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City of Fairfax City Council Work Session, Tuesday, April 7, 2026

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[00:00:06] Good evening. I would like to call the work session of April 7th, 2026 to order. I will now recognize Ms. Shinneberry for the first work session item for discussion. Our first item is the discussion on third-party event sponsorships. I'm going to recognize Stacey Summerfield, our Parks and Recreation Director, for the presentation. Good evening, Mayor and Council. I'm joined up here tonight by our Special Events and Athletics Manager, Mitzi Taylor, and our assistant special events manager Deanna Payne and we are going to invite police up here to join us

[00:00:43] too. I apologize Natalie just to answer any additional questions. She doesn't have to answer anything right away so that's good news. So we're here tonight to talk about the third party event policy and so these are events that take place within the city and many of which are supported by the city but are not organized by the special events crew within the Department of Parks and recreation so to start we're going to go back actually a little bit to our back to 2011 there were a number of resident complaints about the quantity of road closures at the time this was a

[00:01:18] time when road races were very popular they have declined in popularity since then but the city was a very population popular destination to have road races because it was very easy to work with us to close roads and for that reason there were a lot of road closures and so at that point council took an

action which was to reduce the number of road closure events to limiting to six each year so in 2011 this action was taken and so since that time we have limited to six each year of those six spaces five are currently filled so you'll see them at the bottom here we have the turkey trot the ride of the patriots the sweet mile which is new it's the one mile race that takes place along

[00:01:57] with Chocolate Lovers, the Asian Festival on Main, and Labor Day Car Show. So at this time when we began limiting the number of road closure events, we also put into place a framework to manage third-party events within the city.

[00:02:15] And this has grown a little bit over time, but it's stayed largely the same. So we ask that groups submit an application 90 days in advance. There is an application fee that is reduced for nonprofit groups. We do ask each group to carry \$2 million in coverage.

[00:02:31] Our risk management office here in the city can help groups find a way to get that coverage. We ask that the city of Fairfax is listed as additionally insured. For these groups, we do have venue rental fees, which are very reasonable. I mean, they're much reduced from our private rental fees.

[00:02:48] We ask them to develop an action plan and an overall plan for the event. Once MITSU has all of those things from an organization, that information goes out to the events management group, which is represented by police, fire, Office of Emergency Management, Public Works, and the fire marshal's office, and Parks and Recreation.

[00:03:08] So everyone is able to review the event application and weigh in as to whether or not they are willing to see the event go forward. So once the events team has agreed and approved, then event fees are processed and we move forward. currently within the city there are some established annual third-party events and so these are third-party events that over time have become annual there are eight of them five of them include road closures so there are eight events but only five fill those six slots for road

[00:03:42] closures so we are looking at the sweet mile which is there are two road races on this list the sweet mile and then further down you'll see the turkey trot those are both events where the supporting agency covers all the costs so you'll see a zero dollar city expense there and that does not mean that the city does not support them with labor but those costs are reimbursed by the organization and then of the remaining eight we have the asian festival the ride of the patriots fairfax pride juneteenth celebration the labor day car show fiesta fairfax fairfax and the turkey

[00:04:19] trot and so the total expenses over time we've kind of come to these agreements where the city is supporting these through direct overtime hours, the total cost of those events is just over \$88,000. So the costs that you see listed there are direct costs, so that means those are the costs of the overtime hours. It does not include indirect costs such as wear and tear to equipment for the city.

[00:04:46] We don't include any sort of rental rate that we would normally charge for the use of equipment such as barricades, and we don't include offsets for rental revenue loss. So when a group is using Old Town Hall, that number does not include the rental revenue that could have been recouped through a private event. So you'll see the list of direct costs that you see there, you know, sanitation services, public work support, all those overtime hours. And because these events take place on weekends and are addition to people's staff duties, they are all at an overtime rate. Then there's the indirect costs listed there as well, which we do not include

[00:05:19] in the cost estimate. So there is the wear and tear on infrastructure, equipment use. There's also, I think important to note here under indirect costs, there is a cap to the actual staff capacity to support these events. We only have so many staff hours of overtime, and for example, the right-of-way crew, which is Lucian and his team, who do a lot of the road closures, they work every single weekend of the year. They do not, between a number of events and different things that are occurring as far as road work in the city, there is just a capacity on the amount of these events that we can support in actual hours.

[00:05:55] So for this reason, we're coming to you tonight as a group to ask to kind of restructure the city's third-party city-supported events. So there are a number of events that take place within the city that are one-offs, that are individual events supporting them.

[00:06:12] I will say within the time that I've been here, the Virginia Spirits group came in and did a festival at Old Town Square. There is an upcoming performing arts festival that will take place in Veterans. Those groups are covering all of their costs. These are the city-supported events that we're asking for a restructure of how we kind of build a framework around those because they have just slowly accumulated over time through agreements for supporting different things, and there's never been any real framework around them.

[00:06:41] And so we'd like to put that framework into place. It will help us establish a better budget management process. One of the challenges for us as a department is that none of these expenses are budgeted into our annual budget. And so each year we tend to overrun on overtime, but we're able to make that up because our staff diligently works to get sponsorships for city-supported events, so we can offset those costs through sponsorship dollars, and we also tend to exceed our revenue projections.

[00:07:11] So that helps us in that way as well. But these are not budgeted. And the other challenge is balance and equity. I think it's very public to other groups within the city what different groups receive in third-party event support. And there's a lot of interest from other groups in getting the same support for road closures, different ways that we can support them.

[00:07:33] One of the things we went backwards a little bit when we did was to kind of break down, you know, our events and programs. So looking at how do we define our events first, how do we figure out the levels of the events, and then how do we build a framework around this? So to rewind back a little bit, we have a lot of events and programming with the city.

[00:07:53] We have a very robust schedule within the Department of Parks and Rec between special events and our cultural arts programming and everything else that we're doing. So we look at programming as something that's occurring regularly. These are small items, usually things like the community cleanups, the old town hall community performance series.

[00:08:12] These do not require a ton of outside of our department support. But then there are events, and these are higher-intensity events. They occur at a designated time in the calendar year, and they require more support. And within the events, we've developed kind of three different levels to look at them.

[00:08:30] We've got the level one events. Those are 500 and below. This is something that's easily manageable within our department. It's not a huge lift for staff. It doesn't require any outside services. Once we reach level two, which is the 500 to 2,500, then we're starting to coordinate with other departments.

[00:08:48] We're seeking other city services. Whether or not we need police or EMS is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. And then at level three, where we're getting an attendance of over 2,500 people, which is a lot of our events within the city, this is requiring, you know, the city events team.

[00:09:06] It's requiring police and EMS support. For these larger events, we're developing an incident action plan where we have to have three meetings in advance to develop that plan and then one post-event. And that's the minimum of what we're asking for. And a lot of times we're exceeding that because safety is a real priority for the city.

[00:09:23] And a lot of things have happened nationally that have made us, you know, have to reevaluate our events. So how do we move forward? We, as the staff, we've come up with three potential pathways forward. But as a council, you have the option to adopt one of these, to adopt a hybrid of these, or to choose something totally different.

[00:09:45] So the first one is that we just continue operations. We continue supporting these special events. There's no cap on the budget. We just continue to support the needs as they come along. The challenge here, I mean, the pro is that we continue to support these events because they are great for the city.

[00:10:01] The challenge is that there's just no way for us to budget what the expenses are going to be. New events are coming to the city all the time, and it's very hard for us to say no when we're supporting another event. There's no framework for us to decide which groups we're going to support. So that moves us on to option two, which is possibly a formalized, we call it a grant program, but some sort of supportive framework by which we support different organizations in getting these events off the ground.

[00:10:30] The goal would be to perhaps not have to long-term and forever support these events, but to give them a launching pad to, you know, get their feet under them, get a really cool event off the ground, figure out a way to become budget and economically sustainable through event fees or things like that.

[00:10:49] and then to get sunsetted out of the program. There are challenges with this program, which is that it's a big staff lift for staff to take in all these applications, review them. How do we determine afterwards if the event was a well-run event or not? Do we give people a couple of years to try to build an audience?

[00:11:07] There are a number of pieces of really developing the framework around it that is the challenge. The pro is that it really gives us a way to be more transparent in the equity of who is getting sponsorship, who is getting support from the city, and how we are budgeting for this.

[00:11:22] So we have a set pot of money. We're able to move forward and have that there. And then our option three, we move to a system by which third-party events are self-funded. So over a set number of years, whether that's one to three, we work with these groups to create a way for them to self-finance their expenses.

[00:11:48] And then, you know, we would continue to operate under the guidance of no more than six road closures a year. We would probably still need to set a cap on the number because no matter what, even if every group were to come to us and say we can pay for everything that we need from the city, there's still a cap on what city services we can provide.

[00:12:06] So we would still have to create a cap, but we would be able to limit the financial burden on the city, reduce that budget line as the pro, definitely. It does reduce our administrative workload. The cons is, of course, these third-party events are something that the city is known for, and so it might reduce the number of third-party events that we're able to have in the city.

[00:12:32] It definitely also doesn't allow for that startup money for those new events. And so those are kind of the three options forward. There's, of course, potentially a hybrid in there. It's not just one of these three, but these are three potential avenues forward for the city.

[00:12:52] You know, I think we've, I've hopefully done a good job of explaining this, but why this matters to us is really we have to consider, you know, our budget. These things have been added in gradually over time, but they've started to stack up to a really high number. We want to continue to be able to maintain city service levels.

[00:13:11] And while we're doing these special events and they're great, Everyone who's there on the weekend has a job that they're doing during the week for the city. And it's typically not, you know, to be at a special event. It's to, you know, maybe be building roads or setting up light signals or doing any number of things.

[00:13:28] We want to promote equity and transparency, too. One of our biggest challenges right now is that we continue to be approached by people who would like to host events within the city because they've heard about this great deal that a number of people are getting, and they would like to know how to get this deal as well. And so one of our challenges is really how we say yes or no to that and be equitable in that.

[00:13:50] You know, we want to offset the long-term impact on city resources and support sustainable event management because along with these third-party events, we have a lot of events within the city that we're already doing. We did, as part of this process, look at all of our neighbors regionally and locally.

[00:14:07] There are no, you know, there are no formalized agreements to support third-party events with any of our neighbors. We have heard that there might be some handshake deals here and there where the city is picking up some of the expenses as part of an old deal. But there is no formalized event.

[00:14:24] We are the only city that has this process where we're just, you know, providing all these city services. Included, we did put some links to just all of these groups that we looked at, all of these comparison jurisdictions. So from here, what we're asking for is council feedback, you know, based on staff's information.

[00:14:47] We're happy to answer any questions. We've included police here tonight because they are deeply impacted by the staffing for these third-party events. So we very much appreciate the chief and deputy being here tonight. And so we are looking for a way to move forward, create a framework that helps us determine how to allocate funds to this and sets either a number of funds that we're going to use or perhaps gets rid of those funds entirely.

[00:15:16] And also, you know, just create a system that's very transparent for groups that are coming in and wanting to participate in these third-party events in the city. So our goal was to kind of zip through the presentation. I apologize if I went too fast, but we are happy to answer questions.

[00:15:33] Well, thank you for the presentation. Questions from the dais. Council Member Peterson? I'm sure there will be a lot of questions, but to zoom in to the end, just to help with the slide that is comparing some of the jurisdictions around us, If you could just kind of characterize where they are in terms of option one, two, and three.

[00:15:55] And if I understand correctly, you said we're unique because we're the only one that's not requiring some payment for services. But I may have misunderstood that. Can you clear all that up? We are. I apologize if I zip through that. Not at all. So we are supporting these.

[00:16:13] A lot of our neighboring, all of our neighboring jurisdictions, their official policy is that if you are a third-party event coming into the city, you have to pay for your services. So there's different, you know, deposits, ways that that is done, but everyone is paying the city for those services.

[00:16:31] And we are paying for the services and not requiring any repayment from the group. So does that, just to follow up, does that mean functionally they are option three? Yeah, they do have a, I cannot speak to whether or not they have a cap on the number of events they allow, but they are the option three.

[00:16:52] So people can come into the city, do a third-party event, but they do have to pay for the services they receive from the city. Goodness. Good to know. Council Member Hardy-Chandler? So I just want to make sure it's fair to say this statement that this became a question because of the quantity of closures.

[00:17:13] That was kind of remedied with the six cap, and now you're coming to kind of tackle some of the administrative transparency equity factors that affect maybe the quality of what we can offer or the impact, right?

[00:17:33] If that's the case, option one is not what you would prefer, correct? Because that's maintaining the status quo. It is challenging for us administratively to say yes or no to groups as they come forward because there isn't any framework for us to have any basis to say yes or no.

[00:17:50] And then it's also very difficult for us to budget. So you wouldn't prefer if we decided on option one, correct? I would not. I guess I'm going to have to answer that. Can we just like eliminate that? I mean, because it sounds like there's some challenges and I appreciate offering choices, but it doesn't it's continuing with option one is the reason why you're coming before us so yes it's i mean it's not an enormous amount of money in the in the scheme of things but it is a big challenge administratively and it's something that continues to grow and so we'd like to build

[00:18:28] a framework around it before it gets larger and to that end i want to thank you for not only addressing the direct costs but the indirect costs and i think that's something that can be kind of invisible in some of these circumstances. For option two, it sounds like there could be some variations on that. I didn't see, and maybe you included this, that option two would also have a limit, and would it help in terms of thinking of a hybrid, maybe a lower limit? And I asked

[00:18:59] this question about option two because I really like the sort of partnership spirit that's involved in that that it it can be seen as a a collaboration between an entity and the city um so just maybe speak to that a little bit more yeah and i think this if you know i called it a grant program loosely because people be coming to apply to for money from the city i don't know if really that's what it is but um the goal would be to i think you know different festivals within the city have really

[00:19:34] blossomed because of the city support and so to be able to give groups that opportunity while also helping them work towards financial independence as a group would be a great way for the grant program to operate or if council chose it could be there could be no end to the cutoff for funding support it's certainly i think there's a lot of ways to structure that as a staff when we sat down And our thought was to kind of develop a pot of money and then, you know, support these events and let them let them, you know, really grow within the city.

[00:20:11] But then also work towards not being so reliant on city resources long term, which would still put us as an outlier amongst our neighbors because we're still supporting these city third party events. And just a quick follow-up, I think the concern is the support reducing over several years while expenses are likely to increase over those periods of time, making it even harder maybe to hold those events.

[00:20:49] So if two makes us an outlier, we know the policy on our neighbors and what they're doing regionally in terms of option three, do we know the success of the, and the key phrase that stands out, should provide full recovery? Right? That's the key phrase. That's the main takeaway. Do we know if there are, if there's any information about maybe the diversity of events that they host or anything about sort of the quality? Is it sort of just big organizations that can do that

[00:21:27] and we're attracting maybe smaller, do we have any of that sort of qualitative information? We can get that data. I cannot speak to it right now. I will say I think a lot of them are longer-running events, you know, that maybe have a deeper well to draw from and have longer-term sponsorships and more developed community ties to get that support.

[00:21:51] And so I do think there are a lot of challenges to starting a third-party event without really like a private business behind you or just as a group of people who want to bring, per se, a cultural festival to the community. Yeah, I'm very concerned about smaller groups and maybe providing them an opportunity as an outlier that they might not have access to with our neighbors.

[00:22:16] I guess my final comment would be to think about a model where we can pilot it and get data and that it would be agile enough to make adjustments if the data supports it later on rather than locking in one, you know, per se, but just saying let's, you know, pilot this model, collect data on the kinds, and not just, you know, standard measures of success, but also are we reaching maybe groups that, to your point, can't draw from a deeper well, so to speak.

[00:22:52] Yeah. Thank you. Mr. Alexander, and then Council Member McQuillan. Thank you, Mayor. Council, I think, you know, one of the things to keep in mind is that we want to create some framework. So, you know, we struggle with saying that we prefer an option, but, you know, I've heard the analogy used before, you know, playing without any boundaries or guardrails or without a tennis net, so to speak, right?

[00:23:16] That's what we're doing right now. So fundamentally, we need to get to a point where we have an approach and a program that Council is aware of, understands and signed off on, it could align very well to a budget year. We could decide that we have different tiers or a hybrid approach where we say we have strategic partnerships, both in the short term and long term. We've agreed that we're going to embrace these partnerships and continue them forward as part of the budget process with an application and some accountability built into that in terms of what we're funding. We certainly could run a competitive process too, which would then allow us to maybe experiment with some of those other options in community

[00:23:55] to say, okay, let's try this for a little bit and go from there. What is also unique about this, and we really haven't had time to think it out, but I think it's worthy of discussion, is all of this is centered in primarily one place in terms of a third party, right?

[00:24:12] And so even from a funding perspective, we have the option of a special district down here that might be an option for us to consider as we look at where we draw some of the resources. Part of the concern about this, too, is that we're kind of the victims of our own success in a lot of ways, and we've expanded footprints.

[00:24:33] So it's not just the incremental increases that we've seen. In a positive way, we've tried to expand the footprint to make it easier for us to manage and to make the events better. So I think largely in framing, we just want to make sure we have an agreed-upon, established process.

[00:24:49] we certainly could establish strategic partnerships through the budget process and competitive partnerships through that process. We just really want to make sure that we're being clear, transparent, and consistent in the way that we approach these. So thank you for your indulgence. Council Member McQuillan.

[00:25:07] Has economic development had a chance to weigh in on this at all, by chance? It is only Colleen's second week. So we did meet with her and talk about this presentation, and I know that she's evaluating and looking at the special events within the city. But she didn't, of course, have time to kind of formulate an opinion given the shortness of the time.

[00:25:27] Excellent. I just think that that's really important, obviously, in this discussion is to ensure we understand exactly how either the options would affect consumer behavior and attendance. Because I want to ensure that if we're doing this, that we're continuing.

[00:25:43] Our community really is used to these certain – they look forward to these events. And it's part of our culture. It's part of who we are. So I just want to make sure that we fully understand exactly how that's going to affect things if we pick one of these options. So I think that would be really helpful to have that information.

[00:26:01] Council Member Hull. Thank you. Thank you for the information. I know this was put together in a rather quick timeline for a variety of reasons, but I think it's really helpful to have an actual conversation about it. I have some questions and then some comments.

[00:26:19] So looking at these options up here, are staff required to attend these or do they choose to participate? Like for the police, is it we need you to work this weekend because we have this event or is it there's an opportunity for overtime who would like to work?

[00:26:37] And if not, we can fill in with Herndon people or county people. Right now, because these are considered, we have the group, like Stacey was saying, of city-sponsored events and then these are city-supported events. These are items that are mandated for our officers to work.

[00:26:55] So if they move to a self-funded option to where they're not city-funded per se, most of those currently for us are voluntary assignments that they can sign up for. If they don't fill them, then it's just not filled. The scale of some of these, if the staffing is not filled, the event can't take place.

[00:27:15] So right now we mandate that officers work these larger-scale events. We go through a process where they can sign up. We do a voluntary window where, you know, we open the sign-ups. But then as it

gets closer, we have to mandate that these are duty assignments.

[00:27:32] Okay. I think the reality from a de facto standpoint is that when events get large, they become city events. So any outsourcing or, you know, third-party special detail race that you try to apply really don't because you're still having to manage the event from that perspective.

[00:27:49] and oftentimes spots go unfilled they've got to be filled from a public safety perspective so yeah i think it's really important it's a great question because i think it's really important to understand that when events get to a certain size they become frankly de facto city events okay and then the same thing would apply to lucian who i had no idea that his staff works every single weekend again is that optional or is that optional over time i think it's a sign up first for you know who wants the overtime and then it's an assignment past that point it's the same um for us with parks crew for overtime for most of the city departments where we're running overtime we do try to give people who want the overtime the opportunity to sign up first and

[00:28:29] then the end of the day we we do assign some people we have to assign some people in fill spaces okay um and when it comes to our administrative staff um is that my understanding is that if someone works the saturday of fall festival that they then have comp time to be used at another time? Does that apply to, which of our employees does that apply to with regard to the employees that are typically at events such as these? It depends based on people's, you know, exemption, whether or not they have, they are overtime eligible or not. And so most, um, we're asking people to come in on a weekend and fill these spaces. So most of those hours are overtime

[00:29:08] hours that people are, um, eligible for and using. Okay. Do they have the option to take comp time instead of overtime or yes okay yes so then you have the option and sometimes newer employees will do it so they can build up some time off but most the time people do want the overtime and I think it's important to say here that we have to follow our FLSA standards totally understand and I know I just make clear from that perspective that exempt employees can work as many hours as we like yeah we're hourly you know we certainly have to count for overtime and

[00:29:38] Yes. Okay. And this is a fairly specific question, but the information that had been sent regarding the most recent conversation about the third-party event had some hourly rates over three-year span that looked to be a little outdated.

[00:29:54] I don't know how old the hourly rates were, so I know that we've kind of talked about what is a traditional hourly rate and those kind of things. But are those when you're coming up with these numbers here for the eighty eight thousand four hundred and ten? Is this assume X rate for every and I understand we have a timekeeping system that is getting a little more updated these days.

[00:30:16] But is this just an expectation of X rate for every police officer that's there or Y rate for every EMS or paramedic that's there? It is a best estimate because people's rates do vary based on how long you've been here, your seniority, and so it depends on if you pull perhaps for an event like a senior fire marshal or a newer fire marshal.

[00:30:37] I know that Mitzi and Deanna used an average of those rates to determine the hourly rate for each, like public works, fire, police, and so we did use an average, so there is a range in there. okay but those averages is that the same average you've been using for six years now or is that because the three years that I saw in that it was just for those three years just for those three years okay and was that

recreating it from three years ago or was that using the rates from that initial first year okay thank you for clarifying that and then when it talks about not exactly here

[00:31:15] but like an example for Vienna staff overtime beyond regular hours does that mean with how we're doing it, does that mean that if our employees have already worked 40 hours and now they're working 10 hours on this Saturday, is the expectation or the current method that we cover those 10 hours at their base rate and then the third party would pay the overtime or the expectation that they would be expected to pay the full 10 hours at that hourly rate, that is overtime rate? My understanding is that it is the pay the full overtime rate for those 10 hours. I think outside of regular staff hours is more so like handing in your application during the week,

[00:31:53] doing different things you might be doing with staff to plan the event while they're on regular hours during the week was my understanding. And I honestly, I think that's reasonable. We only have so many staff and they can only work so many hours in a day, week, month, et cetera. I do want to point out, I guess, some of the other perks.

[00:32:15] Not, you know, I was kind of hitting on some of the questions and concerns, but what I think we don't have numbers for, and I would love to see if we can get them either through the revenue office or somewhere else. But what is the, what are we bringing in, right? When people are getting tired of the lines of the food trucks and they decide to go into a local business instead, what additional revenue did they receive that day versus an average Saturday where there's nothing going on?

[00:32:42] You know, how much did we generate meals tax on that day? I think what is very, I'll call it frustrating, is a lot of the food trucks that come in for this, for Rock the Block, for all the other events, they're not registered here in the city. They're registered in the county or West Virginia or some other places. So the meals tax that's generated on that day in the city does not go to the city. The only time they pay the city meals tax is if they eat at a city business. And I don't know if there's a way that Richmond could help us work on that to do something because the event is being held here within our jurisdiction. But it would seem to me that maybe there's another way

[00:33:18] to work with these food truck companies or these other vendors that are coming in that are generating sales that we could somehow benefit. I feel like that would help to offset some of these other operational costs, whether they're hard or soft costs that we're not currently calculating.

[00:33:33] But I do, again, want to really point out that there is a benefit to holding things here. We just don't know what that number is. And, you know, Council Member McQuillan and I talked about this before, too. You know, does it make sense sometimes to do these over two days, to encourage people to stay in a hotel overnight, to eat at our restaurants, you know, to go out to breakfast before they show up at the next event, you know, to end it a little bit earlier or, you know, kind of flex the time so that we're encouraging people to stay and move around our city.

[00:34:01] I do also know from rock the block conversations that many of our local businesses, they don't make any money other than a couple of the key restaurants that are right along the main strip because people are not interested in shopping for clothing or shoes or anything else during that time.

[00:34:17] Like they're there for music. They're there for fun and entertainment. And so as much as I would think they would stop by or sidewalk sales would be great. it's not a huge revenue generator other than what's happening in that confined area and again it's not city meals tax that's being generated so

those are things that I would like to see if we could try to estimate ask you know and I'm also curious you know are the businesses that are being impacted are they happy with this is this something that they look forward to every year or they're like oh man this thing's happening again what you know I got to close my shop early because nobody

[00:34:52] comes here, or is it, wow, this is the time that this person or this group always comes in here and shops. You know, they know they're going to be here every year for this. So again, I know some of these are not really quantitative numbers that we can get, but just trying to maybe talk to the shopkeepers, shopkeepers, that was a really old school term, and just, you know, kind of understand maybe what they do. Capacity, I think, is always going to be an issue. I think we are just not big enough to have this huge excess of staff that just sits on demand to be able to help out so i think while i understand that we want required city officers at these events and i'm not telling the

[00:35:30] police you've had to do his job by any means let me be extremely clear on that i do wonder if maybe there are other avenues or departments or people that we can reach out to just so we're not completely burdening our officers or our staff at all times you know that's something that we've discussed particularly in preparation for this meeting and and with respect to other partnerships that we have, which is being able to partner with other police departments, starting with GMU, which we already work with on a regular basis, but there's other neighboring jurisdictions obviously that we could do that, and that's establishing some type of memorandum of understanding, an agreement where we would lay all that out and there'd be an understanding, and we would

[00:36:07] have a requirement in those situations where we would have a certain, we wouldn't just want other officers working in the event, right? There'd be a certain number or ratio. Criteria. But those are things that are obviously open for discussion, and we would look to do, depending on the direction that we take.

[00:36:23] And I just want to bring emphasis to one point, which is the transparency piece, because I don't want it to get lost in the conversation, which is when we talk about some events that are sponsored or sponsored that are receiving the benefit of the city providing these services really at no cost, other people are coming to the table saying, hey, we would like that.

[00:36:44] And it creates a, you know, just when we have our discussions, it's an uncomfortable position that I know Ms. Summerfield is in to have to say no to somebody when they're looking at someone else getting that benefit. So, but we're ready to respond in any way. We'll definitely be providing the staffing and doing what we need to do to keep it safe.

[00:37:00] Thank you. And that was actually, my next question was kind of the third party limited to six. It seems like we, you know, we did add, I think the Sweet Mile was new this year or last year? Relatively new? This, yeah, this last February. But it is relatively new. is within the six road closures so as you'll note there's only five road closure events even though there are eight cities city supported although two of those eight cover their own costs so both of the um both of our road races cover their costs yeah and actually the other thing that i i guess i should have realized but i didn't really put two and two together is the lack of ability to rent

[00:37:35] out for a wedding let's say at peak fall festival or sometime in may when we're doing another event I hadn't really thought about that, especially with our new renovated building that will be coming

online at some point in the next year. So I know you're looking for information here and kind of a yay or nay.

[00:37:56] I'm leaning towards some sort of hybrid between two and three. I think that based upon, let's say, number of participants or people that show up, I think that we do make money off of things, right?

[00:38:12] There is an added benefit. We just don't know what it is. So I think that it's not as easy as just saying, well, it's a total cost of \$48,000 for us, right? It might look like that. It might actually be much higher when you take into account the depreciation on the vehicles, the barricades, the fact that our hourly rates are varied, right?

[00:38:31] And no discredit to that. Just was curious how it was calculated. So I'm at some sort of hybrid between the two. And I think I understand 2,500 people is a big number. I'm also amazed at what our city staff does and how they were like oh 500 no big deal right you know so I don't know if 2500 is that definitive line it sounds like it kind of is where when you need the paramedics when you need the police when you need this and that and if that's the case that's the case I mean that that's what it is but I think we want to encourage events like this we want to

[00:39:05] be known for events like this and I think that we I personally would like a little bit more information to somewhere settle between two and three. And again, if we can try to figure out what these things bring in, maybe there can be a tipping point at which we go into tier three versus tier two of what we're willing to cost recover or not. But I don't know that we or you have enough information to totally make a decision. And that's concerning. The other thing I did want to point out, you know, last year I did ask specifically about the third-party events. And it looks like

[00:39:43] there was a \$14,000, I forget what they called it, in-kind donation. And that was on certain events. And then I was surprised that then the remainder of that was not actually collected. I kind of just thought we were doing a \$14,000 in-kind donation for events of X size. So to see these numbers in their entirety now, I think is a lot more concerning. It's not the right word, But eye-opening I guess I think both to us and to the third-party people right I don't know that that number was something that was shared or provided or really kind of pondered

[00:40:22] So I know I'm talking a lot. I'm sorry But I I think there's somewhere that we can talk between two and three in my opinion, but it's going to need more information So thank you councilmember Peterson why yeah, that's a kind of where I've been going also that I I think some sort of a hybrid Would be worth looking at I also think that the ability to do that on a trial basis or a pilot basis gives us Flexibility in terms of that and I agree with what councilmember McQuillan suggested I think initially in councilmember all has said more about

[00:40:58] Would help to get some additional data here one of the questions for instance is whether Jurisdictions that have functionally this option three format going, whether in their view, whether they have data or not, that has deterred attendance or hurt them in terms of the strategic objectives of the jurisdiction in terms of tourism, et cetera.

[00:41:24] I don't know. It may be that that's had no effect whatsoever, but if there's been an effect, it would be good to know about. On the hybrid option, the one thing that seems to me worth particularly focusing on is calling as a grant mechanism of some kind, but if I understand it correctly, that could be

used as or some mechanism could be used as a way to have an option three, but then selectively and strategically have flexibility and make exceptions for certain cases like for folks

[00:42:01] who are coming in for the very first time or who have less means but are nonetheless really important etc it gives you a flexibility mechanism to deal with here of course there'd be a lot of complications associated with that from my perspective it would be good to receive something back that we could at least get started at so that we do something and not nothing and we don't let perfect be the enemy of the good here and to council to City Manager Alexander's point we I think it is time we stop playing tennis without a net so I think we've got enough here to figure out how to take a next step and I'd I'd certainly advocate in favor of that.

[00:42:41] Councilmember McCullough. I agree that we need a framework for sure. Piggybacking off of Councilmember Hall's comment about the meals tax, I do wonder if we can adjust permitting or do something along that lines to make up some of what, catch some of those fees that we're missing from not getting the meals tax or other things.

[00:43:06] That's the kind of information I think that would be beneficial is to really know what the return on investment could be in doing that like okay we lose the meals tax if we bring in all these food trucks but if we have a permitting fee that is adjusted to compensate for some of that that could you know maybe balance that out so that was my thought in bringing economic development into the mix was more of looking at this and really trying to figure out a solution that like a hybrid as everyone is mentioning here um something along the line so still be able to help out the newer events or

[00:43:41] smaller events or provide a grant in some way um but for you know the ones that are self-funded or the ones that we recognize can be self-funded um i think that more information is just what we need to be able to say which way we want to go with that council member bates any thoughts yeah i um i mean on the one hand we certainly need to have some kind of control over uh how this expense

[00:44:15] might grow in the future but on the other hand looking at especially Fairfax County and you know Vienna Falls Church are kind of unique in that they're a bit smaller than the city even the city Fairfax but Fairfax County on the other hand they have developments such as Reston Town Center Fairfax Corner that completely run their own events and have their own private security you know, large mixed use developments that we don't have in the city right now. So without the benefit of that, I kind of see having something beyond what the county has and what the other jurisdictions

[00:44:53] have is sort of in lieu of just not being able to have that. And I think it's in a lot of ways preferable because it allows for smaller organizations that wouldn't be able to do that elsewhere to have a platform to bring us things like the Asian Festival or, you know, that's Somewhat of a larger event, but, you know, Fairfax Pride, et cetera.

[00:45:20] So I think I am leaning toward having some kind of framework as has been laid out to have a look at which events we want to cover and how much we want to cover.

[00:45:39] But as was mentioned, there are, I guess, a lot of different ways that we can do that. So certainly have faith in staff to look into how we can do that. And as you know, according to what's been laid out here and look forward to further discussion on that.

[00:46:00] Council member Hardy Chandler. I just want to add to the final point council member Bates made. You've heard sort of our questions and concerns. I think it's a great idea to take that and devise a

proposal. Option one is out.

[00:46:16] No one wants that. But I think you can develop a proposal that starts to address and integrate some of the answers to the questions. But you're not going to have all of the answers. And so a mechanism for evaluation of that I think would be helpful, like I said, for modifications.

[00:46:34] I also think that some of the more specific things, that's not for us to do. But I think, well, I'm curious what is in the action plan that entities have to submit, because I think some of the things that we prioritize could be integrated into that action plan that's submitted, and that be a part of the decision matrix, right?

[00:46:58] So if there are, let's say, a weighted benefit, hypothetically, for 50% Fairfax City food trucks or something like that, you know, that that becomes a part of the decision-making matrix in terms of what's submitted in the action plan.

[00:47:19] I'm assuming that that's a template of some sort, but that can also be a tool. I just want to also comment on the presence of the police. I get the certainly concerned about the safety, and that is something that we take very seriously, and our events are very, very safe, and I think people feel very safe at them.

[00:47:41] I think the other piece of it, though, is we had a presentation not too long ago on community policing, and so I think the presence there has value in a lot of different ways, And I've seen people respond very positively to officers who are present, kids, you know, having that be a part of the experience.

[00:48:03] So I just don't want to narrow that as just something that is utilitarian. But there is something about community that is important to having our officers there and present and talking to the crowds and smiling at kids and all of that.

[00:48:20] But I think there may be enough. I sometimes feel that we leave you with maybe more questions than answers, but I think you may have enough to at least start to formulate a draft of a proposal that has the flexibility in it to adjust what that hybrid looks like based on some of the priorities you've heard tonight.

[00:48:44] So I hope it's helpful. It is. Thank you. Other questions or comments? Okay. One of the things I would like to discuss is the new events. So Pride, Juneteenth, and Fiesta Fairfax were things that we wanted to do because we had never celebrated Pride or Juneteenth or Hispanic Heritage Month.

[00:49:09] There is no overarching organization like the OTFBA with organizing the Asian Festival on May. The town of Vienna has Viva Vienna, which is a three-day festival that takes place and is run by the Vienna Rotary Club.

[00:49:24] It used to be a town event, and then the Vienna Rotary took it over because they make money organizing and running it. So they have booths, they have vendors, they pay the bill to the town, and then the money they make, they distribute it because they're a service club. But they are the entity that, they don't do that anymore.

[00:49:43] I'm C. Kelly. They don't pay the town. Oh, so Viva Vienna, they just make the money. Okay. But they are the organizing event for Viva Vienna. They took that over. And so they are the organizer for things like, to your point about new events, there is no organization for Juneteenth Pride or Hispanic or the

Fiesta Fairfax because Elizabeth and Estuardo Rodriguez got the vendors and sort of were the organizing people that pulled that together with the help of your staff.

[00:50:16] And Pride, the first one we did was with George Mason University and getting help from them. And Juneteenth was Mount Calvary Baptist Church. But these are not, there is no organization like the Rotary Club of Fairfax, I mean of Vienna, that can be an organizer if we put a framework in place that says some organization has to go and find the sponsors and do the organizing.

[00:50:41] So we have to ask ourselves as a community, these things came along because we wanted to celebrate something specific that the city of Fairfax has never celebrated before. but if we go to a framework and a guideline that says well we're going to have the structure and the organization is going to come and seek this but what if there is no organization then do we say that as a city well if no one comes forward then we just don't do pride and we just don't do juneteenth and we just don't do fiesta fairfax mr. Alexander that's it's a great question may appreciate it i think it would be you know not unlike some it's a probably bad example we do

[00:51:21] fourth of july right it's a city event so at some point again in the plan with with council we say these are the third party these are on an annual basis the events that we run and council makes those choices about where we want to venture into and we may be supporting it on our own someone may come along later but it's it's a city event so i hate to oversimplify it but i think you know again on a consistent basis we make decisions on where we're spending tax dollars to support events whether we're doing it on our own or whether we're doing a grant arrangement or support

[00:51:55] of external organizations and i think we have that discussion in a meaningful way instead of just things happen and they grow over time and i agree it can't be haphazard i mean this this is we're going to do this for the fourth time this year and and it started out with an idea and some people and some vendors and some things but the the city did the heavy lifting parks and rec did the heavy lifting we had some support from different places and different organizations but we do as a community have to decide what we value and if and if we don't have someone like

[00:52:31] a rotary club say or otfa say we're going to do that then are we just not going to do that we have to ask ourselves that question um like the the labor day car show to your point they've been doing this for a long time but it started out in clifton and i think it was the clifton Lions Club. And I think there's still, but you know, after all these years, the event practically, you know, everybody wants, it was huge last year. It broke all records because people now want to be a part of it because it's long established. But these three nascent events that we have that are

[00:53:06] just starting their fourth year has no such depth. And so that would be the only thing I'm bringing to the table is we as a community have to decide if you have a framework, how rigorous is that framework going to be, or do you just say, we're not going to do these events if no one steps forward and raises their hand? Yes, Chief. I mean, to me, one of the aspects to all of this is if it's for profit or not, right? And so, you know, one of the events we have coming up in the near future is they generate a lot of profit. They have a lot of vendors. They charge fees for those things.

[00:53:44] So I think that, to me, is one piece to consider with whatever direction we go in. And the other I want to talk about is speaking to the question about other jurisdictions you know having come from one of those jurisdictions I could tell you that that what the people that organize these events are looking for they'll they'll because if it's for profit don't they're they're okay paying for those services but they want

some level of predictability and so one of the things that we would hear is one year it would be we want these many officers and this is your bill and then next year it's gone up for some reason and it's not

[00:54:19] expected and so it puts them in a position because the day the event is over the very next day they begin planning for the next year's event and so it's hard for them to get that surprise bill at the end so whatever direction we go in if there's almost like a menu of sorts some type of fee structure or whether it's a cap something that I would imagine that's something that would they would be looking for to be able to plan especially if we go in a direction where they were going to be taking on the cost.

[00:54:50] So I think the feedback I'm hearing is, with all this information, a proposal of some kind, some framework of some kind that we can consider more specifically all the things that we discussed, taking all these factors into consideration, what it might look like.

[00:55:06] And guardrails and structure, but maybe flexibility, again, to your point. The Rotary Club of Vienna is a nonprofit. They take every bit of that money and they give it away. Every penny of it gets distributed. in the community and beyond the community because they're a non-profit.

[00:55:25] But, again, without something, an organizing body like that, I don't know. And there is no Northern Virginia Pride organization. And Mount Calvary, you know, we had, and there was another committee that helped in previous years, too. There was a Juneteenth committee, I think.

[00:55:41] We do still have the Juneteenth committee. For those three events, we do have a group of community members who assist with those events. They are not supported by an organization that would help them be able to raise funds. I do think there's a possibility where we develop a framework and we're able to look at groups' revenue and develop a cost-share model where we're going to, you know, based on the revenue that you're pulling in, the city is asking for this much cost recovery.

[00:56:07] So I think taking all of this information that you've given us, we can come back with a good framework for what that looks like that is manageable. All right. Sounds like it. Mayor, just before we finish. So we'll bring that back. I do want to acknowledge the OTFBA and the work that they put into this.

[00:56:25] They've been great partners. We did spring a bill on them real quick, and they pivoted very quickly with us. And so we're looking forward to a very successful event coming up here in the near future with the Asian Festival. And we certainly will engage community around this as part of the process.

[00:56:41] I'm glad you brought that up. I do want to acknowledge the OTFBA and the people in this room who worked so hard to build the Asian Festival on Main because it is one of the marquee events in this city. And there are people who come from all over, and I don't want to undervalue the effort of the volunteers who put this on every year.

[00:57:01] And so putting up a framework means all of us can budget better. I mean, I think that's going forward is kind of like if we know what the targets are, if we know what the bill is, then we can work toward that starting the day after this festival is over. So I'm hoping that will be a help to this event going forward.

[00:57:19] That is our goal anyway. All right. Thank you so much. We appreciate the presentation. And Ms. Shinneberry, who do we have next? Our next item is a discussion update on city services and support for older adults. I'm going to recognize Leslie Abashian, our human services director, for the presentation.

[00:57:40] Got to make sure.

[00:58:12] All right. Ready. Tonight, our presentation is to talk about how the City of Fairfax supports older adults and why it's important. I really appreciate the opportunity to engage in this conversation.

[00:58:29] David Bowie once said, aging is an extraordinary process where you become the person you always should have been. The reason I say that is because we're all, or most of us, are looking forward to retirement at some point, to enjoy the fruits of our labor, to do something different, you know, to have more time to do the things we like. But at the same time, those, as we get older, there's impacts, you know, natural aging. There's things that sometimes slow us down and we need extra support. And I think that,

[00:59:04] you know, even though, again, I get, I'm really excited one day I get to retire when I'm 95 years old i also want to know that my community is there to support me if i need support or my family needs support and i think that that's part of what we're talking about tonight is how the city supports its resident older residents but also keeps bringing them to the table and and lets them know that we value them as part of the community tonight i've brought this is kind of like the dream team um you know i wanted you guys to hear from the people that really are doing the work that

[00:59:44] are connecting with older adults um that are making those older adults feel valued and get their needs met um i've got jason skadron he's the village coordinator i've got ann chase she's a senior center coordinator and then i've got the community response team i've got um malika Walters, who's a licensed clinical, a licensed clinician, and she's a clinician for the community response team. I've got Jay Davison, who is the community paramedic for the community response

[01:00:18] team. And then our newest member, we have Carrie Johns, who is the police officer for the community response team. So all these individuals you're going to hear from at some point, and it'll probably be about time where you're tired of listening to me, so it'll be a good thing.

[01:00:39] Okay, the topic of aging is important. It's not just important for the residents that are getting older, but it's also for those family members that are caring for those residents and also for those of us that are preparing as we get older.

[01:00:57] And when I was thinking about, when I was first asked to do this, I was thinking about just some trends, some key things to think about of why, you know, this is an important topic. And a couple things I want to point out, that residents age 50 and older, they make up a third of our community of the city.

[01:01:17] And Eric Foreman, who is the guy I go to for any kind of data, he says in the next five years or so that that's going to continue. So they're a third of our population. Almost 89% of the residents 65 and older who were part of the last census own their homes.

[01:01:39] Growing O can be accompanied by increased needs and some vulnerabilities. At FY25, 78 residents from the city of Fairfax got support through older adults. And the Adult Protective Services engaged with 24 adults who there were abuse and neglect concerns that they needed to look into.

[01:02:07] So those are, you know, adults that have needed some assistance and engaged in the system. Not every resident is going to require the same level of need, I mean, the same level of support. Because sometimes, you know, there's individuals, because of your ability, you have resources.

[01:02:27] Maybe you live closer to your family. Maybe your health status, you know, because some of us have better genetics than others when it comes to health status. And so not, you know, on here you see

3,766 residents that are 65 and older.

[01:02:45] All 3,700 are not going to need the village, for instance. But there are people that really need and value the village and need the, you know, need those resources. And so that's something that we have to really pay attention to, that not one size fits all. But there's always a time when one of each of us is going to need some extra support or somebody in our family that we love is going to need extra support.

[01:03:08] The city survey, the community survey that was done about a year ago or so ago, I guess a year or so, yeah. One of the top human services issues was the lack of affordable housing. And I think that one of the things that, you know, affordable housing, why it impacts older adults, because we have folks in our community that want to downsize and they really can't afford it, even though they own their homes because, you know, they bought their homes 40 years ago and the prices have kind of changed since then.

[01:03:43] But we also have older adults in northern Virginia that are either precariously housed or unhoused. It it nerves me to think that anybody in in northern Virginia is aging into homelessness.

[01:03:59] But that's happening. And the there's going to be more as the baby boomers come. You know, they're really thinking that we're going to see more of that because of the cost of living. If you look at the stats up there from the 2025 regional point-time count, 280 residents in northern Virginia now, we're talking about an area that's resources, it's fairly affluent, 280 adults, 70 and older, were in-housed on that night that they counted.

[01:04:33] And add to that, 26 adults, 80 and over, were unhoused. And I just put that out there because, you know, when we talk about affordable housing, for instance, it hits people in different ways.

[01:04:50] But I think it's something we need to pay attention to. All right. And one of the other things I wanted to point out is normal aging for most of us, maybe not all of us, But for most of us, it comes with changes in financial situation, medical and physical needs, and also life transitions.

[01:05:16] And one of the things I would note that, again, even though some of us, maybe me, you know, we count down those days when we can retire, that you can afford to retire and spend time with your loved ones and kind of get out of the rat race of work, That's still a huge transition because you go from a chunk of your life living and connecting with people within the workforce and then all of a sudden you're thinking, okay, what am I going to do with myself and am I going to be able to afford it?

[01:05:44] And so one of the questions I would ask the city is that how do we engage our older residents as they transition to retirement and do we still make room at the table for them? And that we don't take it for granted that even though, again, people may be skipping into retirement, it's still a transition.

[01:06:05] All right. How do we find out that somebody in our community needs assistance? There's a couple different ways that a lot of times the Human Services Committee will hear about somebody in the community that's struggling or maybe needs a little bit more support.

[01:06:25] And I rely, you know, other city departments and the community members pay a key role in that. But, you know, sometimes you're a little hesitant to reach out to the city and say, hey, my neighbor, I think they're struggling a little bit. Can you help us? Can you help them? Or, you know, a loved one, you know, saying, hey, my mom, I'm really worried about her.

[01:06:45] Can you help them? You know, because some is a natural tendency, you know, to think, okay, I need to do it myself. I don't want to reach out. I don't want to let somebody know that I'm struggling. But

one of the things that is an important message from tonight is the human services.

[01:07:01] here to protect and optimize well-being for everybody and that means that sometimes if somebody needs help they need to know where to come to and it is the city sometimes even if it's somewhere where we're connecting A to B where they can get what they need and so I think that that's really important that folks in the community that are aging that they see us as a resource and somebody that cares about them and are going to help them even if we don't have the exact resource for them. We're going to help them get to those resources. Okay, because I like visuals

[01:07:37] and colorful ones too. When I was first, I was thinking about, okay, how am I going to frame this? This frame, how are we doing with older adults? And thank goodness the AARP had done some work. And so eight domains of livable framework, and it's the Age-Friendly Network. And actually, over 1,000 communities across the country are in the age-friendly network, including seven in Virginia, including Alexandria and Arlington.

[01:08:11] And to become a member of this network, you have to do a five-year framework where you do like a review of where you're at as a community, you do an action plan, and you implementing improvements in the areas of housing, transportation, public spaces, and social engagement.

[01:08:33] And I thought, I mean, even though, you know, tonight I might say, okay, let's go do this five-year study, I just felt like this was a good way for us to frame and have a conversation in our community about where we're at and how we're supporting residents.

[01:08:49] And, you know, I would say to you guys, I mean, how does the city currently support older adults? I mean, are we doing good adults? Are we doing a good job with it? Where are the gaps? And where do we want to go? Like, where do we feel like we need to go as a city?

[01:09:05] And some notable things that I wanted to point out, too, because there's a lot of information tied to these frameworks. But a key thing is older adults need a place to gather and socialize, participate in activities, and remain engaged in the community.

[01:09:24] A vast majority of older adults say, I want to age in place. I want to stay maybe not in my house but in my community. And that means sometimes that they have access to those resources that they need to be able to be safe in their home. When we focus on these eight domains of livable framework, we're not only helping older adults, we're impacting the whole community.

[01:09:49] And some further reasons that this is an important issue and something for us to talk about is the World Health Organization considers loneliness and social isolation as a public health priority. And with loneliness and social isolation, it's a key factor in impacting mental health conditions later in life.

[01:10:11] So it's not just about being lonely at home because you don't have anything to do, but it really does impact your mental and your physical well-being. One in four adults experience social isolation, And individuals who live alone or have chronic medical issues or have functional decline already, it impacts them even more.

[01:10:34] So you've got somebody who's having social isolation, already has some things that are impacting their day-to-day. And not being connected to other people, it just makes it worse. There's a social – this one kind of caught my attention a little bit.

[01:10:52] There's a strong association between social isolation and advanced health outcomes. Like John Hopkins did a study, and it found that there's a 50% increase risk for dementia for people that are with social isolation.

[01:11:08] And 29% increased risk for health disease. And I think, I mean, heart health disease, heart disease. But again, you know, whatever the percentage is, it impacts you. If you're not connected to people, if you don't feel worthy and connected to your community, it does impact your health, all of us.

[01:11:30] All right. So what we're going to talk about now, I'm going to have the dream team here talk a little bit about, you know, how we're doing right now with these eight domains of livability. And I would say that we're already doing things with all these different areas.

[01:11:50] And so I'm just going to pass it off to Jason, and they have just a little bit of information they want to share with you. Hello, everybody. Yes, I'd like to share a little bit about the village. So currently we've grown to 167 members, and we have 70 volunteers.

[01:12:09] Our advisory board consists of 12 members. In January, as you probably know, the village received a \$10,000 grant from the Virginia Villages Collective reduce the public health risk of social isolation we're using the funding to develop a training program that we're calling village connections the training members the training it's going to be to our volunteers to help with our members it's going to focus on how best to communicate how to identify issues of concern and safety and how best to build trust with our older population in

[01:12:48] addition as part of our strategic strategic plan we offer educational outreach and resources. So for example, we have a bi-monthly newsletter called View from the Village. We also program the Friday Morning Speaker Series. In February, we have Steve Gurney from Positive Aging. They publish the source book in the Beacon newspaper. In May, we have two speakers lined up. We have two students from George Mason who are going to discuss AI, the hidden biases and algorithms and deepfake scams. And on May 29th, we have Main Street Bank. They're going to give a

[01:13:25] talk about fraud and scams, protecting yourself and your money. These events, we have attendance of between 30 and 70 people. This Friday is the Fairfax Village in the City Advisory Board is hosting our fourth Home for Life Expo. This year, we have four sponsors. We have 35 exhibitors, for guest speakers the the village connection sorry the connection newspaper highlighted the expo this week and it's from 10:00 to 2:00 I hope you

[01:14:01] guys can come by and check it out and yeah so that's a little bit about what the village has been doing to help our community and I'm gonna pass it on to back to you Diane okay good evening everybody for those of you that don't know so much about the senior center I was going to go over three brief points about programming our advisory council and some information about the membership and attendance rates so our center currently has 51 programs and activities we organize into i would say three categories we have volunteer-led drop-in programs staff directed programs and registered classes

[01:14:37] with paid instructors so this mix allows us to provide flexibility structure and skill-based opportunities that meet our social physical and educational interests of our members just to explain a little more, the first category, the volunteer-led drop-in programs, which provide flexibility. They're informal opportunities for our participants to engage in at the center, and they're free of cost for the members. An example would be our military history group that's very popular, sports, arts, the music

groups, and various games that come. So this represents about 37 percent of our program offerings. The second category we have are staff-directed activities, and these are more structured programs organized and directed by

[01:15:17] our team, some of which are at full fee as day trips and their cost recovery, and others have a smaller fee associated like the parties and the bingo and things that are not associated with the fee we lead as well, like the leagues and open house and the lunch and learn series. So that represents about 42% of our programming. Then we have our third category, and that's a registered classes read by paid instructors. Either they're contracted or hourly city employees, and these are more formal skill-based classes that require advanced registration and payment. Those consist of a variety of our exercise classes, line dancing, and they can come at night and do the

[01:15:56] clock repair and martial arts. So all sorts of opportunities there. And that's about 19% of our programming. So while the staff oversees all the programs in the areas, we think the three-tier approach allows to offer a variety of accessibility and high-quality programs that meet the different interest needs commitment levels financial ability within our senior community so to support all that and accomplishing our program offerings we do have a senior advisory council i think you've met some of them over the couple past meetings they are a board made of 10 elected members along with the representative from prab and their role is to support the staff in meeting our social educational

[01:16:35] physical and recreational needs of our members while ensuring an inclusive environment for everyone They do this by staying connected to our members. They gather feedback, make recommendations, and enhancements to our programs and services. They also share information out to the community, and they build community connections through their participation in the city events.

[01:16:57] You'll see them at the Fourth of July parade and the Fall Festival, and then out in the community. They're doing their craft show this weekend. So also the membership and participation, just a few statistics on that. Our membership continues to reflect a steady and encouraging growth.

[01:17:13] We have members ranging from 55 all the way up to 98 that are very active. Our all-time membership database, we started in 2009 in ActiveNet. It's about 7,000 members. However, to come up with a more accurate number that we track unique members year by year, this gives us a realistic sense of who we're actually serving.

[01:17:33] So our unique members from April 2025 to April now is about 1,527. um just quarter in particular which i thought was pretty impressive with all the cold weather we had 975 members participate and from that amount 60 are county and 40 are city we do have a handful that people drop in from out of the city county to pay a membership either at like a five dollar day pass or they'll do a year so we also track new members coming for the very first time And in the first quarter, we had 142 first-time people come through.

[01:18:12] The participation also remains very strong, and it grows. We average about 125 checking in a day, up to 160 during peak events. We do send our newsletter out to about 4,700 people in our Older Americans database there.

[01:18:31] So in conclusion, we have our programming, our advisory council, and engaged membership. We work together to ensure the Senior Center continues to meet the needs of our senior community. If you have any questions, let me know. Good evening.

[01:18:48] I wanted to provide an overview or a quick snapshot on CRT and how we're able to offer that direct support and service to our older adults. You saw a few slides ago, Leslie talked about how individuals are being referred to us, And typically we get a referral from public safety, whether it's EMS or police.

[01:19:11] They may be dealing with a high utilizer of 911. So we're able to get that referral and provide that in-home support, assess their needs and understand what's going on. So then we can also take the burden off of public safety and be able to provide that support and connect them to the appropriate services.

[01:19:31] We also receive referrals from family members and community and even neighbors. We've had a couple of times where neighbors have come in, and if they're already connected to the village, they will talk to Jason and he'll consult with us.

[01:19:47] And that's how we are able to get involved with those individuals and just determine, again, what's going on in the home and how we can best support them. At times, we do have to involve Adult Protective Services, APS, if there is a safety need in the home.

[01:20:02] And even with that, we continue our work with both APS and the individual. And if we can include family members in the support as well, we will. But our goal is to be able to not leave them alone, especially if they're isolated and they're lacking that family support.

[01:20:22] We want to make sure that we're connecting them and they're not feeling so alone or feeling like they have to rely on public safety for that interaction with humans. So we continue our support again with APS.

[01:20:37] We meet with APS on a monthly basis where we can do cross-referrals and consult with APS on just some things that may come up for someone who may not be appropriate for adult protective services but can get other supports from the county through older adult services.

[01:20:56] We also have that support with family members. So we want to know what's going on in the home, having a whole systemic approach with not only family, if the neighbors are involved, but also with medical professionals.

[01:21:13] We've been able to have contact with medical doctors and just understand what's going on. and now we had an individual who was connected to the village, and now this individual who was isolated has a volunteer that will call, but also they now have a home health aide.

[01:21:35] So again, in identifying those needs on what's happening and how we can best support them, we try to have this collaborative approach and be able to identify what's needed within the home. I'm sure you guys have seen me walking around here.

[01:21:52] My name's Jay. I'm the community paramedic from the fire department side. I'm the medical arm of the CRT. So I work mostly in risk reduction, follow-on care, and education. At least that's what most of the things we end up doing right now. So for risk reduction, I may be loud enough without it. Sorry. Excuse me. So for risk reduction, we have various educational programs.

[01:22:14] We teach to the community, hands-only CPR, stop the bleed. I do a lot of medicine reconciliation and when people need help tracking their meds and things like that. I also follow up on a lot

of things that come from the hospital. So essentially, if you are injured in the city of Fairfax and you fall into certain brackets, I get an email about it that says, hey, this person may need your assistance.

[01:22:38] Can you follow up with them? A lot of times it's a phone call and they say, oh no, I'm just fine. But other times it's like, I have been falling more or I didn't know these services exist or any of these things. And that's where our team comes in and kind of feels out what we need to connect them to to help them.

[01:22:53] And so for a lot of these things where the kind of three-prong approach you have here is that sometimes it's a medical issue where I come in and, like, hey, maybe something that was longstanding that the person just didn't know and, like, you know, you're too close to the problem to see it. Or it may be a budding mental health issue that I may not recognize but Malika will.

[01:23:12] And so that's the benefit of having the three of us together and what we provide. As for adult services, we generally, they're 35% of the people we see right now. It's our largest age group. Right now it's 68 people in the 55-plus category.

[01:23:32] And we more often than not stick with a person from anywhere from 30 to 60 days depending on what services they may need. So we may stay with them, checking in with them once a week or so, making sure that they're connected to the things they need to be. And then as the services take over or their situation improves, we kind of fade to the wayside.

[01:23:51] And that's generally our way we do things. I'm happy to answer questions at any point. Sorry, I need to move the mic. Hi, I'm MPO Carrie Johns. I'm new to this team, but looking at some of the services we provide, I looked at data from the last 2023, 2024, 2025.

[01:24:16] And in all of those years, with the 65-plus age range, the three common ways that we come into contact as a police department with older adults is through fraud reports, welfare checks, and anything related to traffic.

[01:24:35] So traffic stops, citations, motor vehicle crashes. So, you know, with the fraud reports, not only do we receive those calls through dispatch, But our detectives also receive those calls from, they receive referrals from investigators through banks, through APS, or other services that older adults might be receiving.

[01:25:02] In terms of, like, regionally, there is a Financial Exploitation Prevention Task Force, which looks like common trends throughout the region. And then from there, as a police department, as CRT, we're able to educate the older adult population on what those scams might be or services that might be available to them for that compensation or to protect their information from further, you know, further issue.

[01:25:38] With welfare checks, that's something that we respond to, as Jay and Malika touched on, going into the home and having that human interaction to see what issues there are that we can assist with and connect them to those services.

[01:25:57] In terms of traffic stops and motor vehicle crashes, the Virginia DMV has medical review services available, not just through the police, but also through family members, neighbors.

[01:26:13] Anyone can request a medical review service should they feel that they have a family member or a neighbor that might need to be reviewed if they should continue to drive safely. so that's what we have

on older adults from the police side of things.

[01:26:41] I'm just going to wrap it up, but as you can tell, the team is doing some really important work, and one of the things that I would say about the services that you're hearing about, they're really low-cost, low-barrier to access but impactful when you look at the overall price of the services we're providing, But I'd also say that, you know, part of the reason this team is successful is because they build relationships.

[01:27:12] They're able to connect. I think a lot of times, for instance, with adult services, they go and they knock on a door and say, hey, Sarah said you're having problems. And they go, we don't need you. You know, close the door. Because you think about sometimes when the government's coming or adult services come in, they're coming to take your independence.

[01:27:31] They're coming to, you know, that you're in trouble or whatever. But our team are able to take some time to build some trust, to get to know really what's going on, to assess the situation, and then link them to resources they need.

[01:27:46] And that's a really important thing that we're able to do. I found, like, well, okay, Jay found. Jay found this great article, and it said that every \$1 invested in healthy aging, \$3 may be returned to society via economic and health care benefits.

[01:28:10] And that was done by McKinsey Health Institute. And really what that means is when we know sooner, rather than later, if somebody's struggling, if we have an opportunity to connect with them to get them to where they need, it's not only, you know, a fiscal impact for us or the, you know, the Fairfax County system or whoever's giving services, it's also a quality of life impact if we can catch people before they get to a place where they're having a hard time being at home or their safety's at risk or, you know, they have to go to a higher level of service.

[01:28:49] So it's really important that we're able to do that. And so I'm going to wrap up by this because I always think, and this is from my days of when I did Toastmasters. You know, you're supposed to have like an ask at the end, right? you have to and i do have certificates if y'all want to see them um i was very proud of my certificate uh but you know there's there's ask and so these are just things to think about because in the end i'm very respectful of the fact that public policy is not a one day i come in i ask for money the money is there and then the next day the program starts and you know part of this is

[01:29:27] about starting conversations having conversations figuring out what the priorities are and engaging And so that's what this is about, really thinking about where we are. And I think, you know, we're doing some great stuff in the city, but also thinking about what we need to do next.

[01:29:43] And so we need to promote social connections. That's really important. People need to feel needed. They need to feel connected. They need to feel part of the community. That's not, it's not only good for them, it's good for our communities. Education awareness, providing information.

[01:30:02] You know, some of the things that we're doing is saying, hey, you may want to pay attention to the scam or, hey, this is where information, this is where you can get resources if you need it. Or, you know, like the expo, it's all about information on things that you need to know as you get older.

[01:30:18] And that's really important for us to put out there because hopefully if something happens where there is a scam call or there's something that happened, they go, hey, wait a minute. I remember that information I got and this didn't sound right. That's what we're trying to do. Policy and budget

considerations, again, just having these conversations, being able to connect and talk about, as a city, what our priorities are and what we want to do. I'll stop with this. Recognizing social needs, it's not always

[01:30:55] driven by financial needs. We have people in our community that have the financial needs, but they're just disconnected, or maybe they don't have family anymore. I mean, I can't tell you how many people we've met where all their family, all their relatives are dead. It's just them, or they live across the country, or they're estranged for some reason.

[01:31:15] So we're not only, you know, looking at financial when we're thinking about, you know, helping older adults. We're also thinking about making sure they really do know where they fit and that they're connected and that we're paying attention. And on that note, I'm finished.

[01:31:31] If anybody has any questions for me or any of the team, we're here for you. Thank you so much. That was a wonderful presentation. I'll start with Council Member Hardy Chandler. Well, I was very eagerly anticipating this presentation, and you did not disappoint.

[01:31:52] Reinforcing all that our city has available is a really important reminder. As you mentioned, not just for those who are direct recipients of these kinds of services, but for all of us who are impacted, who care about the older adults in our neighborhoods and who are becoming or looking forward to becoming the older adults in our neighborhoods.

[01:32:16] I think you can gauge, and forgive me if I'm inadvertently quoting someone and not giving them credit, but I do think you can gauge a city's values by how they create opportunities and treat their older adults, their vulnerable populations, and their children, right?

[01:32:37] And I really believe that we have made some very strong investments. And I'm curious about not getting stagnant. You know, I'm curious about especially this slide along with the graphic because I also want to, while we're doing so many great things, I want to also think about the future and where we need to go.

[01:33:00] where we're headed to maintain this level of care and this level of investment in this particular sector of our community. So it's interesting with the graphic, because I love graphics and color also. If you go back to the livability domains, so I'm curious. Every month I have this journal, and you have to reflect on how well you did in various domains, right? And it's one to ten in each pie slice right and you kind of fill that in and you can see where your gaps are so you can

[01:33:37] look forward to what you need to work on in the future so optimally we would want these to all be at the 10 level optimally and when you go through some of those points on the seven slide slide number seven where are we falling short of 10 so that you know what I'm saying if it's filled out to its capacity, it's 10. If we're falling a little short, it's less than that, right, all the way out to the edge. What areas are we maybe falling a little short where we may need to make

[01:34:12] some of those overarching budgetary investments or policy investments, in your view? Do you understand the question, or am I being very Stacy Hardy Chandler right now? I think some of this is that probably you know as a city have we we've never really had that conversation like really looking at it with older adults at least since I've been here but my initial reaction would be first off is strengthening and supporting what we're already doing if that means like increasing

[01:34:48] that or you know looking at the capacity and I would I would ask like the community response team like what kind of things are you guys running into when you're working with older adults that you know you wish if Santa was here you know maybe what what he would be bringing us. I think one thing that we run into is when we're working with older adult services and wanting to get someone connected like we recognize the need and we want to get them connected to service however their

[01:35:23] income may not allow them to receive that service from the county so we're back at square one again and trying to find resources that will fit their income requirements and they're able to get the support that they need. So I think that's something as a community that would be helpful in not having that income requirement and just allowing for if someone needs that support, then it should be available to them.

[01:35:52] Yeah, in addition to that, I would say I've noticed over time that many of our older adult citizens fall in the category where they're surviving, but they're not thriving. And so that's the issue we run into some of the times, because if you're well below the survival mark, I can get you lots of services.

[01:36:12] But if you're just treading water, it makes it very hard for us to connect them to things. So that would be my area of improvement for us more than anything else, is that that is a big barrier to care for a lot of people, where if they were worse off slightly, I'd have a much easier opportunity and who wants to reinforce people being worse off in order to get services i mean it's horrible um i also just want to highlight all of the sort of preventative measures that that is you know kind of a thing i think i was highlighting that in a meeting earlier

[01:36:45] today um and that statistic is fantastic a dollar of an investment you get a three dollar back on return on that investment because there has been earlier less critical intervention and I think that the extent to which we can build that where the resources there's a smooth path between contact and resources that's really important. Okay and I think one of the things I would add too is just I mean because we work with family services with Fairfax County we get a lot of

[01:37:23] resources for them and they do a lot of work they do some work around caregiver support but that would be another thing you know maybe even with the village or something thinking about we're already doing some support with caregivers but maybe thinking about how we can maximize that because we rely on you know the people that are taking care of the older adults too so i would probably put that in there and i would just follow up by saying i think there's really good data about how often caregivers predecease the person they're taking care of and I mean I can tell you that is

[01:37:57] real and then then the family if there is family is left and oftentimes it's the spouse and so you bury one spouse who's been the caregiver and you left with having to so caregivers get burnt out especially if they're older caregivers and they in the social isolation all of this is so important and I think we don't talk about it enough because people keep their private things private.

[01:38:24] So unless your neighbors understand that somebody is struggling or that an older adult couple is in their house and nobody knows until something happens. So I would love for us to raise up better care for caregivers and more resources for caregivers and programs for caregivers and outlets for caregivers.

[01:38:45] Yeah, that would be on my wish list. other questions comments from the dais council member hall just wanted to say thank you for the presentation and a lot of good information and new information for me as well officer johns it's nice to see you outside of katherine johnson though i'm sure they are

missing you but excited for your new role here for sure um kind of a joke but not really so my husband just turned 49 and all these statistics about like 50 and older i feel like it used to be 65 and older or 55 and older. Now seeing it drop to 50 is, it's not very far away for some of us now. So

[01:39:24] yeah, I think we're going to have a lot of people entering that 50 plus in the next few years for sure, because pretty much all of my friends, the exception of a couple that are younger over there are going to be heading towards that soon. But I think, I think you, you all do a really great job of letting people know what services are out there, what's available. I'd love hearing about how you work, you know, if someone goes to the hospital for something or a car accident, that there's that connection that happens and that, you know, the follow-up time. And I just think it's really great to know that we live in a community that does that. I'm sure it's not

[01:40:01] always successful, but just the fact that it's there and that it's trying, right? And at least if it's not successful, then it's that person still on your radar. And you know, maybe I should follow up in a week or a month or six months, or maybe see if they have any family or other friends nearby. But I also think a reminder for all of us is, you know, as to the mayor's point with the caregivers, you know, know your neighbors, know who has not been walking the dog lately, you know, know who you're used to seeing out there that maybe might not be there and take them over some cookies or knock on the door and just say hello. And you might find that maybe something has happened or, you know, they, you just don't know what's going on in their lives. So I think it's a

[01:40:38] good piece of advice for all of us to check out, watch out for each other. You know, we are all in this together i think we were all so good with that during the pandemic you know you'd see everybody out walking all the time but as we get busy again and you know get different stages of our lives i think we all just kind of sometimes forget about those that we don't see every day so just a little psa and thank you to everyone that does all of these great things um for our community for our residents and as staff members and as volunteers i think it's we do have a great village here um and you know i thank you all for what you're doing to keep it going council member

[01:41:14] i did want to ask how often do you or do you refer people to some of the organization clubs things like that that we have in the area that could you had mentioned that there's this need for socialization in our aging population and we have some really great organizations here in the city that provide that kind of um contact and and ability that socialization do you often link them to like we have the women's club and things things like that in this area just see that we have a lot

[01:41:47] of activity um I wasn't sure how much you I think right now it depends on like an individual it's a one-to-one thing um in that you know like a cert team or village or either the senior senior gets to know somebody and they say hey you should look at this that kind of thing you know so it's a one off and and you know uh fortunately or unfortunately sometimes by the time people come to our attention there's other things going on too yeah um but you know any kind of resource or things where you feel like that's something that people can be connected to that's something we can share through like

[01:42:24] you've heard there's several newsletters there's uh you know ways to communicate that because again there's people out in the community that we may never hang out with right they may never need us But that doesn't mean that social isolation doesn't impact them. So just getting that information out and getting people connected.

[01:42:44] And I think that's why I go back to I really rely on the community to let me know what's going on. And that means, too, your neighbor. If you see a neighbor that's maybe retired, living by themselves, lost their spouse, you know, struggling, you know, taking that extra time to say, hey, you want to go to a woman's club with me?

[01:43:04] You know, we're having breakfast or those kind of things. Because I think that's part of being connected, too. You know, sometimes there's the formal resources that you connect with, and sometimes it's just the things we take that extra minute to do that. But, you know, any kind of those clubs or anything that you think would be connected, we can share with the team.

[01:43:23] And you just never know when they'll meet or connect with somebody and go, hey, this would be a great thing for you to do. Yeah, I was just thinking about the story that you told earlier, that a lot of individuals aren't really in that threshold to receive some of these services and sometimes just having that communication, that contact, that support early on before you get to that point.

[01:43:45] I will put a little plug for our women's club here in the city. It's fantastic. They send cards to people when they're ill. They check on them. They, you know, wish them a happy birthday. They do all of those little social interactions that allow you to feel recognized and help with that isolation that we're experiencing and seeing in the area so that just was one of the ideas I thought was that might be a resource that we can you know greater coordination to provide that to people would be excellent thank you other questions comments council member bates yeah um

[01:44:18] that was a excellent point um you know sometimes when people retire they uh they're just kind of like hey you know i don't need i don't need help i don't need to to go do anything i don't want to being at home, driving everybody else crazy, but not mentioning names, but, but, you know, sometimes when they don't have anybody else at home, that, you know, that becomes a really sad situation where, you know, and I think that's really why it's really important that sometimes

[01:44:56] they need that extra push to, to go out and do something or to just know that they're wanted, I guess, to the people who are out there who care about them, because a lot of, you know, people just deep down, they, you know, they want to be helped, they want to belong, but just don't really know how to go about it, or don't, you know, don't want to feel like they need that, and so having that extra push can be really important, and as you also mentioned, it really

[01:45:33] can have significant implications for mental and physical health um and in many different ways so yeah thank you other questions or comments council member hardy chandler so i just wanted to highlight once again one of the things you said about partnerships and us being able to do more because we have a partnership with the county um and as you talked about building relationships with residents, I think it's been no small feat to maintain good relationships with our county and regional partners, and that's incredibly important to expand our bandwidth

[01:46:13] and what we are able to offer as a city. It's interesting, and I think one of you mentioned it, about banks alerting people to fraud because when I was supervising some folks who work for APS, it was fascinating to hear when a bank identified that there was something going wrong before a family member or community member, which just goes to show information can come from anywhere, and all of us have a responsibility to be alert.

[01:46:44] And when the institutions notice something, certainly we as community members should notice something. I want to absolutely highlight our village and the city as a model for how to do things well and how to do things at a level of excellence that is in demand nationally.

[01:47:05] And I want to acknowledge our village for how generous they are with sharing information with other villages, our chair, Anita Light there, and the other members of the steering committee, who not only provide valuable services to our community, but are more than generous with spreading successes and supporting other villages and getting started with ideas.

[01:47:31] So thank you for not only what you do, but for what you do for other villages. It's incredible work. And on that note, I want to highlight, you mentioned the Home for Life Expo that is coming up Friday. Which, volunteering at that expo is my husband's birthday present.

[01:47:51] It is his birthday, and we will be there supporting that excellent event. And it is another way that we put information in people's path. It is people coming together in a single place.

[01:48:08] And I don't think that can be minimized either. We can hand out flyers, and we can hand out information. But I think bringing people together to commune in a space to have these kinds of conversations and have the resources and to say to someone, just go over there to that table or, you know, there is a resource that can follow up with you, you know, based on the presentation today.

[01:48:31] So although that's once a year, I think it's a wonderful example of how a community literally can come together to really support an idea. But I'm just very, you know, thankful for all that you all are doing. The unhoused piece.

[01:48:50] Curious about the connection to the housing plan and, you know, just some thoughts about we've talked a lot about the prevention part. And that's sort of the extreme of sort of a critical need when someone who is in their 80s, right, is not does not have a stable living situation.

[01:49:12] So just curious about some thoughts around that. There's some connections, because we did look at that when we were doing that housing plan. You know, one of the things I would say, I believe Pathway Homes, like those units that they're putting over their new building in the city, are going to be for older, you know, like older adults.

[01:49:33] I think that, you know, also Beacon Landing, I bet they'll get some older adults too. You know, because I think that there's definitely still a gap with being able to afford staying in a house, you know, staying in this area, especially if you were struggling when you were working and then all of a sudden you're not working and a medical thing happens and, you know, all these things pile up.

[01:49:59] But I think that the continuum of care is really looking at that because older adults, that's the biggest growing subpopulation in the homeless continuum. I think that that's something that Jamie's really paying attention to with the housing work.

[01:50:17] I think the Lamb Center, you know, sees a lot more older people. So I think that it's something we need to look at more because it gets my attention when I see that. And then I have a vision of my mom, if that was my mom, you know, that was living out on the street with her medical issue or whatever.

[01:50:38] And so I think we do need to pay attention to that and pay attention to opportunities. And I think on Friday, Jamie, one of the things she's bringing is talking about the home sharing, you know, like, I don't know. It's like one of many options, you know, but there's there's some different opportunities to be

creative in the community and try to find places where people can live, you know, and afford it, but still stay in the community.

[01:51:03] So, yeah, I wish I had all the answers. Then I would be making, like, I would have a Nobel Peace Prize and, you know, be retired. But I do think that on a serious note, we really do need to be paying attention and talking about that. Other questions, comments?

[01:51:21] Councilmember Peterson? What do we do to help people who are older and are homeowners and are really worried with good reason about not being able to afford to stay in their existing home?

[01:51:41] Things are getting expensive, including the burdens of home ownership through taxes, et cetera. But this is a pretty common fear people have that they're not going to be able to hang on to their home. What do we do to help them? I think there's different things because, you know, some of the folks we're talking about, the ones that don't own homes, so there's no resources.

[01:52:02] So I think that with folks that have, you know, own homes, they're worried about keeping with the upkeep, you know, all the expenses that it costs to live. I know AARP and some of those, you know, like sometimes we'll do sessions or educate, you know, like there's connections to kind of think about that, think about how to maximize the resources you have.

[01:52:28] um i think that you know that's sometimes that that's a fear that maybe you have resources but you're just worried that if one more thing happens you're not going to have the resources and i think sometimes with some of the folks that we you know end up dealing with because at the time when they come to us sometimes the older adults they're living by themselves that code has gotten involved in because they're not keeping their house or their yard or whatever You know, there's also sometimes those critical conversations about, are you, you know, are you at a place where maybe this is too much for you?

[01:53:04] You know, are there other options? You know, just starting to have those conversations. I don't, you know, there's just a lot of different ways. I don't think with our services, we don't have, like, a specific thing, you know, that we do, one-stop, you know, thing that we do.

[01:53:21] But, you know, that would actually also may even be something to throw back to HCAB, too, you know. in regards about some, you know, resources, because we've got some housing people on that. I know I worry about it. I worry about being able to, once I retire, to be able to pay for my house.

[01:53:40] So I think that's a real thing for many people. Well, I would just agree that it is. And it is here in the city of Fairfax. And you've rattled out some statistics that affirm that a pretty big percentage of people are older, a pretty big percentage of them own homes, a pretty big percentage of them.

[01:54:01] For a good reason, are worried about being able to make ends meet. And I think it is a driving fear that a great many people have in their lives that that is what is waiting for them. And it's waiting for them here in the city of Fairfax. And we hear from them, and we knock on their doors and talk to them.

[01:54:17] And we hear from them when it's budget time and tax time because that extra increment is something that they really do feel. So I'm not sure there is a perfect answer. I just want to affirm that it is a real issue. I was just going to tell you, Mr. Peterson, that, uh, so for most of those cases, that's one of the common things that I deal with as the people that again are surviving, not thriving, or slowly going towards that not surviving level. Um, thanks to our partnerships with the more robust areas of the county.

Uh, we have access to utility support. We have access to food support. We've access to numerous other things that I can connect people to that not only buy them time, but bring in

[01:54:55] expertise. So whether we can quickly help them in the case of like they are destitute and need financial support or if it's hey we're heading that way can we start to direct you to or a better way of living whether it be downsizing or things in your home itself that is one of the things we can take advantage of here in the city I'm sorry if I could add as well so the city does offer what I would consider a pretty robust tax relief program for our seniors and also our elderly and disabled we're actually in the process April 15th is the cutoff for the annual

[01:55:29] basis for people to apply and also renew that application. It's based off of a certain asset amount that you can have. Total assets of about \$400,000 and then also an annual income threshold depending on certain levels. You would either get 100%, 75%, 50%, or 25% credit on your real estate tax bill. Once you qualify, you just have to renew on an annual basis for three years.

[01:55:57] To give you a very good statistic from last year, there was about 250 individuals who applied and who received that tax benefit, totaling about \$1.3 million in revenue that was not received on the city, that we were able to give those elderly residents, those potentially disabled residents, that tax benefit on the city side.

[01:56:21] And that's something that we review on an annual basis, bring to council every November, and say, would you like to review this and or increase those thresholds? And so for people who are listening this evening who may have an interest, do they call the city and say, I'd like to talk to somebody about tax relief for seniors?

[01:56:39] Absolutely. I know the treasurer, they receive a lot of individuals that come there. He also provides some of that service and information. It's actually administered through the finance department. Sue Heath is the one who actually administers that. Everyone knows her.

[01:56:55] She has traffic in and out of that office constantly between now and April 15th. Some individuals will reach out to the real estate assessment director, Christine Johnson. She will direct them accordingly as well. And that information is also on the website. April 15th is the deadline.

[01:57:12] For 2026. For the programs you are referencing, for the people who are listening in this evening, how do they reach you? How do they place a call and say, you know what, I could use a little bit of advice here? Probably the easiest way is either to call into the city itself.

[01:57:31] So the same way you'd call a city manager suite, you'd be able to talk to us. Who do they ask for? The CRT. You would get one of the three of us, and then that would... CRT? Yes, sir. The other way to do it would be referred to us by email, which is communityresponseteam@fairfaxva.gov.

[01:57:48] Very helpful to know, because I think one of the other things that is perhaps generational, There may be more to it than that is the way people communicate. And for some people, it's a whole lot easier to place a telephone call than it is to get on a computer and start punching numbers and all that kind of stuff.

[01:58:09] So it's great to make a call and to get somebody live who can help on these kinds of things. I think that's just a really crucial thing. The other thing that I think is worth just knowing and noticing in case you haven't is that a lot of people are working a lot longer than they used to.

[01:58:25] Part of that's necessity. You can't retire. I'm so sorry to say the retirement calculator ain't what it used to be. So people are staying in the workforce and that should be recognized and we should reward that without any penalty. I hate to use the term age discrimination, but I will because when you get there, you know how it feels. So we need to create an environment that takes care of people who are continuing to work past the ages when in the past we thought it was retirement time because that is norming a heck of a lot these days.

[01:59:02] So there's that. I mean, some people can't do that, but a whole lot of people can. People are taking care of themselves also. So the whole definition of age brackets is now not what it used to be. So we just need to get used to the fact that we've got an active, older population of professionals and others who are working and otherwise really active, fully active, and we need to appreciate that and not limit it.

[01:59:27] The other thing speaking, anybody who's gotten older at whatever age this happens, but particularly after a certain point, you start to wish that you had known and done certain things earlier in your life. So I don't know where that fits in, in terms of what we do here, but back to the financial side, one of them is wishing you had started saving money earlier to help people financially at the earliest possible ages.

[01:59:57] I think it really needs to start in high school, honestly, the concept of saving and building a savings. There's taking care of your health and being proactive about that and not thinking that it's going to take care of itself for you. But there's a whole lot of things that make a very big difference in people's lives if they are proactive early in life and continuously.

[02:00:18] And yet, for whatever reason, a lot of times we don't realize that until we sort of cross the bridge later on and say, good grief, I wish I'd known that. So, again, I don't know where that goes in terms of what we can do to help at an intergenerational people level, younger people, appreciate the need to focus on those things.

[02:00:37] So I would offer that as well. I was going to say, too, you know, not only with the SIRT team, if there's ever a question in the community where somebody just doesn't know what to do, they can call me. You know, Leslie Abashen, they can call me and I can connect.

[02:00:57] You know, I might connect them to Jamie. I may connect them to SIRT team. I may connect them for adult services because, I mean, that's kind of what I do. And I think a lot of times I may not have the answer, but I can at least hear what's going on and try to figure out where they're trying to get and at least get them started because I think sometimes you just need a problem-solver buddy, you know, like somebody that you can kind of work with and kind of figure out what's available.

[02:01:26] So I would put my name out there, too. Well, if I could just add and appreciate if there's one thing, this has been wonderful to hear all of this this evening, but if there's one thing that I think is the most helpful and important of all is that there's an opportunity for people to pick up a telephone and call the city, ask for one of you, or at least just ask the operator who they can talk to, and they get somebody to talk to.

[02:01:57] They get a person to talk to about all this. The human side of this just cannot be overstated. So really appreciate that that's an opportunity. And again, for everybody who's listening in this evening, I would strongly encourage you not to hesitate to call the city about anything like this at any time.

[02:02:13] You know, folks who've gone through that experience will tell you it has been so good to make that call and to talk to one of you guys and have you talk to them and help you out with all this and kind of navigate your way through whatever it is. So it's really great to know, and I'm hoping that you will be sure to continue doing that.

[02:02:33] Until I retire. Other questions, comments from the dais? So I'm just going to show you my Young at Heart Senior Center card, because this is a very unflattering photo.

[02:02:49] I'm one of the 7,000 people who are members who, every time I walk in there, I never have it on me, so I don't swipe it for you to know that I'm one of the 146. But, you know, this is something that everybody can get.

[02:03:07] I want to give a shout-out to Gloria Toner, who is a young-at-heart Senior Center superstar, and she is the living embodiment of what it means to age gracefully and vibrantly in the city of Fairfax.

[02:03:22] And she might be your most senior member of the Senior Center. Nah. Nah. Well, and, you know, and we've got somebody who's coming up with a 100th birthday on July 4th, which is Virginia Mahoney here in the city, too.

[02:03:41] Just putting that out there because I'm thinking about Virginia, who will be 100 on the 4th of July. We do have a lot of people who have lived most of their lives here who are in different places in their lives and who require different kinds of supports and services. But, you know, one of the things earlier this evening we were discussing, the Willard Sherwood Center and the senior center that will go at the Willard Sherwood Center.

[02:04:01] And that is a facility for the 7,000 people who have this card to go in there and get the community connection to take the exercise classes to play pickleball or basketball or bocce to do.

[02:04:18] And that's something that we as a city can offer the people who choose to age here. And I would just close by saying thanks to all of you for supporting the older people who live in the city, including me, because, look, I have a card. Aging is a privilege. It truly is. And it certainly beats the alternative.

[02:04:38] Something to keep in mind for those of us who have fewer years ahead of us than we have behind us. So I appreciate the fact that our city has centered people who are seniors and that we care about them and that we work to build the programs and the services and the places for them to be.

[02:04:59] So thank you all very much for your presentation. Councilmember Peterson? i don't think we're doing council comments tonight we are not so i just as a matter of personal privilege would like to wish my mother a happy birthday this thursday she will turn 98 there you go there you go and she lives right here in the city of fairfax on edstill road across from woodson in a nice residential home there where she's been now for almost a decade amazing yeah amazing let's hear for tom's mom okay these are the people we do this for thank

[02:05:36] you all so much ms shinneberry who do we have up next our next items discussion on translation services for city council meetings i'm going to recognize matthew kaiser or communications and

[02:05:47] marketing director for the presentation right are you ready are you ready i i'm i'm ready if you're

[02:06:44] ready we're ready we're ready okay we're ready well good evening mary reed city council um matthew Kaiser, communications director, and I'm here with Dave Welch, who is our executive video producer. Typically, you don't see him because he's back in the back room managing these meetings. He and his team make sure that these run smoothly. So he's very aware of the technology in these rooms, the software behind it. And in that vein, he has discovered a new service. It's 2026.

[02:07:14] Technology is crazy, and this is wild. Real-time translation service for any meetings in this room or council chambers so you can imagine if someone has a land use case or if they're at a school board meeting and their siblings or sons daughters granddaughters are being talked about and languages and English isn't their first language you can imagine that that would be a problem right a barrier maybe they wouldn't even attend the meeting maybe they'd just be unaware of what's being discussed so kind of following this last presentation with

[02:07:49] Leslie's team, inclusivity, right, and breaking down these barriers to have a government who serves everyone. So we were kind of asked to look at different options for language translation. There's several out there. There's some devices that are similar to the hearing box over here, you know, that you have to kind of keep clean and batteries charged and, you know, they're not used very often, so is that always the case? But this is a really kind of magical solution we've stumbled to cross and it actually is with the same company that provides our services now so there's not a

[02:08:26] huge lift as far as you know digging up the floor and rewiring things putting in new speakers or microphones if you have a if you have a smartphone this will work for you and with that i'm going to give it to dave because he is the expert here and be able to walk you through what we've found i will say this is only a one-slide presentation, but you get to check this out at the end. So the service that we have is called CableCast MediaScribe, and CableCast is the system that runs our broadcast, which we all watch

[02:09:03] streaming through Cox and Verizon, various places. So what is MediaScribe? A little bit technical here. It's described as a one-site gateway appliance that connects to our meetings AV feed using automatic speech recognition in the cloud to convert spoken words, anything that's coming through these microphones, into text and audio in real time. And it does have up to 72 languages.

[02:09:30] So it's got a pretty robust collection of languages. So how does it work? Residents or anybody attending a meeting can scan a QR code. You can select your desired language and read the live translated text on your own personal device. You'll see an asterisk here. There will be in-ear spoken translations that'll be released. They have it in beta form now, so when you look at it, you'll hear Spanish. It'll speak German, a few other languages, but that's coming.

[02:10:07] What does staff need to do? This is a pretty simple process for staff. We basically turn it on at the beginning of the meeting and turn it off at the end. So very little interaction with the technology for us, for staff during the meeting. Funding. So this is not a general fund.

[02:10:26] This would not be a general fund expenditure. This would come from the cable grant fund, which is outside of the general fund. And it is a five-year term that includes all of the hardware and the licensing at \$70,000, and it's a pretty quick implementation time.

[02:10:47] So you've got about four weeks' implementation time from the initiation of the project, which is basically we have a PO and we're ready to get to work on it. So this is the presentation, but I think the fun part, really, Matthew has something else.

[02:11:07] Hold the fun, hold the fun. So just for the benefit of other people who aren't aware of the Cable Grant Fund, that is the franchise fees that Cox and Verizon pay the city for the privilege of having their businesses here, right? So that's not tax money from residents.

[02:11:24] That is a franchise fee from those businesses. That's something that Dave manages. As we know, as people have cut the cord and gone to streaming services, that stream of revenue has shriveled, so we have to manage it. and make equipment last a little bit longer.

[02:11:41] But we think that this is a valuable way to spend some of that money. The other thing I wanted to say is that this has potential to be a two-way communications device. So in the same way that the resident is here listening to the language spoken, their native language, if they want to communicate back to you, you just have to have the app open and put in your earbuds, and you'll be able to hear what they're saying in English.

[02:12:07] So that is going to be pretty cool. So with that, it's show and tell time. Ms. Shinneberry has some QR codes if you'd like to scan that just to see how it works. This would have been so useful today.

[02:12:23] We had the mayor of Kalika Municipality in Nepal. I thought that same thing. Yes, yes, and, of course, I don't speak his language, and he had a translator with him, but, man, this would have been so cool to try out with the mayor.

[02:12:38] Anything that's spoken into a microphone would be captured, and you can select a language. So if you open this, if you scan the QR code and open, it doesn't open an app. It goes to Cablecast Cloud Service. And once it populates your screen, you will see on the bottom right-hand side an icon, a figure inside of a circle.

[02:13:04] If you tap that icon, you can select a language, you can select the font size, the spacing, and you can select audio. While the Spanish translation and audio portion is beta, I have found it does work.

[02:13:20] A few other languages do work, but right now they're not committing to that. But I've noticed that they're working even in beta form. And if anybody has a question on how to open this and use it, happy to help. so what you're seeing um i worked with cable cast to give them one of our previous work sessions with the school board yep and then you'll see that it's it's branded with our with our seal in the top left corner and then you'll see the translation happening of that previous work

[02:13:58] session so i had to give them they can't do it live because it requires the appliance to get it live but yeah this is all wrong we have to pay for it first and get it installed then it'll be real time but this but that was the next best best thing you know using something pre-recorded that they could use right so you can see all the stuff and if you don't see a language there is a little search box so you can type in the language and it'll usually bring it up for you language okay i actually we went toward um old dominion university over the weekend with my junior and

[02:14:36] they offer something like this in their classes which i just think was amazing and they're like tell everybody about it i think they're the only university that actually offers it so this is super exciting that we can be doing this here in the city were they using the media scribe um they called it some sort of odu something so i don't know if they just rebranded it might have Yeah, but I just thought it was super cool, because we have another friend with a son at Radford, and he's got one class where the professor has just such a heavy accent that he just can't really understand it, and so he's struggling in the class, and I'm trying to think of all these things, ChatGPT, Google, this, that, and I mean, the fact that this

[02:15:15] is presentation tonight was just very, very timely, and I'm all in for this. So Dave and I have both worked in surrounding jurisdictions, and we've checked, and nobody else is using this yet so this would be a very forward-thinking thing for the city to adopt and we've already heard other people were like wait what you're going to be doing that sounds like something we should be doing so now sign me up i'm in i'm all in in fact my counterparts at fairfax county said they were coming tonight so i'm glad they're not glaring over my shoulder tonight council member hardy chandler i like that you can also adjust the font for those of us who

[02:15:51] are older it's amazing council member Peterson I don't know if you've checked quality control issues but it'd be worth doing that so not not all translators are created equal right right and not all languages are easy similar and ease to translate and sometimes you can get some goofs sometimes they're problematic you know I've used a lot of translators and a lot of public meetings and a lot of countries and you find it real quick that there are certain things that they have a tough

[02:16:26] time with. And so technical things are a prime example of that. It's often difficult for translation programs to be able to sort out technical terminology, jargon of different types. And we use a lot of jargon politically in this country as well that's very difficult to translate into other countries. And sometimes it translates in ways that are offensive or embarrassing and all that. So just a long way of saying to the extent you can check it out to see how this has worked for others who've had to use it in this kind of an operating environment, I think it'd be helpful to do.

[02:16:57] Yeah, for sure. Something to keep in mind. I mean, we've been able to, I think, take a look at the Spanish translation and been able to identify that it is accurate. Now, you know, further testing, you know, there are ways to use vocabulary where you can go back in and tell it, don't use this word, use this word, which we can do with our captioning, our cloud captioning for the meetings as well.

[02:17:23] So those are all things that we'll certainly keep an eye on. Might I suggest you try it in Chinese? I would like to have somebody who speaks Chinese and actually look at it. That's exactly what I would suggest is somebody who's fluent even.

[02:17:42] And we have a lot of translators who live here and they do this for a living. My next door neighbor teaches Chinese and English and what have you. There are people who could help you with that. But that's one of the trickier ones. And let me just say, that's one where the translation mechanisms sometimes falter.

[02:18:01] Understood. Council Member Hardy-Chandler? Yeah, I think it would be helpful for our top spoken languages, which Korean is spoken. I'm curious, in addition to setting up parameters for words that aren't used, does it learn then?

[02:18:20] Can it adjust through use? And so will it kind of build a vocabulary around commonly used phrases or things that we tend to touch on? I believe we can help it learn. We can do that with the cable cast cloud captioning that we use to caption planning commission, school board, and work session meetings.

[02:18:45] We can help it develop a vocabulary if we notice things need to be changed if it's using the wrong term. CNI funding was one it was I forget what it was saying but it was it was capturing the gist of what was being said but if you read it it didn't quite make sense so you can go in and change it and it'll it'll learn but you have to help it learn and when you say we would that fall on you and do you have the

capacity to do that on an ongoing basis if this were to be implemented we have so far I mean it can be time-consuming we haven't had too many obstacles with

[02:19:22] helping the cloud captioning AI captioner learn so far it's been fairly accurate we've only had to make a few small adjustments with it so that that would be helpful if it worked that way for this service as well if we didn't have to make you know baskets of adjustments to the vocabulary but you know adjustments here and there once you do it stores them and it remembers but But that would be under your purview?

[02:19:50] Right, under staff in communications. Okay. Just want to make sure that there are backups for it. Right. Other questions or comments? Mine would be, like, how fast do we get this? What do we have to do to get this, like, right now?

[02:20:06] I'm sure the sales team would be willing to hear from us. Wow. I mean, this is just so extraordinary. I mean, we've been talking about it. Our school board members have been talking about it. I've been talking about it for four years. The fact that we have such a diverse community here, and I feel like people do not participate because language is a barrier.

[02:20:26] So I would love to do, I would love to have an evening where we just invite all the people we know who speak native languages to just come, even if they don't stay for the whole meeting. Just come, do the app, and tell us, do quality testing. Do quality testing and tell us if the Vietnamese is accurate or if the Urdu is accurate.

[02:20:47] because that would be such an exciting way to invite the community in to do something to help us, but also to introduce them to the idea that they can come and participate in local government because now they understand in their native language what we're talking about.

[02:21:04] Yes, Councilmember Hall. Can they do this from home if they're not live in the meeting? I believe they have to be present in the room to do it, but I can check on that and see if they're going to develop something because it relies on capturing the audio here through the microphones and it has to pass back through the system.

[02:21:29] But I can check on that. Yeah, I just didn't know if they weren't present, but they watched it either not live, but if they went back and watched a recording of it, if that would then be an option since it's maybe hearing it on one end and then translating it on their end, maybe.

[02:21:46] I don't think it does, but again, I can check on that. Not to crap on your great idea here. I mean, again, we're never going to get everybody all the time for everything, but I think we're making these steps we're doing, we're trying, and I want to applaud you for what you've done to find this and to bring it here.

[02:22:06] I appreciate it. Thank you. I think this is gateway technology, quite frankly, because AI is out there, and we know that AI is a large language learning model, right? So this is the gateway product, and I've said for years, I believe the technology was there.

[02:22:22] no one brought it to market as a product this is an app or it's not even i don't know what this is it's not really an app it's something and but the point is is that the technology exists it's how do you bring it into a space where you can utilize it and this is an excellent way and i think probably how quickly this morphs into something else because the audio is already in beta i think this is going to be fast i think this

is going to be fast i would love for the city to be on the leading edge of us doing this because then i think school boards and other jurisdictions and people

[02:23:02] in the northern virginia region all of whom have very very diverse populations of people this is something that really needs to become like the basic level of expectation in local government in my opinion council member hall just realized i probably asked a dumb question but how did you do this because this is a recorded right correct so in working with cablecast and media scribe we had our meeting with the city manager we we realized and he had a good thought well can't we put one

[02:23:36] of our own because their demo model is a is a council meeting from somewhere in the midwest and we thought well can't we put one of our own meetings on there i thought well we might be able to so in working with cablecast they said yeah we'll just need to talk to our engineers just here's the site where you can upload a video.

[02:23:56] Let's pick a meeting. And they trimmed a piece that was workable. And so it's playing in a loop right now. Okay. So maybe in the future, there would be an ability to upload it and then be able to stream it or send out a link or something. I'm not guaranteeing anything, nor am I asking you to.

[02:24:13] But it sounds like there is that capability. I see where you're going with that. Like if you're able to do it for this little clip for the demo, why couldn't you do the whole meeting in whatever language you've wanted it in? yes yes yeah good question something i can ask them yeah thank you so i guess one of the questions i had day was um you know relative to a live meeting for broadcasting the qr code what prevents me from at home using the qr code and and watching my translation my inclination is to say you could do that but i don't want to say you could do that and then cable cast tell me you can't do that yet

[02:24:48] so yeah i'll i'll ask them and and see if that's possible it seems like it would be on the surface right but i can confirm with their engineering we're just going we're going to a site from wherever we are whether we're sitting here or if we're at home so it seems logical but certainly we'll go through that the other comment i would make is that i think that media scribe has probably 1100 or so clients across the country to your point earlier about that it's developing now i'm sure not all of them are doing the translation piece there are not many they're doing it in if any in NOVA now, but I anticipate that this is going to continue to grow over time, get better as it learns,

[02:25:27] and so expect that to happen. If there aren't any objections, I think we move forward. We understand that it's largely a pilot in some regards, a living, breathing process, and we'll just go ahead and move forward with the process unless there are objections. Unless anybody objects, I think that this would be a great, I would love to pilot this, and it'd be good to understand what the business model is, too, because thinking about the fact that you have to be in the room or somebody's going to scan a code to access this while they're here, one assumes that a subscription

[02:26:05] business model might make it available for someone to purchase this as an app. I don't know what their model is, if they're providing it to a municipal government, if you're in the room, but in the future will they offer an actual app that maybe you purchase the app or there's a subscription or something i mean there has to be a business model to develop something like this but i don't know what it is and you probably don't know what it is either other than this is what they're doing right now for organizations like ours but i think in the future bringing to

[02:26:39] market a model where people can put it on their phone even if there's a cost i think people would do that. I would do that in a heartbeat. I would pay for this. Yes, Councilmember Hardy-Chandler. So when we launch this multilingual test, which is sort of could be a kickoff, could we have a representative from there attend and give us sort of the business model at all, what they're envisioning, and maybe what they're anticipating in terms of future capacity? I could ask if they able to have somebody attend but i'm sure that's information that we could ask them at least find

[02:27:18] out where they're headed that would probably be the easiest way what can you tell us about where you're headed what your business model will be and if you're going to go public just you don't have to ask that but you could say and are you gonna i'm just kidding but you know this to me is like the greatest thing since sliced white bread in my opinion but maybe it's just because i wanted it for such a long time council member peterson well so if i understand it the advantage that we're after here is something we call simultaneous translation. It's real time, as opposed to sequential, which has delay. Sequential, you can do right now, right? You just do a voice memo. It

[02:27:57] does a transcript. You put it into whatever translation program you want, and you're done with it. So for people who are listening in, just to know if you want to do that, if you want to record this meeting, do a transcript, and then a translation, you can do that on your home right away this has the advantage of giving you live concurrent or what we call simultaneous translation so you don't have to wait and go through that drill is that a fair characterization of what's going on here that is that is fair we we had some other talks with folks who are using live

[02:28:32] translators in the room and my counterparts of the county described a few situations with land use cases where they requested the live in-room translator, a human being, and there has to be a statement. The translator has to hear the statement. The translator has to translate the statement.

[02:28:55] And so it's a kind of a, there's a block of time, a pause, another block of time, a pause. So having something like this where you're getting, yes, a live in real time, basically translation is very helpful in those situations yeah seamless natural just conversational that's the goal council member hall just a flashback to pandemic learning for parents that had kids i think this is more like synchronous learning as opposed to asynchronous learning right you're not watching the teacher tell you something after the fact you're actually listening at the time so good old pandemic and i

[02:29:32] think it helps people participate in the moment you know because we need to be able to hear from from people and understand and they need to understand us especially people giving public comment I think that's a struggle if people are doing it in English and that's not their primary language it'd be great if they could do it in their language knowing that all of us would hear exactly what they're saying as they're saying it I think that's such a game changer this is this is such a game changer just huge council member McQuillan I think this also just kind of compliments you know in our meetings we added the closed caption element which I personally love

[02:30:09] to use when some of our speakers that come out for public comment whether they speak too quietly or a little softly or just can't make out a word that's been really helpful and I just see this as you know being an extension of that but for other other languages so this is great I love this thank you wow anything else anything I think we've got we're just all enthusiastic here just a ball of enthusiasm right here in this room so I should make headway on this project I think you should I think enthusiastically, yes.

[02:30:40] Thank you for your time. We're really excited to share that. I'm glad that you felt the same way. We're very excited. Thank you so much. Thank you. Ms. Shinneberry, what do we have next? Well, our last item is a discussion on the proposed FY 2027 budget, general fund questions, and discussion.

[02:30:57] I'm going to recognize Daniel Alexander, our city manager, for the discussion. We hope you're just as enthusiastic. And I will then ask our Assistant City Manager and CFO to lead us in this discussion, Mr. Martinez. Sure. Thank you, City Manager.

[02:31:15] Mayor, Council, thank you for the opportunity. We are a little more than halfway through the budget process going into the beginning of April. Tonight, no structured discussion other than if you would like to review the eight budget memos that have been published.

[02:31:32] We will be more than happy to review any of them. know specifically number six I would like to bring to your attention and get some guidance based on some recommendations as well but before we get to budget memo number six if there are any specific budget memos one through eight that you would like for us to review we do have them or we can bring them up on the screen if need be and that way the public can review can we review them or receive them as well additionally as we previously stated all All of these have been posted online to the budget web page and then also in Engage.

[02:32:10] Additionally, beyond these eight budget memos, we have also answered probably about 10 to 12 emails from citizens or residents that have emailed either mayor or us directly. Additionally, there have also been probably a handful, four to five questions asked through the Engage site that we've also responded to.

[02:32:30] So we are trying to be as responsive and as transparent as possible. With that, any questions, any budget memo that Council would like us to review, provide further clarifying information? Do we have Council Member Peterson?

[02:32:48] Number 8. And I think it's number 1, actually. And BPAL would be helpful. 1 and 6. What was 6 or 1 and 6?

[02:33:05] They are. So I heard Budget Memo 1, 6, and 8. Is that correct? That's what I heard. Okay. Do you want to bring up budget memo one, Ms. Riddle?

[02:33:29] I also, number five, just as a general conversation. Sure. So very quickly, what do you see on the screen? And then also what has been previously provided as budget memo number one. I think this was the first one.

[02:33:46] Some questions were asked regarding B-Pole the last time that the rates had changed. What is our current B-Pole rates? We did engage the Commissioner of Revenue, Mr. Page Johnson, who provided us, actually i think provided council directly the responses there was some follow-up with that response directly with council those interactions were listed sort of copied and pasted from those emails into the budget memo if you go to the second page really quick miss riddle the commissioner

[02:34:21] revenue did provide some graphics and a chart that are displayed there up on the screen sort of being given a comparison of B poll rates within our Northern Virginia area, how the city, which is sort of highlighted in that red or salmon color sort of in the middle, and then the Northern Virginia average as well towards the bottom in that green or yellow color.

[02:34:47] My color scheme is different than what is on the sheet there or what's being displayed there. But I think additionally, the Commission of Revenue sort of noted that we were almost at the max at every single section except for one. That one specifically is in the professional real estate and financial section.

[02:35:09] We are currently at .40 when the Northern Virginia average is .48. I think in some correspondence back with Council, the Commission of Revenue noted that that may be a possibility of a potential increase in that one area everything else we are either at the max or at the statutory max which would also require either going back to the general assembly and asking mom and dad for permission to increase if need be i'm happy to answer any additional questions off of that council member peterson

[02:35:44] just to clarify the last how are the last two different lessors of property one more time I'm council member sorry so if I'm on the right graph I've got two column sets that have the same label one's commercial one's residential okay great sure not quite on and if I'm reading it correctly the first one is one where the city is lower significantly than the region correct it should be I think the one you're referring to is lessors of property in parentheses commercial

[02:36:24] we are at 0.23 the northern virginia average is 0.30 the state maximum is actually 0.23 so we are currently at the state maximum okay so there would be that one plus professional uh the professional category those are the two where we are a bit below yes and no so the lessors of property commercial side we are at the max based off of what the state would allow i would assume that

[02:36:59] in some time in the past the state did not have a state maximum and localities had different rates at some point the state came in and said this is the maximum and that's sort of where we are now if we were wanting to increase that we would have to petition the general assembly to go anything above 0.23. Unlike the other half that you mentioned, Council Member Peterson, the professional real estate and financial, where the state maximum is 0.58, the city's currently at 0.40,

[02:37:33] the Northern Virginia average is 0.48. That one, there would be room potentially to increase. So I guess my question overall here is where we do have opportunities for expansion, and it looks like we've got some space between where we are at large and where the region is, Northern Virginia region.

[02:37:56] What's the economic development effect on that in terms of business retention and expansion? Is it measurable? Is it significant? Is it insignificant? You know, does this make any difference at all in terms of, again, retention and expansion of business?

[02:38:12] And if so, how much? Do we have any idea based on data, based on experience from others? Sure. great question unfortunately a question that i will not be able to answer tonight i would ask to probably have a conference with our colleagues whether it's the commissioner revenue and economic development more than likely just the commissioner revenue to see if he can provide us some of that economic data that would better inform that decision mr alexander i think it's an excellent segue if council is okay with us to move into number six because we do talk about the

[02:38:50] and additional revenue sources so budget memo budget memo number six to the manager's point and I think to where I think councilmember Peterson maybe councilmember or other council members were sort of alluding to if we were to potentially increase that one segment in the people rate the that area

[02:39:22] specifically in professional real estate and financial from point four to the Northern Virginia average of 0.48 the Commission of Revenue did state that bringing that up by that amount would

potentially generate an additional almost \$700,000 so 698,000 he stated each additional one cent increase would yield about eighty seven thousand three hundred twenty five dollars so that would be a potential amount of additional revenue that has not been added or was

[02:40:00] included in the manager's proposed budget. Again, I would need to follow up with the Commissioner of Revenue and try to get some of that economic data to see what the impact would potentially be if we were to do something like that. That aside, again, trying to increase that rate to the Northern Virginia average of 0.48 would potentially generate an additional \$700,000 that has not previously been advertised or incorporated in the FY27 proposed budget. That being said, we are on somewhat of a tight timeline. I'm looking at the city clerk

[02:40:38] to verify this. So April 14th, so next Tuesday, seven days from today, we will be advertising the introductions of certain rates. A B poll is currently not listed in any staff report. It is, again, not listed in the manager proposed budget. If council were to give us direction or the recommendation that we would give is to potentially add that in as a potential option or lever doesn't necessarily mean we have to pull that lever at a later date we could just introduce it

[02:41:12] go through the administrative process if council so decides to not do anything to it we don't have to take any action on that item very similar to what transpired last year with the meals rate where we introduced it it went all the way through budget adoption that night we actually affirmed no action made no change but we went through the process so that would be a potential recommendation that staff would give given where we are sort of in the budget process and the administrative timing on the requirements to introduce and advertise accordingly council

[02:41:51] member hall thank you i am very much in favor of that i think even if we didn't go that route now it's a conversation but i think if we don't do that and we don't introduce it next tuesday we've completely missed the opportunity to have potentially a new dedicated revenue source that we haven't had before. And I also would be open to having a conversation about if some portion of this maybe could go to economic development. I know their budget was significantly slashed this year, about \$300,000 or so due to the ARPA funding and some other strangities, I'll call it.

[02:42:30] But I think, you know, there's only so much that we can do with our general fund, and I think this is definitely something that we should at least consider and not ignore. Thank you. Council Member Peterson?

[02:42:47] Just agreeing. Okay, Council Member Hardy-Chandler, thoughts? I support things that allow us flexibility later on. So being consistent with that, I am not opposed to introducing it. Council Member Bates?

[02:43:04] I support introducing it. Council Member McQuillan? Absolutely. Yes. Okay. There you have it. Yes. Councilmember Hall. Thank you. It wasn't covered more fully, and there may be a reason why this wasn't discussed further, but if we go back to budget memo one, there's, and again, I'm not trying to tax the crap out of everybody, just trying to understand. There's another line for services, business, personal repair. We're at 0.27. The Northern Virginia average is 0.3. The state maximum is 0.36. Was that another area of consideration. I'm curious what that would generate, and I'm also curious what types of

[02:43:43] businesses that kind of covers and what we'd be looking at there. Sorry, one more point. Whether we jump up to 0.48 in our advertisement or if we decide to implement in stages, is that something

that could be open for discussion when we add an introduction to this next week? I know you're looking at me. I'm sorry. Waiting to see if there's any other questions before. Nope, those are them. Thank you. So question, let me start backwards. So question number two, in discussion

[02:44:15] with the city attorney, this sort of came up and his advice to us is very similarly to the max advertised rate on the real estate tax. Once you set it, you can always go down, but you cannot go up. So our recommendation would be to advertise, if we're going to make the change on that one specific item, advertise 0.48. If council so chooses collectively, you could reduce that to wherever you want it to go. But if you start at 0.41, you cannot go above 0.41. So our

[02:44:54] recommendation would be advertise the max. If need be, pull back. Thank you very much. I would agree with that. Question number one, because I'm going in reverse, services, like you noted, was 0.27 the northern virginia average is 0.3 difference of about three basis points i would need to get with the commissioner revenue see how much potential revenue that would generate i think the reason we did not recommend a change to that is that there was not as much variance between the 0.4 and the 0.48 it is very comparable on 0.27 to 0.3 if you look at some of the other northern

[02:45:33] VIRGINIA'S RATES, THEY ARE PRETTY COMPARABLE. AGAIN, THE AVERAGE IS .3. YES, THE STATE MAXIMUM IS .36. WE COULD POTENTIALLY GO UP TO THAT AMOUNT. I CAN HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE COMMISSIONER REVENUE IF NEED BE. THAT WOULD BE ANOTHER ITEM THAT IF COUNCIL SO CHOOSES, WE COULD ALSO INTRODUCE AS WELL.

[02:45:55] MAYBE AT .36 OR .30. I DON'T KNOW WHAT COUNCIL'S SORT OF FEELING OR THOUGHT IS ON THAT RIGHT NOW. I'm not saying yes, definitely, but I would like to understand, is that another \$600,000 in revenue, or is this a \$60,000 revenue difference?

[02:46:13] I think those might be key differentials for, again, is the juice worth the squeeze, or what are we looking at? Sure, I can try to get you that information as quickly as possible. Thank you. As noted, we would have to get something introduced and published by the end of business tomorrow, if I'm not mistaken.

[02:46:32] Okay. For me, that would be, it would be nice to know how much we're talking about before we commit to advertising something like that. Sure. But I don't expect anyone to pull it out of their back pocket at the moment either. Well, so my concern is that we will not have a chance to have a discussion in the next 24 hours. Right. So if we are of the mind that it's better to put it out there and say no than it is yes than to say let's try to do something but we can't

[02:47:08] communicate we can't talk about it so I sort of feel like if you think there's something there and maybe there's nothing there there but if you think there's something there and everybody agrees let's put it out there as an introduction and then we find out it's not meh then we just we just pull back and we're like we're not going to do that that was going to be my request of council to consider but thank you it sounds like everybody's on board with giving ourselves flexibility you can always say no after the fact but we cannot in 24 hours regroup and have a discussion about this so I think we're better off just doing

[02:47:43] it getting the information sure so that it can be discussed a future meeting sure and we'll do I mean you'll see it in the introduction because it needs to be published but we'll probably do another budget memo as well in conjunction in coordination with the Commission of Revenue so that way you clearly understand counsel the body understands what the thought process was and what the values would

be as well so we could definitely do that if I can sort of go back to budget memo six because I heard something on potentially earmarking or setting aside some money for economic development in addition or the second part of budget memo number six we talk about the TOT the

[02:48:22] transit occupancy tax tax that's sort of on the second page I think Ms. Riddle has it up perfect so currently we are introducing that rate subject to legislation being passed it was introduced it seems like it's favorable we will not know until the 13th of April but in discussion again with the city attorney he's suggesting that we introduce it contingent upon the formal approval from the General Assembly given that we've met the

[02:48:56] introduction process it's currently at 4% we would be recommending and this was sort of built into the budget via signed fund balance, as sort of discussed in the memo, to 9%. If there is potential desire and recommendation from the staff is potentially increasing that another 3%, so going from 9% to 12%. Again, 9% is the average amount within Northern Virginia when you look at Fairfax County, Arlington, and Alexandria. If we were to go from a potential

[02:49:34] 9% to 12%. That would generate about another \$375,000. It is noted in the budget memo that council may designate those revenues for a specific purpose, such as economic development, or allow those funds to remain unrestricted for the general fund. We can definitely have those discussions at a later time. Again, right now, the way that it's listed in the introduction, it is at 9%. So I'm asking, and staff is sort of recommending potentially going up to 12%, but sort of need guidance from

[02:50:10] council on that. So the thing I would raise here is we don't have a lot of hotels in the city. And I don't even know that all the hotels that are in the city are going to continue to be a going concern, because there might be one that's for sale.

[02:50:29] So raising the tax rate is one thing, but the reason that the number is so small at 375 is that it doesn't matter how much how high it is we're just not the revenue's not there i mean in the future we could build more hotels but that i don't think that's going to happen in the next three years three to five years so when you think about raising it to 12 it sounds like it's a high number but it applies to a very small number of properties. So to get any significant income from the TOT, you almost have to go higher

[02:51:09] because there's just not enough properties to produce anything. So that's just my two cents worth. But Council Member Hall, thoughts on that? Yeah, I think it's kind of like the others where I think going 12% is a good number to start with and to put out there for a public hearing.

[02:51:27] To your point, we don't have a ton of hotels, but what we do have is anticipated to bring in an extra \$625,000 if we went to 9% and then to bring in another 375 on top of that. So that's like an extra million dollars right there. And most people that are paying this in most cases are not city residents that are here and all of that. So, um, and the hope for me at least is that we do become a bit of a tourism destination and that we start to have some, um, additional hotels and opportunities so i i would be all in for these and i also i do want to thank you for the

[02:52:04] work that went in into the outside the box thinking of something beyond real estate taxes i think we've been strongly reliant on that and i'm really happy to see that we're considering these other options so thank you and council member really quickly and it's on the screen right now as well um so your math wasn't too far off and you're absolutely right it's about an additional \$1.1 million or the

equivalent of 1.21 cents on the current real estate tax rate by doing these two changes. The BPOL change specifically, and we can incorporate what the

[02:52:39] change would be on the other side, but the 698 that's listed there is going from 0.40 to 0.48 in that one category, and then going from 9 to 12 percent is an additional 375 on the TOT. Combine those two, that's about \$1.1 million, not including the other potential BPOLE aspect of it.

[02:53:03] So, may I? Yes, go ahead. Thank you. I'm on budget memo, I think. On page two, it talks about the TOT. It says, increasing the current rate from four to nine, is it estimated to generate approximately \$625,000 in additional tax revenue?

[02:53:23] So I was taking the \$625, plus then if we went from \$9 to \$12, it would be another \$375. So I was looking at \$625 and \$375 to get \$1 million. But that doesn't include the, is it because the \$625 is already in the budget?

[02:53:39] I knew we were getting there together. All right. But either way, we are looking at substantially more revenue than we have been generating previously with these same categories. So thank you for your clarification. Council Member Peterson. So two questions. The similar question we had on B poll, which is what's the sensitivity, the demand sensitivity to the higher tax?

[02:54:00] Is that significant in terms of, you know, occupancy? Does it do anything to hurt the economic performance of the hotels? I don't know, but it just would be good to know where we are within that band of price sensitivity for them.

[02:54:17] The second thing is in terms of where if we do collect some set of funds, whether they go to or stay in an unrestricted and general fund or are set aside for economic development, I take it that that is an open option at this stage and we could make a decision about what we'd want in the future.

[02:54:36] And to the extent that that is an option we talk about, you know, I'd like a little bit more background information about what the purpose and need of those funds would be in economic development and then relative to keeping in the general fund as well.

[02:54:52] I just like some clarity about what we're dealing with there. Sure. And we can provide that. I will give you a little bit of background. A CURRENT EDA BOARD MEMBER, I THINK, WORKS OR REPRESENTS THE HOTEL INDUSTRY AND IS ACTUALLY ADVOCATING TO INCREASE OUR TOT AS WELL BECAUSE SHE IS AWARE THAT WE ARE WAY BELOW THE AVERAGE AND I THINK THAT'S WHY WE INTRODUCED IT AS A BODY TO THE LEGISLATION, TRYING TO BRING IT UP TO AT LEAST THE AVERAGE NORTHERN VIRGINIA.

[02:55:24] again that's about nine percent so we're trying to get to that and then anything above that and the recommendation from the eda specifically this member was to try to set some of that money aside specifically reinvest it back into the edo or eda specifically in tourism as well i think council would be fully aware even more so than the meals tax these taxes are probably almost 100 paid by non-residents. Individuals that would come and stay here more than likely don't live here. That's

[02:56:01] why they're in a hotel room. So it is really reducing the burden on the residents and their real estate tax rate by trying to reassign that potential revenue to the TOT. And honestly, I stayed in the Hotel Roanoke last weekend and couldn't tell you what the TOT was. Didn't even look on the bill to see what the TOT was when I stayed there because I don't know. It's just, it's what it costs. Maybe that's just me. I'm

probably very careless about not looking at what the TOT is, but I didn't. I really, I'm like, you stay there, you stay there. That's what it is.

[02:56:38] Well, in some cases, you just want to get out of the hotel so fast. And that's true too. So do we seem to have consensus here that we want to look at 12 as a starting point because we can always pull back, right? That's what I'm seeing a lot of consensus here that this is another one where we give ourselves flexibility to do something

[02:56:59] else. Any other budget memos that council would like to review? Number eight. Budget memo eight

[02:57:33] deals with referendum, the use of referendum or the use of non-referendum regarding capital improvement projects. We coordinated with city attorney along with outside bond council and then also our financial advisors, Davenport, in putting together this pretty inclusive and exhaustive memo, a five-page memo, gave a lot of historical and broke it down into three areas.

[02:58:06] So historical city information and practice in utilizing referendums for capital improvement projects, an overview of common practices across the Commonwealth, again, given that our bond council deals with numerous localities, so does our financial advisors, Davenport, and then any relevant legal and policy references.

[02:58:26] So is there anything specifically that council wanted to touch on in those three areas or on Budget Memo 8? Yes. Council Member Peterson. So just to cut to the chase, my reading of this, and I'm going to stand corrected if I don't have the right read here, is that whether for the big-ticket items or the small-ticket items, there's pluses and minuses associated with handling either of them with a referendum or not, for that matter.

[02:59:01] And without unpacking all of that, and I think, again, there are kind of pluses and minuses because there are different circumstances, et cetera, it would, I guess the question I have to ask is really about policy and practice. Every year we have a great big stack of CIP items in front of us, which includes all of the above.

[02:59:23] And it would seem to me that that would be a good time to have the conversation about what are we doing with these and what are we doing with new things and are any of these applicable potentially for a referendum, but to have the conversation, and that's really a matter of practice that we would do it.

[02:59:43] And the next question is whether that needs to be affirmed or required with a policy so that we actually have the conversation each year. But it would just seem to me that that's something that would be an important and prudent thing for us to do rather than necessarily attempting to set some sort of a bright line, which I think is a little bit difficult under the circumstances.

[03:00:05] But the bright line is problematic, but having nothing whatsoever is equally, if not more, problematic. And I would be curious to your feedback on that. Mr. Alexander. Yeah, I think, you know, generally we try to stick primarily to our practice as we talked about this.

[03:00:27] Drew some comparisons in this document to show that what we're doing is pretty consistent with other jurisdictions. I think the reality from a policy standpoint is that referendum is an option for council to consider on all these large projects.

[03:00:45] And so, you know, we're open to that. I think as we go through the CIP process, it's certainly something that, you know, needs to be on the table from the perspective of it's an option for us. I think you made the point that there's some potential limitations around referendum.

[03:01:02] It kind of fast-tracks us right into a policy decision, meaning our citizens into policy decision. In a lot of ways, we have more discussion around things that aren't in a referendum. But it's an option for us, and I think it's a long way of saying we certainly recognize that council may choose on certain projects to go to referendum, and we certainly understand that, appreciate that, and see that as an option.

[03:01:33] Well, and then, again, as a matter of practice, it would seem to me that it would be helpful to lay out a rationale that the council could use for sorting through that decision. And, again, cats and dogs, we're going to have a lot of different CIP items here, and they're going to vary.

[03:01:56] And just sorting through how we deal with all that would be an enormous help because where we are right now is we don't do that as a council, as a body, I think, at all. Yeah, I think, interestingly, there are some projects that are going to be smaller projects that we're probably not going to have that discussion on.

[03:02:18] I think on the larger ones, it certainly makes sense. And I think we can lay out what the options mean in terms of sequencing and process as we talk about those larger items. We know there's some coming up. Property yard is just a perfect example.

[03:02:34] I think you had a number that's larger in our conversations than I recalled. It's going to be a big number. So we certainly need to talk about how we're going to approach that project just based on the sheer amount of money. and and certainly referendum would be on the table for something like that well then just to as a matter of practice stretch the conversation a little bit because it would seem to me setting aside the question mark of whether we use a referendum in any one of these cases i think this

[03:03:10] is really in your court from a management perspective but it comes to our court to ensure that we are doing everything we can to get the best bead we possibly can on one of these projects at its outset to avoid a situation where we have unexpected cost increases.

[03:03:30] And, you know, so the value of a referendum is it forces your hand to do that homework up front. The downside of that is you're stuck, right? And you're on a short lease, you know, so it robs you of the flexibility. So I don't know what the remedy is for taking actions to ensure we're doing all that we need to to get the earliest, best understanding of the cost estimate to avoid the risk of cost escalations.

[03:03:56] Again, the referendum raises that and forces it, but I think independent of that, from a good practice standpoint, we ought to be doing it. I would be just curious if you have any thoughts at this stage on that, because we've seen a bit of that. Yeah, it's a really great point in the sense that if we get into projects that are large in number, they're going to be long in time, most likely, which means we're at risk, larger risk for those escalations to occur in a lot of ways so that is a potential pitfall you know around um around that process going out getting an affirmation and then getting to the point where it's a concept largely and then it becomes real when we start to to really design

[03:04:34] to um you know what our expectations are and then and the dollar amount following after that so i i think it's to your point worthy of having that conversation every time we approach these large projects about how we're going to finance it and what methodology we're going to use from either referendum or our traditional model. My very last question is this absolutely is not a criticism of the

Willard Sherwood project because if ever there's a project here it's a big ticket item that has not escalated that's it. I mean that cost number has stuck and then come down a little

[03:05:13] bit so again no criticism whatsoever of that project from a cost management perspective however it did not go through a referendum and it is a big ticket item any history or rationale on that I wasn't there for that one but I don't know decision-wise I wasn't there either I think again what was sort of listed in the memo is that the City Council in the past along with staff have recommended certain projects depending on what their values would be TRADITIONALLY IT SEEMS LIKE SCHOOLS GIVEN THAT THE AMOUNT OF INVESTMENT THAT WOULD BE NEEDED IS PRETTY SIGNIFICANT THOSE GO THROUGH

[03:05:51] REFERENDUM SMALLER AMOUNTS USUALLY DO NOT I THINK IN THE PAST 20 YEARS IN REVIEWING ALL OF OUR DEBT ISSUANCE NON SCHOOLS THERE'S ONLY BEEN ONE INSTANCE IN THE EARLY 2000'S AND THAT WAS ACTUALLY FOR WHERE WE'RE AT RIGHT NOW THE CITY ANNEX IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE POLICE HEADQUARTERS THOSE TWO PROJECTS WERE COMBINED AND THEN THOSE WERE done on a referendum basis other than that all other projects have gone in non-referendum if I could very quickly go to page three towards the end our bond

[03:06:25] attorney actually wanted me per se to illustrate that the city of Fairfax is among a small number of jurisdictions with charter provisions that are more restrictive than general state law so he listed the examples there and then if If you go into page four, there's even more information that we operate under, again, a more restrictive debt authorization framework than many jurisdictions in the Commonwealth and relies on non-referendum financing tools for routine or programmatic capital needs.

[03:07:01] There are other examples of relevant legal policy references, again, that show that we have historically utilized financing structures such as subject to appropriations or moral obligation, debt to fund certain capital needs without referendum, and there's certain instances that are listed there, and then also gives the legal framework, that Supreme Court case from Virginia that allowed and reaffirmed that localities can do this.

[03:07:28] As noted, I think in one of these areas, we act more like a county than a city, given the restrictions that we have, if that helps provide any comfort to council and or the residents that there are current restrictions but as the manager noted, we could definitely try to provide a framework of trying to evaluate certain projects and when they would potentially be asked to be brought via referendum versus just an appropriation.

[03:07:59] Yeah, I think, you know, a big part of this, regardless of the mechanism we use, is that resident engagement piece. And, you know, ultimately, you know, even if there's determination that we want to go to referendum, we get approval on referendum we need to make sure that you know we're clear that there's there's a tax impact and oftentimes that you know that could get lost if we take a while to get to the to to go you know and so you know that the engagement can't be just at the beginning you know or the middle you know or the end it's got to be all throughout the process regardless of what mechanism we use to

[03:08:34] ensure our residents are engaged council member hall thank you i i too am in support of discussing this further and having, you know, some additional thoughts on it. I did want to point out a conversation or a statement I think that you, Mr. Martinez, made last time we discussed this, which is that there are many opportunities for public comment, public outreach, public meetings, public, public, public

for all of these things. And I understand that part of it in here talks about how, you know, the voter process may delay it a little bit. We're in Virginia. We vote every

[03:09:10] year. So there's almost always a ballot that we can throw something on. But I did also want to point out what you had said last time too, which was that there's only a certain length of time in which after you do the referendum in which you have to act. And so that in the case of Willard Sherwood, let's say we might be bumping up against that timeline. So I think in recognizing that challenge when you're working through the framework, I think those are, I'm sure, things that you will be thinking about. And I've just recently learned about them. But they're just things that I think that we want to try to keep engaging with the community on. Personally, I don't think a referendum

[03:09:45] them as a bad thing, I think, especially when you're spending tens or hundreds of millions of resident tax dollars. I mean, I think, you know, when you said before, and I understand it was the equivalent of 158 or a million, whatever it was, but there's certain things that a building of this size, the police renovation, you know, the police station, those are big things, you know, kind of like the property yard is a big thing, and Willard Sherwood is a big thing, and the schools are a big thing. We haven't done a lot of really big things like that since the city was kind of established and created and they did all the big things early on. But we are now faced with finding the money

[03:10:24] to do these renovations of these big things or to build the next big thing because our buildings are aging. Our infrastructure is, you know, starting to go despite great years of maintenance and operations and all that. But things don't last forever. You know, we all see that with our houses my house was built in 69 there's despite a renovation in 2016 there are still things that it's going to need to keep it looking pretty good right so um i i think this is a good conversation and i did want to thank you for pointing out some of the areas about the general obligation versus not and also how we tend to operate a little bit more like a county than a city in comparison

[03:11:01] because i do think that we do try to have the appropriate checks and balances but again i think we're just facing a lot of new things or new again things to our current residents here that are big ticket so thank you councilman peterson well just to maybe add to that and double check if i've got my numbers right i think oh gosh it was maybe earlier this year as well as last fall

[03:11:30] we were provided an estimate a best understanding of the set of capital improvement projects that we would have over two five-year spans or a decadal span from 20 starting in 2026 to 2035 but 10 years of CIP half and half over a billion dollars and the first half of it if I recall my math right is like basically 520 million and the second half is 500 million which is entirely an

[03:12:07] expectation around school renovation I think from my standpoint the takeaway on that is these this is a big number. This is a big package. This is a heck of a lot for this city to have to digest realistically in a relatively short period of time. And the capacity that is required to implement a CIP program at that scale over that period of time is not insignificant. It's a stretch. It's a challenge. It needs to be thought through in a very sober manner here for the city. So I say that just to underscore the need to have this very serious conversation

[03:12:46] about how are we approaching this package. The referendum approach is a tool, but there are other tools, there are other strategies for what has become a very, very large package in comparison to historically what we've done in the city.

[03:13:01] I could be wrong. It may be that we've been here at that level before, but my read is that we're in a different future situation, so it'd be good to get some feedback on that. No, so your memory is correct, Councilmember Peterson. At the November budget retreat, we did show some CIP sandwich slides, is what I called them.

[03:13:22] In one of those slides, it did show a projected future spend. About half of it, half a billion dollars was attributable to a potential future renovation of the high school and then also the middle school.

[03:13:38] Those two projects are not 100% scope. Schools does not come forward. It was just based off of the September 2023 feasibility study done by Moseley that identified all schools. And at some point, those will need to be renovated as well.

[03:13:57] And those were the anticipated projections at that time. Additionally, you also have other infrastructure internally, the property yard being one of the larger ones. at about \$120, \$160 million currently that's being projected as well. So absolutely large-ticket items.

[03:14:16] I think Councilmember Hall summarized it very well. These are generational investments. Probably the last time that the city had significant capital investments of this magnitude was when it was founded 60-some-odd years ago, and now we're sort of at that point where we need to renovate and or construct new as well.

[03:14:35] So absolutely correct, sir. Councilmember Bates. So first off, do you happen to know off the top of your head if the city library, was that a city CIP project or was that split with the county?

[03:15:00] Do you know? That was a city CIP project that we are paying debt on, yep. Yeah, yeah. But that did not go to a referendum, is that right? Okay, thank you. So that, I think, is something that is perhaps somewhat comparable to the Willard Sherwood project.

[03:15:21] And perhaps, let me think, do you recall, was that like 08 or late 2000s, I think? Around that time frame. I don't remember the specific year. So recent history.

[03:15:37] And so additionally, let's say that we wanted to do a referendum for the Willard Sherwood Center. Is there a time in the timeline to do that, you know, based on when we need to issue those bonds? I think Councilmember Hall was sort of bringing that up.

[03:15:55] So we'll use the school referendum because that's pretty recent, where once a referendum passes, the clock starts. You have eight years where you can pull debt off of that approved referendum. You could ask the circuit court for a two-year extension.

[03:16:11] But beyond that, so a maximum of 10 years is the limit that you would have to pull debt associated and directly tied to that approval of that referendum. If you don't complete pulling debt within that time frame, you would have to, and if you need to, do another referendum if you still need to renovate and or complete construction of that project.

[03:16:33] So what about when we would need to start issuing that debt in order to have the project go forward on the timeline that we're on right now?

[03:16:55] If we're talking about schools or Willard Sherwood, if we're talking about Willard Sherwood, we would be issuing debt now. We did not do a referendum, so we have, at the grace or at the time frame that

we want to, with schools, we would have to issue debt, which we are planning on as a part of the FY27 budget, to issue debt in FY27, not all, 220 in year one, but in tranches over the next seven years.

[03:17:25] So on the other hand, for something like that, would doing a public hearing sort of in lieu of a referendum be an option? Not necessarily for a referendum. I think when we do...

[03:17:44] Well, I mean, for something that wouldn't otherwise require a referendum, if we wanted to instead have a public hearing, even though neither is necessarily required, is that an option? I think we do that already during the budget process, so while Council's considering the FYX budget and we're reviewing the CIP, that's a part of the budget, we have numerous work sessions and public hearings that the public can attend, all related to the budget, and either provide feedback for or against that specific item.

[03:18:23] I think that's what Councilmember Hall was alluding to, where there is slightly more public engagement during that process. But to her point, you do, in Virginia, you can vote every single year as well. So it's a little bit of both in that respect.

[03:18:40] Yeah, that's a good point. Thank you. Councilmember Hall? Councilmember Bates, I just want to be clear. I was not suggesting that we do a referendum for the Willard Sherwood Center. I just want to make that sure that that's very crystal clear.

[03:18:56] I also did just Google while you were talking, the library was built in 08 and then renovated, and it said the new building costs about \$16 million, financed through a partnership between the city and the county. The city sold 30-year bonds to build it, and in return, the county will not charge the city its \$700,000 annual library services fee, which is normally a charge levied by the county in exchange for making library services so yes it is something that we took out bonds for but I do think that cost differential is rather

[03:19:32] different with regard to the 16 million I don't know what 16 million then would be worth now but maybe it's a little bit closer than I think but yeah are there I don't mean to like run the agenda I just have one more question about another budget memo if there's if we're done with this one sure what's yes council member hall okay thank you um it's just a very quick question comment um for budget memo number five which was regarding the meals tax um i just wanted to point out for those at home that might not be reading the budget memos as we are um the question i had asked was whether the increase in

[03:20:11] the meals tax revenue was based upon the cost of food inflation or whether or not we were seeing more people actually in our restaurants. And I also want to point out to the credit of the EDA for all they do and bringing in new businesses and Chamber of Commerce and all those for kind of, you know, keeping things going here. Based upon what staff has shared here is that the increase in the meals tax is relatable to increased traffic in our restaurants and not increased food costs. So I think that that's good to know that we are doing bigger and better in the city and it's not just because things are costing more so thank you for putting that one together

[03:20:50] and i will just insert uh as a point of privilege that um two of our restaurants received rammy uh uh finalists elise in the city is a finalist in fine dining and andy's pizza is also a finalist for rammy awards that just came out today i know andy so i just want to say very proud super proud that two of our restaurants are have been nominated for rammy awards just okay anybody else council member peterson just to clarify what we are doing with budget memo eight it sounds like

[03:21:25] we're just looking forward at some point to hear more about how to structure a thought process around this i that's probably not the best way to describe this but we'll be hearing back from you at some point is that where this is yeah it could be well i would suggest that as we as we look at these projects and fortunately in this budget we know what's right in front of us but as we start talking CIP for some of these other projects in future cycles that we include this process,

[03:22:01] the how we're going to fund it process as part of that discussion, and very early on get council direction on how we want to proceed. I think, you know, again, we try to keep this neutral to the extent of describing our history and how we've come up to this point. Certainly council's prerogative as we approach these large projects to say we want to go out for referendum. So I'm not jumping there what I'm responding to I think was the thought that you shared that I probably prompted which is that we could have a rationale of some sort developed to help us through those

[03:22:37] kinds of decisions when we get to them to give us a little bit more guidance than we currently have it may and I you know I'm just speaking you know top of my head it may be a function again of looking at the project that's in front of us, looking at what is involved in terms of potential sequencing, and then building in alternative funding models based on that project that's in front of you. Now, some are going to be probably easier than others in the sense that you see the total costs associated with it. Some may be a little more nuanced in that gray area. Council

[03:23:16] makes a call at that point to decide how they want to approach, you know, the individual projects that we bring to you, if that makes sense. Well, is this purely case by case, or in addition to that, is there something broader and more systematic that helps us kind of know what we're heading into here?

[03:23:32] I think it's case by case, and I think as we've talked it through, that as we get into projects that have different variables, and I think the property yard's a great example, that could be multiple sites over multiple years.

[03:23:51] There could be some other options that come to the table around partnerships. So, you know, all of that's going to, I think, factor into the decisions that we make on how we approach the funding from, you know, the traditional mechanism that we've used, which are both, really, quite frankly.

[03:24:08] You know, whether we do the funding process through bonds and we make the decision or we go out to a residence through a referendum. So I'm just going to give us a time check.

[03:24:25] It's 1024, because that has been requested, and I just did that for you, Ms. Shinaberry. It's 1024, so other questions? Council Member Hall. Sorry, thank you. Just to wrap up on the referendum thing, I think maybe put a pin in it, to borrow the mayor's phrase.

[03:24:49] I'm interested in discussing it. I think we probably have bigger fresh to fry at the moment, and it's not going to be another immediate need for a little bit later, but I don't want to just let it completely go off the wayside. I do worry about putting something in that's too structured, but I would like to revisit this in the future. It sounds like there's support for that as well. So now off of budget for a moment, just general thing. I know we don't get council comments tonight, but I did reach out to each of my colleagues. The only person I didn't hear back from was Council Member Amos, which is

[03:25:26] expected because he is away, but I just wanted to bring this to staff's attention. I know I emailed with Anna Safford, our urban forester, but there have been several properties in neighborhoods that have taken down an extraordinary number of trees without getting proper permits and was

heartbreaking to see what happened recently to a couple in my neighborhood. And so I reached out with some questions and i was told that the current city code dates back to the 1970s with no updates since

[03:25:59] then um let me back up just a minute so people that need permits are in zoning districts rl rm and rh and on a lot that is greater than or equal to one half acre and only if the tree is greater than or equal to five inches in caliper and i think that's at chest height so this really leaves which I didn't realize that was a pun but this leaves much of the city without a permit requirement even in single-family home and townhome communities so what I was proposing to my

[03:26:34] colleagues was that could we reconsider this for both lot size and the applicable zones especially with all the new development coming in and that was when I had asked when it was last reviewed so just to be clear I shared that information with my colleagues and I said you know, I had serious concerns about these things. And there was support from everyone that responded to me. So five out of the six here, including myself, support looking into it. And I understand that this is something that is likely, hopefully going to be covered in part of the tree conservation

[03:27:12] tax amendment package that's coming up soon. So I don't mean to put more work on staff, but I was really, really, really devastated to see what happened in my neighborhood and the fact that kind of putting all those steps together that anyone in most neighborhoods around here can just take out whatever trees they want at any time.

[03:27:31] And I know, I believe Anna Safford had said that I could be wrong. 70% of our tree canopy is on private property and we're not protecting that as far as I'm concerned. Thank you for that. This is the first I'm hearing of it.

[03:27:47] So it's certainly something I think we should investigate, but we should also be cognizant of the fact that Virginia is a property rights state too. So I want to protect trees, but people also own their property that their house sits on. So we have to have balance. That's fine.

[03:28:02] But I would just say, and I would have said at the time, I think it's worth looking at, but we have to be cognizant of the fact that we want to protect trees and we are a property rights state. And people have a house, like I planted 11 trees in my yard because they were taken down when my house was renovated.

[03:28:18] There wasn't a tree on my lot when I moved in. But there needs to be balance. And so I think this is one of these things where robust public engagement would be appropriate here to balance out the health of tree canopies and also people buy their homes and some of those trees.

[03:28:39] We were talking about this actually at Easter dinner because the house that I used to own on Woodhaven has a tulip poplar in it that's probably 70 feet high and should never have been planted in the front yard. no offense to the people who own that house out but the point is if it comes down if it comes down it takes out a lot of things including other people's property so a lot of times people are taking down trees preemptively so it doesn't fall over and take out their house somebody else's house

[03:29:16] with power lines and these are the kinds of things where I think we need to have Anna Safford speak to us. I think we need to consider under what circumstances people can take down trees preemptively before they fall over. But, you know, but the owners, they are my neighbors. I mean, they are my neighbors. But I'm just saying, when I moved into that house in 2003, it was huge. It's huger.

[03:29:38] And there's an age, there's a life cycle to trees. And I don't want people to wait until their trees fall over. So we really have to be very considered about under what circumstances are we requiring people to seek permits or permission because I'd rather a 70 foot tall tree that is probably that house was built in 1954 that's how old that tree is so balance just balance councilmember hall and I totally respect and understand that and I think we probably all or many of us have

[03:30:13] that one tree in our yard or our neighbor's yard that we are worried about this was full-on clear overcutting of two entire properties um one was done years ago and it was it was right when we were doing the um I believe it was the inaugural uh halloween parade in cobdale and it was the house that was right next to the park so I don't even know how many emails and calls the city received about that I actually was not one of them but it was such a it was just devastating so I completely understand that but I also think that there is an education component and a

[03:30:47] responsible city leadership of we understand you want to take out x trees or y trees for these reasons and we will help you with planting new trees that are going to take you know two more homeowner cycles or generations in order to grow so it's not a it's not an all or nothing but I just I think especially since it hasn't been looked at since the 70s I do think there's room for improvement so that was all I wasn't trying to take away anyone's tree rights but there's room Peterson when is the next time we're going to be speaking with Anna Safford about urban forestry

[03:31:24] for the council and where this is going is whether that would be an appropriate time to understand this a little bit more clearly I don't know the specific date but we'll certainly come back and and let you and let you know I think you were right we talked a little bit about other text amendments but I'm gathering from council that you want to have a broader discussion about this. Well, and I think all these points are really fair and well taken. From my standpoint, I'm still a little bit confused on the patchwork. Some places you can't, some places you can't, and whatever. It just would be kind of nice, given that this is a real thing happening, and more of it's going to happen. So if we could just count

[03:32:04] on doing that, it would be great. We'll bring it back to you in a work session. And I think any time we get a conversation going about trees preserving trees conserving trees planting trees native trees saving trees from invasives which I mean please that the ivy hanging off trees is unreal it's a good thing I think the more conversations we have and the more people are focused on what we're talking about and why we're talking about it the more educated we have a very educated city people care about environmental sustainability they truly do so every time we can give them tools or draw their attention to

[03:32:43] something that maybe they haven't considered I think this is all positive I'm anytime we can do that I think that is a good thing anything else for the good of the body mayor we yes before we get too far we wanted to draw your attention very quickly to our calendar understanding that we are halfway through budget process and as much as it says up there for the seventh general fund questions and discussion if needed we'll be prepared to bring back to you some specific um expenditure revenue discussion items that I think will be helpful for you as we proceed

[03:33:18] through the process so I just want to be clear that that's what we want to discuss with you next week along with anything else that you would like to discuss around the budget and I think that will prepare us well as we look to um the last half of this process okay comments or questions about this schedule council member Peterson well only that there's a big hop between April 14 and April 28, what happens during that period?

[03:33:50] Well, we do have meetings that are scheduled with you, too, that I think occur during that week, and so those should be already on your calendars. And so, yeah, so that's a great promo for please get back with us and schedule those meetings if you haven't already.

[03:34:11] In terms of public discussion, it's three more meetings as presently scheduled in my reading that in terms of public hearings correct and opportunities for us to have public discussion and we have our engagement at uh april 16th which is a thursday thursday april 16th at six o'clock in the chambers and the public is welcome and and remote and you can watch on on tv may i ask that you just say a little bit more about that in case that didn't quite uh get fully understood by people

[03:34:47] because I know you all have worked very hard in creating an interactive opportunity. If you could share that for the people who are listening here. Sure, and the team will back me up for what I leave out at 1035. But essentially, we've arranged a meeting, again, I'll repeat, in Chambers on the 16th.

[03:35:08] That's 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The design is to be interactive. It is a hybrid event in that people can come in person. our residents can watch online and interact remotely and we're also going to do some live polling as we go the intent of it is understanding that we presented the budget so we're not going to go through the full presentation but we're at a point where we can talk about priorities from the residents perspective um you know go over some some of the basics on the budget get feedback and then be able to bring that feedback to council um you know by virtue of

[03:35:46] asking very specific questions. So it's a great opportunity for folks, again, to come on out in person, to log in, to engage online, and, you know, give us feedback on where we are at this point. Anything else? We're all good. Nothing for the good of the body. Then I'm going to adjourn this meeting at 10.36 p.m. on Tuesday.



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