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Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors Meeting - March 12, 2025, Wednesday, March 12, 2025

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[00:01:20] Good afternoon and welcome to the afternoon session of the March 12th Board of Supervisors meeting. Madam Clerk. Mr. Chair, the first item on the agenda is request to postpone agenda items and additions, deletions, or changes in the order of presentation. Staff has no requests.

[00:01:37] Item two, everyday excellence, Dr. Casey. Good afternoon, members of the board and the public that's before us today and those that are viewing. As with every board meeting, it's just a recognition of the many employees amongst us that are on the front lines and serving either as a support function to others that are on the front lines directly serving the citizens or for the citizens themselves.

[00:01:59] Today is no exception. We actually have someone who sort of is a dual role. They are close to being a support function, but what they do is really right on the front lines in their library services. So if Dr. Mabe and Wallace Corbett could come to the front, I'll leave it to Dr. Mabe to introduce Mr. Corbett in his efficient and effective way in which he is the delivery person to all books between all the library functions.

[00:02:24] So anyone who orders something in the far east of the county that's in the west, he knows where to go, and he knows how to get it back to them as quick as possible and vice versa. Dr. Mabe. I will talk slower.

[00:02:47] Thank you very much. This is Wallace Corbett. He's in a unique position in the public library. We certainly do circulate books. And because they are, as Dr. Casey's pointed out, sometimes in the wrong place for the wrong reason, Wallace is the one who makes sure that happens.

[00:03:05] Wallace has worked for us for about 12 years. He started out part-time as a delivery driver. He's now our lead or primary driver. And, in fact, to put his job into perspective, Every day there are hundreds of books that may be at the Bonaire Library that somebody down in Ettrick wants to read.

[00:03:22] So a staff member pulls the item off the shelf, puts it on the delivery van, and then Wallace makes sure it gets down to the branch, typically within about 24 hours. But in addition to just that alone, there are the thousands of books that are placed on reserve every day that come from some location that a customer, again, at Central, may want to pick up at the Metadale Library.

[00:03:44] Again, it's taken off the shelf, put on the delivery van, and gets to the right location. At the end of the year, the total number of items that Wallace and his crew actually cart from one location to the next is equivalent to the circulation of our two smallest branch libraries.

[00:04:00] There's a lot of material that's flipped around. The good thing is that we have libraries in local communities where people can get to them quickly. The bad thing is they're probably not large enough for everybody to get all the items they want, But the important thing is that the system is large enough to maintain a lot of material.

[00:04:17] And Wallace and his crew are the ones responsible for making that material get around. He certainly, it's a logistics nightmare. When he was part-time, he was just the driver. When he became full-time, he went out of his way to learn a lot more about the process.

[00:04:33] So he learned about placing materials on hold. He learned about how to process new materials in, actually even how to order material. All of that made a big difference. And then when he became our lead driver, he took that one step further and was able to shift from everybody getting at least one delivery a day to where now all branch libraries get two deliveries a day. He's added into that, of course, he takes care of all of our inner office mail, the mail, the deliveries from one location to the next. He does work in a library, so he likes to read.

[00:05:03] He tells us he likes Westerns and something else. You like Westerns, mysteries, and of course, true crime. So Wallace is known by almost everybody in the library staff because he gets around. I would tell you most of the staff, especially the folks he works for directly, really love him.

[00:05:21] But he's really well respected among the system because he's paying attention to that key element of what's most important for us in that service to the delivery and to the community. So I present Wallace Corbett. Did you tell Wallace he has an opportunity to speak? I did. That's why he wore a He was hoping you wouldn't notice.

[00:05:49] Well, real quick, nothing big. Thank everybody for coming that showed up. You know, the library is my second family, so they're the reason that I do the job that I do every day. You know, it's not just me, it's them, so this is for them also.

[00:06:07] So, that's it. All right. Board members, any comments or questions? I'd just say it's nice to have a man who would rather read and speak.

[00:06:26] It's awesome. We got too much speaking around here. that's got to be a lot I mean I can't even imagine I'm just thinking about making sure they go to the right library and then I'm sure somebody somehow maybe gets it to the wrong library and then people get upset but I think people need to be more cognizant about how many libraries we have and you know how many books we have on catalog that's amazing so I never knew that existed so thank you

[00:07:01] so much that's amazing I use Libby all the time so I'm bad I put you out of work I'm sorry Actually, Libya is the reason a lot of that material gets carted around. Thank you very much.

[00:07:18] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to congratulate you and everyone in the library system. I think it's a wonderful place. Historically, I've been a friend of the library since I first came to Chesterfield over 36 years ago. First thing my kids had was a library card. So before they could get a driver's license, they'd have a library card.

[00:07:36] And so we had to visit and read and read. So congratulations. Thank you for a wonderful system. think we have the best system I'm aware of. So great job and kudos to you and all the great work you're doing for being recognized here today. All the best. Thank you, Mr. Chair. They say that the angels are in the details and the truth is that what you're doing, it's very easy for folks to just take it for granted. They need a book and then they put it in order, but they don't realize the angel that is taking everything and taking it from point A to point B and making it happen.

[00:08:13] So thank you for what you do with the folks in the library do every day. And you're a big part of that. So thank you. Well, I imagine that not all library systems within a jurisdiction can move books around from one facility to another.

[00:08:30] So I think that puts us a step ahead already. But then for you to take a part-time job to a full-time job to the interest that you did to understanding the efficiencies that would allow us to have two trips a day that I'm sure is very much appreciated by our citizens that are very much wanting to get an opportunity to start a book that just finished the book and by being able to get it quicker because of the efficiencies that you were able to work on and bring to the table I think is remarkable and says a lot for the type

[00:09:09] of employees we have in the county to serve our citizens so thank you very much for what you've done yeah one last thing um i don't know if it's good or bad but we're building another library so your trips are going to get a lot longer actually building building a couple of them so but it's we're lucky to have you so thank you he's going to need staff yeah that's true dr case mr chair i'll uh i'll finish on one comment though and i talked dr may this yesterday we We had a person who recently moved to Chesterfield County, and I asked him, you know, what's the difference?

[00:09:44] And they said they get three weeks to read a book in Chesterfield, and they came from a place that they only got two weeks, and they could never finish a book without having to pay 32 cents in fines. So I will credit Dr. Mabe and his team to recognize that in Chesterfield, we'll let you read the whole book if it takes three weeks.

[00:10:00] Thank you. Thank you. Item three, work sessions. A, schools FY2026, proposed budget presentation. Dr. Murray. And I'll take a point of liberty.

[00:10:16] I talked to Dr. Murray and then Mr. Harris as well. I thought it would be in the interest of the public since today is the county administrator's proposed budget. To just make some remarks actually repeat, quite frankly, what was said at the media briefing so that nothing gets taken out of context for the public that's paying attention today.

[00:10:34] So as soon as I finish, I'll welcome Dr. Murray. And again, I just want to also recognize we have two school board members in the audience, Ms. Coker and Ms. Hudgens as well to support the school board's adopted budget that was presented to us. So I usually don't read scripts.

[00:10:49] I usually try and go ad lib from what I know. But I don't want to throw this message off because it's a very important message of Chesterfield County. This is really the words that helps hopefully set the context for the dollars and numbers and everything you're going to be hearing and the community will be hearing over the course of the next month.

[00:11:07] So, yesterday was a nostalgic day in welcoming a private-public partnership to return short track racing to Chesterfield County for all fans, citizens and visitors, and related businesses. Today is actually just as nostalgic as we recognize the inherent value of Chesterfield in serving its citizens, visitors, and businesses.

[00:11:27] However, to contrast to entertainment and the exciting but uncertain outcome of a race around an oval to a finish line our budget is an austere approach where our pace is a straight line progression slow and steady with no finish line as we've been racing to the be the best for 276 years longer than we've had a state or a country you're going to hear from those that are right well very well respected in their professions locally regionally and nationally on the budgets and you're going to be seeing and hearing many community meetings being espoused out to the

[00:12:02] public for the details of what is actually a 400-page budget document that I see is before you and that is available for the public as well on the websites. This public budget, this 400 pages, again serves as the foundation for which all the discussions will take and ensue over the course of the next month. I would encourage any interested parties though to read at least the 14 pages of the county administrator's transmittal letter as that sets as a guide for all the topics of interest for others to do deeper dives into the rest of the document.

[00:12:34] You know, I would be remiss if I didn't thank all the departmental leaders in formulating their requests for their needs to serve our citizens. All needs cannot be funded, but rather prioritized with some needs further refined for future year discussions and engagement with the Board of Supervisors and Citizens.

[00:12:51] I also respect Dr. Murray and how he formulated his school needs to all of us and how both his school board and our county board continue to focus all funding shortfalls on the state's perpetual incongruence between its mandated level of public school service and funding. Their own JLARC report confirmed this, and my less technical interpretation is put your money where your mouth is. This is just an hour operating ask of the state for the schools as local government provides 100% of school capital needs. Our 2022

[00:13:27] bond referendum together with school and county boards working together to build new schools and rebuild other schools and the school board's work and efforts in redistricting will hopefully finally overcome a generational issue of over capacity. I also want to thank the collective county and

school workforce for all that it does every day. Their efforts have been recognized by many national, state, and regional award programs for innovative practices, cost-saving ideas, service above the call of duty and for our county employees their own assessment in being a top workplace winner for those staying and starting their careers here for hopefully what is long and

[00:14:05] productive and rewarding careers. Regionally there will be much attention to public utility budgets and while we're able to sustain a water system during the regional crisis and enabled our water to help Chippenham Hospital and others in that area have water pressure we are not done in creating a dynamic and resilient system. This budget and its CIP has \$426 million for phase one of the lower Appomattox water treatment plant, the county's fourth water source for even greater capacity and redundancy for decades to come. And from long-term planning, our operating and

[00:14:41] capital budgets of public utilities, not the general fund nor the local taxes, will continue to have the region's lowest utility rates. There are no charges from our general fund for which our taxpayers support to the utility system. It is self-funding from its own rate structures of user fees and connection fees. I realize that we are also under constant inquiries regarding federal funding. My observations are four. One, our direct service levels of a county are not as dependent upon federal funds as most people think. Two, Virginia is recognized to be one of the best

[00:15:16] managed states, and Chesapeake is one of the best managed local governments, which includes fiscal stewardship. Therefore, news stories of other local governments and states less resilient will dominate the news before these topics reach our state and county lines. Three, we cannot react to what we do not know, only to what we do know. So until definitive funding issues are provided to us or to our businesses and non-profit partners, we will continue to forge ahead in an austere manner 24-7, mindful of the local economic environment that has not experienced a recession since 2007. Ideally, any impact upon federal funding may be mitigated with the removal of

[00:15:56] unfunded federal mandates or burdensome regulations. And four, by law, in the state of Virginia, the state and local governments have balanced budgets, so we are not deficit funding our budget already. We are only living within our means. In the interim, we continue to drive down the real property tax rate, increasing tax relief for elderly and disabled as this continues to be our highest increasing expense, providing rebates on first-half real property tax bills, a regional leader from 2024 in lowered personal property tax rates, increasing business license

[00:16:32] exemption thresholds so that small businesses that grow in an inflationary manner are still classified as small, and avoidance of the meals tax rate discussion. While each of these may affect each citizen and business differently. Under state code, there are not many other manners to differentiate our tax base and the manners in which we can tax. So with that said, Mr. Chair, I'd like to introduce the budget process and Dr. Murray. And we have a special guest.

[00:17:07] Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, members of the board, and Dr. Casey. I'm Ann Coker, chair of the Chesterfield County School Board, and I'm here with Dr. Murray, our superintendent, and we're pleased to join you this afternoon and celebrating one of our students. Mason has received a national recognition earlier this year, this school year. During the National Conference of Future Business Leaders

[00:17:42] of America, Midlothian High senior Mason Captain was honored as the number one accounting student in the United States. Budget accounting, yeah. Mason achieved this title by outscoring all other students on a competitive test that assesses students' knowledge of introductory accounting.

[00:18:15] Here are some of the accounting topics covered. Journalizing, account classification, income statement, posting, payroll, and bank reconciliation. Quite the achievement. Dr. Murray? I just want to say that Mason actually created our budget this year.

[00:18:37] I thought, I think Mr. Holland might want to speak on this one. I'm glad to hear he worked. Well, we just appreciate the invitation before presenting our budget to show the impactful work of where our dollars are invested into our children and what that leads to.

[00:19:03] So Mason, job well done. He was among a dozen students from Midlothian High's FBLA chapter who attended the National Conference last summer. Our students joined more than 8,700 other high school students from across the nation to learn, network, and compete in business-related events.

[00:19:25] Midlothian High's business teacher, Yvonne Mullins, is the faculty advisor for the school's FBLA chapter, and she does a remarkable job year after year. Yvonne, we appreciate you and your transferring passion for FBLA.

[00:19:41] We are all extremely proud of our students' success and offer congratulations to Mason Captain and his family and to his teachers and administrators and to Ms. Mullins at Midlothian High School. And we thank the Board of Supervisors for recognizing them today.

[00:19:59] If appropriate, I think we would like to hear from Mason. Ms. Mullins will steal the mic for the rest of the afternoon. um so first off just thank you for having me today and recognizing me it's not just me that should be recognized today though it was miss mullins that helped me throughout the way she's my accounting teacher at melothian high school so this competition was a big deal for her as well as it was for me so it was just that fbla has been a big impact in my life accounting big impact

[00:20:35] in my life and i'm going on to study accounting in the future accounting and finance in college so we'll see where that takes me we'll take his business card yep seems like you already have a job mason well i was going to reserve the first right to schools but we're we're going to take the second right on you won't be able to afford it that's a good teacher right there yeah on every i don't want to cry but on every recommendation letter and scholarship

[00:21:10] a letter I've done for Mason, which has been a lot, I say, this is a kid who I'm going to be able to say I'm so proud I taught him, because the sky is the limit. He is so smart. He is so good. He is just a great student. And only with the school board's budget can we do the things we do in accounting. Very few high schools offer accounting anymore. I have six classes of it.

[00:21:32] It is my baby. I have grown it. I tell my kids who go to VCU, look for Mr. Holland. Tell him you're my student he will know you had me because you know your debits from your credits and yeah and I will never forget Mr. Holland my first year going to nationals when I was at Meadowbrook and we didn't have money you gave me a personal check for a hundred dollars to help me get to Nashville with a student and that made such an impact on me that you cared when the school board member didn't give me anything and didn't have time for me you cared because I was working with your wife at the same time at Meadowbrook but FBLA is a phenomenal co-curricular club that we have and we

[00:22:09] have 477 members in our FBLA. 25% of Medlothian High School belongs to our club. We have 45 kids going to states in three weeks and I will bring home, we will bring home state trophies. I mean our kids are good, they're smart and they want to do well and they know the business careers are great. So, Board of Supervisors, we need you to invest in our CTE programs and our business programs, and we're

losing teachers. I'm going soon, and I don't know what's going to happen to accounting or FBLA because it's another job just to be an FBLA advisor. So, funding. When I

[00:22:47] just heard this week that we have a teacher leaving at Midlothian because they can make \$10,000 more as a first-year teacher at Henrico County, even though they've been a teacher for 11 years they're going to make ten thousand dollars more it's sad so fund the salaries i don't care what else you don't fund but fund the teacher salaries because they're leaving and we know people are going to chesterfield we didn't rehearse this yeah we did it they they do need to re-read their calculations though because that's not correct they they they're their guide they need to re-read the um because henrico's steps are every three years and ours are every year so they may need to double check their numbers well he's going you know he's getting paid more

[00:23:26] 10,000 more but I'm just saying the schools are white people move to Chesterfield listen to dr. Maurice budget. Thank you. Mason's the best Miss Snyder You're not escaping that quick Thank you for your passion that's amazing and I know how much extra time goes into when you lead groups like that and my husband wasn't in FBLA, but he was in DECA and he after

[00:24:05] all the way through college he went and he did coaching or he did coaching as well as judging at all the tournaments and um it's just a really great way to get keep yourself um on that path as you get older and and keep that in mind they're always looking for coaches and judges for uh turn afterwards when you leave so thank you so much for what you're doing well mason congratulations um there is uh nothing more important than a mentor and in this mullins you a mentor. There's a truth which you typify, besides the fact that you go to

[00:24:45] Midlothian High School, is that really accounting and good management, good fiscal management, literally is in our DNA. It's not by accident that our county administrator is an accountant. It's not by accident that someone on the Board of Supervisors is an accountant. It's because that kind of very important fiscal management is what we do day in day out and to figure out what are what are not the priorities so that that's what accounting is about and congratulations and I'm looking forward to hearing which school you ultimately

[00:25:23] choose if you selected where you're going yet make sure your answer is a matches your father. You don't have to answer, but I don't think he knows. I don't know which school I'm looking at right now. I'm in between three. I'm looking at University of Virginia to go into the Commerce School with McIntyre or Clemson University, which I'm waiting on the financials from them to know if it's within the budget. We're looking there. And then I'm waiting

[00:25:57] on the University of Pennsylvania for Wharton School to come back. Congratulations. Whatever does come through as what was supposed to come through. Yeah, we're not going to be able to afford to hire you.

[00:26:14] You're going to be worth a lot of money. But there will be a lot of nice companies in Chesterfield County that will probably afford to hire you. So don't forget about coming back home when you are through breaking a bunch of records at college and showing everybody else that our public school system and our teachers are the best. And our children, like yourself and so many others, have learned how to learn and take that information in that they're trying to give you for free. Well, we're paying them. But they're trying to give you so much and apparently you're getting it. I wish I had that same skill

[00:26:52] set when I was your age. You're a very unique, very unique young man. And I wish you the best. I know we're not going to be able to hire you later, but don't forget about Chesterfield County because we have big companies coming here that probably will. Yep, internship, too.

[00:27:08] We can do that here. I may, Mr. Chairman. Congratulations, Mason. And Ms. Mullins, so good to see you again. I remember from Meadowbrook, thanks for reminding me. I'd forgotten all about your days in FBLA. Y'all were really forerunners in accounting and making a difference.

[00:27:25] And as you mentioned, a lot of high schools don't have accounting programs. We're always pushing that, as you well know. So, Mason, I tell you, when I was in college, I studied in North Carolina. Dr. Case has studied at the University of Richmond. He's a CPA as well.

[00:27:42] I was told by my professor, he said, you'll never go without a job. I've always had multiple jobs. In fact, I work too many at times. But that's just the nature of my get going and helping others to achieve. So I congratulate you.

[00:27:58] And still on the faculty of VCU, I teach students, non-business majors and business majors. So I'm always looking for aspiring CPAs, CPA. And some people don't know what that means probably, but that is a credential that is far valued for most of than any other credential in the community because you're experts in making things happen.

[00:28:23] And I can tell you over my 50-some years of work as an accountant, I'm always called upon with taxes. In fact, someone called me today, can you do my taxes? And so, but I can tell you, it's very rewarding.

[00:28:39] This is the first time I've seen a number one student here in the U.S., not just Chesterfield. I like that U.S., so that's a notable achievement, I tell you. And I won't tell you how many times it took me to pass the CPA exam, and I got to ask Dr. Casey. But anyway, passing it, you pass it, and once you get the pass marks, that's it.

[00:28:59] Once you get the scores that they require. But in a way, congratulations to you and all the best, because I tell you, it's a rewarding career. In fact, most of the CEOs in the country have CPA backgrounds. Look at our CEO over here. He's accounting background. And of course, that's the one thing, office that's closest to the president.

[00:29:18] Usually in most organizations, you'll find that office closest to the president at universities and all institutions. It is the 360 degree opportunity in the country. everybody needs accounts even rock stars so you might want to get a job there they pay big money I'm told so big money rock stars and others but so they can bring you along and you can be their accountant personal so so many opportunities congratulations we're so proud of you Ms. Mullins so proud of all you continue to do at Midlothian High we had at Meadowbrook first by the way

[00:29:52] Mr. Vice Chair at Meadowbrook High School where she's honing those skills you know so congratulations are all the best. Anything we as a board can ever do for you in terms of letters of recommendations, we're most happy to do so. And for scholarship, don't forget to apply for all the money out there.

[00:30:10] AICPA scholarship, I'm doing a letter now for a young man. And then, of course, the Virginia Society of CPAs has \$50,000 in scholarship money for young people. So there's so much money out there

for you, and it's just a great field.

[00:30:28] We have great students here in Chesterfield. I've seen men come through and just snapped up their year. In fact, I'll say one last thing, and don't speak too much, I hope, is that I knew some enterprising students who were snapped up by firms, and they paid for their senior year, and they paid for them to pass a CPA exam, and they gave them a bonus to do so.

[00:30:49] So they always give money a flush. So anyway, great opportunity. All the best. Congratulations to you. And thanks for being here. And this is why we fund our school system. This is why we give. This is why I've been such a passionate advocate for whatever it takes to pay those teachers and to, of course, fund our young people because that's the future.

[00:31:08] You're the future. So God bless. Keep it the great work. To finish number one in the country, you do have to have a great teacher first, but you have to be an excellent student. And you've shown that you are.

[00:31:24] Thank you for representing Chesterfield County at the national level. Good job. Thank you.

[00:31:55] All right, follow that with your budget presentation. Well, it's all downhill from here.

[00:32:13] Well, thank you for having us. I'm joined by our CFO, Bob Meister. So I want to begin with some thank yous. Certainly, thanks to Bob and his team for doing such deliberate and thoughtful work throughout this process.

[00:32:32] It really is a year-long process, and we'll kind of walk through some of that for the general public. But I also want to thank the county board of supervisors as well as Matt Harris and his team, certainly Dr. Casey.

[00:32:49] There are many conversations that are had. I've been in this work in this county for 21 years. I don't recall a time where I have felt or seen such a display of togetherness, not just in this process, but over the past eight months, just more broadly speaking.

[00:33:15] So thanks for that. And we'll jump right into the budget if this, did you change the slide there? Is it? - It changed. - Oh, here I am, all right.

[00:33:32] Do you wanna hit the executive summary and then we're going to tag team this, folks. Happy to hit the executive summary. So sorry for the smaller font there, but hopefully you guys can see it. You hear a lot of us discuss a billion-dollar budget here in Chesterfield County for our schools.

[00:33:47] You can see that in the second bullet, just over \$1,070,000,000 when you include all of our funds. We're going to spend most of the time here today, though, talking about that first line, that \$986 million. That's our ongoing operating fund. The difference between those two is our grants and our food service funds.

[00:34:06] Obviously, a lot more in the news recently about those two funds as you think about the higher percentage of those being federally funded. I'll echo Dr. Casey's remarks from the intro on that. We don't know what we don't know. We're going to monitor that closely and carefully. In addition to our operating fund, you also see a pretty robust CIP package here.

[00:34:29] Happy to say that these are all the projects that we've been talking about for several years. We did not add anything new this year. We know that inflation is a real thing. We know that we've got a lot of

great projects underway. So there is some uncertainty in terms of timing and affordability as we go out through the end of our plan.

[00:34:46] But we are continually working with both county staff, our own staff to find those locations, find the funding to make sure we complete that list. The last item I'll note here before I turn it back to Dr. Murray is, please keep in mind that the school budget is a working process even at this point.

[00:35:06] Yes, we've gotten through a school board approval, but as you know, this just kicks off your process, which is a significant source of funding, as well as the state process, which is over half of our funding comes from the state. The governor came out with his proposal. The General Assembly came out with their proposal.

[00:35:23] relatively recently. We feel good about what's in the General Assembly proposal versus at least what the governor proposed, but those are by far not finalized. There'll be additional discussions on that. The General Assembly will get back together after the governor puts his pen to it in early April, and we'll have to almost certainly come back and revise this for that information, but we are excited to present what's here today for you with the understanding that the STATE NUMBERS MAY STILL MOVE ALL RIGHT SO NOTHING NEW FOR THE FOLKS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE

[00:35:58] BUT FOR EVERYONE ELSE WE'RE GOING TO WALK YOU THROUGH WHAT OUR CODIFIED EXPECTATION IS AND THAT IS TO PRESENT A NEEDS-BASED BUT ALSO A BALANCED BUDGET I WILL SAY THAT IF YOU ATTENDED ANY OF OUR TOWN HALLS YOU'RE GOING TO NOTICE SOME POSITIVE CHANGES AT OUR TOWN HALLS, WE TALKED ABOUT THE SCOPE OF OUR NEED AS WELL AS THE SCOPE OF OUR HORIZON OF WANTS IN THREE BUCKETS, WHAT WE COULD AFFORD RIGHT HERE AND NOW, WHAT WE NEEDED TO AFFORD BUT DIDN'T HAVE LINE OF SIGHT TO THOSE DOLLARS, BUT NOW WE FEEL COMFORTABLE,

[00:36:37] WE DO. AND THEN SOME BIGGER PICTURE, LONGER TERM GOALS THAT ARE VERY IMPORTANT FOR US TO keep our eye on and continue to make progress toward meeting those goals.

[00:36:55] For the larger public, I mentioned our budget is a year round process. For the sake of talking in school years, late summer, early September, we begin dialogue with our internal staff, talking at the chief level, our directors and others to present to us what we call white paper initiatives.

[00:37:19] What do we need to perform at a higher level? Those could be staffing needs, those could be programmatic enhancements, those could be replacement cycles, et cetera, et cetera. From there, we await the governor's proposed budget, which came in very slim, to the tune of \$12 million of new money for Chesterfield at the time.

[00:37:44] And that's when we had to start making some tough considerations of what we could afford and what we needed to reach between the couch cushions, as we like to say, and try and find some loose change to fund multi-million dollar initiatives and needs.

[00:38:02] From there, we go into our town hall process and really solicit community input and feedback. Along the way, I should say that our school board advisory groups are meeting and making recommendations to our board for our budgetary consideration.

[00:38:19] You'll see some of their recommendations and work honored and represented in some later slides. Before, ultimately, Bob and I present our final proposed budget, which we did to the school board

earlier this month and have sent it over to our friends here, and we're happy to meet and present this to you.

[00:38:46] I appreciate Dr. Casey's comments on the JLARC study because that, indeed, is where our fingers should point and point often. Chesterfield County remains roughly \$250 million underfunded, according to that commission.

[00:39:07] Going back to the white paper initiatives I mentioned, they totaled coincidentally just under \$300 million. That would more than satisfy all of the compensation studies, all of the programmatic enhancements, all of the staffing needs that we just can't afford because the state isn't coming to our aid.

[00:39:30] So this slide says we do it anyway, and people choose to move here because our schools remain premier, even in the absence of a significant funding shortfall.

[00:39:47] This is a bird's eye view of some of our high level accomplishments. I won't read them off to you, but from elementary to graduation, our students are attending award-winning schools or participating in award-winning programs.

[00:40:05] I should have said pre-K to graduation because we're very proud of our C-CLA as well. Look forward to expanding that. This is our nine slide where we highlight how large Chesterfield is.

[00:40:21] A lot of times we forget being a bedroom community And we do so well at making the big feel small that we forget how large, in fact, we are. We are one of the 65 largest school divisions in the country, one of the top five in the Commonwealth. And so our bus drivers drive over 9 million miles a year.

[00:40:40] Our food service serves over 9 million meals a year. Our custodial crew cleans over 9 million or right around 9 million square feet per year. And that is kind of how we arrive at the need of a billion-dollar operation.

[00:40:58] Arguably, it needs to be much higher than that. And then the infographic that you might struggle to read without a monocle is showing you exactly where the percentage breakdown of our dollars are spent, with the largest portion in blue there, obviously going to instruction.

[00:41:15] We create pathways for our students that meet the personalized need or desire of families and their children. So we offer a robust online menu, either through CCPS online or virtually through our K-8 virtual school, which was the first in Virginia.

[00:41:40] If you have struggled with addiction and you are in recovery, we have a home for you at our Chesterfield Recovery Academy, which was the first in the Commonwealth, which will now, using Chesterfield's Canvas, be re-implemented in three other divisions around the Commonwealth.

[00:41:57] We have our Chester Early Childhood Learning Academy, where we're meeting the needs of three- and four-year-olds, making sure that they are ready for life in kindergarten. AND OUR DATA AS WE HAVE BEGUN COHORT TRACKING SHOWS THAT THEY ARE PERFORMING HIGHER THAN THEIR GRADE LEVEL COMPLEMENT AT THE FIRST AND SECOND GRADE LEVEL AND OUR AWARD-WINNING CTC CAMPUSES.

[00:42:26] AND I MENTIONED THAT BECAUSE TODAY WE BEGAN OUR MOVE INTO SPRINGLINE DRIVE WHERE WE ARE consolidating both of our central office camps and that will give way to 650 new CTE seats in the next year and a half so we're excited about that. We prepare our students for life beyond high

school. We're pretty proud of our 91 percent graduation rate. We'll be prouder when it goes higher than that but our students participate in nearly 30,000 work-based experiences before graduation earning

[00:43:04] almost 9,000 career industry certifications and prepare for the rigors of college if that is the pathway they choose by completing over 24,000 college credits. But Bob and I don't create this budget by ourselves or prioritize the needs alone. Certainly we rely on other division staff and their departments of oversight as well as our school board advisory groups as I mentioned previously, and the community feedback, as well as our school board. Anything I miss, Bob?

[00:43:44] Fantastic. I think you've done this once or twice. Thank you, Dr. Murray. I'll carry the ball forward here. As we think about the school budget, the first thing we always have to be mindful of are those mandates and requirements. Those often show up in terms of unfunded mandates from the state. I know we've had many conversations over the years about what those look like. The go-to example that we've historically used is when they claim they offer a 3% raise, as an example, that really trickles down to Chesterfield County is about half of that being funded by the state, and the rest of that needs to come from the county in that case. That's not the only place

[00:44:23] where that happens. It just happens to be the easiest example. As we go through this deck, you'll see uses for new money, most of them are going to fall in this camp of mandates and requirements or, quite frankly, inflation. We'll look at that through that lens as we go. But the other half of this is also important, and that's the need to maintain that high level of community expectations. Here's where you see unique programming, staffing above those SOQ levels, things like that. The example we had earlier today is a great example of that, of the specialty programs and things that we can do when we invest differently that aren't necessarily state

[00:44:59] requirements. And what a great example that was just a few moments ago on that. So with all that in mind, enrollment is also a big deal. We've come to you over the course of time and talked about accelerating growth, accelerating growth. Good news is that slowed a little bit here, which is great to see. This does still assume our models, Stratus models, both align on about 1,400 new kids between roughly last year and 2029, the end of our sort of five-year horizon.

[00:45:29] So still growth, slower than we've been projecting. Happy for that as it gives us an opportunity as we think about the CIP and other places to catch up. This year's growth is relatively flat, just a little bit over 100 to 200, depending on the point in time where you do the math.

[00:45:45] Still growth. Not all the counties in the Commonwealth are growing. It's great that we are still one of them. You don't want to be on the other side of that and shrinking. That comes with other challenges, but I'll take slow, modest growth any day, and that's what we see going forward. So here's where the money meets the road.

[00:46:04] Here's our overall picture of the roughly 1.07 billion funds. Again, 986 of that is in our operating fund, 38 within grants, 42 within food service. I'll talk mostly operating from here, but I will pause on this grant bucket for just a moment. Of that 38 million, roughly 30 of that is some form of federal grant, whether that be IDEA, the various titles, Perkins, those type of things. We are actively monitoring what's happening in Washington and making sure that we stay attuned to that. This reflects as if those

[00:46:38] programs continue. Should something change, we'll certainly adjust to that, but this assumes those change, no change. What you do see here is a minus 1.2 million in this line. This is from a specific

decision that the school has made to shift away from a certain pre-K program called Head Start that is federally funded and shift over to a different but equally viable program called VPI that is state funded, a little less regulation, roughly the same funding level. So you'll see that as a swap in and out of our grant fund, which is why you see that actually being reduced

[00:47:14] this year. No major story in food service. Food continues to get expensive. But from here, we'll talk about that roughly 4.5% increase in operating and where that money goes. Again, mostly toward compensation and those requirements. So where does that, there we go, where does that money come from? Obviously, a big portion of that comes from the folks here. That county funding of just over 40%, a little over \$400 million of funding in ongoing operations is assumed in this budget. Thank you to Mr. Harris for the early read on what is likely that transfer. This reflects

[00:47:50] A \$15 million increase in ongoing transfer from the Board of Supervisors in this budget. We hope that stays as we go forward. The other big piece of this pie is obviously that state funding. That's the \$57 million or just over \$560 million of funding from the state.

[00:48:08] Here's where I could talk JLARC. I think that point has been made once or twice, so I'll just leave it at that and say there's about \$560 million from state funding reflected in this budget. And again, this is reflective of the General Assembly's budget assumptions, still subject to the red pen of the governor.

[00:48:26] So should things change, we'll need to come back and revisit that. Where do we spend this money? Needless to say, the bulk of this is in instruction. You see just under \$700 million here is directly pointed towards instruction.

[00:48:42] And I would argue most of the other pieces of this pie are also very much pointed towards instruction, whether that be transportation, maintenance, technology, things like Chromebooks to put on their desk, and of course, debt, being able to afford the mortgage payments on our existing CIP program that's already out in the field and that debt burden that's out there. So 987 million, 42.8 million increase. Those are the numbers we're going to talk about as we dive in. So where did that \$42.8 million come from? You see here state revenue of about \$28.7 million. Three things in

[00:49:19] there. The governor's original assumption of \$12 million, that was primarily to fund their half of the 3% raise, about \$10 million, and about \$2 million to fund ELL growth. The next 15 or so is from General Assembly action recently. Primarily, the removal of the support cap that we've been anxious to see for some time. That's a little over 12 million of this, as well as some additional funding to support special education. And as we go into where we're spending, you'll see that is definitely a need. And the remaining dollars is that swap from Head Start to VPI that makes up

[00:49:57] that 20, just under 29 million of state funding. You see the county money here, we split it up into two pieces, 15 million in total, 13 million for sort of ongoing new work, another 1.85 to support the lease payment on the spring line building really great to have that building excited to move in there for all the advantages it's going to offer to our administrative staff but it's really about clearing that construction space at ctc hull and we're really excited to start the start to build out on that and open those extra 650 seats in ctc so where does that

[00:50:32] money get spent in terms of new money compensation 20 million required increases of about three and a half. This is exciting stuff like health care increases and inflation on custodial contracts. The lease, spend on one side, get the revenue on the other. Student facing 13.8. We'll spend a fair amount of

time on this one, but this is really two big things. Increase in need and growth of special education within Chesterfield County, as well as growth in and SOQ requirements for English language learners within Chesterfield County. There's a few other things in there,

[00:51:09] but those are the big items in there. You'll also see on this page the pre-K adjustment as well as a shared service adjustment. As we went through and worked with Matt and county partners, they were able to identify just under a half million of savings that we could help fill our funding gap through some adjustments in the shared service allocation. So thank you, Mr. Harris, for that, and we'll continue to appreciate that as we go forward. So again, \$40 million plus sounds like a lot of money, but when you first 20 million of that is invested in compensation, that's what a

[00:51:47] 3% raise cost. That was the amount requested from the state. We've heard other surrounding districts offering more. We're able to offer 3% at this point in time. I'll have another slide on that, so I'll come back to that in a moment. In terms of the other items, nothing terribly exciting here. These are nuts and bolts budgets. Health and dental insurance, we're assuming like the county, a 5% increase coming in January. Custodial contract, about a 5% escalator in their contracts that we'll have to pay next year. Technology services, this shows up in a couple

[00:52:23] different places, but similar escalators in contracts for things like Chromebook support and network switches and things like that that are really just inflationary in nature. And the last item, about \$1.85 million for the lease at Springline. As we went through our School process, those were the items that were largely afforded based on that initial \$15 million offer from you all at the county, plus that governor's budget.

[00:52:51] We spent a lot of time saying we need to fill other gaps, and I'll talk about those in just one moment. But before I do that, that \$20 million in compensation shows up as a 3% increase, at least 3% for all employees.

[00:53:07] THE STEP SCALE, WHICH ARE LARGELY YOUR TEACHER AND SCHOOL-LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS, THAT SHOWS UP AS GIVING THEM THE STEP THAT THEY'VE EARNED, PLUS A 2% ADJUSTMENT IN THEIR SCALE OR COLA ADJUSTMENT. FOR THE GRADED RANGE, THAT LOOKS LIKE A 3% INCREASE TO THEIR PAY.

[00:53:24] FOR OUR MINIMUM WAGE, THAT MOVES OUR MINIMUM WAGE TO \$14.70 AN HOUR, UP FROM \$14.42. AND OTHERS, LIKE INSTRUCTIONAL AIDES, DON'T FIT IN EITHER OF THOSE BUCKETS NEATLY, another just under a million and a half to offer them at least it says at least a three percent raise their steps are a little bit bigger than one percent so offering them that full step plus the two percent cost of living leaves them a little bit north of three percent not as high as four but it's three point something depending on where you are in the scales for those other

[00:53:58] positions as we've mentioned we've got a longer term goal for those teachers to get to a sixty \$60,000 minimum salary. This puts us to about \$55,000 where we stand now. And the graded range, that \$147,000, we've got a stated goal to get to \$16 an hour. As I said, we're not there on each of them, but we appreciate each step we can take. We recognize that getting to that levels of that \$60,000 and that \$16 would cost an additional \$65 million. I don't have that growing in my money tree. We'd love for that to rain from the sky, but we recognize that that's something we're going to

[00:54:36] have to work for over the next few years. Now we're looking at what we're talking about as the superintendent's proposed additional school needs. These were the items that as we were working through our budget process and talking to the community, we did not have line of sight to funding. This is where the additional funding from the general assembly is largely targeted IN OUR BUDGET AND ABLE TO MEET THESE NEEDS OF THE SCHOOLS.

[00:55:04] AND AS YOU LOOK AT THIS LIST, YOU'LL SEE THAT NONE OF THESE ARE NECESSARILY OPTIONAL IN NATURE EITHER. I'LL HAVE A SLIDE ON EACH OF THE SPECIAL ED AND ELL OPTIONS, SO I'LL TALK ABOUT THOSE AS PART OF A SECOND SLIDE. BUT SOME OF THESE OTHER ITEMS ON HERE, COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS, IS A LONGSTANDING RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE WITH THAT ORGANIZATION TO PROVIDE WRAPAROUND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS IN NEED.

[00:55:27] This is part of that agreement is we add a site each year and they fundraise and they provide an extra another site. This is a buy one, get one free money well spent opportunity here with our communities and schools group. The other needs here looks like more of that inflationary items that we didn't have line of sight to when we put the budget together.

[00:55:48] Fleet and fuel. Our bus fleet continues to age. We appreciate the support of the board of supervisors to continue to help us modernize that fleet. It still costs more to service them as things go forward, about \$1.2 million of an increase there. Other inflation, waste service contracts, things like that, little things that add up to about \$200,000.

[00:56:09] Technology equipment and replacement schedule. This roughly half million is carrying a lot of weight here. We have a roughly \$10 to \$11 million backlog of technology replacement cycle needs across the district. These are things that range from everything from staff laptops to PA systems in the schools to other classroom technology as you look around.

[00:56:34] What this first half million dollars on that journey to fill that bucket is really a few laptops, but mostly replacing five intercom systems at schools where, quite frankly, they're at end of life and obsolete, and if it ever breaks, we cannot physically purchase the parts to repair.

[00:56:52] So we need to get in and make those needed adjustments there. And the last item on here is megatrailers for you and for the folks that are listening. This is not new megatrailer leases. This is to fund existing leases. We've historically been funding these roughly 50-50 from ongoing operations and other sources, whether that be year-end funds, pandemic monies, other things like that.

[00:57:17] As that money is largely dried up, we need to find an ongoing source of funding for those existing mega-trailers, and that's what that \$600,000 reflects. Now, the big numbers on here is the special education number, just under \$10 million related to special education.

[00:57:36] There's two high-level things going on here. One, continued growth in number and severity of special education students. Just looking at count, in 2020, we had about 8,100 students identified with special education needs. Last year it was about 8,700 and continuing to grow even further this year. Most of that growth is really captured in that first bullet in terms of increased caseload. This will show up as six additional teachers and 28 IAs to help service those students across their spectrum. The other versions are also versions of the continued growth

[00:58:15] but also starts to layer in the more expensive services when we can't afford to hire folks at Chesterfield County who have higher paying opportunities in the private sector. But we are required via

their IEPs to meet those needs, so we have to go out to those private sector and pay consulting rates on those services.

[00:58:36] That shows up in speech-language therapy. That shows up in nursing support specifically on this page, but also in other areas across special ed, but those two are the big ones that we'll highlight here. The other big number, that 2 million in the middle of the page, 50 additional instructional aides to support one-on-one opportunities for kids.

[00:58:58] As those severity increases, we need to lean into additional support for those kids with those higher needs so that we can maintain sort of cohesion in the classroom AND QUITE FRANKLY, CAN KEEP THEM IN OUR CLASSROOM SO THEY'RE NOT ULTIMATELY REQUIRED TO GO TO OTHER THIRD-PARTY PRIVATE DAY, WHICH WOULD BE AN EVEN BIGGER NUMBER IF WE DON'T LEAN INTO ADDITIONAL BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT ON THESE FOLKS.

[00:59:22] AND, BOB, I APPRECIATE THAT POINT, SO I WANT TO TAKE IT BACK TO THE VERY FIRST BULLET AND EMPHASIZE THE SAME. YOU MAY THINK THAT 2.1 FOR SIX SPED TEACHERS AND 28 SPECIAL ED AIDES is maybe the juice isn't worth the squeeze, this too is an effort to create additional ADP and IDP, so those intensive day and autism day programs, such that we do not have to send students to private placement and we can keep them here where they belong in Chesterfield

[01:00:01] and at a lower cost than private day placement. - Thank you, Dr. Murray. - Mr. Chair, I got a question. - Oh, please. The increase in students, are they coming in at all different grade levels, or are they coming in primarily in the first grade, second grade?

[01:00:20] Are we coming, we have a lot of people moving here that are bringing kids with them that need the special needs, or what's that number look like? I don't think I've looked at that specifically, so I think I'll have to sort of get back to you on the specific number, but clearly we've seen more at the elementary level.

[01:00:39] I can't quantify exactly how much or whether that's in proportion. have to get back to you. I mean, I think it's important for us to, as a community, to look, you know, in our, in, in the kids that are in, in, you know, and you talked about pre-K from three to age three to four, um, out in the community. I mean, by gauging that, it'll actually give us an opportunity to look into the future to see what these increases are going to look like as we move forward. We can't gauge that for people who move here from somewhere else, but people are already here who are already having uh to work with their you know i have an autistic brother so we knew

[01:01:15] when he was three right right so um it gives us and you a better chance to predict these things in the future so we can work towards making sure you have the funding for teachers uh for this and and and the funding needed to to support it so i'm just curious as to how you're modeling that or tracking it and if there's any help we can do to help you with that even would reach out to the the community. And of course, you know, they're like, and I'll just tell you in Ettrick, we don't have a, we don't have pre-K down there. We need it. Right. So if we have special need kids down in Ettrick right now, you don't know about them. You won't know about them until they hit the,

[01:01:51] hit the elementary school. But if we had pre-K down there for them, like we have in other parts of the county, well then we would know it. So just, we need any help in that area. We'll be one happy to help. The only other thing I would offer to your question, Mr. Carroll, is we've noticed a considerable

uptick in identification post-COVID. So you think about the learning loss there, mental health concerns and issues, and all of the contributors because of that event

[01:02:26] has led us to seeing a significant increase. I think you couple that with some transient population. But here again, a modest growth. I feel confident that the majority have always been ours. Mr. Chair, just to speak to that, I know I'm about to climb into the weeds a little bit because I understand special ed, but just understand that the psychological evaluation is one for when they're little kids, which is called the WIPC, and then it moves to the WISC, and then it ultimately moves to the WISC. And so when you're putting together an IEP, THERE ARE THREE COMPONENTS.

[01:03:06] YOU HAVE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL, YOU HAVE THE EDUCATIONAL, AND YOU HAVE THE SOCIOLOGICAL. SO OVER TIME, THINGS CAN REVEAL THEMSELVES BECAUSE OF COVID OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. SO INITIALLY, THE STUDENT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED, AND THEN WHAT OCCURS IS THAT AS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS, YOU'RE ALWAYS COMPARED TO YOUR PEERS.

[01:03:26] SO IT'S WHENEVER YOU'RE GOING THROUGH THE DIFFERENT PHASES, IF YOU ARE IN PRE-SCHOOL OR IF YOU'RE STILL-- So really the cutoff is you're going to get one somewhere around kindergarten and then another one at 6 and then another one at 12. So because of that, you're always being approved, always with your peers, then you can measure when you've fallen behind.

[01:03:46] And then at that point through a Woodcock-Johnson or through a sociological, what's happening in your family, all of those components can mean that you wouldn't necessarily know it or not be able to identify it at one age, but then it becomes so much more identifiable, add on to that the mental health, and it could be anything from ADHD or something else, and then you can identify it at that point.

[01:04:10] So sometimes it takes a little while for it to reveal itself. It's not necessarily someone coming in from the outside. Thank you, Mr. Miller. Moving forward. The other big area of increase here is with respect to our English language learner population.

[01:04:29] There's two dynamics at play here. The first is, I'll start at the bottom bullet, where you can see there's been about 2,200 increase since FY24 into what is projected for FY26. So a pretty big increase in population here.

[01:04:45] Couple that with the change in the state's SOQ requirements, which you can see in the middle of the page there. Happy to say that Chesterfield County has largely been ahead of the shift in higher staffing ratios for ELL students for those in the levels one through four.

[01:05:02] We didn't do it exactly like this. We had it bucketed a little differently, but largely met the spirit of one through four. So we were ahead of the curve on that. However, the new item here is that level five plus population. These are the students who are in monitoring status for English language learner capabilities, et cetera.

[01:05:21] That wasn't something we were monitoring it. We knew the number of kids, but it wasn't something we were explicitly staffing for. With this new ratio and across the district, roughly 30 of these 43 FTEs are really driven by that 100 to 1 ratio by itself there.

[01:05:42] So you look at this \$4 million. If you remember, I talked earlier about the \$12 million from the governor. About two of that was to help support this particular growth. So, again, another good example of

state mandates equaling about half the funding for this particular initiative.

[01:06:07] The last slide I won't dwell on. Dr. Murray talked a little bit about this before. We have needs that go beyond this. I mentioned one of them with respect to compensation and getting to those \$16 and \$60,000 salary levels.

[01:06:23] operations, you hear about major maintenance, you hear about things like that, as well as additional staffing and student needs. We have a long list behind this, as I'm sure every department that will talk to you today does, and we're really excited to continue to partner with you as we go forward to make additional progress on this particular set of longer-term needs, and happy to dive into any of those as we go forward or at other points in time. So with that, I'll pause for a moment to flip over to the capital improvement plan.

[01:06:55] Again, as we talked about earlier, no new projects on our list this year. We continue to highlight the three new, the West Area L, Dale Area L, and Old 100 Area Elementary Schools, and three replacement of A.M. Davis, Bensley, and Grange Hall, a new middle school, Deep Creek.

[01:07:13] We're excited to open that one really soon, and a replacement of Midlow Middle, as well as a reno of Matoka Middle and the high school project of the West Area High as well as the expansion of Thomas Dale 9 and the renovation of the Bird Gym are the big projects that continue to move forward in our CIP. We also continue to fund major maintenance, \$9 million transfer. I'll talk a little bit more about what that means in the broader major maintenance category. And this year we're also looking to include a Chromebook lease as part of our CIP going forward.

[01:07:47] I talked about these projects very briefly, but excited to open Deep Creek and the new AM Davis in August of this year. Excited also a year behind that for the Bensley and West Area Elementary Schools, and recently finished bidding and ready to move forward on the West Area High School project, which will be slated to open in August of 2027.

[01:08:12] The other items in previous years, we like to put these in blocks and say where we're going to start them and when we're going to finish them. This year we're choosing to put them in as a list and really highlight that bullet sitting at the bottom there, which basically says the timing and priority of these are dependent on ultimately funding site identification and the collective will of the Board of Supervisors and School Board.

[01:08:35] And we'll continue to work closely with you to close some of the funding gap we see from the inflation since the pandemic era, as well as meeting these needs that we have laid out in our CIP in previous years and continue to strive for here.

[01:08:51] The other bigger piece of our CIP is major maintenance funding. We've established a run rate, thanks in large part to support from the Board of Supervisors in years past, as well as pandemic-era funding to essentially spend roughly a \$30 million level.

[01:09:07] We're well-funded to meet that level in both FY25 this current year as well as FY26, but the bank account starts to run dry when we get into FY27, and we'll need to continue to partner here as well to maintain at least that level.

[01:09:24] You saw major maintenance on my other needs for the district. \$30 million is a great level. We can do a lot of good things with that. I think we could do a lot more great things and keep our buildings in

even better shape if that number was increased to higher levels as well.

[01:09:41] And the last thing I'll talk about here briefly is the addition of a Chromebook lease. We've had these in years past. We didn't have a Chromebook lease payment last year and this year as the current lease expired. But what that has led to is over the last few years, we've shifted our Chromebook policy to be one-to-one.

[01:10:00] And we've also done that through various funding sources, including pandemic ESSER-type funding to fill that need. What that's left us with is a bit of a Frankenstein fleet of Chromebooks, a bunch of different models that look and smell different, which makes servicing more challenging, which makes getting the Chromebook back in the kids' hands more challenging.

[01:10:18] And quite frankly, given the age of them, they're running on fumes as well. So it was time to look at additional needs for our Chromebook fleet. Our new chief technology officer came in, jumped right in, and proposed a Chromebook lease to replenish that fleet, to provide some cost certainty with respect to servicing of these devices, and quite frankly improved the overall service level of the fleet by having essentially the same model for all the kids across the district.

[01:10:50] So we're really excited about this one as we move forward. And I'll pause. I think I see a question. I think it's important for the community to understand part of that is somebody sold the Chromebooks. Is that a Windows operating system on there? It's Chrome, Google Chrome.

[01:11:06] Okay, Google Chrome. Okay. So Windows 10, Windows 11 doesn't affect? It does not. That's good. Awesome. Oddly enough, that's where I was planning on ending this.

[01:11:24] But thank you very much for your support. I look forward to engaging with you in the community as we go forward as well. And I'll turn it over to Dr. Murray for any other closing thoughts. Good job, Bob. Great job, Mr. Superintendent.

[01:11:40] One question. What are your expectations, as asked earlier, regarding Ettrick, for example, for pre-K? We know that early education is a game-changer, and we know it makes a difference. So I know we have Harrogate, but where are we contemplating or planning for the future relative to Ettrick, for example, and, of course, this area in Dale, Well, we have some kids that could probably benefit from pre-K.

[01:12:06] So I'll bite that off into chunks, Dale and Matoica-Etrick Corridor. We looked at the numbers early on this summer, I want to say, to see if there was a robust need out in the Ettrick Corridor.

[01:12:27] And we only had three classrooms between Ettrick and Matoica Elementary that were pre-K by design. Not saying there's not a larger need there, but to consider repurposing a facility out that way where we only had three classrooms worth of need felt irresponsible and that we should shift our focus to where there was more consolidated need turnover to the Dale District.

[01:13:02] Yes, sir. Real quick on that point. - What you're saying is we're already servicing those students in our current classrooms and we don't have a lack of space to be able to do that. So, that's why you're looking at not making a change, right? We are already servicing all of the people.

[01:13:17] - Through Title I. - Through Title I, yes. - Okay. - So we have Head Start and VPI and Title I kind of, you don't have to be at CECLA to have your pre-K need satisfied.

[01:13:33] - Okay, that's good to know. - Why are you coming to me telling me that the kids down there are not in pre-K? Why do I have people from the Concerned Citizens of Ettrick talking about a just Monday

night to both myself and Steve? I would send them to me so that I can get them to the real numbers and information and have a very candid dialogue.

[01:13:52] And I had this with the Concerned Citizens of Ettrick in my previous position, maybe not to the extent that there were classrooms. My understanding then was that there were some classrooms that they were invited to use at the time, and then that went away, and that presented the issue.

[01:14:11] because there was a lack of teacher credentialing, and that was a requirement. Right. Yeah. But their argument is that there are still plenty of kids down there that are pre-K that are not in a classroom. I could look and see what type of wait list there might be, but to say it's of great significance, I've never heard that outside of that particular narrative from that group.

[01:14:41] Well, I would really like to get the numbers so we can present it to them, to know one way or the other what the need is or what the need is not. Happy to do that. But the pervasive message in the community is they're not getting served. And if they are, then I want to be able to show it. Yep. That's a great point.

[01:14:57] Well, and as an example, CECLA services 13 of our elementary schools, and we're able to free up classroom space by not having pre-K exist there.

[01:15:12] So when you think about overcrowding and trailers, all of these are contributors. So we do have pre-K in our elementary schools that are not attending CECLA. And that's why we've been having the conversation around a second early childhood academy in the Dale area because of the extensive need out of Falling Creek and Hopkins and Beulah and Chalkley and Jacobs and Henning and Bensley.

[01:15:41] as well. Great. That's in need. In addition, let me finish up. One more question, and that was in regards to your future needs that you had mentioned with operations. What's the most, what do you see as the most pressing need for the coming school year, fiscal year 26? What do you see as the most pressing need for your school system, academically or in terms of resources or capital or operations?

[01:16:14] Well, I'll let Bob answer for himself because our answers might be different. We are closely watching the General Assembly pertaining to a sunset clause of long-term substitutes, which post-COVID, when we were seeing a mass teacher exit, they extended the 90-day long-term substitute to 180 days.

[01:16:43] So now we weren't breaking or pulling a teacher out of the classroom at the midpoint only to then put a new substitute in there for the rest. And so we were breaking that continuity when the teacher pipeline was pretty dried up.

[01:17:00] And so you weren't magically going to find the teacher that you couldn't find five months prior to. Well, if the governor vetoes the extension of that 180 days that has come out of the House and the Senate, but there is some pressure being applied for him to consider vetoing that, we would lose 200 or we would have 200 vacancies out of the gate in addition to what we would normally expect.

[01:17:33] And I want to say that our goal and desire is to put fully certified teachers in our classrooms. That's number one. But sometimes you can't do that. As an example, last year, Virginia colleges and universities only graduated around 70 people certified to teach secondary math.

[01:17:55] Well, that doesn't mean that they are going to work in education. It doesn't mean they're going to live in Chesterfield, much less the Commonwealth. And then they become the most competitive teacher on the market. We could fill 40 of those 70 vacancies tomorrow.

[01:18:13] So we've had to be very creative in what we do. We've had significant success with our substitutes in bringing them in, getting them pulled in as an annual substitute, which then makes them eligible for a subsidized licensure pathway.

[01:18:29] We have all but doubled the amount of substitutes to fully or provisionally licensed teachers to date this year that we did in our entirety of the last school year.

[01:18:46] Significant triple digits. So that's what I see. But we also know that pay attracts, culture retains, so it kind of goes hand in glove. Excellent. Thank you, Dr. Murray.

[01:19:02] I would echo everything he said on teacher retention and recruitment. I think that's clearly top of the list. But I'll add on to that with respect to operations, monies. You did not see a big number in here for continuing to invest in our ongoing operations, major maintenance, bus fleet, those type of initiatives.

[01:19:25] We just didn't have dollars to allocate to them, so it's going to be another year of doing the same with the same as things continue to increase. So in addition to everything Dr. Murray said, I will not contradict that in one bit, but I would add in the need to continue to fund the operations to ensure that we maintain our buildings and get our kids to school in a clean and safe bus as well.

[01:19:49] Yeah, thank you for mentioning that the governor has this bill probably in front of him to sign or veto. Also, I would like to mention the newly promoted Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Hyde. Would you stand so that they can see you? Deputy Superintendent, I hope I'm in order, Mr. Chairman.

[01:20:07] I don't think I heard that earlier. Okay, very good. Thank you. I just want to make sure we saw her as well. So thank you all for that time. We appreciate a great job. So I was at a legislative update last night with four of our local electeds, and one of them was very pointed at pushing us under a bus about, we need to fund more in the local level for our schools.

[01:20:40] And I said, and then one of the other ones brought up the JLARC study, which I'm just, because as I'm sitting here, like, hello, call me. But I ask about the JLARC study. So I just think it's sometimes about perception and about, you know, who's pushing who under the bus.

[01:20:58] But if we're missing \$250 million of funding and they're, you know, I realize that they're giving us more funding and they took the cap off this year. And so hopefully we'll get, you know, more than what we have. That's still \$13 million is nowhere near \$250 million.

[01:21:18] So that's 64 schools is a lot of schools to take care of. Let's just put it that way. So we really try to do the best we can. And I think we do a lot of offsetting sometimes with our diff funds and stuff as well to help out with those types of needs as well.

[01:21:37] So let's hope we get more money from the state. And I appreciate you making that comment, Ms. Schneider, because I should have mentioned early on when I was saying how the budget is a year-round process that the community kind of laser focuses in on this process where we're partnered very outwardly to arrive at our operating budget for next year.

[01:22:06] when really it should be fully acknowledged that the Board of Supervisors does present and provide along the way each month one-off needs, unique things. Diff is a great example of that, but there are other times that we've had to hold our hand out and you all have come through.

[01:22:28] And that's absent the budget process proper. I just think it's important for the community to know. Thank you both, Dr. Murray and Mr. Meister. You made a really good point.

[01:22:45] I just want to really emphasize it. Pay attracts, culture retains. It reminded me of a situation where our daughter, what, five years ago, or even six, was going through math-sci. Here is the penultimate number one math-sci program that could not hold a physics teacher and could not take physics because that teacher wasn't there.

[01:23:13] And I think it really gets to the point of math and sci and to be able to hold on to those teachers is very, very important, and they're the ones that are the most pursued. So I think you just made a great point, and we live that firsthand.

[01:23:32] Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I think Ms. Schneider brought up a good point. You know, there are other ways that we try and make sure that we can fill in the blanks for you throughout the year. And I get a lot of requests in my district. I got three high schools and a bunch of schools. And I think we're also working on, because there were some questions at the last board meeting we had about tennis courts. And I think we're going to talk about that and what we're trying to do to solve that problem, because we know we have four tennis courts that need to

[01:24:05] be replaced. You know, we replaced Cosby High School's tennis courts last year. And so, yeah, I think that sometimes that's missed by the community, other than the one school or the parents that are involved in that particular issue.

[01:24:21] You know, like we just redid, and I know you and I talked about this, the outdoor locker rooms at Cosby High School just cut a renovation inside, and it looks absolutely spectacular, and we're getting ready to do Manchester. So, you know, we're going to continue to do the best that we can to support you in that need, and then also continue to advocate, like Ms. Schneider talked about, with the General Assembly to get this Daylark study funded and put us in a better position.

[01:24:50] And then, you know, quite frankly, and it's not an immediate thing that's going to happen, but hopefully in the future with some of these big companies we have coming in the chess field that will be providing jobs for our children in the future, highly technical skill jobs, but also additional tax dollars on a commercial base that will hopefully put us in a position to help with some of these needs in the future as well.

[01:25:14] It's not an immediate, I know, but I think we've done very well to bring in bringing more companies in like we've never had before. I know I didn't see it in my 32 years as a police officer to see what we have coming in now. You know, when Lego comes out of the ground on some of these loans, there's going to be an opportunity for the board to not just cut the tax rate, but to also have additional monies to fund some of these needs.

[01:25:38] So we're working on it. Well, before the JLARC study came out, I felt like the canary in the coal mine. I, for several years, was saying what the JLARC study said publicly to no avail.

[01:25:53] I felt like I was shouting in the woods to nobody. To Ms. Coker's credit, we had some great conversations, and through those conversations, I believe, which I've shared before, that we were able to come to a better understanding of both sides.

[01:26:11] the county me as board supervisor member understanding schools concerns and why they were saying what they were saying and vice versa and that's helped tremendously I can't thank our staff and school staff and this school board enough for changing the narrative in the community because for

many years the state's been able to laugh at us and say to people oh you just need to tell your locality to pay more when we're already paying more than what the state uh would their

[01:26:47] Ici would say we should be paying now i think we're right funding schools i don't think we're overpaying i think we're paying what we should be but the state is definitely under funding and that's what i've been saying and to have schools um get in the boat with us and row with us instead of shooting at us has been just a tremendous change for our citizens. So much to the point that I heard Dr. Casey say that somebody said to him, well, y'all must have passed a two-year budget because we're not hearing anything from schools this year. And that's because we're

[01:27:22] working together. And I cannot thank you all enough for being able to work together on this issue and i'm sorry that the county's still having to fund over 650 teachers 100 of their salary and over 900 of employees including those teachers in the classroom 100 of their salary because the state won't fund any of it because they say we don't need those teachers to be able to run our schools and i don't think our citizens truly comprehend how much of a lack of funding the

[01:27:58] state has which would solve the issues that schools is facing so to have somebody at the state level to say the localities just need to fund more is really scary to me that anybody would think that but at least another state member stood up and said wait a minute we got a mirror to look at and I appreciate that person standing up and saying that because it's important that at the state level they understand the unfunded mandates especially on schools but also on local government put us in these predicaments and make it very hard for us when it comes time to have the next discussion which we're about to

[01:28:37] have for the budget on the county level and again to your point this system is so broken there's no way schools should go first the state should go first the county should go second and schools should go third and schools should be at the table for all of those discussions but that's the way it should work and it works opposite that's state law we need to work on that together as well thank you thank you mr. chair can't get into that point you know a surplus is only a surplus when the bills have been paid and where I have difficulty is when we

[01:29:17] end up on the state level I'm not taking that into account a surplus is only a surplus when the bills have been paid and the bills need to be paid for our schools. We just really appreciate y'all's support and thank you for this time. B, County's

[01:29:40] FY 2026 proposed budget presentation. Mr. Harris and Mr. Durkin. I'm getting your break. You ready

[01:30:14] to go? Very good. Well, similar to what you just saw, we will, now we'll tag team this as we go through back and forth. We had our media briefing in this room this afternoon and kind of tie into some of Dr. Casey's commentary to open, because I think it's relevant to sort of set the stage, maybe even more so than some of the expenditure choices that we're going to walk you through.

[01:30:50] I think, again, the process this year and the backdrop are vitally important. I don't think I'm telling you anything you don't know in terms of the amount of economic uncertainty that's floating around out there. If you pick up a newspaper, watch the news, you know, any financial website, you'll see, and we'll give you a flavor of that. But I think, and Bob did a good job highlighting the process on their side, but the challenge for us is we have to have this thing in place by May 1. Effectively, we've got to have it done by April 9. You're voting on this by that

[01:31:29] date. So we've got a little over a month to make all of these decisions, and certainly we will not have all of the economic variables that we are monitoring. We will not have answers on those. All the direction will not be established. So I say all that because we have built this budget with an increased number of safeguards to make sure that between April 9th of this year and June 30 of next year that we have enough flexibility in the plan to be able to pivot to whatever might

[01:32:05] come down the line. I think that's just vitally important. So what you're going to see as we go throughout the presentation today is a greatly reduced number of expenditure that have been included in the budget. You're going to see a revenue forecast that is subdued as compared to previous years. There are a number of, you know, top-line priority items that we are recommending to continue to move forward but do so or doing so in a very very measured way so that's and then at the same time recognizing as we said this afternoon this morning in the media briefing

[01:32:40] you know this economic uncertainty is not uniquely experienced by justville county government it's by all of our residents and businesses and so there is a continued emphasis on tax relief and making sure that we are making progress on these longstanding initiatives, but doing so in a way that recognizes that, you know, we are all in this together and we need to factor that reality into the plan. So, Gerard, you want to get started? Yeah. So the first thing we like to talk about when we look at the economic plan and situation is just, you know, the labor market is really the

[01:33:19] engine of the entire economy. And there's enough numbers in front of you in those documents. I'm not going to rattle off a whole bunch of statistics today but just more of the kind of overall trend you know we'll we'll talk about what's happened over the last few weeks as we get further into this deck but prior to that you know there was a general slowdown in the economy as a whole i'm not sitting here saying that you know a recession was coming but there was definitely a slowing down you can see that in the number of job openings the chart to the left you can see it on terms of that step down from 22, 23, 24, you can have 300,000, the average jobs per month added down to 200,

[01:33:57] now down to the kind of mid 100 range. So prior to everything that's come in the news in the last few weeks, the economy as a whole was generally beginning to slow down after that kind of aberrational period from the COVID impact. Same, you know, again, the numbers aren't important, really the shape of these charts, housing starts, you know, you see sort of that turn back in 2022.

[01:34:21] too. So again, it's a bit of a perfect storm. You got a sort of a natural cycle of the economy occurring. And then you've got sort of this uncertain policy environment that we have waded into over the course of the last 60 days. Those two factors, you know, bumping into each other is a challenging backdrop to build any budget, but certainly this year. Same idea here.

[01:34:44] You see household debt starting to trend back up. On the left-hand side, you see COVID. A lot of the resources during that period of time went to paying down household debt, and you saw a very strong consumer, and they've been able to use some of that capacity to fuel the economy over the last couple years, but that's getting back up there into those levels, which is a concern. And then you see on the right-hand side sort of federal interest payments skyrocketing up into record territory. Delinquency rates on credit cards, you see a couple of different categories there.

[01:35:20] the top one, the sharpest increase is the credit card piece. Again, savings starting to run dry a little bit, starting to put more spending on the credit card at the consumer level. And this is what you're looking at here is delinquencies over 90 days. So that's considered to be fairly serious.

[01:35:39] And you see that ticking back up. And the closest thing that we have to it in modern years is the Great Recession, not quite to those levels. But again, these are all of the factors that we're monitoring and trying to decipher as we bring you a financial plan for fiscal year 26.

[01:35:58] Lastly, is sort of the look back period. You see inflation. You saw that stall is the perfect word here. They're trying to get that down around 2% if you listen to the Fed, if you follow that. And we're making a lot of progress, but it really has kind of stalled out in terms of those declines.

[01:36:16] Depending on what measure you look at, it's anywhere from 2.5% to 3.5% inflation. And the tariffs in particular that are being discussed now, I think, are going to push this or have the potential to push this back up. So that's another factor that certainly will weigh on not only 26, but perhaps beyond that.

[01:36:37] Now I get to be the harbinger of good news. So these are a compilation of articles that we have been looking at over the last month or so. You know, as I said at the beginning of the presentation, we were beginning to see a general slowdown in the economy.

[01:36:53] But really now the economy is beginning to flash red. This chart, I think, more than any that you will see kind of shows that. GDP, when it gets released, is always subject to revision and there's a bit of a lag to it. But the Atlanta Fed produces what they call GDP now.

[01:37:10] And what it does is it takes the information as it's coming out and feeds it into one of their models to predict what's essentially happening to GDP in real time. It will be subject to revisions, I'm sure, but you can see that steep drop-off that's happened over the last month or so. There's been a slight rebound, but you can see the effects of uncertainty really beginning to weigh, not just on the consumer, but on businesses, and both, just as human nature like certainty, they do not like unpredictability, so we are very much in a kind of wait-and-see pattern, but you are beginning to see this stuff feed through into the national statistics.

[01:37:48] You can see that as well on various other measures. You can see what's called the Economic Policy Uncertainty Index without getting into the weeds. It basically looks at, you know, what are people looking at online? What are they searching? You know, terms recession, downturn.

[01:38:05] You can see that spike that's happened in the last few weeks. The last time that you can see something close to that was during the COVID period. The chart on the right, measures that comes from the University of Michigan's Consumer Sentiments Survey, measures where people think inflation is going to go. It was already trending higher over the last few years with all the inflation that was being to feed through the economy.

[01:38:26] But with the potential looming impact of tariffs and maybe some other measures, you've seen that spike up to its highest level since 1995 within the last few weeks as well. And again, focusing on the general shape of the charts, not the specific numbers, but the first series of charts, you kind of see that gradual downshift.

[01:38:43] The last four or five, it's that dog leg, either up or down, depending on what the measure is, but it's that suddenness that we're monitoring that catches our eye. And, you know, we're not going to, there's no charts in here that are going to show you that Chesterfield economic indicators have followed the same pattern yet, some of which, in fact, we just don't have the data.

[01:39:02] There's a delay on that. But I think our message today is we have to build a budget that is cautious enough because we don't know where all of this stuff is going, and we have a duty similar. I mentioned it while the COVID chart is up here.

[01:39:18] I think that's a very good comparison. Obviously, there's parts of this that are quite different. But in terms of the unknown, you know, sitting in here with the pandemic starting to spread, you know, we had to pivot very quickly to build a budget that could maintain core services, but was also flexible enough to get us through that course of that year.

[01:39:37] And then our approach was we'd rather come back and add back as opposed to make promises to employees or residents or businesses, whatever the case might be, that we're going to do X, Y, and Z thing and have to pull those promises back. So we'd rather start slow, kind of take a wait and see approach. And then, you know, as you're well aware, you see us on a regular basis, not just in March. So we have the opportunity on a monthly basis to really utilize, I think, the Audit Finance Committee for regular updates as we get into the fiscal year or even up to the fiscal year to continue to monitor these situations.

[01:40:15] And then finally, on this section, you know, just another statistic that follow the wavering consumer sentiment, sorry. Again, that drop-off that you see on the far right, the 64.7 level, you have to go back, aside from 2011, there was a 10 percent drop in one month.

[01:40:34] That was largely driven by durable goods that were down about 19 percent. people holding off on those kind of larger purchases, just given the level of uncertainty in the economy right now. So kind of turning more to the kind of local scene, what you see here is continued unemployment claims. Usually we report out on the initial, the continued is those on a kind of month over month who are still looking for work. The overall trend here, as you can see, especially in the county level, that has begun to creep up again. It's data that we are getting every week from the Virginia Employment Commission, and it's something that we're tracking closely.

[01:41:10] But you can see that beginning to slightly have an uptick. This one's done by the Richmond Fed, kind of over its sector, over the couple of states around about us. And this is what's known as the Future Business Conditions Index, where the businesses see the kind of economic landscape from their perspective over the next few months.

[01:41:32] And in one month, it dropped from a kind of positive nine, where they had a good decently positive view of the economy, down to minus 30 in one month. So kind of looking at our, you know, trilling this down to some of our revenue trends that affect the budget as we get ready to get into fiscal 26 recommendations.

[01:41:57] You see here, and this is, we've been saying this for, you know, better part of two years. We expect that those large reval results that we received kind of on the very tail end of COVID, 22, 23, that's going to start to normalize.

[01:42:12] What you're looking here is only through fiscal 25. So you've got another number that we will show when we get to it. But what we're trying to do in this section is just kind of reset everybody kind of where we left off. Another thing that I think doesn't get discussed enough, we've done it a couple times in here the course of this fiscal year, but you have to really take the longer view on this topic.

[01:42:34] Yes, there have been some larger reval results the last couple of years, but as you see there in the middle of this chart, and we'll say as many times as it takes, 12 consecutive years under four percent

reval growth including the the teal bars there five consecutive years where the actual value of the homes as determined by the assessor declined and then you've got you know the better part of a decade where you've got sort of very tepid growth in the twos and sort of upper threes so over time you see the average there four percent you know we have said

[01:43:10] consistently that you know three and a half to four percent is the long run average and then you We'll fast forward to it for a second. The rebound activity for how it's most recent is the 5%. So moving back down towards that long run average. On sales tax, this sort of mirrors some of the things you saw on the national level.

[01:43:31] What the trend is here, no one knows. I think the trend is there is no trend. You see the very, very strong results, a double digit, really 12 consecutive months of sales tax growth during COVID, people buying durable goods, redoing their houses, a lot of income, you know, being spent on things. People are cooped up very different pattern of consumer behavior that has gone all over the map over the course of the last three or four years. So in terms of forecasting, we've got our biggest economic variable, home values, again, downshifting,

[01:44:07] it's sort of that long range average. And you got sales tax, sort of unpredictable. You know, we've got sort of a very modest forecast there. And then the other big piece for us, of course, is personal property and the tariff environment. That is a very, very difficult thing to forecast what those values will be this time next year. So you've got sort of a murky forecast in terms of local revenue. We don't have the data like we do at the national level per se, but we do know how it impacts our big three revenues and so that all of that factors into

[01:44:43] this measured approach to the FY26 budget. Yes sir yeah please jump in anytime. So Matt for the last couple of years we've seen vehicle valuations go down based on what you're saying here especially when you look at the tariff part of this it's very possible we may see those vehicle valuations start going back up. So yeah so the personal property is a strange one right because just the timing of it. So the valuations that we're setting are set now are for the bills

[01:45:20] that are due June 5, which is a fiscal 25 issue. What we're, you know, charged with in this process is what's that valuation process going to be in 12 months from now. So that's why, you know, looking at things like the tariffs and other items is a relevant topic, trying to figure out how that might impact that. We're fairly locked in with FY25, continuing to work with the commissioner's office to refine that forecast. It does look like values have dropped again this year, and we'll come back to you all with those recommendations in terms of how to set the relief percentage, so forth and so on. But what we're specifically talking about is trying to

[01:45:59] look basically 18 months down the road through a lot of challenging geopolitical issues and figure out what that's going to mean. And car values can change, as we all know, very, very quickly. Well, I think one of the most hated taxes in Virginia is the personal property tax.

[01:46:16] And that's the one we hear about the most because of the fluctuation. So a couple of years ago when they went up quite a bit, we heard a lot about that. Last year they went down and we cut the rate, so we didn't hear as much. But if they go up in the next year, we just, you know, I want the community more so whoever's watching us to understand that there are other forces that cause these valuations to happen when the commission of revenue has to turn around and do an assessment on them.

[01:46:43] Absolutely. And, you know, Dr. Casey talks about the, you know, living through the cash for clunkers. I mean, all sorts of strange things can happen very, very quickly in that space. So we'll continue to monitor it. The good news for you all is you all have used the relief percentage as a very, very effective tool, which doesn't affect your long-range rate.

[01:47:00] So you don't have to have that fluctuation. You can have a predictable path for the citizens. But we have gone above the \$41 million on a regular basis, you know, since COVID to provide that temporary relief until prices normalize. Again, some people may not understand what the \$41 million is. Yeah, I understand.

[01:47:21] We're going to get into it in a second. It's probably coming, but they need to understand where that comes from, the origin of it, because it's important. Yes, sir. Again, looking at some budget trends, I think none of this stuff happens in a vacuum. FY26 is linked to 25, is linked to so forth and so on. So this is looking at a period back to 2009. You see very you know, sort of up and down, very modest budget growth up until you get into the COVID period of time. And then the last two years, the general fund budget, which is the main operating fund,

[01:47:55] that's what we focus on. That's what we talk about 99% of the time, increase of 5%. That's the main operating fund. That's where all of the taxes that we've just discussed fund and flow into. But you see the long run average here, we got some ups and downs, you know, right around 2%. So This is, again, only up to fiscal 25.

[01:48:16] This is not the 26th number. We'll tack that on in a second. But I think what's important here and why we've got that in here, that period of time from the Great Recession through the recovery period, which was very modest for local government, particularly around here, there's a lot of investment that doesn't occur.

[01:48:36] You know, we built up a lot of things that we were not addressing during that period. The real estate rate was raised one penny, Mr. Holland. We'll remember that. It was dedicated to schools. We took it back as soon as conditions, you know, sort of stabilized a little bit.

[01:48:51] But we ran up a tab on a number of areas where we were not able to invest properly over that 10 to 12-year period. That's really, Mr. Carroll, I know you lived that as an employee, but Dr. Miller, the same way. The main way that that manifested itself was in terms of pay.

[01:49:10] This is looking at the merit history over that period of time. 1.6% was the average merit. Compression was, you know, all over the place. On the teacher side, certainly for first responders, you had a zero up there.

[01:49:26] You had three consecutive years of 1%, and there's a number of other topics. Certainly infrastructure would be a big one, but that period of time, it's not as if the budget doesn't grow by 4% or 5%. It doesn't mean that those needs and that those, you know, liabilities of sorts go away.

[01:49:43] They just continue to, you know, pile up. And so what happened, you know, you all had a large part in correcting that. And I'm going to skip forward to this slide. So what happened? Let me go back. So this looks at where does the budget growth, if you, I'm going to go back one more time.

[01:50:03] You see 7% merit history, then three and a half, four. And then back on this slide, you see the larger increases in the general fund budget, two years of double-digit growth, really correlate with those

higher merit increases. Where was that money spent?

[01:50:19] Public safety, education, infrastructure. And then this board has made a real, real targeted effort to reinvest in our tax relief programs broadly. We'll talk about that in just a second. So you have over 80% of the growth of this period where it's larger than normal general fund increases over the last several years.

[01:50:39] But this is where it went. see support functions down there that's everybody else that makes the place go a little over seven percent you know there were merit increases there but it was really concentrated in those front line areas and to give a little bit more color to it this is what we were able to accomplish through the budgets over the last three to four years and again you see not only you know initiatives that the county should be proud of but dealing with that backlog of things that happened over that 10-year period. \$87 million increase in the transfer to schools, helped establish the teacher

[01:51:14] pay plans, decompression, a very similar amount into public safety, established the STEP system, which is a guarantee now you all have gone even beyond that to set up the reserves such that if economic conditions do change, that that two and a quarter percent on July 1 is an absolute something that those folks could count on. \$58 million during the height of COVID invested in major maintenance, you heard Bob and Dr. Murray talk about that. That is running out, but we were able to catch up on that backlog and all of the issues that came along with that. Over \$500 million

[01:51:48] into school capacity and school renewal, and that, you know, has done tremendous things to the capacity of the system. We expect, and Josh Davis gave a presentation, you know, earlier in the year that once all of those facilities are open and you saw the very, you know, sort of modest growth in enrollment, that system-wide capacity would be somewhere in the mid-80s, you know, after dealing with that issue for, you know, several decades. And then lastly, establishing a new source for transportation. Transportation needs had piled up as well. You had CVTA, now \$427 million into the

[01:52:25] local road network over the course of the last several years. So yes, the budgets have grown more the last couple of years, but this is what we've done with it. And these are issues that, again, had built up and needed to be addressed over the course of that period of time. And one of the large components that Matt had talked about was record levels of tax relief.

[01:52:47] And just for context, before people draw in on that top left, this is, to date, this is not inclusive of the 26 number. This is everything that you have done as a board over the last few years. And you've done it across the full spectrum of relief where possible, not just homeowners, but those that own cars, businesses, and our seniors and disabled people as well.

[01:53:08] Real estate tax rate, up to the 2025 budget, down 5 cents, I believe. And it's the largest of all the jurisdictions in central Virginia in terms of drops over the last four or five years. Vehicle registration fee went from \$40 to \$20.

[01:53:25] That was about an \$8 million return of relief to taxpayers every year, with those funds then being dedicated towards the CIP, which is also continuing with the fiscal year 26 budget. As part of last year's budget, the personal property rate went from 360 to 335, the lowest of all localities in Virginia with a population of 100,000 or more.

[01:53:46] And then the B pool thresholds going up from 300 to 500. As Matt had mentioned earlier, those multiple supplements to personal property tax relief when we had those abnormally high values, we

increased the threshold on those as well. It was the first adjustment that was done since 1998.

[01:54:02] We had in June 2023 the 5% credit on real estate bills. That is going ahead again this June. You voted for that in December. And then a big emphasis, and it's also going to be a part of this budget as well, is expanding eligibility for senior and veteran tax relief.

[01:54:20] You now have a formal policy in place to adjust those income and net worth thresholds to match social security adjustments. you've removed the cap on there as well, as well as increasing the eligible acreage to apply for the program. Mr. Carroll, I'll come back to your point. The PPTRA, the state gives us \$41 million each and every year. And what you all get to do is to figure out how you want to spread that amongst the personal property bills that you have. And there are some exceptions, but generally we spread that \$41 million. What you all have decided to do, because we've had these sharp increases have nothing to do with you know anything in Chesterfield County and vehicle

[01:54:58] values we have increased them that 41 million dollars to 50 55 60 million dollars given depending on the year that you're talking about so we are deferring that 10 15 20 million dollars of revenue and making those bills lower it's a temporary measures because you got temporary spikes in prices now they're coming back down and we will you know have for you over the course of the next couple weeks as we finalize that piece for fiscal 25 what that new relief percentage would be but that's a very valuable tool and i think that the board has used that well to deal with these

[01:55:33] you know temporary one-time fluctuations and again this has been a little bit of a trip down memory lane but the just to matt just to again you and i know what i'm getting ready to say but there are some people who are probably watching this that don't know what i'm getting ready to say which is sometimes why you have to say things right all right so when the personal property of tax program was passed by the state, there was a fixed number for Chesterfield County. This was what, 98? And that number was \$41 million. And the population of Chesterfield County in 98, compared to the population now, which is 394,000 and change, there's a huge difference. And that

[01:56:11] population brings vehicles with them, which means that \$41 million gets stretched over a much bigger number on what type of percentage personal property tax relief we can actually calculate on the first \$20,000 of value on a personally-owned vehicle, not commercial vehicles, not business vehicles, only a commercially-owned vehicle.

[01:56:31] And I think it's important for the community to hear it. Again, we say it every year, but it's important because, again, it's the most hated tax, I think, in the state, because people say, I bought a car, I already paid tax on it, now you tax me again. And what I say is, I understand, but we also need to make sure we have firefighters to come put your car out if it catches on fire.

[01:56:50] We have rescue people to come save your life if you're getting a crash and police to investigate if someone steals your car. So, you know, we use those personal property tax dollars to pay for all kinds of things within the county. But to understand that as we've had an increase in people move here with cars, the county's ability to spread that \$41 million has been stretched.

[01:57:14] Gerard, just sketching here, but I think when it set up for us, we were somewhere in the 70% relief. And now, depending on the year, you're somewhere in the 30% to 35%. So it's been cut in half just from what you're saying, the growth aspect. And Mr. Chair, to Mr. Carroll's point, this is an example where it's not equitable across the state.

[01:57:38] Those localities that have grown since the state ran out of its fuel, if you will, to get to 100%, which was their initial desire, they ran out of money at 70%, and I think it was \$950 million statewide. I have a tattoo of that because I want to get it removed at some point because they stopped it statewide.

[01:57:57] And whatever you were getting in that particular year, you were stuck with. We're stuck with, again, a growing, prosperous locality that we cannot provide the same amount of relief to another locality that has not grown since then.

[01:58:12] There are localities in the state of Virginia that still are at 70%. There's perhaps even localities that have taken this same fixed amount and have granted higher relief than where the state stopped because their tax base of vehicles perhaps is less.

[01:58:28] That's the fallacy of the formula. I have said for years, if the state wants to stop at \$950 million, that's fine, but proportion it out to each and every taxpayer the same way as you had intended it to be when it was at 70%. We could extrapolate this model 50 years from now, and you know we're going to be, someone sitting right here will be saying the same exact.

[01:58:52] I'll be good, but that's okay. Right, but your successors, I'm sure, will be saying the same thing even more so because there will be localities 50 years from now who will still be at 70%. That's not fair. All right, so, again, I thought the history was important because, you know, Again, each budget is not a standalone, not a standalone entity.

[01:59:19] So now we transition to FY26, the budget that goes into effect on July the 1st. Two slides of sort of overall structure. This is the total budget. So this is all in at \$2.4 billion.

[01:59:35] But I do want to, you know, just pause here and do some painful accounting discussions. I apologize up front. So it does look like a large increase in the overall budget, but you've got to remember two things. You had Mr. Hayes and his team in here last month, and the way that this total budget, this is why we will tell you any time that you want to hear from us, this is not a good measure of the overall budget because it includes the Utility Operating Fund and the Utility CIP.

[02:00:06] It does not have the county CIP. It does not have the school CIP. That's an accounting rule, essentially, that allows that to happen or requires that to happen. So when you see the utility increase, there are 12 percentage points of the overall increase.

[02:00:21] Why is that? It's because they got the water treatment facility and these other large projects that we've been planning on for 10 years show up in their particular part of the budget. So that's why it gives you very false reads. The other thing that happens here, as you'll recall, we've been talking about process today.

[02:00:39] The school increase looks larger because it's going off of the adopted total that you all put into place last April. The state budget didn't come back and be finalized from a revised amount for several months after that. So, again, you have a larger than increase in the reality in the school fund.

[02:00:59] The numbers that Dr. Murray walked you through were those revised totals. So they were 4.4, 4.5% increase. We are right there with them, but that's revised to adopt it. It didn't have all the state money. Mr. Engel, you pointed that out very correctly.

[02:01:16] So, again, the better measure, the more accurate measure, the one that people can relate to, the general fund, crest the billion dollars, 4.4% increase. Again, last year and the year before, the total

increases were 5%. So you see sort of a deceleration in growth heading back towards that long-run average.

[02:01:34] And then the boxes here are where the total dollars in this budget, how are they invested, education, public safety, and infrastructure continue to be the big three. Again, support functions, we try to keep that at somewhere around 7% or less, and we continue to do that with this budget.

[02:01:55] Sort of, again, the executive summary of the key highlights, this budget is built on continued themes from the last few years. Everything we just showed you about 25 and before, those things really continue into this new chapter. It is built on a \$0.01 reduction in the real estate rate from \$0.90 to \$0.89.

[02:02:16] That would mark the fourth consecutive year that the real estate rate would be reduced. It was \$0.95 just a handful of years ago. \$43 million increase in revenue, 4.4%, 5% last year.

[02:02:32] You see that deceleration? Four net new positions in the general fund in this budget. Four. If you look at the position appendix in the document, which is online, as well as this presentation, all of those materials are up there live now. You will see some grant positions come over. We'll talk about that in a second. You'll know what that is. Those are not new people.

[02:02:53] They're here today. They're just switching funds. But in terms of new bodies that would be here or July 1 that aren't here now. In the general fund, it is only four. By comparison, you remember a couple years ago, we increased fire staffing by 48 just in one department. So we are looking for ways to move the ball forward, to continue to advance strategic initiatives, provide tax relief, but do so in a very, very measured way. Select expenditure choices, which allow for that flexibility that we think we'll need given the economic uncertainty. Yes, sir.

[02:03:29] I just think it's important to say when you talk about the increase in the firefighters, we were actually paying more money for overtime, mandatory overtime for our firefighters to have to work than it was costing us to hire those new firefighters. And so it was desperately needed to bring the new people on because we were overworking our employees. We were killing them.

[02:03:50] Again, I think that's one of those things that built up during that 10-year period, Not keeping up with staffing levels in critical agencies, fire would certainly be one of those. We'll get back into this, but four positions in here. There are 175 position requests in FY26 alone that are on the unfunded list, just to kind of give you some sense of the requests we got from departments.

[02:04:15] So can I get into the details a little bit more about where that \$43.8 million increase went? You can see the kind of large buckets on the screen there. schools, net of the one-time step-down use of reserves that we've implemented over the last couple of years has a net transfer increase of about 14.2%. In terms of public safety, you know, the 7.2% increase just went into effect in January. The fiscal year 26 budget annualizes that total cost. You can see that one there with the benefits as well, about \$17.1 million. There is the merit, same kind of thing, annualization of the merit that

[02:04:51] into effect January here for about 6.8 million tax relief for seniors and veterans up by 5 million and we'll go into more of these in depth in a few slides but long story short in terms of the expense side if you take the school transfer increase the public safety annualization and the tax relief program that's over 82 percent of where that 43 million dollars is won and you can see the source of that on the right you know we've talked about this in the past you've got like kind of three main horses of general fund revenue growth real estate taxes personal property and sales taxes as

[02:05:28] well but the other thing that i do want to point out on this slide and it comes back to that whole flexibility adaptability wait and see what happens at the macro level is that drop in the use of reserves typically in a budget cycle we will have a use of reserve from one-time purchases nothing ongoing this budget cycle we have reduced it on the county side by over 10 million dollars to give us that kind of hedge against what could come down the line either as a saving measure or if things improve to be able to be deployed for one-time initiatives i won't spend too much

[02:06:04] time on this it's a little bit repetitive they did a great job uh walking through this but a 4.4 4.5 percent increase on the on the school side matches what we did a three percent merit increase You see a number of the SOQ supports, the ongoing operating costs for Decrease Middle.

[02:06:21] That will be a continued theme over the course of the next few years. We did whatever we could to try to help them on shared services. There are a variety of, you know, probably a better part of 20 services that we provide in a consolidated fashion. And we have not been passing along the increases to the school division in those to try to, you know, just take a little bit of pressure off of them.

[02:06:43] and that has allowed them to accomplish a lot of things over the course of the last years. And as similar as Mr. Durkin just said, reduced reliance on one-time funds in schools as well. They didn't get to zero, but they did reduce by almost \$2 million, so they are getting to more of that sustainable place.

[02:07:00] Again, they have more federal exposure in terms of direct revenue than we do, so that's a very helpful measure for them. I'm just to touch on the compensation topic. I'd already talked a bit. Oh, sorry, sir. Yep. People understand when we open up a new middle school, which we're getting ready to do, we have to hire teachers.

[02:07:23] And so that additional cost gets added into the budget.

[02:07:35] I'd mentioned about the annualization of the 7.2% increase. Another thing to point out is, you know, there is the continuation of the step plan, the 2.25%, that was instituted a few years ago. Again, all of that in is about \$17.1 million in annualized basis, nearly 40% of the overall increase that you see in the general fund budget is part of fiscal year 2026.

[02:07:58] I will say that for the general government merit of two and a half percent, you always see in the news articles as much as anyone. You know, there's other localities that are doing higher than that. We've taken the kind of prudent step right now. We are able to stand behind this number. We never like to be put in the position where we promise a certain percentage and then we have to dial that back.

[02:08:17] We would rather take the approach of, you know, we can stand up this two and a half if conditions allow. It's certainly something that we would come back to you all to see if there was a recommendation for adjustment. and we do have luxury on that piece we move as you remember moved the merit date for general government to january 1st so that gives us some inherent flexibility to two and a half could you know go back to the three which was what was in the five-year plan but again just that 50 basis points gives us a little bit of breathing room right out of the gate tax relief again continued priority here you see 89 cents the four consecutive declines there the rate's been reduced you know

[02:08:57] Basically, one out of every three years going back over the last 30 years, starting back at \$1.09. So that pattern has really just gone one direction. We sort of, you know, looking at the rate itself is a little bit hard to, you know, sort of personalize or really kind of wrap your head around.

[02:09:17] So we tried to put an example in here, I think, that does a better job of kind of explaining what this has looked like over time. So this scenario looks at a house that has a value of a quarter million dollars in 2008. The increase in terms of real increase, if you take that house and they're, again, they're following the average reassessment for the county.

[02:09:41] Everyone in here is going to be high or low amongst that average, but that's, you know, how we constructed this. So the county average over this entire period, that bill would increase \$872 from 08 to 2025. On an annual basis, that's a little over \$50 a year or 1.9% increase over that period.

[02:10:03] From 24 last year, last tax year to this tax year, it's a \$43 increase, a 1.3%. 33%. And to get that, it's the benefit of, well, first off, you've got the assessment activity. So it's 5% on average house year over year. That's Mr. Bloomfield's part of the equation. And what we're recommending today is going from 90 to 89. And the board has already set aside, and the treasurer has, you know, as recently as today, working on those simulations through the tax system, a 5% credit on the first half of the tax bill. So it's a one-time 5% on the first half,

[02:10:43] or you could look at it as a 2.5% credit over the course of the tax year. You take the one-time credit, and the one-penny reduction gives you, on average, an increase of 1.3% year-over-year tax year for this house. So I think the other thing I want to point out, and I kind of have to stare hard, but you see a red dashed line here, and you see how many years it takes to get back.

[02:11:09] you're all the way back to 2020 before you're paying more, just in nominal terms. There's no adjustment for inflation or anything like that. The amount you're paying in 2008, you got to go all the way out to 2020 before you're paying more than you did in 2008 because of the reductions in home values and then the very sort of that period of very weak growth. So again, taking the longer view. The last few years, we have seen larger assessment increases, but if you look at

[02:11:45] this whole period of time through a couple of economic cycles, the average increase on a year over year basis less than 2%, and it's \$50 a year over the full period. Yes, ma'am. Just to be clear, the line over here is yellow. Over here, it looks maybe orangish yellow. I was just wanting to make sure people were clear on that. Gerard and I said to each other, we said know that we needed to go see the optometrist very soon. So I think we're going to speed that up.

[02:12:12] The dashed line. Yeah. Yes. But now it does look orange to me. So we took that one step further, same scenario. And instead of using what has actually happened to the average home value, we said, okay, what's going to be 3% a year over this time period, 2008, your home and your appreciates by 3% a year, that entire period of time, the difference in those tax bills in total is over \$12,000 if it's an average 3% increase versus what has actually happened over that period

[02:12:48] of time. So, you know, it gets bandied about that, you know, 3% is a target, but when you actually sit down and you do the math and you look at it, it doesn't necessarily come out the way you would think. This has been an absolute priority for the board in terms of tax relief. I want to point out a couple of things. This is a combined program, so it does have the disabled veteran piece, which was a state mandate, unfunded mandate, certainly a program that we support, but it is a costly part of this program. They're all in here together. It's one cost center. So just want to make sure

[02:13:23] that that's pointed out. What you all have control over, though, you don't have any control over what happens with the disabled veterans. You do on the elderly and the disabled. The board put in place

that automatic social security adjustment increase. That has increased those thresholds in the program by over 22% over the last couple of years.

[02:13:42] That remains in place. That's an automatic thing. It doesn't even have to come back to an agenda. But what we are recommending for this plan, given the level of uncertainty, is investing \$5 million into this program such that that allows for us to deal with program participant growth.

[02:14:01] We have more 65 and older folks that might be eligible. That's just sort of the natural order of things, as well as we can see what happens with the overall economy. we can see what happens with prices. So if you want to go above the social security piece, which is automatic, you have the resources already built in this budget. It's like \$5 million increase for the direct benefit of the senior program. You don't have to have this determined by April 9. You've got all the way, probably I would tell you sometime into August or September in order to give the commissioner's office enough time to take that decision and make sure that she

[02:14:37] can advertise and the forms and all of those things, but you've got at least through the summer to make this determination. But this budget does include a large increase in the program to make sure we are paying attention to the needs of those folks. Again, just for ease for the public to understand, we have to recognize through Virginia accounting practices that this is an expense of the county. So we gross up our real property tax revenues for what we bill out as far as a gross. For those that qualify for relief, we kind of net the bill, but the net is actually shown up as an expense. So the two go together in netting out

[02:15:15] the tax bill. But some people would be confused. We're not actually writing checks per se as an expense like we do for other expenses, but through accounting practices that are mandated by the state, we all have to gross up both sides of the transaction. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Dr. Casey, for that. I wanted to go back and look at the growth in this program because many years ago. We tried to mitigate that. As you may recall, Jared, one board I served on, we looked at that.

[02:15:42] We saw it back in, I think, 2008 or 2009. We were looking at \$3 or \$4 million, and now we're at \$24.2 million. Again, unfunded by the state for the veterans as well. As you point out, we get nothing from the federal government or the state government to help mitigate that significant increase and also I'm sure you can see the age wave as well in that number and the growth in population in Chesterfield as well so just want to point out that big increase that number is pretty staggering to me in terms of increase from my perspective and we with the help of the

[02:16:21] commissioner's office we've run a number of scenarios and so I think our thought process get into you know July bring that maybe to audit finance share what those numbers look like and And then we could bring that to the full board to have it adopted in time for the fall. Yeah, I'm glad to see this.

[02:16:42] I've had many conversations with you and Jennifer. I just think that there's a lot of citizens that if they have two people living in the house that are only on limited Social Security income, the \$64,000 that we have right now as the threshold doesn't always cover them.

[02:16:58] And so I just think that maybe we could look at increasing that somehow to a little higher threshold so that they would be qualified for some kind of relief. Mr. Chair, I don't disagree with that except that what we did, and it may require an adjustment, we removed the cap, right?

[02:17:19] So anybody who does fall into the threshold, they get a 100% reduction depending on where they fit. It might be 60, whatever the number may be. Other jurisdictions have higher numbers, but they

have a cap. So, you know, you're changing it, and if you do that, and you're taking away that greater benefit for the people who make even less.

[02:17:46] And so there is a trade-off there. Again, I think that Jennifer and I have talked about, there might be about shifting those scale numbers that she has because it depends on what percentage of relief they get, depending on how high.

[02:18:05] And so might just need to, even if the higher number, if we raise the number a little higher, they would get a smaller percentage of DISC. It just, I just think that there's a good way of trying to get, yes. Hold on one second. To Mr. Holland's point, just looking at that chart, I like to look at FY22, which is when Mr. Holland and Mr. Carroll and I worked together to make the first significant increase in many years in that.

[02:18:36] And then if you look at the chart from there to what we're proposing this year, this full board, all five of us, are working together to continue that effort because we recognize that our fastest growing population is our 55 plus, our seniors in the county, and that we do have a lot of seniors that fall into a position where they aren't struggling with the increased taxes.

[02:19:01] So I just wanted to point out that originally it was the three of us and now continued all five of us to make this program more robust to take care of those citizens that we know are precious to us and have been here for a long time.

[02:19:17] So thank you to this whole board for helping us to do that. So just a couple of other points, and I think this is a very worthwhile topic, actually to come back and drill down like we have done in the past to set up for the next calendar year.

[02:19:33] because what you see before you is the 2025 year. But as part of the demographics of these populations, it is important to note those that are renting do not get this break regardless of their disposition. And so every dollar that we're increasing on this relief, all things being equal, we are shifting the burden to those that are not eligible for the program, even shifting the burden to those who might be renting where their rents are going up because, again, their taxes are going up.

[02:20:00] So I just think we have to be mindful of this. But I also do think, to the board's credit, these automatic adjustments are very similar to how we're framing the business license taxes. If we defined you once as small business and you're growing by an inflationary rate as a good business should at minimum grow, then we will still call you a small business and raise the thresholds.

[02:20:20] You, by default, are recognizing there are people whose incomes may grow by an inflationary manner. Social Security is an example. You're not going to grow out of this program because of Social Security changes. The last note on sort of the tax relief chapter is the B poll.

[02:20:39] You all have had a similar practice with the seniors to increase that threshold by not specifically an inflationary target, but we are recommending go from a \$500, where it is currently, to \$550. Same concept. Somebody whose bottom line has just been impacted by the cost of goods, we don't want them to then move out of that \$10 scenario that they're currently in.

[02:21:02] Dr. Miller, did you have something to say? Just a comment on how we take good care of each other, and by that I mean how we as a community take care of our elderly or disabled and our veterans. And the way that we do that is that, I mean, I think I'm right, and tell me if I'm wrong, that, you know, for

every penny we're talking six or seven million dollars. Is that accurate? So if we're talking 24 million dollars, then we're saying that we're paying an additional three cents on our taxes on average per 100 to take care of our community. And I think that's so important for folks to understand. But that's what it's about.

[02:21:38] I mean, is that by taking care of our elderly or disabled and our veterans, we're doing the right thing. So just some other things that are in the fiscal year 2026 proposed budget. You can see on the top left, you know, growth and contractual obligations. This is something that we have every single year as contracts come up for renewal. The big one in here, it was already part of the plan, the five-year plan from last year's budget, is the ongoing costs of the new financial system. Just as a quick reminder, the system that it will be replacing was first instituted

[02:22:14] in 2008, so well beyond its useful life. Moving on to the new initiatives, it's about \$1.9 million. That's about 4% of the growth in the general fund that you'll see between 25 and 26 a very limited number both in terms of absolute dollars and initiatives that we are putting in you'll see on there some highlights funding for parks and recreation and some funding adjustments for their part-time to be able to stand up staffing all of the events happening around the park system you will see some deputy and personnel enhancements in the sheriff's office

[02:22:50] i've worked closely with sheriff leonard on that over the last year or so to rectify those kind of imbalances within part-time positions in his office and finally in that one you'll see the employee medical center that was something that stood up as part of last year's budget that actually in the longer term will help reduce our health care costs that we have with the health care fund as our employees and schools employees are able to utilize that service in house as opposed to going to more costly options outside of the employee medical center and then finally you'll see on here on the far right in the kind of lavender box existing and cost neutral initiatives um the arpa program matt had referenced earlier when we're talking about the fte count

[02:23:30] those 12 positions moving over from the arpa fund to the general fund that will now become a permanent program as part of the general fund operations um and then you can see on here um for kind of zero net costs and position regates and social services they'll be um funded basically through state and federal funds and then the streetscapes in middle of the intern pike which is not going to receive any general fund contributions because there's a restricted revenue source that they pay into for that as well. The more important message on really the right-hand side is those requests come in as

[02:24:05] grossed up and then the budget staff which is sitting in here this afternoon they work hard with those departments to look for you know a department that's got some surplus budget maybe they've got a savings somewhere else so how can they help themselves to move these initiatives for. So everything on that right side, you get all of those items for \$800,000, essentially.

[02:24:26] That's because they're going through line item by line item in those budgets, trying to figure out how we can just reallocate within a department to a new initiative to let them get these things done. So this kind of thing happens every year. And the new initiative, you see, if you think back to AFR totals the last several years, you're going to see numbers much, much higher than 1.9 And that kind of goes to that, you know, being very select with what we have put forward.

[02:24:51] And a number of these are just like the clerk position, for example. Those are part-time today and converting them to full-time. So trying to, again, utilize staff that are already here, maybe get a little

more hours out of them, but trying that before just adding new positions.

[02:25:10] So, you know, we've talked a lot about inflation today, and we've talked about this chart in particular before as well. is, you know, on a nominal level, inflation can really distort the cost of goods and services. So we like to look at, you know, what is the cost of operating the county once you strip out inflation? And what you can see here is, you know, that green line is back to the fiscal year 2020-2012 level, where it's about \$1,800, give or take, per capita to operate the county as a whole.

[02:25:38] You can see we've stayed right around that level, kind of bobbed up and down in the last couple of years. Actually, compared to last year's budget, there has been a slight dip. You will see it going from 1793 to 1780. So even with all of these investments that you've made over the last few years, on a real basis, once you strip out inflation, the true cost of running things day to day has actually been on par with levels that we saw back in 2012. So one thing we thought we'd highlight as part of this budget is kind of you know ongoing savings and efficiencies and um if

[02:26:16] I can be quite uh I think some candor for a second it's really not something that we've done a great job of telling because it's just something that's so core to what we do every every day but it is something we should do a better job of saying to the public out loud as we go through these budgets every year to identify where savings and efficiencies can be found before we come back and ask for additional dollars from taxpayers.

[02:26:41] And you can see from this chart, this is not everything. This is not a comprehensive list, but it does run across the full services of county operations, all the way from the employee medical centre, saving in-house costs of over \$300,000 last year, to our purchasing and e-pables programme, if I remember correctly, had them as everyday excellence about a year or two ago.

[02:27:01] Since 2012, that has returned over \$4 million back to the county. You see with utility costs, we've been installing solar panels across county and school buildings over the last few years. Fiscal year 2024, that saved nearly \$300,000 a year.

[02:27:17] Fuel conversion from gas to liquid propane, same thing. Fleet policy, only first responders are allowed to take their vehicles to home each night. The fleet review is annual to see justification about whether vehicles are needed as well. And then finally, kind of reduction in administrative footage needs.

[02:27:37] So a picture we probably should have put on here, but, you know, just even down the hall with our internal audit office and what previously was one office occupied by one person is now pretty much entirely occupied by that entire department. So if we can find an efficiency and squeeze an efficiency, we will find it.

[02:27:55] To that point, as Matt said, all the budget team are here and they've done a fantastic job throughout this process. We were able to find over \$7.2 million worth of efficiencies as part of this budget. That runs the gamut from one-time costs that were in fiscal year's 2025 budget.

[02:28:12] Procurement and economic development have implemented new strategies in their personnel structure. They were able to give up positions as part of this budget. And then, you know, we – it might sound strange, but it is actually very, very true. We go through every single line item, line by line, with a ruler to find where we can find efficiency savings within department budgets.

[02:28:35] And that exercise alone saved about \$1.3 million that has been able to reinvest into things like contractual increases that departments are seeing this year as well. I think, wow, we mentioned it a second ago, but this row here, maybe that one's left, but we do have the bulk of our budgets.

[02:28:58] That was Coleman back there, Nisila. They've done a fantastic job putting this plan together. So I just wanted to take a moment and thank them and tie into what we've just been talking about here. When I joined the budget office in FY09, I had 14 people in that office. They run that same shop today, much larger budget, much more complex budget with nine people.

[02:29:19] So, you know, that's the kind of thing that happens over time trying to find ways to leverage technology. this group is very very savvy in that but that has allowed them to take a core function and takes five positions that have been able to disperse elsewhere in the organization to do other you know more public facing things so thank you guys very much for all your hard work um so as we referenced earlier you know as part of this budget we have made some very limited strategic investments until we can have a better idea of what we are going to see at the macro level um but you know there are

[02:29:57] many unfunded requests as part of this budget. On the operating side, there was \$22.1 million worth of requests that we were not able to fund. It was about 175 full-time positions. On the capital side, that was a little over \$300 million worth of capital projects that we were not able to invest dollars in. And in transportation, as much as investments were put in the last few years, there was still an outstanding need of about \$4.5 billion dollars worth of transportation projects that you will not see as part of this budget?

[02:30:32] Chair, you know, as you know, Dr. Murray referenced the J-LARC report, so the schools have used that and us together as an effective tool for communicating out the 200 million dollar plus shortfall of the state to possibly deal with unfunded. This is not necessarily something that there's a J-LARC report on this, but as you can tell from Barry's presentations of the ways in which the state does have many powers, even on the local government side.

[02:30:56] And, you know, I will give the state credit. Annually, the Commission on Local Government produces a report on mandates of state to local, many of which are regulatory, you know, and many of which are not necessarily fully funded. That's a product available to the public as well.

[02:31:12] And just as we're communicating out the JLARC report to those that are of interest to maybe advocate on our behalf, citizens and otherwise, which is in their interest from a tax burden, This unfunded mandates report may also be another product worthy of the citizens' review. Next topic is something that was brought up by a number of board members.

[02:31:34] You know, kind of what is the county's exposure to direct exposure to some of these federal topics? And there have been stops and starts here where, you know, grants have been cut on, cut off. So we pulled this together just to kind of give you a sense. On the general fund side, and Gerard mentioned it earlier, almost the entirety of our direct federal revenue, on an annual ongoing basis is in social services.

[02:31:57] Those are, you know, pass through items that come through the general fund. We hope we don't see any disruptions there. If you look on the right hand side, you know, we went back and looked for the last full audited year, you know, what were those major categories, regardless county schools didn't matter.

[02:32:14] But I think we're, you know, happy to have this list. I'm gonna walk you through real, real fast. So ESSER, that was one time money that went into the school division. You just saw the school budget.

there's very little that they did with ESSER that rolled into an annual operating budget. So I think they're to be commended for that. The next one is same program on our side, some of the ARPA and CARES money, same thing. The only thing that really, you know, passes that test in terms of an ongoing piece is those two initiatives in the fire department. Gerard just talked about those. Those are being picked up on an annual basis. The rest of it was one-time pieces. So the message is we do

[02:32:53] have federal money that flows through here, but by and large, we try to use it for one-time things such that if, you know, those spigots were cut off moving forward, it has less of an impact in terms of personnel and, you know, sort of day-to-day costs. We try as best we can to put as much of this into capital and one-time pieces of the budget. This one mentioned just here, the ARPA piece. We just wrapped this up in December. You all held the public hearing. The only two pieces that have ongoing here are the mobile and great health, the peak demand. The biggest, of course,

[02:33:27] was \$25 million into AM Davis. So, you know, no limited or no exposure there for us. Those dollars are already spent. That school is scheduled to open this fall. Even more broadly than that, we looked at sort of overall employment trends. Less than two and a half percent of Chesterfield County employees are recognized as federal. At the state level, that's about 2x. Of course, That doesn't take into account the contractors and other folks in Northern Virginia.

[02:33:58] But in terms of direct flows of money, we think we have a limited exposure in terms of disruptions in the county workforce, fairly limited exposure. I think our concern on the federal topic, beyond just the uncertainty that has been created, is really the impacts in Northern Virginia.

[02:34:14] If you've read anything about those budgets, those locality budgets up there, they are really bracing for some much, much deeper cuts. obviously that doesn't have a direct impact for us, but that flows into the state budget. It is an economic engine for the Commonwealth, and we can see reductions, particularly on the school side.

[02:34:33] They've done that the last couple years, state sales tax. So it's kind of those secondary pieces that we'll continue to watch, but in terms of direct impact to just fit on the federal piece, we feel like we're in a pretty good place. Well, thank you, Mr. Go back to the previous slide, if you could. I have a question, just so I have clarity on it. 2.4 percent of all employed individuals in the county we talk about people that are working in the county and let me just kind of lay my cards on the table i'm wondering about those individuals that live in the county but are working at greg adams at fort greg adams is that being counted as part of this this i believe

[02:35:11] this is a it would be picked up in this this should be a more of a household survey yeah so they would be part of that okay thank you yeah that's right just just as an fyi the weldon The Cooper Center just issued a report, I believe, last night that I forwarded to you.

[02:35:32] It's a public report as a PDF that shows the entire state workforce, as Mr. Harris illustrated here. But more importantly, it shows by locality the concentration of that workforce. Chesterfield County is in the second highest tier that we are 6% to 9% of the federal workforce.

[02:35:49] There are localities, many localities, northern Virginia. The Prince George, as an example, would be a much higher percentage of their population, greater than nine percent, but we are classified six to nine percent. I also rationalize those federal workers have discretion of where they choose to live in the region. We have a high quality of life, have a great school system. Many of the Fort Greg Adams, you

know, leadership, if you will, resides in Chesterfield County. I guess my bigger concern is not the direct impacts, but the rolling down impacts of, you know, getting rid of SNAP if SNAP funds go away or

[02:36:28] um medicaid or medicare those are our citizens that are going to lose those benefits and what are we going to do to help them so i guess i just really i understand that's not you know we're not obliged to do that but we are here to serve our citizens and so that's what i worry about so um there's a lot of things to keep in mind no i mean certainly the spirit of what you're discussing is the spirit in which we built the budget i don't know we don't have a direct response or reaction that we can deal with that but we recognize that you know again our what we're hedging against is the broader uncertainty i think you know this is something we'll continue to update the board on

[02:37:05] we'll follow up on the on the question about the survey but uh you know it is information that we will continue to provide you with that yeah um so moving on to the cip um i hope you all can see that dot on the left um if they say that you know a picture speaks if they if they say a picture speaks a thousand words. This one speaks 105,610. We have heard a lot over the last few months about the county and its debt and trying to understand that. Our debt position is something

[02:37:44] that we take extremely seriously, as you can see on that chart. We do not have the luxury of the federal government to borrow. We have to have a balanced budget, as Dr. Casey referenced this morning at the media briefing. And if you look at the per capita debt position for the county, it's a little shade under \$3,000 a person. You take that and extrapolate it to the national level with the national debt, you're in six figures, nearly \$106,000. And what I will point out before I move on is that our number may grow or even go down in a given year. That \$105,610 will be a lot higher next year.

[02:38:22] Real quick, though, you said we don't have the ability to borrow. We do have the ability to borrow. We do not have the ability to go into debt to borrow that the federal government has. But we do, through bonds, we pay back in a timely manner. We do have the ability to borrow.

[02:38:38] We just don't borrow more than we can pay back because, fortunately, state law prohibits that, which is good. I'm glad that that does. But the federal government can borrow into affinity, and that's the problem. And they can borrow on the operating side, which I think that's really what Gerard is referencing.

[02:38:56] We do not have, that's not something that we do. We only borrow for assets. And, Mr. Chair, if I could just highlight this, too, you know, that dot that we have is constrained because we're triple-triple-A. You know, there are localities that may have a higher debt per capita, that may even have balanced budgets that have a larger percentage of their budget going towards debt or larger percentages of burden to their people.

[02:39:19] You don't keep the triple-triple-A status. As Mr. Harris was a young child back then, but during that recessionary period, the rating agencies were actually on the verge of lowering the federal government's, what they call their sovereign triple-triple-A rating, because they were at the federal government paying back its debt.

[02:39:38] I was with Hannah at the time. I got together with my friends in Henrico and Chesterfield, and we all made a statement with our triple-triple-A bond rating because they were going to bring our bond ratings down because of the federal government. We took the position, we can pay our money back, and we do not punish us because our parent or grandparent cannot pay their debt.

[02:40:00] And the rating agencies listened. Fortunately, the United States, as a congressional and president at the time, listened as well and tried to get their house in somewhat order. But the \$105,000, I can't point to assets across the country that represent the financing of that.

[02:40:17] I can point to the Hoover Dam, but I think even that debt has been paid off. Add to that the interest on the debt, which is out-script Medicare as well. It went over last year. So that's interesting. Got to pay interest and debt.

[02:40:33] And so very good. While I'm here, one question, two questions I made very briefly. One is, you mentioned the operating system in 2008 that's being replaced. Is that the accounting system? Yes, sir. That's what we're replacing. It's a consolidated system, county and schools.

[02:40:50] Okay, integrated as well. Yes, sir. And we have more integration, which is wonderful. Absolutely. Thank you. Great. And I saw earlier we did not use any debt reserves, any reserve cash. That's right. And we're at the point where we're funding that amount that we have set, the limit we've set, we're funding that.

[02:41:10] Have we fully funded that yet, or are we still in progress? I know that's a passion of yours, Mr. Hahn. We are in year two over this four-year term, so we're getting up to the 10%. So we're making another step with this plan. So, again, that's just another safeguard that we've got in place to make sure that we can continue, you know, core services.

[02:41:30] Thank you. And then the final thing I'll say about the national debt scene, and then I promise to get off my soapbox, is, you know, when the federal government was downgraded about 14 or so years ago, if you actually look at the credit reports for the county every time we go to the market, and one of them in particular, you will see that they rate us higher than the sovereign debt. Because in their eyes, on a rating agency perspective, we have a better control over a fiscal house than the national government does.

[02:42:00] So next two slides kind of take this conversation more to Dr. Casey's point. How do we stack up against our direct peers, not the federal government? So this is looking at debt service per capita amongst our peer group. You see 247, so second lowest amongst our peer group.

[02:42:17] This is APA data that they publish on an annual basis. Looking at debt service as a percent of your total revenue is to Mr. Holland's point, you got to pay that interest and the principal. So that has a 5.8 percent, you know, again, towards the lower end of our peer group, a very manageable position.

[02:42:35] And then this is the full matrix of the full debt policies that govern everything that you do. Anytime that we want to borrow, it doesn't matter what avenue you borrow it through, whether it could be, you know, VPSA, it could be GEO, it doesn't matter. This is the rule book that's in place that makes sure we stay in a good position.

[02:42:54] And you can see the arrows, the first three all going down from fiscal 23 to fiscal 24, meaning that in aggregate, we have a lower debt position than we did the year before. You know, we're trying not to go over 2.5%.

[02:43:10] That is a percent of AV. We're at 1.1. That's a personal income, not to go over 5%. We're at 2.97. And then the last one, I always try to point this out. Our goal, that is, if we didn't issue another penny of debt today, that within 10 years, we'd have 65% of all of our debt paid off, and we're almost to 70% on that mark.

[02:43:31] So, yes, we have done a lot of infrastructure projects. Think about all the things that you all have cut ribbons on and put shovels in the ground. We're able to do all of those things and still have a very, very carefully managed debt position. This really is, above all else, this is the core of a AAA locality.

[02:43:51] So looking at the CIP, again, this is a five-year plan. Move through these pretty quickly. This is all the sources, and all I really want you to know about this slide is what's on this slide here. It is two-thirds cash, one-third debt.

[02:44:06] So, yes, we have a referendum that we're underway with county and schools, but we are a predominant cash operation when it comes to putting infrastructure in the ground here, And that prevents us from having or allows us to have that tiny dot instead of the big one.

[02:44:24] Looking at that same concept in a little different way, this is the blue sort of figure you see. That's current debt service. That's that fall off. So if you attend 10 years, do we have 70% of that paid off? That's our goal. What you see in the teal on top of that is everything else that we expect to sell.

[02:44:43] And you can see, because of the way we structure the debt, that it barely goes over that yellow or orange line, I'm not sure, but it barely crests that over that full period of time. So we're able to finish out the referendum and still, you know, not see a shock in debt service payments that would crowd out our ability to offer other programs and services or pursue, you know, further tax relief measures.

[02:45:07] How is the money being used? Community infrastructure, that's a glossy thing that Coleman came up with. That means roads, essentially. Major maintenance being the next biggest piece of that, that's vitally important. That is taking care of everything we already have on the ground here. And then you see the other Navy box up in the corner, referendum projects. Again, this is just the county side over the full five years. So where are these projects going to go?

[02:45:36] they're going to go into roads, they're going to do major maintenance, and they're going to be the execution of the 22 referendum. Speaking of which, approved in November of 22, again, we are taking a step back here. We are not issuing debt in or plan to in this upcoming fiscal year. Two reasons for that. One of which is it's a nice safeguard. Again, that's less pressure on the budget, but you see that middle block here. The pipeline is quite full. We approved in November of 22. We were out selling in the marketplace by May.

[02:46:06] So we jump-started that, and we are still fully within the legal timeline to get all of these projects done. So even though we are not selling debt, we remind everybody that full middle block is underway. Take a little different look at that. Mr. Bowles and his team have a full plate.

[02:46:24] You see all those projects, what phase they're in, and then the timeline. Again, all of this is included in the packet that's up on the website, so we'll be able to update folks on this. In the transportation space, again, a big chunk of your five-year revenue sharing comes back. You have \$23 million just in fiscal 26. There's more state dollars there. Remember, this is the program where you put a dollar in, the state matches you.

[02:46:55] That's almost up to the \$24 million package for FY26. You see a heavy emphasis in here on safety projects, the number of roundabouts, the Dundas Road improvements, focusing on pedestrian safety.

[02:47:11] So a heavy emphasis there is part of this plan. There is a one-year holiday from community connectivity. That's what we call our sidewalk program. The only reason for that, we had that opportunity with the revenue sharing to move those dollars into there. So we're able to double what that community connectivity buys us by doing it through a different program.

[02:47:34] It is restored and full by the time we get to fiscal 27. A couple other highlights that I'll touch on, the airport enhancements, the big thing here is the extension of the runway, which will be complete over this five-year period. The Chesapeake Bay TMDL, this is our heavy environmental focus to make sure that we are sending clean water down to the TMDL, down to the bay rather, 24 million dollars over that five-year period of time. This is funded by that separate fee.

[02:48:05] We collect it every year. It's a little higher in this because we collect it and then spend it as that team is ready to put projects on the ground. And then technology continues to be an even mix of replacing things like the Chromebook, the Toughbooks that our first responders use, and then a continued emphasis on cybersecurity to make sure that we are protected on that front.

[02:48:28] dive down into major maintenance for a second as you can see this cuts across the board I won't you know go into each one of these pieces of the pie but we are making sure we are taking care of all of our existing assets we had that policy two and a half percent of the replacement value reinvested every year we are fully in compliance with that with this plan the big emphasis this year though is on HVAC you see some projects of some systems that are coming close to the end of life. So we've identified with Mr. Bowles and his team over \$20 million of HVAC needs over this

[02:49:03] period of time. We are looking at other ways to pay for that, at least in the short run. Otherwise, \$20 million out of that major maintenance program is going to crowd out everything else that's going in there. So we'll come back to you just planting a seed probably sometime in the summer to figure on how we can line of credit or some other vehicle to be able to go ahead and attack that.

[02:49:26] The other thing that we don't want to do is stretch these projects out over a number of years. It becomes more costly, and it interrupts the operations in all of those buildings. This is a new topic in the CIP, so we'll pause here for a second.

[02:49:42] I think you're familiar with James River Tennis Courts, but we did go through a very specific evaluation of all the facilities on school grounds, So we're not talking about the buildings, but trying to do a facility condition assessment of everything outside of the building.

[02:49:57] The first part of that was looking at tennis courts. So this budget includes \$4.2 million to deal with all of the identified tennis court major maintenance needs. Half of that would be in 26, and three facilities that have been identified for funding in 26 are James River, Thomas Dale, and Matoica.

[02:50:17] Another element of that would be turf field replacement to continue that program. That sits in 27 and 28, and there's other elements of that facility condition assessment that we will bring to you in outer years. So those are the specific projects, but I think my bigger message here is this is something we're looking to add to our overall major maintenance program, taking care of those facilities, because while they're on school grounds, they certainly benefit the broader community.

[02:50:43] It's used by far outside of just the people that go to the school. And then similarly, a new line item in the park space, really focused on upgrading existing facilities. We've had a lot of success with this. Rockwood's getting ready to turn 50.

[02:50:59] It hasn't had a facelift. So not expanding the park system under Mr. Luther's leadership, but really, let's go in. We've got great parks and great spots. Let's make sure that they are shiny and look like a facility that the community wants to go and visit.

[02:51:16] Rockwood is one of our most visited parks. So they would receive those upgrades for their 50th birthday. You saw this earlier, this gets into a little more granularity in terms of the unfunded projects and the CIP. This is a \$300 million list. We'll have to come back to a lot of these.

[02:51:35] We won't spend a lot of time on it today, but that's the major parts of it. The second part of the Powite, looking at the courts building will be another topic, more roundabouts, so forth and so on. But we do have a laundry list of CIP projects. The main thing we put this in here for is if we have the opportunity to come back to any of these things and accelerate, we feel like it is important to disclose that to the public. So, you know, they know that there was a plan and all we're doing is moving something up the matrix. Last chapter, it'll be very brief, sort of looking ahead. And I think this ties in well with how schools ended their presentation. This is overall

[02:52:13] county population growth and you can see that average over the last number of years right around one and a half percent and we have decelerated right to that for the last two years so population growth overall in a manageable place but I think it's been pointed out many times here today it's not necessarily the top line number that's interesting but it's the in the dynamics within that and particularly the 65 and older so making sure whether it be tax relief or programming for them. That's going to be a continued topic as we move forward. You see the expected growth or the

[02:52:49] growth since 2009 in that demographic. That's going to be something that will be with us for many budgets to come. Same story in student growth. They did a nice job of this. You see that flattens out. That has put us in a great position in terms of capacity of our buildings, but absolutely I would agree with both the gentlemen that were up here before us. Major maintenance is going to be a big topic in fiscal 27. So any, any opportunity we have with schools, surpluses, or even on the county side, trying to make a run at that major maintenance issue, that debt issue that you all

[02:53:26] authorized several years ago is about to be all spent out. They got a base of about \$10 million, but they need to fill in that other space, you know, anywhere from 10 to \$20 million. Won't happen in one year, but it is going to be a topic we'll come back to. And then lastly, that sort of normalized revenue environment, these are our out-year forecasts for residential revow.

[02:53:46] You see the 5.1% this year, but we do expect that to sort of moderate over the course of the five years to being conservative, but I think that we're not going back to those double-digit increases, so we're going to have to continue to be very selective in terms of the initiatives that we push forward.

[02:54:06] What's immediately ahead, there's your list of all of your community meetings which start tomorrow night at Manchester Middle School. The 26th is your public hearing, downstairs, adoption on the 9th, and then the most important words on here, additional budget updates.

[02:54:23] You're gonna adopt a budget on April 9th, but this topic is gonna be with us. I think it's gonna extend well beyond that. We need to monitor economic conditions and bring updates back to the board, or certainly audit finance into the summer, fall, as long as it takes. So April night's a big date.

[02:54:40] It certainly has some weight to it, but I think this is gonna be a longer season than normal. So with that, we're happy to take any questions you might have. Board members, any other questions? Thank

you for your presentation. You're gonna say what I'm gonna say.

[02:54:57] Thank you. Thank you to the whole department for all of your work on this. I know it's a year-long job that you start again tomorrow. Well, actually, you're not finished yet, but then you'll start again the next day. So thank you for all your work on this.

[02:55:17] See consent agenda highlights. Mr. Smith. I'll just briefly cover two items out of the three on your consent agenda tonight. So first is we're requesting to set a public hearing for April 23rd to consider eminent domain for the western area capital improvement project. So these are the projects that Ms. Walker's group primarily is working on over in transportation related to the school the school's project. It's really providing all of the road water and sewer infrastructure for

[02:55:56] those. You'll note that there's, there are no specific properties in the set public hearing agenda item. We will get you those details well prior to the meeting. The goal is to work on obtaining amicable resolution with all those folks prior to then. What is really pushing that is the timeline for the schools. We do need to have all of those open, particularly the high school by 2027. So we need to go ahead and move forward with, uh, uh, with obtaining property rights.

[02:56:28] Mr. Turner, good to see you're okay. Uh, with property rights for those, um, primarily to relocate utilities and get all those, uh, facilities in the ground. Uh, next on there is a request for a lease amendment extension for the employee medical center over at Lucy Core. This really just allows us some room to work while that gets relocated to another building over where IST is currently located. It's a one-year lease extension followed by some possible month-to-month extensions ranges from \$5,700 to about \$5,800 for a month for the

[02:57:04] employee medical center. Thank you. Item four, reports. Are there any questions regarding the reports? Seeing no questions, the reports are approved. Item five, 15-minute citizen comment period on unscheduled matters. We have no speakers. Mr. Chair, we need a motion to recess for dinner in room 502. I'm going to, is it just one person? I'm going to go ahead and allow the one person to speak. Okay. They've waited through the whole afternoon. All right. Just to be aware though,

[02:57:42] in the future, you do need to sign up by noon with the clerk's office. So, but we're going to, we're going to grant you now, and it's three minutes. We're going to grant you the three minutes to speak. Good afternoon. My name is Claude DeBron, a 100% disabled veteran. In December, me and my wife purchased a newly built house in Chesterfield. By January, we had to move out because of mold problems and a house is not structurally safe. The house is still not up the county code. Before we purchased the house, we hired a house inspector who told us we need

[02:58:19] to hire a structural engineer to look at the foundation. We hired two structural engineers who gave us solutions to fix the foundation. We gave these solutions to the builder and the county inspector. We were assured the house we brought up the code. Instead of using our solutions, the builder went with a fix offered by an engineer he hired. This fix did not correct the overspanned floor joists. Because we were living in Texas at the time, we had to rely on a realtor, builder, and county inspector to bring the house up the code. They all signed off on everything being fixed. This house should never have been built at this location due to the shrink

[02:58:59] swell soil problem and the fact that this is swampland. This is all proven by the soil and mold contractors we had hired. Two previous builders tried to purchase the land to develop it and were told by

the county the land was too wet and swampy. How come our house builder was allowed to develop this land? Now my house is cracking apart, collapsing and full of toxic mold, making the house unsafe to live in. Would you want to live in a house where you cannot put furniture in because the floors and walls are collapsing? The mold is so toxic my wife and I became very sick and we lost 20 pounds each.

[02:59:36] We had to leave that house. We are now being sued by the builder for exercising our First Amendment rights. We have tried to hire over 40 different lawyers for this case and have yet to retain counsel. Now we have a week to get a lawyer or we will lose everything we have acquired in our lifetime thanks to a crooked builder and a county that issued a certificate of occupancy and never inspected the crawl space.

[03:00:02] The county also signed off with our mortgage company, USAA, that the house was up the coat. If you do not believe me, come by my house today and see for yourselves. We want the county to take responsibility for the role in the building of this house on shrink-swell soil and in a wetland.

[03:00:20] Thank you for your time. Thank you. Madam Clerk. Mr. Chair, we need a motion to recess for dinner in room 502. Second. All in favor? Aye.

[03:00:36] Good evening.

[03:01:41] Welcome to the evening session of the March 12th Board of Supervisors meeting. For the record, no comments were received through the online comment portal for consideration on matters before us tonight. At this time, I'll ask Dr. Miller to give the invocation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[03:02:00] Let's take a moment to kind of drop in to what I like to call the looks within place. Take a moment for that and just check in with that, which is so much greater than ourselves. We know that you are in everyone, everything, everywhere, all the time.

[03:02:22] Thank you. Thank you for our lives, for our health, for the gift of each day, for all the gifts as spring seems to be wandering our way, and that which is that all that energy that built up throughout the winter is now ready to come into bloom.

[03:02:50] Thank you for our lives. Remember that we are all made of stardust, literally made of stardust, and that we are all sacred, worthy, and luminous beings. May it be so.

[03:03:10] We would like to call forward Deputy County Administrator Matt Harris to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[03:03:33] Item 9, County Administration Update, Dr. Casey. Good evening, members of the board and the public that's here and the public that's watching. I have five items on my agenda, and the fifth one will be some of our Southside Speedway representatives that are in transit.

[03:03:54] So I'll try and talk at a slower pace than I normally talk so that they can get here. With that said, you know, each March, I think we're going to do a better job than we may have otherwise done before and remembering Pocahontas, whose death was in March of 1617.

[03:04:11] Again, four centuries later, her legacy endures. And while her story is often romanticized, she played a key role in the early English-Native relations, acting as a bridge. In 1616, Sir Thomas Dale, on behalf of the Virginia Company, brought Pocahontas to England, where she was presented to London Society as this native princess.

[03:04:33] And during the nine months that she was in England, she helped change the course of world history through her diplomatic actions. In 1617, the Roths set sail for Virginia, but Pocahontas became ill and was taken off the ship at Grayson, where she died, and was buried at St. George's Church in Gravesham.

[03:04:51] So as many of you are aware, Chesapeake has an historic linkage with Jamestown through the city of Henricus and the home of John Roth and Pocahontas, as well as Gravesham, England. And so I just want to, again, each March, just to remember her. And there's different social media and other programmatic things that will continue to recognize her.

[03:05:10] Dr. Case? If we need to, we'll go ahead and start board reports and then go back to the south side so you don't have to. I think we're going to have plenty of time tonight. 7.30 is going to come to us. This year, Chesterfield Restaurant Week will take place April 4th through the 13th.

[03:05:37] I want to especially thank Katie Hardell, who increased from the over 50 places we had last year to over 60. Now, restaurants, wineries, breweries, there's dessert shops, I think even coffee shops. So it's a widespread excitement and buy-in from our culinary scene.

[03:05:54] As my wife has said, she's already written down three places a day, seven days a week. So I got 21 places to visit that particular week. But unlike other restaurant weeks, these participating assemblies are not locked into a set price or menu. Instead, this week highlights each restaurant's uniqueness with a special menu featured especially for this event.

[03:06:14] Proceeds will once again benefit the Chesterfield Food Bank Outreach Center, and more information is to come. And as you may remember, that helped, I think, deliver almost 40,000 meals through the Chesterfield Food Bank last year through the donations raised of Chesterfield Restaurant Week.

[03:06:33] Sports Event Magazine has named River City Sportsplex the number two outdoor sports venue in the country, with 16 fields now. And again, that's the addition of the four fields. Over 35 weekends of major events, this continues to be unlike any sports venue in the United States.

[03:06:51] Most of this usage is year-round by local groups, but sports tourism events on the weekends provide a return on investment through significant economic spending that more than pays for the facility and tax revenue back to the county. It also provides a first-class home field advantage for our local leagues and associations to play in these tournaments.

[03:07:09] And I have already received messages from the hotel owners, especially for this last weekend of the Jefferson Cup, that their hotel occupancy and Rev Par, which is their main statistic that they use, were far, far greater than any time last year during this same week.

[03:07:25] So I want to congratulate Parks and Recreation and our own sports visitation and entertainment, and whose dedication and hard work resulted in this accomplishment. Speaking about River City Sportsplex, tomorrow is the groundbreaking of the park, which in itself is going to be a major attraction and destination, apart from those that are there for the rectangle fields aspects of it.

[03:07:46] The picture on your screen does not really even do it justice. You can just see all those red dots there. There's so many ways in which a child and their family can just enjoy the day. And whether you are

there for a tournament and in between games or trying to keep young ones engaged, you know, in the county, it's a win for everybody.

[03:08:07] So, again, tomorrow is the groundbreaking for what is labeled as the park. Next is we were, myself and two board members, were at a Sportsbacker-sponsored event for RVA Active Workplace. This is, again, sports backers' recognition of workplaces that provide a healthy environment for its employees through physical fitness programs, which also transcends into mental health well-being as well.

[03:08:35] Chesterfield County was recognized as the company of the year for an organization greater than 100 employees. When I say company, it's private sector or public sector companies. So, again, just something notable to be recognized. So with that said, I'm sensing I'm going to be going to board reports right now, and then we will by no means forget our guests that are here, which some are here, but we want to have all of them here for the Southside Speedway presentation.

[03:09:06] Thank you. First board report, I believe, is Ms. Snyder. All right. So Dr. Miller and I provided district updates at the Midlothian Business Alliance luncheon at Salisbury Country Club earlier this month.

[03:09:29] um mba provides resources and support for businesses to grow and succeed i appreciate members thoughtful questions and look forward to many more of these luncheons we usually do them once or twice a year so it's always a good conversation time next well okay well this is just a teaser so um as we well okay we didn't really no that's fine so yesterday was an exciting day at Southside Speedway. The weather was beautiful for this beautiful announcement that

[03:10:05] so many people have been waiting for, and we'll hear more about it from our new owners when they both get here. So excited about this and to be bringing racing back to Southside Speedway and Clover Hill District. I went to a fundraiser for the Housing Families First. They do this annually.

[03:10:32] called the Art of Housing at the VMFA. They have local artists that prepare artworks to be auctioned off to raise money for housing. They help with housing insecurity and rehoming, especially families with little kids and finding not just, they transition them into transitional housing and then as well as permanent housing after that.

[03:11:01] So they've committed 25 years of work preventing, reducing, and ending homelessness. So this year, I think they raised over \$75,000, so that's awesome. And finally, Joe stole my thunder on this one.

[03:11:25] Anyhow, so we will be officially breaking ground tomorrow at the River City Park. And the park has many amenities, including splash pad, zipline, play areas, picnic pavilions. This will actually be an awesome opportunity for when families have an older kid that's playing in a tournament and the other kids need to be entertained.

[03:11:49] That's great. There's also going to be, like I said, picnic pavilions and bathrooms and a Christmas tree. That wasn't mentioned here, but next year we'll be having our Christmas tree lighting in the park as well. so stay tuned. And with that, that concludes my report. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Holland.

[03:12:11] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was pleased to recently host a meeting with Richmond's mayor, Dr. Danny Avula, and we talked extensively about Chesterfield and the region and discussed ways that we can

collaborate and work together. Here you'll see a picture of me outlining geography of Chesterfield County, I told him I love geography and land mass.

[03:12:35] And so I had to tell him, and I'm going to share with you, you already know this about the Dale District, that every district in Chesterfield touches Dale, one place or another, but they do. So I'm always pleased to share with them. But I always mention also, and I told Dr. Abdullah, that Chesterfield, that Dale District is the heart of Chesterfield.

[03:12:58] And so we're glad to work with him on any issues and challenges. And, you know, when you meet someone, I've met him on many occasions, but this is the first time as a mayor. And I share with him that he had a tough time coming in as he came into office. But, you know, we look to the future.

[03:13:15] We don't place blame, although sometimes I always look at what the causes are, root causes of everything, even the water crisis. But I didn't share much on that. But nevertheless, it was a real pleasure to meet him and talk with him and show him our county.

[03:13:30] And by the way, as you can see on that pink, in the pinky area, I'll just say one more thing, is that Matulka is bigger than all of Henrico. Mr. Carroll, I know you probably hear that a lot as you traverse. Pretty close. Traverse the county. So we got to give him, make sure he has plenty of time to get to the county complex.

[03:13:49] I can't imagine how they did it years ago. But anyway, next item, I'm pleased to invite anyone and everyone to our March 17th Dale District Beulah Recreation Center budget town hall meeting.

[03:14:04] You're welcome to come and share. We had a good turnout last year, a very good turnout for that meeting. And the citizens were asking a number of questions. So feel free to come. I know someone will answer your question. I may not answer it, but someone will or research it eventually for you.

[03:14:21] That's what we do here in Chesterfield County. So I think that ends my report, Mr. Chairman, and it does. Next up is Frank. I mean, Mr. Kevin Carroll. That's pretty good. And unless you were at the chamber luncheon today, you won't get that joke, but it was pretty good.

[03:14:44] He just did that to throw me off. It worked. So I think we skipped, if you go back to my picture, two things. One, as Mr. Holland pointed out, the Matoka district is rather large, which is why we're having two community meetings on the budget.

[03:15:04] one on the 18th and one on the 25th. The one on the 18th is going to be held at CTC Hall, and the one on the 25th is going to be held at Matoka Elementary School. So as I would like to extend the same welcome to everybody that Mr. Holland did. We didn't get pictures of this, but yesterday I had the honor of going to the Matoka Middle School for the local government speakers day. And what you have is you have a bunch of young children, adults maybe, that are asking local government leaders. So yesterday I had one of our police officers there with me

[03:15:43] and someone from our 911 dispatch center there with me. And these kids asked fantastic questions. And, you know, there are some great things about this job and being able to go to the schools and meet with the kids is one of them. There are other things that are not so much fun, but these are of the things that make a big difference when especially when you look at that young young man from earlier tonight that was number one in the United States I mean that's amazing I mean it's accounting of all subject matters from the Midlothian district got to throw that out there

[03:16:21] in the country number one that's just amazing but it just speaks to what great people we have in our community what great job parents are doing and then what a great job our teachers are doing in the schools to set something up like this for all of us I'm sure we all do the same thing we get to go to different schools and do this I already did it at Cosby High School I actually we didn't do a tile on that one either but again the government kids they ask some great tough questions about government which is really good that they're learning this stuff because I you know I know a lot

[03:17:01] of people don't even know what the Constitution says. And they're adults. So the kids are fantastic. Next slide. So myself and Mr. Engel, and I want to premise this with this. I was going to Rhode Island to visit my mom. She turned 89. And I said, you know what? While I'm up there, I'm going to swing over to Massachusetts. It's just a short ride. It's like going from the southern part of Matoka to Malothian. Truly. And I said, let's go take a look at Commonwealth Fusion. So staff

[03:17:38] was nice enough to set up a meeting for us. And by the way, it didn't cost the county a dime on my part. I paid for my own flights and everything, but I couldn't wait. The county was going to set it up later on, but I said, now I'm going. And Mr. Engel was kind enough to come up. And we got to tour the Commonwealth Fusion system. And that picture you see is us standing inside the room where they are building SPARK, the smallest possible electric generation unit that they're going to build, which is the prototype. And during that process, they gave us a tour of the entire

[03:18:15] operation and the building, that they're still building out the building to build all this in the design phase of actually making all the magnets. If you recall last December, they announced that they would be locating their first fusion energy plant right here in Chesterfield county um and you know they're independently building this they're going to finance it build it and operate the facility um which um it's interesting we like it because of the name arc but upon completion it will mark the first time that fusion power will be made available

[03:18:49] in the world at a grid scale now we know there's machines being built in france and being built in china and they're much bigger machines and it's the same kind of technology on a larger scale but they are behind commonwealth fusion and be able to bringing it actually to market and of course it's you know this facility is a collaboration with scientists from mit and spark will demonstrate the the power of the fusion and the viability of producing more fusion energy than it's used to start to sustain the process and i'm not going to get into all the technical parts but mr engel

[03:19:27] explains that better than i do but it's absolutely amazing technology what they're doing and this is in fact going to be the future of energy generation for the world, for generations to come. And they, I mean, it's just amazing. And I can't wait for it to get here. And I know the other board members are going to go take a tour as well and be equally as impressed with this company.

[03:19:53] But in the background, you'll see, you can't really make it out, but there's the picture on the wall is actually of Spark. And that's, if you look at it inside the room, that's actually the size that the unit will be when it's built and even those orange platforms that you see behind Jim's hand though they had to build all of that just to actually that's where they will actually assemble the the unit and that's just a stand for assembly everything that they're doing here they've had to build from scratch it's just amazing so and thank you Mr. Engel for coming up

[03:20:31] there uh with me you got anything to add to that the picture on the back wall is a actual scale picture of the spark that they're building right now so um it doesn't look as big in the picture and the

room's not as big as it shows it actually seems somewhat small for what they're doing but um it looks that scale does look about right uh from where we're at but it looked the picture looked bigger on the wall from the balcony that we were on. But that is a to scale picture of what

[03:21:06] it'll look like. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And that concludes my report. Dr. Miller. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Before I go through the slides, I just wanted to take a moment and I wanted to thank Pastor Sean Franco and the Congregation Cornerstone Assembly of God for their welcome. They're very, very welcome, warm welcome this past Sunday. It was a powerful time to hang out with the congregation and many of you may know or some of you may know that for years now Cornerstone has attended our organizational board meetings to provide encouragement to county leaders and how

[03:21:41] much that's deeply appreciated. I appreciate their hospitality and continue to support throughout the year. I said to them honestly truly when you all come out in January you really do set the cornerstone for what's going to happen for the rest of the year that foundational piece and so grateful for what they do and for the prayers that they say for all of us in the county, county leadership all the time. So it's really deeply appreciated.

[03:22:09] I had the opportunity last, I guess was last Sunday. I've lost track of my days, but I recently attended the Interfaith annual Ramadan Potluck Iftar. It was held at Bonaire Presbyterian Church and I know now that it was on Saturday evening. It was a chance to support communities across the world. I enjoyed sharing a meal with old and new friends while contributing to the meaningful cause. This event was heartwarming reminder of the importance of giving back.

[03:22:42] Last minute I had to show put in a picture of a little kitten. I went and toured the animal shelter here in Chesterfield, the Chesterfield Animal Shelter, and this little kitten is available for adoption. She is only about a month old she's going to be spayed on this friday and then she's ready to go home so whoever wants to take yes so mark's getting a kitty no i already have two um and uh my wife goes to the

[03:23:20] shelter trouble um but it's not my fault it's her fault look at her um she's like take me home i mean she is definitely working it so um folks if you want a little kitten uh save me from bringing home another fuzzy to my wife, who will kill me. But yeah, of course, if you are going by there, it's appointments only, so make sure it's Monday through Friday, and you can go out and visit the website for more details. And then finally, I had the opportunity to sit down for a podcast discussion

[03:23:57] highlighting economic development, transportation, and schools projects happening in Midlothian. The podcast is available wherever you get your podcasts, so I encourage you all to take a moment and just listen to what's going on in Midlothian District. And that concludes my report.

[03:24:14] Thank you. And last, go ahead, next slide. I had the pleasure of attending the Tech for Troops breakfast last week. The experience was uplifting, and the attendees came together to show their support for our veterans, active duty service members, and their families.

[03:24:33] They highlighted a gentleman that just several years ago was homeless that's now running one of their programs for them. that is a veteran. And the highlight of the event was the keynote speaker, Philip Bershar. He's the son of Carl Bershar. You may know who that is. He's the first African-American U.S.

[03:24:56] Navy master diver. His story was in a movie, you might have seen it, Men of Honor, that was shared by Philip. It was very powerful and moving tribute to the sacrifices made by military families and

especially his family as his father lost his leg and they tried to take him out of the military and he was able to prove that he was still worthy to stay in the military and to continue to serve and that was no small feat to say the least so this is a very moving event

[03:25:31] next slide please and then I also had the privilege of participating in the annual Rule of Law program where high school students from Colonial Heights and Chesterfield County had the opportunity to learn about law and government. The event brought together judges, elected leaders, and law enforcement officials to guide students through an engaging activity and discussion on legal principles and government operations, and it was inspiring to see the enthusiasm that the students had as they participated in a mock trial and had a chance to engage with judges and law enforcement.

[03:26:07] I have to admit, when they first mentioned what the topic was, I was like, wait a minute, that's not right. The state's not doing that. But it was not something the state had proposed, but it was something that wasn't beyond the state proposing, but it was actually setting them up for the mock trial, and I was very relieved that it wasn't actually something the state was working on at the time.

[03:26:32] And that concludes my report, And I think we're back to Dr. Casey. Yes, sir. Thank you. So last but not least, you know, in the audience today, we have representatives of, it's on, I think, isn't it? Of Competitive Racing, Inc., CRI.

[03:26:49] Again, yesterday was a very special day in Chesterfield County as we finalized the 20-year ground lease to purchase agreement for helping bring racing back to Southside Speedway under CRI's leadership. So I'd like to have, I think it's Jeff Oakley and Lynn O'Neill will be representing the group behind me today to come up to the podium, please.

[03:27:08] And again, these discussions are continuing as we speak. And just talk to Mr. Vaughters, who is in the audience as well, about maybe a joint Richmond Times-Dispatch op-ed about public-private partnerships. Mr. Oakley. That's all I'm talking about.

[03:27:29] So we had a wonderful time yesterday, and I don't think I'm as prepared for tonight as I was yesterday. But we met a lot of you guys. The county reached out to us tremendously well.

[03:27:46] We're excited about what we think that we can do for the county. Lynn's worked tirelessly for several years to get us to this point. I've been honored to be brought into the mix. And we feel like we're gonna provide a product that Chesterfield County will be just as proud of as they are the water park or other areas in the county.

[03:28:06] So we're very grateful for you guys allowing us to be here and do what we are very passionate about in your county. And we all know that racing for Chesterfield County is like Friday night football in the state of Texas.

[03:28:22] So we think Friday nights will certainly be back in Chesterfield County. So thank you very much. My voice is about gone from all I was talking the last couple days. I want to thank all y'all.

[03:28:39] I know I've been kind of a bear at times for y'all, and I felt like that's kind of what I had to do to protect the racetrack. And I'm glad that everybody's on the same page and we're all doing good and going forward with it. It's been a big part of this county, and I'm looking forward to keeping it a big part of the county.

[03:29:02] Yeah, I think that area is going to really be a killer area for this county as far as the water park and the soccer park and then the racetrack. I just hope you all are coming out and enjoying the races with us. I think, Mr. O'Neill, you might have a video that we want to unleash tonight.

[03:29:21] Is that correct? Yes. Okay, sounds good. Sorry to get ahead of you there. Mr. Chair, it just shows that this is not scripted. Welcome, everyone, to Southside Speedway.

[03:29:38] We are excited, and we are back. Thank you to the residents of Chesterfield County, the Board of Supervisors, and the Chesterfield County EDA. But most importantly, I want to thank Lynn O'Neill for giving me an opportunity to join in him with his vision to bring stock car racing back to Chesterfield.

[03:29:53] I must say this turnout is quite larger than I expected. Lynn told me to hold on. There was going to be a bunch of people showing up, so he was correct. We're going to develop this entire 47 acres, every single acre. We will develop this property for sports and fun that all of the residents of Chesterfield County will appreciate and love.

[03:30:12] The only thing that will look the same in the future as it is now is this one-third of a mile bullring known as the toughest short track in the South. Lynn and I have one common goal, and that's to reach for the next green flag at Southside Speedway. We all know that Friday night racing in Chesterfield County is like Friday night football in the state of Texas.

[03:30:31] Our plans are exciting, and we cannot wait to see a packed house on opening night. Mr. O'Neill, come on back up. Chairman Engel, I want to thank you for making an old supervisor happy yesterday.

[03:30:56] My dad was so tickled that, you know, when he got home, he called me like four times. You know, he said, they forgot me. I said, cool. So he had a really good time. So thank you. Thank you. Go ahead. He said that you still haven't shown the picture that you took of his name on the wall.

[03:31:14] Yeah, I sent it to him that night, actually. Thank y'all. Thank you. We, again, are very excited to have been able to work through this process to be able to bring a lease to purchase agreement with CRI and we look forward to making sure that all of their documentation is in line but that we don't hold it up in any way so that we can get things back to running out there as soon as possible so we will be as accommodating as we can we just got to make sure everything all the i's are dotted and t's are crossed but we are definitely here

[03:31:52] to work with you and we're extremely happy that we made it through this process and just to be fair i do need to give mr uh carroll the credit because he's the one that reminded me that your father was a previous board member so thank you for reminding me of that yeah sorry lynn i also said something to your dad about the picture last night so i said he ain't showed him to him yet but no we don't forget and that's that's what that wall is all about thank you any any other

[03:32:24] comments item 11 resolutions and special recognitions a resolution recognizing lieutenant landon b harris fire and emergency medical services department upon his retirement will

[03:32:38] lieutenant harris and his guests please join the board on the stage madam clerk can you read the

[03:33:24] resolution yes sir whereas lieutenant landon b harris retired from the fire and emergency medical Services Department on February 1st, 2025, and whereas Lieutenant Harris completed Recruit School No. 20 in 1989 and has faithfully served the residents of Chesterfield County for 35 years in various

assignments as a firefighter and officer at the Manchester, Wagstaff, Dale, Ettrick, Chester, Dutch Gap, and Centralia Fire and EMS stations, and whereas Lieutenant Harris was certified as an emergency medical technician paramedic in 1997 and has served the county as an

[03:34:03] advanced life support provider since that time. And whereas Lieutenant Harris served as a member of the Chesterfield Fire and EMS technical rescue team from 1996 to 2025. And whereas Lieutenant Harris was awarded a Life Save Award for his involvement in the successful outcome of a patient who suffered an obstructed airway on December 8th, 1992.

[03:34:26] And whereas Lieutenant Harris was awarded a unit citation award for his involvement in the successful outcome of residents trapped on a dam in the Appomattox River on March 16th, 2015. And whereas Lieutenant Harris was awarded a unit citation award for his role in the successful extrication of a patient involved in a motor vehicle accident on November 11th, 2018.

[03:34:52] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors, this 12th day of March, 2025, publicly recognizes the contributions of Lieutenant Landon B. Harris, expresses the appreciation of all residents for his service to the county, and extends their appreciation for his dedicated service and their congratulations upon his retirement.

[03:35:13] And be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Lieutenant Harris, and that this resolution be permanently recorded among the papers of this Board of Supervisors of Chesterfield County Virginia. Can I get a motion to approve all in favor? Aye, well if we if we opposed it would you go back to work tomorrow well then we may have to have a revo

[03:35:43] 35 years of service that's amazing thank you and um wow life-saving multiple life saves thank you for all that you've done for the community for our citizens and especially those that you saved. And I want to give everybody an opportunity.

[03:36:02] You want to start, Louis? Thank you, Mr. Engel. Landon, congratulations on your accomplishment in all the years of service to the residents of Chesterfield. And one of the things that I'd like to point out in your resolution, it talked about your involvement in the technical rescue team.

[03:36:19] In fact, you were one of the founding members of the team back in the 1990s. And I think the board's very well aware that the past six months, that team has been very active. It's now known as Task Force 8. It's a deployable asset for the Commonwealth of Virginia. And, you know, your hard work and training, really your legacy will live on as I know that this team will be going out the door many more times in the future.

[03:36:43] Again, thank you for your service and dedication to Chesterfield and the residents that rely on you. You know, people love the fire department. More so than they love the police officers, right?

[03:36:59] But they love our cops too. But they love the fire department. I can tell you, I have a personal love for the fire department because it saved my life, right? And what you did for your whole career is exactly that. You saved people's lives and you kept them safe. And I don't know, I hope that we have a lot more young people that want to come in and work for us and continue to build on the legacy that you helped build here.

[03:37:24] Do you have any plans? Do you want to come back and work part-time or something? All right. All right, he's not done yet. Good. Well, congratulations. God bless you. Thank you for so much. You've

everything done. You were part of a great organization. We've got the best public safety in the world right here in Chesterfield County.

[03:37:41] Mark. Thank you for selfless acts of kindness for 35 years. You were such a coordinator in making sure that we stay safe and we couldn't be more grateful as a community. There are moments when I wonder, there's times I think we take it for granted, that when we dial 911, someone's on the way, and that someone more often or was often you.

[03:38:06] And so grateful for what you've done and shared your life with our community. My husband and I just got back from, we drove down to Florida and we took kind of a scenic route. And we saw some flooding out on a road that was obviously from the last storm that came through that you guys were deployed to down towards the border there.

[03:38:31] And it was up on the road, I mean, the highway. So it was quite, and my husband said, well, that can't be from that. And I said, well, I think you guys said it was up two stories, yes? So he said, oh, well, I guess maybe that could be from that, because you could see that it was all washed out along the highway, and that's amazing that you guys put yourselves in that danger, and I'm so grateful that you guys are able to help out other people that don't have those services and be a helping hand for the rest of the state.

[03:39:02] So thank you so much for that. Thank you, Supervisor. I want to congratulate you and the entire fire department for the excellence you've displayed over the last many years for Chesterfield County residents and citizens. Those who visit as well. You've made a difference. I always say this, we have some of the finest public safety in the country, and you are part of that. Both of you are part of that because you know you support him as well. So thank you both for all you do and the difference you make here in Chesterfield County for all our citizens. Your work seems seamless, smooth, exceptional. Again,

[03:39:38] a model of excellence. Thank you. Well, Lieutenant, you know, in your profession, you could probably write a paragraph every call you get to be added to a resolution so hopefully we picked a few of the memorable ones some of them you may want to forget but all of them were purposeful and all of them you had to do because you were that you were the call that someone needed on on that typical day we all know that the tactical rescue teams that we try and train as best we can and as safe as we do tactical rescue training is probably one of the toughest training assignments to also be in not just the responses but what that makes you and makes your team

[03:40:14] operate as one and be called upon, quite frankly, almost across the entire United States when something is needed, and they call upon the state of Virginia, first call the state makes is to you and your friends. So I appreciate you for being that leader to set the tone for that and recognizing that public safety is for what Chesterfield is, is not just Chesterfield-centric, you have a skill that's deployed elsewhere. So I thank you on behalf of Chesterfield County's employees. I have a brick for you engraved in that is your your name and your tenure with us it will be forever placed in front of the historic courthouse don't look there right now we're moving all the bricks around so we can have people find them a little bit

[03:40:52] easier and actually replacing bricks that have been worn down over the years so that every every name is there and emboldened so your brick will be actually probably one the first of the new bricks to be placed back in there I don't know if that means something but it just sounds good saying it so but having said that, I thank you for your years of service. You're too young to not do anything else, so we're going to be talking about what else you can do. Thank you. So I came here as a scared,

[03:41:26] immature 19-year-old, May of 1989, and over the decades, the things that I've gotten to do, the opportunities this county has given me has just been extraordinary. I never once, you know, had to worry about, you know, my job or the finances of the county. It's all been excellent professional governance, and that's a comfort to the employees to not have to worry about things like that. So congratulations to you guys, too. It's fantastic opportunities over the years, and I'm looking forward to the next phase.

[03:42:05] Well, I've been doing my part-time jobs. You know, every firefighter has what they call side hustle some more than some more than one so so I'm just going to continue doing those things but I can do them at my leisure and my choice which is uh which is a benefit of retirement oh she has she has a she has a long list and I think she would admit I'm working feverishly on that list so maybe we shouldn't give her the microphone I did just want to say that we live

[03:42:44] in Charlottesville and so you know when you are married and have a family and your husband's 24 hour shifts and far away you know there were times that I was like let's revisit this can't you work closer and he always held very firm that he wanted to stay here in Chesterfield it was

[03:42:59] important to him he was very loyal to it because you're very loyal to him thank you item 12 new

[03:44:22] business a appointments mr. chair we have one appointment to the committee on the future can get a motion? I'll move. Second. All in favor? Aye. I think you should give Mr. Holland credit for that approval. He started before me, so he can get the motion to approve, and Dr. Miller can get a second.

[03:44:43] I'll fix that. Mr. Holland. Item B, consent items. Mr. Chair, there have been no requests to remove items from the consent agenda for public comment. Do any board members have any items they wish to remove? I need a motion to approve the consent agenda. So moved. All in favor? Aye. Be five votes.

[03:45:04] Item 13, 15-minute citizen comment period on unscheduled matters. We have no speakers. Item 14, deferred items from previous meetings. We have none. Item 15, public hearings. A, to consider an ordinance to amend county code sections 18-5, defacing or obstructing utility property, and 18-27, utility charges, And to enact new County Code Sections 18-12, maintaining unobstructed access to water meters, and 18-36 meter repair fee.

[03:45:39] Mr. Hayes. Mr. Chairman, members of the board, Dr. Casey, this is a public hearing to consider amendments in addition to Section 18 of the County Code. As this board is aware, the Department of Utilities is in the final stages of completing a project that installs advanced water meters throughout the county, providing our customers near real-time water usage.

[03:45:59] The recommended code amendments and new code section are to address the need for us to have unobstructed access to our water meters and implement a meter repair fee if a customer tampers with and damages our water meters. As we operate as an enterprise fund, we believe that the relatively small number of customers that tamper with these new and more expensive meters should be responsible for the repair cost as opposed to placing that burden on our entire customer base. For code section 18-05, defacing and obstructing utility property, we are proposing amendments to address the bypassing of water meters and impeding access to water meters. We

[03:46:36] are opposing a new code section 18-12 regarding maintaining unobstructed access to water meters, which includes unobstructed access of one foot around the water meter so we can properly maintain and service our water meters. To enhance the protection of our water meters from tampering,

We are opposing a new code section 18-36 that includes a meter repair fee to repair water meters that are damaged and the damage is not associated with normal wear and tear.

[03:47:04] The meter repair fee will be the actual cost to repair the water meter with a minimum charge per occurrence of \$200, but the fee will not exceed the cost to replace the meter. Section 1827 of utility charges will be amended to find these fees.

[03:47:19] These fees will be placed on the customer's utility bill. Mr. Chairman, this is a public hearing. Board members, are there any questions for staff? All right, ladies and gentlemen, this is a public hearing to consider the ordinance to amend County Code Section 18-5, defacing or obstructing utility property, and 18-27 utility charges, and to enact new County Code Sections 18-12, maintaining unobstructed access to water meters, and 18-36 meter repair fees.

[03:47:57] Is there anyone who would like to speak to this issue? If so, come forward and state your name. Seeing no one, I'll close this public hearing. It's back before the board. Is there any discussion? Mr. Chair, you know, growing up in the fire department and in the police department, when something like this has to come out, you always say it's got somebody's name on it, which means somebody did it, which is why it requires us to do something like this.

[03:48:25] And it's unfortunate, but we need to protect our infrastructure, And there has to be consequences when you either obstruct our employees' ability to do their job or destroy equipment. So, Mr. Chair, I make a motion to approve the ordinance.

[03:48:48] Second. All in favor? Aye. And, Mr. Chair, there definitely was a reason. I mean, I think that was the person that parked their car over the top of it and then pulled a gun on a... There was definitely some bad situations, and a machete was involved in another one.

[03:49:09] Mr. Schneier, you're correct. There was multiple reasons that customers can tamper with the meters, and these will address all of those. Thank you. Mr. Chair, I do have a question for legal counsel. So, under the ordinance, is this classified as a Class 1 misdemeanor?

[03:49:32] Some of the penalties are particular to certain things like the damage, But for the other offenses, it is classified as a violation of the county code, which is the same as a Class 1 misdemeanor, which would be a year in jail or \$1,000 maximum.

[03:49:48] \$2,500. Ours says \$1,000. So it's only \$1,000? We need to fix that, too. We can do that. I think it's important to understand that if our officers go there and they witness this in person, it's a Class 1 misdemeanor committing their offense. they can issue a summons on site and release on a summons for this.

[03:50:09] And if the person ceases to discontinue the act, they can take them into custody. Right. And as Ms. Schneider mentioned, that actually we had incidents where there were other offenses that were committed on the scene. And there are other criminal penalties that deal with those. I brought that up to make sure that anybody who's watching or later on watches understand that it's not just a paper ordinance.

[03:50:29] You can get arrested for this. Right. You can. B, to consider an ordinance to amend County Code Section 7-3, Precinct Boundaries and Polling Places, to relocate polling places for Falling Creek, Voting Precinct 205, Falling Creek East, Voting Precinct 220, LaPrade, Voting Precinct 405, Reams, Voting Precinct 408, Beaufort, Voting Precinct 513, and Davis, Voting Precinct 515.

[03:51:00] Mr. Minks. Mr. Chair, members of the board, this is an ordinance that we're holding a public hearing on tonight to change these polling places. There actually are six polling places, total two in Dale, two in Clover Hill, and two in Midlothian.

[03:51:19] The Dale precincts are the Falling Creek Voting Precinct and the Falling Creek East Voting Precinct. This would change the polling place from the old Falling Creek Middle to the new Falling Creek Middle down the road. The changes in Clover Hill, the first one is the La Prade voting precinct, and that is to change from La Prade Library, which is going to be under renovation, and moving it to the Lutheran Church of Our Savior down the street on Hall Street Road.

[03:51:50] This is a temporary move, and it is anticipated that the library will be done, but this is to deal with the primaries, and hopefully we'll be able to move back, and there'll be another action the board would have to take to do that. The other Clover Hill one is the Reams voting precinct, and that is to move from North Courthouse Library to St. David's Episcopal, which will just be, I think, an easier, more accessible voting place.

[03:52:20] The two in Midlothian, the one is a Beaufort voting precinct, moving from the Forest View Rescue Squad to Stonebridge Recreation Center. And that's because the current polling place no longer wants to serve as the polling place.

[03:52:35] And then the Davis Voting Precinct, which is to move from Davis Elementary School to Stonebridge Recreation Center. And that is also because Davis Elementary School will be undergoing some construction. So I don't know whether that'll move back, but it may very well move back at some later time.

[03:52:55] But those are the six. It is an ordinance, and this is a public hearing. Do any board members have any questions for staff? Ladies and gentlemen, this is a public hearing to consider an ordinance to amend County Code Section 7-3, Precinct Boundaries and Pulling Places.

[03:53:13] To relocate pulling places for Fallen Creek Voting Precinct 205, Fallen Creek East Voting Precinct 220, LaPrade, Voting Precinct 405, Reams, Voting Precinct 408, Buffon, Voting Precinct 513, and Davis, Voting Precinct 515.

[03:53:36] Is there anyone that would like to speak to this issue? If so, please come forward and state your name. Mr. Chairman, I should also tell you that the registrar is here as well, in case the board has any questions for the registrar. Good evening. My name is Renee Eldred.

[03:53:55] I've read the information on this, and quite frankly, when I was reading Fallen Creeks, it was really confusing, but that just might be me. But I just want to remind everybody that when we changed polling places last election, we did have some hiccups.

[03:54:16] And I want everybody to remember what they were so they can maybe think out of the box this time to get people to go to where they're supposed to be going. granted most of them that was probably their own fault for not getting to where they were going but even still if you've got one person that doesn't get to the polling place on time to vote that's one too many so just when it gets election time just kind of get the reminders out that you know we had a few hiccups so let's try not to do it again thank you thank you renee any other

[03:54:55] speakers seeing none this public hearing is closed and it's back before the board are there any questions any discussion mr. chair Renee I completely agree with you I used to be an officer of election and I know when we did the last read the last redistricting that caused a lot of issues and again anytime you make those changes it's going to cause problems it's so important that people actually look at their information that they get in the mail and sometimes I think if they just look at it as junk mail but if they do send out notifications to

[03:55:34] everyone um and i don't know if there's a possibility of putting us are we going to have like a sign at la prod saying that it's been moved yeah i think there will be okay thank you all right but i do agree so thanks we'll have to everybody talk to your neighbors and let them know if they've got it moved one comment mr chairman i make is that one concern i always have is timely communications and informing because that may eradicate some of the confusion or lack of information so i think this is so important that we time this information for the citizens and of

[03:56:12] course uh madam registrar we appreciate that and making sure that we're aware and you're working with the attorney to make sure that's communicated uh appropriately for all the precincts throughout the county thank you and with that is the with that i move that we approve the ordinance amendment as requested um accordingly i'll second mr chair with a comment all right missy do we know when those notifications will be sent out how quickly after we do this will your office be ready to

[03:56:51] send them out whoever sends them out notification wise so we can maybe do some um i don't know maybe you can do a little public information video for us and we can push that out on social media Yes, absolutely. I would love to do that. David? Once you all vote on it, it will go to the Attorney General's office.

[03:57:09] They do have 60 days to review it. We do try to stay on the Attorney General to be like, can you review this? That way we can get out the notices quickly. But until we receive that certificate of no objection from the Attorney General, we cannot send notification out.

[03:57:25] So once we get that, we will send notification. And I think that's a great idea to do a public announcement. But voter cards will go out. We'll have signage at all the old polling places and the new, you know, with directions, QR codes that will help people.

[03:57:41] But anything that we can do, and Renee mentioned some hiccups, and with that comes notifying the public. So if you all have, if anybody has any suggestions, we are open to suggestions because it's hard to reach everybody.

[03:57:58] Well, we have great social media people. It would be great to let you do a PSA on that, and we can push it out. And if for some reason you don't hear back in a timely manner from the Attorney General's office, please reach out and let us know, and we can reach out as well on your behalf and see if we can expedite it.

[03:58:15] Great. Thank you so much. Just, Mr. Chairman, actually, the Attorney General has been very, very good to work with on that and has been able to accommodate any expedited requests that we make. So we look forward to working with them again.

[03:58:31] I figured as much, but, you know, let's make sure we can help. All right, thank you. Thank you. All in favor? Aye. C, to consider the quit claim of a portion of Simon's Bath Drive right-of-way across the property owned by Daniel L. and Aspen S. Sowers.

[03:58:49] Ms. Snow. Good evening, Mr. Chairman, members of the board, Dr. Casey. This is a public hearing to consider the quit claim of a portion of Simon's Bath Drive. This portion of Simon's Bath will be relocated to facilitate the future development of Roundtree Sections 5 and 10.

[03:59:06] A public hearing is required to quit claim right-of-way. The request has been approved by staff and approval is recommended after the public hearing. Do any board members have any questions for staff? Are they objecting to this, the people who own the property?

[03:59:22] No, sir. That was the easy question. All right. Ladies and gentlemen, this is a public hearing to consider a quit claim of a portion of Simon's Bath Drive. right away across the property of Donald L. and Aspen, I'm sorry, Daniel L. and Aspen S. Sowers.

[03:59:45] Is there anyone who would like to speak to this issue? If so, please come forward and state your name. Seeing no one, this public hearing is closed. It's back before the board. Do any board members have any discussion? I move to approve this motion. All in favor? Aye. D. To consider the conveyance of underground easements to Virginia Electric and Power Company at Huguenot Park. Ms. Snow. Mr. Chairman, members of the board, Dr. Casey, this is a public hearing to consider the conveyance of 15-foot underground easements to

[04:00:23] Virginia Electric and Power Company at Huguenot Park. The easements are needed to power AED defibrillators at the park. The request has been approved by staff and approval is recommended after the public hearing. Any board members have any questions for staff? All right, ladies and gentlemen, this is a public hearing to consider the conveyance of underground easements to Virginia Electric and Power Company at Huguenot Park.

[04:00:48] Is there anyone who'd like to speak to this issue? If so, please come forward and state your name. Seeing no one, I'll close this public hearing. It's back before the board. Any discussion? If not, can I get a motion? I will. So moved. You're going to make a motion?

[04:01:04] Yeah, so moved. Do you have a question? Someone else want to second it? Oh, I'll second it, but I had something to say. Okay, go ahead. You can go first. We'll reopen for discussion. I just think it's so important to have these devices in our parks. We have found, you know, we had a presentation last year of one of the pickleball gentlemen that was saved by a device that was recently installed at CTC at Hull.

[04:01:29] So that's an awesome addition to the park. So I just want the community to know that, you know, us making this a priority to have these AEDs put in our parks came from not just from that incident, but people from the community. really who utilize our parks every weekend with the youth athletics and we have a lot of older people that come to watch their grandchildren play sports and medical emergencies that could occur and this is something that we started in our last term and I'm very happy that we're doing

[04:02:04] this because like Jessica said this is critically important for us to have these in parks because every second counts so all in favor all right 16 15 minutes citizen comment period on unscheduled matters we have no speakers mr. chair we need a motion to adjourn to the regularly scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting on March 26 20 25 at 6:00 p.m. in the public meeting room mr. chair I don't know I think we should wait to 7:30 I was hoping we could go a couple seconds earlier so we

[04:02:39] could do at seven. That's why I thought he was wasting time before with that question. Motion to adjourn. Second. All in favor. Aye. 7-0-1.



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