentially reducing the need for vacancy savings. She said that other County mandatory changes included inflation, contract increases, and utility increases. She said that in County debt service, they anticipated minor decreases over the next five years, but also recommended holding these costs for future increased debt for the Courthouse.

Ms. Light said that they also had investments in technology, including a new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system for the Sheriff's Office, an M365 update for County Information Technology (IT), and a financial system replacement planned for Fiscal Year 2029. She said that staff was concerned about change fatigue and needed to ensure that they were properly resourced, funded, and staffed. She said that partner agency assumptions included an increase of 5% for the Juvenile Center. She said that they currently had a $1.9 million shortfall in Fiscal Year 26, plus a 10% increase. She said that the jail provided its first draft of their budget, showing a $5.6 million increase for Stafford County.

Ms. Light said that the library's Fiscal Year 27 request was $592,800, and was assuming a 5% annual increase. She said that additionally, partner agencies were increasing their base budget by about 5% annually. She said that considering the concept of a flat tax rate in Fiscal Year 27, they would have new projected revenue of approximately $3 million. She said that the items they had covered so far, mandatory technology, partner agencies, School Operating and Debt Service, totaled $28 million, creating a funding gap of about $25 million going into Fiscal Year 27.

Ms. Light said that the Board's Strategic Plan was important in understanding how this would be funded. She said that Strategic Plan Item 1.2 recommended developing a funding structure and capital program to facilitate the Transportation Master Plan. She said that working with the Transportation Department, staff felt that the Board had achieved this priority. She said that they had not received funding through Smart Scale Round 6, and there were no awarded projects.

Ms. Light said that staff recommended continuing to plan for revenue sources to meet their master plan initiatives for Smart Scale Round 7. She said that under this recommendation, staff proposed reducing their annual ongoing contribution to Transportation by $2.5 million, while increasing their policy requirement from $1 million to $1.25 million to shore up some of the shortfall. She said that Item 6.1 aimed to continue efforts to reassess Stafford County's public safety salary scale to maximize retention and recruitment. She said that from Fiscal Year 22 through FY26, the Board had invested over $30.7 million in public safety.

Ms. Light said that in Fiscal Year 26, there were no market increases adopted. She said that staff anticipated an annual comparison with the market before the Fiscal Year 2027 proposed budget, which would inform the Board's decisions when they adopted the budget. She said that the assumptions they had were market increases of 3.25% in Fiscal Year 27 and 2.25% in subsequent years, with a step increase in all years. She said that Item 6.3 recommended creating staffing capacity and implementing programs to reduce community risks. She said that the Sheriff's Department had not added any uniform full-time positions to its budget in Fiscal Year 25 and 26, and in Fiscal Year 24, there was only one new position.

Ms. Light said that their staffing assumptions included four deputies in Fiscal Year 27, five in FY28, and six in the last three years. She said that Fire and Rescue had not added any new positions since Fiscal Year 26. She said that in Fiscal Year 25, they received one new ambulance crew with six staff members and one fire marshal. She said that they had understaffed stations at Potomac Hills, Widewater, and Brooke, and lacked ambulance crews at Mountain View and Rock Hill. She said that there may be future discussions and comparisons regarding shift work and community progress.

Ms. Light said that their staffing assumptions included adding about half an engine crew every year, approximately $800,000, with an annual increase of about 5%. She said that under the Board's strategic item for Excellence in Governance with Transformational Leadership, they had Item 7.2, focusing on customer service retention and recruitment centered around the County's values. She said that they had explored several initiatives within this area, such as offering $1,500 in tuition reimbursement, but the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) maximum was $5,500. She said that they planned to research comparable localities and bring back suggestions to the Board.

Ms. Light said that to reduce health insurance costs, they could create wellness activities for staff and identify variances within the health insurance fee structure. She said that they could also promote their health savings accounts, providing staff with excellent medical support at a lower cost to the County. She said that additionally, they would continue to focus on developing transformational leadership, investing in employees, and understanding the drivers behind their assumptions. She said that their current CPI was 2%, but the cost of meat and poultry, fish, eggs had increased 6.5%.

Ms. Light said that compensation for state and local government workers had risen 4% as of June 2025. She said that the FY26 pay raise had not been received yet by staff; they would receive it in January. Because of this, they were assuming a 6% increase in Fiscal Year 27, with 5% increases in FY28 through FY31, which would be allocated between raises and market study impacts. She said that last year's Fiscal Year 2026 budget had only approved revenue- or expenditure-neutral positions, and this was a bit of a reset.

Ms. Light said that as they moved forward, they needed to assume that they would be taking a more strategic approach to investments in order to eliminate gaps and improve service delivery. She said that the provided chart showed that to keep up with population growth, they would need to add eight new full-time equivalent (FTE) positions annually. She said that the plan started with four, moving to five, six, seven, and eight in the fifth year. She said that there were lots of opportunities and challenges within the Five-Year Plan.

Ms. Light said that the five-year revenue increase was $167.9 million, with $92.5 million invested in Schools and the remainder in County investments. She said that staff would seek the Board's direction on their declining real estate revenue base and exploring alternative revenue sources, possible changes in infrastructure growth and advancing strategic priorities to meet the 2040 vision and meet the needs of Schools Operating and Debt Service. She said that in January 2026, they would continue these discussion through the Board Annual Retreat, a Five-Year Financial Plan work session, and an FY2027 Proposed Budget work session.

Ms. Vanuch said that she wanted to tell Ms. Light that this was one of the most accessible and well-organized budget presentations and five-year plans she had seen. She said that Ms. Light's ability to present complex information in a clear and concise manner was truly commendable. She said that she wanted to discuss how data centers would fit into this Five-Year Plan. She said that Ms. Light had mentioned potential opportunities for increased tax revenue, including a solar farm tax and personal property tax on boats or a Business, Professional, and Occupational License (BPOL) tax.

Ms. Vanuch said that she was surprised that Ms. Light did not mention increasing the data center tax. She asked if staff used the calculation they currently had to build out the assumptions, and whether they had conducted any modeling to demonstrate how raising the data center tax to match Prince William or Loudoun Counties, based on current approvals, would impact the revenue gap.

Ms. Light said that staff had not included data center revenue in their personal property calculations for this Five-Year Plan. She said that these projections were conservative, and she believed she had a good understanding of the situation; however, some of the data centers that were developing were still unknown in terms of type and timing. She said that to avoid being overly ambitious, they had chosen not to include these uncertainties in their projections. She said that to gain a better understanding, they were planning to conduct a study with PFM. She said that as they approached Fiscal Year 27's budget, staff would continue to refine the projections for the data centers.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the PFM study would be done prior to that timeframe.

Ms. Light said that she hoped so.

Ms. Vanuch said that she was unsure what the direction was for staff, but based on what had been approved, she believed they were missing that huge piece. She said that that omission would offset some of the revenue they were losing due to unfunded mandates Ms. Light had mentioned. She said that she thought they should have a slide that clearly explained this, so that people understood that this information was not including that particular piece.

Mr. Ashton said that their desire was to have PFM's study done by the time they starting working through the budget. He said that however, the County anticipated no personal property tax revenue from data centers in the upcoming year. He said that the assessment was made in January, so what was assessed in January would be the only revenue they saw. He said that the Old Potomac Church building, which was currently under construction, was running approximately four weeks behind schedule.

Mr. Ashton said that based on his recent conversations, it was expected to be completed in February. He said that therefore, they would not include any data center revenue in the 2027 budget, as the only revenue they would see was the increase in property value for the affected properties. He said that they would not have equipment tax during the 2027 budget year.

Ms. Vanuch said that her final comment on that matter was that the revenue projections they were presented with when they approved those projects should be taken into account, so that new Board members could understand their original projections and how they related to the Board's decision-making. She said that she recalled being told that by 2027, they would start to see revenue positivity on a couple of those projects.

Ms. Vanuch said that however, it appeared that this was not the case. She thought it would be fiscally responsible of them to track this information, so they could see the trend as they moved forward with additional data center projects. She said that this would be particularly helpful, as it allowed them to compare the actual results to their initial projections, similar to how they analyzed rezoning proposals, where the expected number of children per household was often presented as a projection, but the reality could differ.

Ms. Allen said that to her understanding, there had only been two projects that the County had approved, and one of them, the Amazon project, was not expected to come online until after the assessment was completed. She said that the Stafford Technology Campus (STC) project was contingent on several variables, and its timeline was uncertain, possibly not coming online until 2028. She said that given these factors, she was not sure what could be assumed at this point. She said that she was not disagreeing with Ms. Vanuch's perspective, but they could only make those assumptions based on the one project with one building that had been erected so far.

Ms. Vanuch said that there were two by-right projects that they received tax revenue projections for, and she was asking for those projections to be provided for the Board.

Ms. Allen said that that was fine; if they were going to be requesting information from staff they must be clear in what they were asking for.

Dr. Yeung said that she noticed the Schools' presentation mentioned their strategic plan, but it seemed to only include the costs associated with the three new schools coming online.

Ms. Light said that according to the Five-Year Plan, for Fiscal Year 27 the funding included was sufficient for the three new schools to open. She said that the Schools were scheduled to give a presentation.

Dr. Yeung asked if Ms. Light's five-year projection was informed by the Schools' financial plan.

Ms. Light said that when evaluating schools, they considered several key factors. She said that they examined their five-year financial plan, affordability, taking into account the potential impact on their tax rate, and a rolling average of the past five years, the Prince William model of revenue sharing, and a per-pupil adjustment to account for inflation. She said that they projected a moderate increase with all of those factors in mind, ensuring the Schools were funded in a realistic and sustainable manner.

Dr. Yeung said that she had recently received information that stated that they had 2,200 empty seats in their schools. She said that she had previously asked about phasing in their new schools to soften the costs, so she would ask Schools staff about that when they gave their presentation to the Board later. She asked if the County had a strategic plan specifically for ensuring their public safety and school operations stayed ahead of their population growth.

Ms. Light said that the population growth rate in their community had slowed significantly. She said that they used to be among the top three fastest-growing communities in the Commonwealth, but their current growth rate was now among the top 20. She said that as a result, this plan took into account some of these changes. She said that they had met with Fire and Rescue to discuss their needs in detail, and unfortunately, the County was unable to meet their identified needs.

Ms. Light said that the Sheriff's Department had consistently requested eight new deputies each year, and the County was unable to fulfill this request within this Five-Year Plan. She said that the School Division staff, including the Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mr. Fulmer, were present and could provide insight into whether this Five-Year Plan addressed some of their needs and how it would accommodate the community's population changes.

Dr. Yeung asked, if their revenues softened, did the County have any cost containment strategies in place and outlined in this financial plan? She said that she was referring specifically to measures that would enable them to prioritize and avoid placing additional tax burdens on their constituents.

Ms. Light said that she believed that if they examined the slide from Fiscal Year 27, which highlighted the $3 million in new revenue associated with new projects, the Board would need to consider the implications of maintaining that number. She said that to do so, they would need to engage in a thorough review with the Schools, the County Sheriff's Department, and constitutional officers, to assess their base budgets and the services they provided. She said that this would involve identifying areas where the Board may want to restrict or reduce those services.

Dr. Yeung said that she understood the County did not receive any Smart Scale project funding. She asked if they had a realistic plan for funding their transportation priorities and if they needed to reprioritize.

Ms. Light said that they would need to explore alternative revenue streams, possibly data centers and personal property, to see what that might look like in the future. She said that staff recognized the importance of examining the five-year period, as they looked at this Five-Year Plan and what it encompassed. She said that they had already covered transportation costs within that timeframe; therefore, they sought to investigate various mechanisms for adjusting revenues to ensure continuous service delivery.

Mr. English asked if they had projections for the reassessment rates for this upcoming year.

Ms. Light said that the Commissioner of the Revenue would bring that information to the Board in February.

Mr. English asked if staff could clarify the reason for the $5.6 million increase in the Regional Jail budget.

Ms. Light said that it was the Jail's first draft budget. She said that typically, when their first draft budget was presented, staff began the process of negotiating the service levels, employment changes, salary adjustments, and comparisons to other jurisdictions to ensure public safety standards were met.

Mr. Ashton said that as with any negotiation, they came in with an initial number and worked from there. He said that as of scenario two, which they dealt with earlier today, they were estimating it at $2.9 million now, but to get to scenario three with $2.3 million, they continued to work on pulling it in that direction.

Mr. English said that in terms of the solar farm tax they had in this presentation, he knew of only one solar farm in the County. He asked if more information could be provided on that.

Ms. Light said that the solar tax would be based on the real estate rate, amounting to $10,000. She said that this presented an opportunity, but it was clear that it would not be a comprehensive solution.

Mr. English said that it certainly would not be enough to cover the $5.6 million. He said that he also learned today that Arlington was offering $90,000 as the starting salary for deputies, plus a $25,000 sign-on bonus. He said that if that was the case, there would be a snowball effect. He said that he did not want their County to lose employees because of that, but he thought it should be considered in their budget discussions.

Ms. Bohmke asked what the specific cost increase was for the Juvenile Center.

Ms. Light said that they anticipated a $100,000 increase for the Juvenile Center. She said that there was a handout that outlined this information in the presentation.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the decline in real estate tax revenue was related to the veterans tax relief.

Ms. Light said that yes, that was correct.

Ms. Bohmke asked for more specific information on the plan with PFM. She asked what they would be doing and what the County's expectations were for the contract. She said that additionally, she would like more information on what was taking so long to bring the data centers online.

Ms. Light said that PFM worked with Loudoun County and Prince William as well, so it was not just Stafford County. She said that as part of their process, they would interview staff, data centers, and Dominion Energy to gain a thorough understanding of the types of data centers coming online and their associated power needs and costs. She said that they would review their approved data centers online and create a model that they could use to make projections on those data center revenues. She said that they only required a bit of time.

Mr. Ashton said that they were looking to further elaborate on this topic because the Board would need to make a policy decision when data center revenues started coming in. He said that specifically, they would need to determine how much to operationalize versus how much to capitalize. He said that this was particularly relevant given the variability in depreciation schedules from year to year and across multiple data centers, which would help smooth out the curve.

Mr. Ashton said that for instance, a single data center may depreciate on a straight line, while multiple data centers would come online and refresh at different rates, blending to a different curve. He said that they aimed to gain a better understanding of this blend to provide the Board with policy options on how to capitalize versus operationalize revenue.

Ms. Bohmke said that she would like to know if they could provide a rough draft sooner rather than later, and then complete their analysis, or if they would come in with the full analysis at the end. She said that she would like to know what their current conversations with them were regarding their progress in the overall process.

Ms. Light said that they were currently in the initial stages of their discussions, which could be thought of as similar to a discovery period. She said that during this time, they were providing PJM with the necessary information and ensuring they had access to the correct staff.

Ms. Gary said that regarding the analysis regarding the impact of energy costs, she was wondering if the analysis would be regional, or would it be statewide. She said that they were aware that when other Counties had installed data centers, it had affected their local residents.

Ms. Light said that the impact on their residents would not be part of this assessment. She said that they would be examining the power that was coming into the data center. She said that the power that entered the data center provided valuable insight into the types of equipment that would be housed there and the data center's purpose. She said that the data center's primary use may be storage, processing, or artificial intelligence.

Ms. Gary apologized; she thought they were talking about potential rate increases and energy usage. She said that she appreciated the clarification.

Ms. Allen asked if Ms. Light could clarify what M365 was.

Ms. Light said that it stood for Microsoft Office Suite 365. She said that it was an upgraded version of the standard software, and she was still learning it herself.

Ms. Allen asked if the Fire and Rescue conversations included the potential grant opportunities, which would cover staffing costs for a few years.

Ms. Light said that in speaking with Fire and Rescue, they regularly reviewed the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants, potentially multiple times a day, to check for updates on their status. She said that they had not had any positive feedback they may have shared with them as part of this planning process. She said that it was unclear if this grant would ultimately be awarded, and it was not included in their current Five-Year Plan.

Ms. Allen asked if they could expect to receive an update by the Board's retreat meeting.

Ms. Light said that she would follow up with Fire and Rescue to see if that was possible.

Ms. Allen said that regarding Transportation, she was wondering if they could get an update on what the outcome would be after not receiving Smart Scale funding in Round 6.

Mr. Ashton said that they were attempting to provide a regular quarterly update on Transportation, a change from their previous annual approach. He said that he was unsure of when the next one was scheduled, but he would follow up with that information.

Bryon Counsell, County Engineer, said that they had run all the numbers in Ms. Light's presentation tonight, and Mr. Lehane and he had supported the included elements. He said that they were prepared to provide all the necessary numbers to the Board at their convenience. He said that they had a February work session scheduled, where they would have the opportunity to discuss the translation program in detail, including their vision for its evolution over the next several years.

Ms. Allen asked if they could receive that information at their Board Retreat, prior to February. She said that there was Board consensus to do so, if possible.

Mr. Counsell said that they would make it work.

Ms. Allen said that she had a question for Ms. Light regarding the significant increase in the tax rate. She said that she was not suggesting that this rate would be the one they ultimately chose, but she was asking for clarification. She asked if this jump in tax increases was largely driven by stressors from the Schools and the County's Capital Improvement Plan. She said that every other year, the increase was relatively small, but then there was a significant jump. She would like to understand the reasoning behind this trend.

Ms. Light said that in reviewing the plan and the layout in the spreadsheet, they could identify the areas where these changes were implemented. She said that one significant driver was the need to support School Operating and Debt Service for their projects. She said that the ongoing need to add staff for Sheriff, Fire and Rescue, and general government continued to be a factor. She said that increased inflation, partner agencies, and other expenses also contributed to rising costs.

Ms. Gary said that she would like to just note that in discussing the Transportation information at the Board retreat, they would have two new Board members as part of those discussions. She said that they may want to consider a preliminary Transportation discussion before the full, detailed information was reviewed because it would be a lot for the new members to learn all in one month.

STAFFORD SCHOOLS FINANCIAL UPDATE PRESENTATION

Mr. Ashton said that he welcomed Dr. Daniel Smith, Superintendent of Stafford County Public Schools, to present information as part of his report. He said that staff had owed the Board an update on how much operating costs would change with three new schools coming online, which Dr. Smith would present to the Board this evening.

Daniel Smith, Superintendent of Stafford County Public Schools, said that he appreciated the opportunity to share information regarding the staffing and operating costs of their new schools in Stafford County. He said that he would like to begin by expressing his gratitude to the Board of Supervisors, the School Board, the community, staff, and students for their investment and approval of the construction of these three newest schools. He said that he was pleased to provide an update on the progress made at Hartwood High School, Falls Run Elementary, and Crow's Nest Elementary.

Dr. Smith said that tonight, he would be presenting updates on the three schools currently under construction, as well as those scheduled to open in August 2026, just nine months away. He said that his presentation would cover construction updates, budget information, and anticipated staffing and operational costs associated with these buildings.

Dr. Smith said that he wanted to share some updates on the replacement projects at Drew Middle School and Hartwood Elementary School, as requested by the Board at their October 21 meeting. He said that he would just like to note that these estimates were current, but not a full budget presentation, as there were many factors to consider. He said that he hoped this information was helpful as they began their budget conversation for FY27.

Dr. Smith said that he wanted to state that this work remained grounded in their strategic plan, focusing on providing their students with meaningful post-secondary opportunities. He said that they maintained high expectations for their students and strived to provide a safe, engaging, and welcoming environment. He said that first, he would discuss Hartwood High School. He said that the County's sixth high school had been first proposed in the Capital Improvement Plan in 2007, but gained momentum in 2015 with more intensive planning. He said that in coordination with County staff, the School Division had found and purchased a suitable location and begun construction.

Dr. Smith said that at this time, after more than a decade, Hartwood High School was approximately 75% complete. He said that it was designed to accommodate up to 2,150 students in grades 9 through 12, spanning over 290,000 square feet, and would alleviate crowding in every one of their current high schools. He said that several areas were nearing completion, including the administrative offices, gym, and work areas. He said that he had provided an update on the spending for Hartwood High School.

Dr. Smith said that most of the lines were expended, and they were finalizing purchases on furniture, fixtures, and IT equipment, with the last step, and their Board was scheduled to approve those purchases in November, with more purchases for IT equipment to follow in the following months. He said that they were mindful of costs and strived to minimize change orders. He said that at this point, they were at 0.17% in change orders, which was exceptional, considering the average percentage for new school construction change orders was 3% to 5%.

Dr. Smith said that they planned to return any funds left over at the end of this project and other projects to the County. He said that they were also constructing two new elementary schools, with construction starting in 2024. He said that they were happy with the progress and thanked the Board for approving these buildings. He said that Falls Run Elementary School was 60% complete, while Crow's Nest was 50% complete. He said that they were on time for final completion of both buildings and on budget. He said that exterior brick walls were being installed at Falls Run, and interior framing was ongoing.

Dr. Smith said that meanwhile, steel was nearly completed at Crow's Nest, roofing systems were being installed, floor slabs were being poured, and wall framing was ongoing. He said that extensive exterior improvements to the parking lots at Brooke Point High School were completed last summer as part of the Crow's Nest project. He said that he would like to highlight the efficiencies they had gained from using prototypes for their elementary schools and the construction of Falls Run and Crow's Nest. He said that by learning from one school to the next, they had been able to identify and apply improvements to their mechanical modifications and school layout changes.

Dr. Smith said that both of these projects had been managed well, with limited change orders. He said that the Falls Run project had only 0.44% in construction change orders, while the Crow's Nest project had 0.97%. He said that recently approved change orders for Crow's Nest represented 0.77% of the construction budget. He said that given the tighter construction schedule for Crow's Nest, which started later than Falls Run, they had still been able to ensure timely delivery of the buildings. He said that they were expecting the buildings to be completed by mid-May.

Dr. Smith said that while they were excited to see the buildings take shape, they must also consider the transition. He said that opening three schools in one year was a monumental undertaking, and they were tackling it with precision and intentionality. He said that this was more than just opening new school buildings and structures; it was a complete shift for their school system and community. He said that they were growing by 10% more schools, with 30 K-12 schools currently, and opening three new schools would require a significant redistricting effort. He said that they had completed the redistricting plan, notified families, appointed principals and bookkeepers, and were hosting internal transfer fairs with their current employees.

Dr. Smith said that a transition team was working diligently to plan the movement of students, support structures, and other essential items, such as student records, athletic equipment, furniture, technology, and more. He said that their goal was to ensure that every student felt welcome and excited to transition to their newest buildings and every school affected by the district-wide redistricting.

Dr. Smith said that next, he would discuss staffing. He said that the total size of these three schools was approximately 560,000 square feet, covering around 114 acres. He said that to maintain the buildings and grounds, they would need additional maintenance crews, including custodians, grounds crews, and electricians. He said that they were investing $312 million in construction, and it was essential that they protect this investment. He said that new schools required essential staffing, including principals, assistant principals, counselors, social workers, technology staff, and librarians.

Dr. Smith said that this came at a cost, which he would also outline in this presentation. He said that at the same time, the new schools had reduced utilization rates from 99.2% to 85.7% in their elementary schools and from 102.3% to 85.4% in their high schools, influencing staffing and operational needs. He said that with these factors in mind, they were carefully planning to ensure each school was properly staffed and supported, allowing students and staff to thrive in these new environments. He said that they would have approximately 376 full-time equivalent employees assigned to the new schools; however, they were only adding 86.8 full-time equivalent employees, while 290 staff members would shift from their existing schools to the new schools, leaving the remaining 86.8 to be fully staffed.

Dr. Smith said that a majority of their teachers would follow the students and be reassigned from existing overcrowded schools to the new schools. He said that however, every school must have certain positions, including administrators, front office staff, maintenance personnel, librarians, counselors, social workers, and security staff. He said that they had searched for and identified efficiencies wherever possible, including relocation of staff, teachers, and assistant principals, and those relocated positions were not included in the new staffing requests. He said that he also wanted to clarify that their Hartwood High School would open with grades 9 through 11, with seniors remaining at their current school, following their established practice.

Dr. Smith said that they would add additional teachers to Hartwood High School in year two, as the senior class moved up. He said that this was not included in the numbers, as these teachers would transition from existing schools with those students. He said that the list of positions needed for the opening of the three new schools were provided in the presentation. He said that overall, 86.8 full-time equivalent employees would be needed next year, which would cost approximately $7.9 million. He noted that stipends were included in this total, as they were expanding their athletic activities and clubs by 20%. The decrease in stipends for the elementary schools was due to the fact that they had provided stipends for a few elementary positions this year to get the schools up and running.

Dr. Smith said that for example, they had provided a stipend for an elementary librarian to assist in getting the library collection in place, which could not wait until July 1. He said that as a result, they had not hired that position last year, and it would be included in the upcoming year. He said that librarians were included in the new school staffing, so the elementary stipends had been removed. He said that as they got closer to opening, they remained focused on each dollar spent, and they continued to refine these numbers, becoming more accurate. He said that they had drilled down to the specific ways that they could be more exact with their costs.

Dr. Smith said that for example, in today's estimates, they had accounted for many of the required and detailed costs, such as special education compliance. He said that they had also accounted for necessary equipment, including EpiPens and inhalers for their clinics, radios, Virginia High School League (VHSL) licenses, security licenses, copies or leases, and labor law posters that needed to be posted in each building. He said that they were also building in efficiencies into their cleaning processes.

Dr. Smith said that considering all this, they still needed to be mindful of sustainable long-term planning and account for ongoing staffing, utilities, maintenance, and service contracts across each new site. He said that these included items such as maintenance and upkeep, utilities, and ground care. He said that academic program costs continued to grow, including site-based platforms, learning tools, arts and music consumables, and testing and field trip logistics that must cover more schools. He said that technology also expanded with each building, requiring more endpoints, phones, security cameras, copiers, and licenses.

Dr. Smith said that health and wellness needs were site-based as well, including clinic supplies, medical compliance, mental health programs, additional Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and crisis readiness expectations. He said that as provided in this presentation, they had made a concerted effort to identify and account for each and every cost. He said that the displayed chart showed the estimated annual recurring costs of operating the three new schools, ensuring the same level of support and quality as the rest of their School Division. He said that staffing was the largest cost every time a new school opened, and these costs showed the positions that were needed, not the teachers or other positions that would necessarily move with the students from their existing schools.

Dr. Smith said that utilities, supplies, technology, safety, and compliance requirements, and site-driven licenses were also included. He said that combined, the recurring costs to operate the three new schools were $10.5 million, independent of enrollment changes. He said that each building required staffing and operational support, as well as an expanded operational footprint for the division. He said that further, he had been asked to provide an update regarding the rebuilds of Edward E. Drew Middle School and Hartwood Elementary School.

Dr. Smith said that when discussing Drew and Hartwood together, it was essential to keep in mind that with replacement schools, they affected the budget in a different way than new builds. He said that these were replacement buildings, so there were no additional staffing costs tied to them. He said that they may also potentially lower and offset some operating costs due to the energy-efficient systems and construction methods used in the new buildings. He said that these rebuilds had been approved in the Capital Improvement Plan with an opening in 2028.

Dr. Smith said that since then, they had made decisions regarding maintenance and replacements based on the opening of these new buildings in 2028. He said that they had already incurred $2.3 million in property acquisition costs and $5.2 million in design costs related to the Drew Middle School rebuild, planning for its opening in 2028. He said that for Hartwood Elementary School, there were no property acquisition costs, but they had started the design and incurred approximately $2 million in costs. He said that the progress happening inside these buildings was remarkable.

Dr. Smith said that the walls were up, classrooms were taking shape, and it was exciting to feel the energy of what was to come. He said that as he walked through the hallways and saw the spaces taking shape, it was easy to imagine that students would soon be learning, collaborating, and creating lasting memories. He said that this was possible because they had worked together as one Stafford in the best interest of their students. He said that he would like to extend an invitation to each of the Supervisors to experience this for themselves.

Dr. Smith said that he would be delighted to schedule a walkthrough of the construction sites, allowing them to feel the excitement and see the progress firsthand. He said that it was one thing to review renderings or numbers on a slide, but it was entirely different to stand inside and experience the scale, light, and excitement that was already taking hold. He said that he encouraged them to reach out to Mr. Ashton, and they would be happy to coordinate a visit.

Ms. Bohmke said that she wanted to express her appreciation to Dr. Smith for giving one of the best Schools presentations she had seen since joining the Board. She said that his presentation on new schools was exceptional, and she had never seen a breakdown like the one he provided, along with the continuation of the additional staff and what was needed. She said that it was truly phenomenal. She said that he explained everything clearly to the Board and to the public.

Ms. Bohmke said that given that she had attended the data center ribbon cutting today, she was discussing electricians with one of the people present. She said that she was sure he was working with their school division in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. She said that although this was not directly related to the presentation, she wanted to ask if Dr. Smith could attest to the fact that they were working very well with them. She said that they not only wanted to attract electricians to their community, but also encourage them to live here once they worked on the data centers.

Dr. Smith said that they were preparing to open a new pathway at their Engineering Professions and Industries of Construction (EPIC) Center at Stafford High School, specifically focused on data center operations, as it was a need that was emerging. He said that they had identified this need and were working with several partners to develop those pathways.

Ms. Gary said that she greatly appreciated Dr. Smith's presentation and the granular details he had provided on some important aspects. She said that it was extremely helpful to know that the School Division knew what needed to be funded and conveyed that to the Board. She said that she was grateful that he was serving their families and educators.

Mr. English asked if they had considered installing solar panels on the roofs of the newly-constructed school buildings. He said that he was sure they would be a cost- and energy-saving measure.

Chris Fulmer, Chief Operating Officer for Stafford County Public Schools, said that all three new schools were designed to be "solar ready" from the outset, meaning they would not come equipped with solar panels from day one, but they built them in a way that allowed for the addition of solar panels later. He said that they would work with an outside company to install the panels, similar to what they had done in North Stafford. He said that typically, it could be challenging to do this during the construction period, as the construction team was focused on completing their work. He said that they would look into installing solar panels about a year or two after the building was completed.

Mr. English asked if they knew how much money they had saved at North Stafford.

Mr. Fulmer said that he could not recall the exact dollar amount, but it was several million over the full length of the project. He said that the way it worked was that they purchased their electricity from the solar company that installed the panels, but at a reduced rate. He said that if Dominion was paying X cents per kilowatt, they were paying a lower rate on that. He said that as a result, it would always be a cost-effective solution for them.

Dr. Yeung asked if the School Division could provide a breakdown on the specialty schools' operations and the savings they could get if they did not spread those teachers out. She asked if there was a plan if some of those specialty programs did not work out.

Dr. Smith said that in terms of specialty centers, they evaluated each pathway and program annually. He said that moving forward, they would be examining these programs even more closely in the upcoming year. He said that specifically, they were seeking to clarify their evaluation process, including how they assessed enrollment, certifications, and the outcomes of these programs.

Dr. Smith said that the new programs were still in the process of getting established, which would allow them to conduct a more thorough evaluation of their effectiveness. He said that they wanted to ensure that they were achieving the desired results, ensuring that graduates were securing high-paying, in-demand jobs. He said that they were working on this, but it was still early in the development of these programs.

Dr. Yeung said that she did not vote to support all of the schools to be up and running at the same time because she wanted to implement a more phased-in approach. She said that she knew some School Board members felt the same way. She asked if there was a backup plan to phase in the new schools or delay opening any.

Dr. Smith said that they did not have a backup plan in terms of the three schools currently under construction. He said that he had not been part of any conversations around not opening them on time as they continued to build them. He said that to reiterate, no, there was not a plan for not opening them on time.

Dr. Yeung asked if it was correct that they had 2,200 open seats currently.

Dr. Smith said that he did not believe so. He said that he heard Dr. Yeung mention that earlier in the meeting and reviewed his numbers, and did not see that mentioned anywhere. He said that he believed they had about 1,200 open seats, with 800 of them at the middle school level. He said that the remainder were at the elementary level across all 17 schools, approximately 25 kids per school if divided equally. He said that however, in reality the vacancies varied across the schools. He said that furthermore, the high schools were all over capacity, around 102% filled.

Dr. Yeung said that the redistricting they had was based on how things were currently. She asked if there was a backup plan so that, if something happened to Hartwood before the replacement came online, the students would be able to move into the completed school.

Dr. Smith said that he would not say so. He said that the redistricting that previously took place had filled up the new school at Falls Run. He said that the School Board could do another redistricting if necessary.

Dr. Yeung asked if they had a plan to move kids out of Hartwood Elementary in case of emergency, which would be similar to spot-redistricting.

Dr. Smith said that they had reviewed contingency plans for Hartwood, the Melchers Complex, and some of the others. He said that unfortunately, none of these plans were satisfactory or effective solutions. He said that however, they did have some options that they would need to consider if something were to occur.

Dr. Yeung asked if they planned on putting a plan together.

Dr. Smith said that the plan was to open the Hartwood Elementary School without any issues. He said that if they encountered any issues before that, they would have to make some difficult decisions.

Ms. Vanuch said that regarding the 86.8 positions Dr. Smith mentioned for the new school openings, she would like to know which of those positions were funded through the School of Quality (SOQ) or state funding. She said that she was reviewing the revenue amounts Dr. Smith provided, which totaled approximately $7.8 or $7.9 million. She said that she was seeking clarification on how much of that amount would be covered by state funding versus County funding.

Dr. Smith said that he did not have that information with him today, but yes, some of those positions would be SOQ-funded. He said that they only received a portion of that funding, and he did not have the exact figure with him today.

Ms. Vanuch asked if Dr. Smith could bring that back as a follow-up. She said that she thought it would be beneficial to include the cost breakdown of the County's contribution and the state's portion, to help with the County's planning. She said that on another topic, Dr. Smith had mentioned utilizing staff from current schools, with approximately 378 employees moving into the new schools to minimize new hires.

Ms. Vanuch said that she wanted to know if they had considered eliminating or reducing positions, such as the dean of students role, which had been added due to behavioral challenges related to overcapacity in some schools, particularly high schools. She asked if they had assessed the potential impact of reducing capacity in those schools on the behavioral challenges faced by students and whether such support staff roles were needed at the same level.

Dr. Smith said that they had staffing standards that varied, with some being one per school and others based on student enrollment. He said that for positions like counselors, which were typically based on student enrollment, they applied the staffing standard of 325 to one. He said that this meant that if they reduced the number of students at North Stafford, for example, they would need to adjust the number of counselors accordingly. He said that they applied this approach across all high schools. At Hartwood High School, for instance, they considered the number of students and how many counselors they could move from other schools, while also determining how many they might need. He said that this process was applied to all student-based positions, but they did not reallocate staff from one school to another; instead, they allocated the necessary staff to the new school.

Ms. Vanuch asked if the leftover contingency funds for the new school projects were planned for any other purposes after construction was completed.

Dr. Smith said that they were nearing completion of construction, and as he mentioned earlier, they would be returning those funds to the County. He said that they would love to work towards future school projects such as Drew or Hartwood, but ultimately would be returning those funds to the County.

Mr. Diggs said that he wanted to thank Dr. Smith for the phenomenal presentation. He said that he appreciated his colleagues' comments. He said that as someone who voted in favor of the new schools, he was committed to ensuring they opened. He said that during this process, there were concerns about whether the schools could meet the timeline to open on schedule. He said that the schools had demonstrated their ability to meet their commitments so far. He said that it was the Board's responsibility to find ways to support the opening of these schools, providing a proper learning environment for their students and educators. He said that he believed they must work together to ensure their schools had the necessary resources to succeed.

Ms. Allen said that asked why there was a $3 million difference between the two schools, considering they were using the same design prototypes for both.

Dr. Smith said that the land acquisition was the main factor in that difference.

Jason Towery, Chief Facilities Officer for Stafford County Public Schools, said that it was also partially because they got a better deal on the Crow's Nest project.

Ms. Allen asked if they had established an academy for the high school.

Dr. Smith said that they had a program of studies scheduled to be voted on by the School Board next week, which included the proposal for an arts, media, and production specialty center at Hartwood High School. He said that a proposal had been made for an aerospace, supply chain, energy, and navigation technologies (ASCENT) specialty center at North Stafford High School. He said that there would then be specialty centers at each of their six high schools.

Ms. Allen asked if they would also be remodeling the engineering program to include data center career pathways.

Dr. Smith said that Stafford High School would include a data center program as one of the pathways they were proposing. He said that they were also looking at other mission-critical buildings that might be included in that pathway.

Ms. Allen asked if bonds had already been taken out for the contingency funds that may be returned to the County.

Ms. Light said that these were bond-funded projects, so the Board would have to make decisions about how to allocate the funds. She said that they could choose to reinvest them in other school projects, such as the upcoming 3R projects, such as Drew and Hartwood projects, or they could use them to repay the debt on those projects, which would result in a one-time payment of debt. She said that it would free up operating funding to be reallocated.

Ms. Allen said that she appreciated the clarification. She said that she greatly appreciated Dr. Smith's presentation, which was easily digestible. She said that she was one of the Supervisors nervous about the logistics of opening three new schools on time, and with Dr. Smith's team and central office, they had made significant progress. She said that her only concern at this point was the mascot names for some of the schools, but otherwise she was very excited for their students and families. She asked if they would be including the costs of the new schools when presenting their budget to the Board in the coming months.

Dr. Smith said that yes, that was their plan.

PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS BY AGENCIES

TRI-COUNTY/CITY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT FY2025 ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTATION

Madison Morgan, Education and Outreach Coordinator, said that she would be presenting on the FY25 Annual Report for Tri-County City, Soil and Water Conservation District for the period from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. She said that the numbers she would be sharing today represented Stafford County, and she had the complete annual report available for review following the presentation.

Ms. Morgan said that the District's mission was to provide leadership, education, financial assistance, and technical programs to both rural and urban communities to improve soil and water conservation. She said that their vision was to work with communities and partners to promote awareness and inspire conservation of natural resources through multiple approaches, ultimately improving soil and water health. She said that their Board of Directors included John Howe and Mr. Daniel Goodale-Porter from Stafford County.

Ms. Morgan said that as for their staff, she was pleased to report that they were fully staffed for the first time since pre-COVID. She said that this had significantly increased their outputs. She said that their district manager, Renee Davis, along with administrative professionals Christine McLean, Jenny Greenlaw, Jerry Rauch, and Theresa Bradford, handled their conservation side of the business.

Ms. Morgan said that Mr. Rauch had recently been appointed assistant district manager. She said that she brought a unique focus on education and outreach, working with agricultural producers and attending public meetings, as well as educational work with their local schools. She said that for FY25, their operating revenues came primarily from the state, specifically the DCR's Virginia Agricultural Cost Share (VACS) Fund, which was over $1.4 million, and local government funding from Stafford County, which was approximately $40,000. She said that they were grateful for Stafford's local contribution to the District.

Ms. Morgan said that their budget expenses were largely driven by the VACS program, which had a significant expense of $1.4 million last year. She said that the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP), their urban conservation initiative, had seen a major increase in demand, and therefore, funding had been maxed out and a wait list had been created. She said that she would discuss this further in the presentation. She said that the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program was a key component of their work, and she would explain the cover crop program in more detail. She said that cover crops were planted with the intent of stabilizing the soil, reducing erosion, and ultimately maintaining healthy amounts of nutrients in the ground.

Ms. Morgan said that conservation highlights in Stafford County last year saw $206,000 allocated towards the agricultural cost share program. She said that they planted over 13,000 acres of cover crops across the District, representing a 3,000-acre increase from last year's FY24. She said that they cost-shared over $1.2 million with producers across the District last year, with FY24 totaling $958,000. She said that being fully staffed had enabled them to expand their network with new producers and allocate more staff time and funding towards those who could accomplish more programming.

Ms. Morgan said that the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program in Stafford County last year offered three types of practices for allocation: living shorelines, rainwater harvesting, and conservation landscaping meadows. She said that the living shoreline, paired with another grant, was fully funded at over $60,000. She said that they were excited about this project and anticipated funding in the coming year, although it was a federal program and funding may be slow to materialize. She said that it had not been halted but may switch over to state funding in future years.

Ms. Morgan said that in Stafford County, the VCAP locality program provided $31,200 directly to the District, which was used for the living shoreline project and other approved projects. She said that education outreach was a highlight for her, as Stafford County had the most educational programming and community outreach of all the areas in the District, with 18 programs and over 1,600 participants reached. She said that this included school programming, community outreach, gardening groups, Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) nights, and other events.

Ms. Morgan said that also in the education report was another significant highlight, with 885 students influenced through career-type events, including 700 from Stafford County. She said that they also awarded $550 for a student to attend a youth conservation camp, and they were excited to continue increasing this program in the coming year. She said that there were many partners in conservation, and she was delighted to work with them on a daily basis along with their schools and localities. She said that being fully staffed, as she had mentioned before, they were able to develop and implement new programs.

Ms. Morgan said that as for programming on the agricultural side, $1.2 million was paid out last year. She said that they had already reached $2 million in FY26. She said that this was their first year participating in the Whole Farm Approach Program, which combined nutrient management practices and cover crop practices in a comprehensive way. She said that this program had been extremely helpful, not only for the land but also for their producers. She was excited about the benefits it brought. She said that they were also working to host meaningful watershed educational experiences, days for schools, and planning field trips for the spring.

Dr. Yeung said that she greatly appreciated Ms. Morgan's presentation. She said that she served on the Rappahannock River Basin Commission (RRBC) and wholly supported conservation initiatives. She said that in terms of funding, she always advocated for increased funding to support initiatives like these for the benefit of the children. She said that her children had grown up in 4-H, which was a significant part of her experience. She asked if the numbers in this presentation were specific for Stafford and Fredericksburg or if it encompassed all of Planning District 16.

Ms. Morgan said that their District did not align entirely with Planning District 16; they were actually covering Stafford, Spotsylvania, King George, and the City of Fredericksburg. She said that for VCAP, they had initially wanted to implement the entire program because it was a smaller program, and they wanted to ensure that each practice was included, as there were many excellent practices that they unfortunately could not highlight every year. She said that this particular presentation focused primarily on Stafford County, and she had the completed report, which included all the practices, available for the Board's review.

Dr. Yeung asked if there was a breakdown of the state-supported funding allocated to the District, specifically for Stafford County projects. She said that she assumed that information would be included in the report.

Ms. Morgan said that state funding specifically allocated to Stafford County was not broken down. She said that they received a certain amount of money to allocate through their operating funds and through their practices and programs. She said that it was difficult to determine a specific amount of state money that would be allocated to Stafford County versus another County, particularly when comparing agricultural land in Stafford County to the City of Fredericksburg. She said that the difference in the amount of agricultural land in production and available for practices would be substantial.

Ms. Gary said that she appreciated the report and was pleased to see a high level of participation, which she was not surprised by given how much their residents prioritized this work. She said that she had a couple of questions regarding the living shoreline grant program. She said that she was curious to know how long this program had been in existence; it had been a few years now, she believed.

Ms. Morgan said that specifically through their program, the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program, it had been running for at least 10 years. She said that as for the grant funding, that had been relatively recent. She said that their portion of VCAP would cover a certain percentage of the total project's funding, or a cap at a certain amount. For living shorelines, their cap was $30,000.

Ms. Morgan said that the additional grant funding originated from Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with Friends of the Rappahannock. She said that as a result, they were permitted to allocate their funding to match a portion of theirs, and the George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC) also had a couple of these agreements in place.

Ms. Gary said that she understood that the program was available to individuals, such as private citizens. She said that the complexity lay in the fact that the County needed to participate and submit through the locality.

Ms. Morgan said that to her knowledge, through the VCAP program, residents reached out to the Conservation District, and they worked together with Friends of the Rappahannock to conduct site assessments. She said that if any permitting or other requirements were needed, they then involved the County. She said that for private landowners, the process typically involved direct communication with the landowner and any contractors they may hire.

Ms. Gary asked if it was something that the County would not need to formally sign off on unless it involved standard permitting procedures.

Ms. Morgan said that yes, that was correct.

Ms. Gary said that her last question was based on her understanding from a few years ago, and she was not sure if this had changed. She said that the grant program, which was a great resource, could also support local businesses providing materials for living shorelines. She said that she recalled that there had been an issue in the past where it was challenging to find local businesses in Virginia that had the native grasses needed for these local projects. She said that she wanted to confirm whether that was still an issue for these conservation projects.

Ms. Morgan said that she was not sure, but she would recommend anyone with questions reach out to Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service (SEAS), which had been handling all the living shoreline practices and should have the relevant information.

Ms. Allen asked how they determined where things were planted for soil preservation.

Ms. Morgan said that there were a couple of parameters that producers must meet in order to work with the Conservation District and with DCR. She said that these parameters included having at least five acres of land, a natural resource concern issue such as flowing water on their land or livestock that were open to grazing. She said that producers must self-certify that they could sustain their operation over a three-year period, earning at least $1,000 in income each year. She said that based on these parameters and the available land, their conservation specialists created a plan, which was then submitted to the DCR. She said that once funds were approved and allocated, they worked to ensure that their producers received the necessary support to continue preserving their soils.

Ms. Allen said that she was curious because she did not have much experience with farming practices. She asked if the five-acre requirement was an issue for interested parties.

Ms. Morgan said that yes, they had seen a number of smaller-scale producers, homesteaders with acreages as small as three acres. She said that for instance, Rappahannock Education Farm had reached out about their practices, and unfortunately, not all requirements were met so they had to say now. She said that however, it might be possible in the future. She said that much of their current approach was based on word of mouth, as they had been in operation for over 80 years and had a legacy of family farming, with many farms passing down through generations.

Ms. Morgan said that they did host pasture walks, and they recently launched a legislative pasture walk last year. She said that she encouraged the Board of Supervisors to keep an eye out for future phone calls or emails from her, as she planned to invite them to participate in a pasture walk specifically for them. She said that it would provide an opportunity for their Board to observe and learn about various practices firsthand.

Ms. Allen said that there was a general trend in their community of focusing more on farm-to-table food systems and more efficient farming methods. She said that she wanted to ensure that anyone interested could access these kinds of soil preservation programs. She thanked Ms. Morgan for the presentation.

ACTION ITEM

ITEM 23. UTILITIES; CONSIDER REFERRING AMENDMENTS TO THE STAFFORD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, SPECIFICALLY A NEW DOCUMENT ENTITLED "STAFFORD COUNTY WATER, SEWER, AND RECLAIMED WATER SYSTEM MASTER PLAN" TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND THE UTILITY COMMISSION; PROPOSED RESOLUTION R25-220

Mark Gundersen, Acting Director of Utilities, said that staff would present a short update on changes to the Utilities Master Plan, a component of Stafford County's Comprehensive Plan. He said that staff was seeking the Board's approval to advertise for the Utilities Commission, Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors' hearings to adopt the Utilities Master Plan. He said that it had been approximately 15 years since the last update to the Utilities Master Plan. He said that currently, they were planning for growth within the Urban Service Area (USA), which included the County's first reclaimed water system.

Mr. Gundersen said that they were making frequent updates to reflect changes in current conditions and projections from the Comprehensive Plan. He said that the primary driver behind these updates was a 15% reduction in water demand due to decreased residential growth across the County. He said that during the last five-year budget presentation, there had been a significant focus on 3R projects, with the goal of preserving asset life through reliability and capacity upgrades, capital improvements focused on federal and state regulations, with the master plan outlining projects included in their pro rata program.

Mr. Gundersen said that the revised Master Plan now included these 3R projects to increase system capacity, providing a funding source for their 3R program that would allow future developments to fund those initiatives. He said that they were focusing on moving water from the north to underutilized areas in the central and other portions of the urban services area, as shown on the provided maps. He said that the goal was to improve redundancy within the system. He said that historically, wastewater had been underserved in the central part of the service area.

Mr. Gundersen said that they were planning a new pump station, the Potomac Creek Pump Station, being constructed to serve this area. He said that this addressed capacity issues and supported development in this region. He said that the pro rata program also allowed them to deliver expedited delivery of these projects to the County and its residents.

Chris Edwards, Chief Operating Officer, said that this was Stafford County's first master plan that included reclaimed water. He said that this was actually one of the first master plans in the region, if not the nation, to incorporate reclaimed water with traditional water and sewer services. He said that unlike traditional water and sewer systems, which served urban areas, this system required a separate service boundary for reclaimed water. He said that the area to be served by the Aquia Wastewater Treatment Plant, located about a mile north of here, would be east of I-95 to avoid long-term maintenance issues.

Mr. Edwards said that the system would extend from the plant down to Potomac Creek and potentially further south, serving industrial cooling purposes for that area. He said that Phase 2 of this system, which would be based on their Little Falls Plant, was currently under development. He said that they also had another plant along the Rappahannock River, and if needed, they would plan a reclaimed water system there for data center and industrial cooling purposes. He said that they were requesting authorization for public hearings with the Utilities Commission, Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors to adopt the updated Master Plan.

Mr. Edwards said that they would provide more detail when they presented this item again in the public hearing; tonight was more of a brief overview prior to requesting authorization. He said that this Plan would enable them to implement updated pro rata rates, which would be implemented in the FY27 budget. He said that they were also working on an update to their Water and Sewer Ordinance, Chapter 25, to include reclaimed water. He said that this overhaul would be comprehensive and the reclaimed water rates would require adoption by the Board prior to budget adoption.

Ms. Bohmke said that Mr. Gundersen had mentioned their 15% decline in water usage in the County. She asked if that was for water or sewer usage.

Mr. Edwards said that it was water only.

Ms. Bohmke asked if this was the first time they had had a decline.

Mr. Edwards said that this was not a decline in water usage. He said that from 2018 to the current Master Plan update, they were actually forecasting a 15% reduction in overall water usage. He said that while water usage continued to increase, the long-term build-out would likely use 15% less than what they had originally forecasted. He said that the main drivers of this reduction were the reduced rate of residential development and the use of reclaimed water for cooling.

Ms. Bohmke asked if it was correct to state that even if the Stafford Technology Center data center had not been approved, they would still have had to build the pump station at Potomac Creek.

Mr. Edwards said that yes, that was a correct statement. He said that the new pump station was in their previous master plan, but the major difference was that it was much larger now because it would not only address wastewater flow, but also blowdown from the data center sites. He said that the increased capacity also made it more flexible, allowing them to redirect it to either plant, depending on the capacities available at the plant and the availability rate at that time.

Ms. Bohmke asked if that pump station would be built by the data center developers for the County. She asked what the estimated cost for the pump station was.

Mr. Edwards said that he thought it was approximately $30 million. He said that they were also building a pipeline directly back to the wastewater plant, which would be a considerable cost.

Ms. Gary said that she did not have any questions about the presentation but would note that she had recently toured the Water Treatment Plant and discussed a lot of this information then. She said that she highly encouraged her colleagues to go see it in person.

Dr. Yeung said that she had discussed this with staff in their one-on-one conversations and remained very impressed by the work they had done this year. She said that she also appreciated staff presenting this information at the Rappahannock River Basin Commission, where other Counties could learn about their work. She asked if Mr. Edwards could summarize some of the information they had discussed in their one-on-one meetings and how the County would profit from this work laid out in the Master Plan.

Mr. Edwards said that in terms of the reclaimed water system, through their two water service agreements with STC and Potomac Church, the construction of different components of the reclaimed water system could be completed without any cost to the County. He said that what was particularly beneficial was that once the system was operational, they would be able to process wastewater that would normally be discharged into the creek and sell it back to the end users, therefore making additional profit.

Dr. Yeung said that she recalled that a company was planning to collect rainwater to be used. She asked if there would be impact on residents using rainwater at their homes.

Mr. Edwards said that nothing they were doing should have a significant impact on residents. He said that one of the things they had to do was conduct an environmental impact study with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for the stream section they normally discharged into, and they did the same for the Little Falls Run Plant. He said that they determined that, in fact, they would have no adverse impacts by not discharging.

Dr. Yeung said that since this Master Plant tied to the future south reclaimed water system to meet data center demand, she would like to know how they would ensure data centers were required to use only the reclaimed water for cooling so that their drinking water supply and ratepayers were not negatively impacted.

Mr. Edwards said that he believed that what they had accomplished with Aquia, the first system, was a great template. He said that they had worked on the water services agreement during the rezoning process to establish a water services agreement, and the developer had agreed to build it and pay the associated rates. He said that he saw that same approach being applied moving forward.

Ms. Bohmke motioned, seconded by Ms. Gary, to approve Proposed Resolution R25-220.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

CLOSED MEETING

At 8:34 p.m., Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to authorize closed meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Resolution CM25-15 reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board desires to hold a Closed Meeting for consultation with legal counsel regarding data center regulations and probable litigation, which is a specific legal matter requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel and where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the litigation posture of the Board; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(7) 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 November, 2025, that it be and hereby does authorize discussion of the above matters in Closed Meeting.

CERTIFY CLOSED MEETING

At 9:49 p.m. Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to certify closed meeting.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Resolution CM25-15 (C) reads as follows:

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

WHEREAS, the Board has on this the 6th day of November, 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 November, 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.

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Ms. Bohmke, to approve Proposed Resolution R25-295, a Resolution Authorizing Execution of a Settlement Agreement Regarding Phase 2 and Phase 3 Site Plans for the Stafford Technology Campus (STC) Development.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Dr. Yeung, to waive the by-laws of Section 11.1 to hold a public hearing on a Zoning Text Amendment in December of 2025, an election year.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

Ms. Vanuch motioned, seconded by Ms. Bohmke, to advertise a joint public hearing with the Planning Commission on December 2, 2025 for the purpose of reordaining Ordinance O25-29 with the grandfathering for data center projects that had received reclassification or conditional use permit approval from the Board of Supervisors or site plan approval on or before October 21, 2025.

Ms. Vanuch said that for transparency and awareness, she wanted to state that the projects that would fall under the motion she made included the Stafford Tech Campus, the Potomac Church Tech Center, Cranes Corner, Centreport Gateway Pemberton, Vantage VA4, also known as Melrod.

The Voting Board tally was:

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned its meeting at 9:52 p.m.

William H. Ashton, II
County Administrator