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City of Fairfax City Council Meeting, Tuesday, April 14, 2026

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[00:00:03] Good evening. I'd like to call the regular meeting of April 14, 2026 to order. It's good to see the chamber full. We have a lot of things to celebrate tonight. If you are able and so choose, please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:01:25] Place allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:01:43] I will now ask Suzanne Levy, Eric Carzon, and Alana Quarles with the City of Fairfax Library to come down for the proclamation acknowledging National Library Week.

[00:02:04] Okay, I'll be in the middle. That sounds reasonable. all right whereas libraries spark creativity fuel imagination and inspire lifelong learning offering a space where individuals of all ages can find joy through exploration and discovery and whereas libraries serve as vibrant community hubs connecting people with knowledge technology and resources while fostering civic engagement critical thinking and cultural enrichment and

[00:02:40] whereas libraries provide free and equitable access to books digital tools and innovative programming, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of background, have the support they need to

learn, connect, and thrive. And whereas libraries partner with schools, businesses, and organizations connecting the dots to maximize resources, increasing efficiency, and expand access to essential services, strengthening the entire community.

[00:03:06] And whereas libraries empower job seekers, entrepreneurs, and lifelong learners by providing access to resources, training, and opportunities that support career growth and economic success. And whereas libraries nurture young minds through story times, STEAM programs, and literacy initiatives, fostering curiosity and a love of learning that lasts a lifetime. And whereas libraries protect the right to read, think, and explore without censorship, standing as champions of intellectual freedom and free expression. And whereas dedicated librarians and library workers

[00:03:41] provide welcoming spaces that inspire discovery, collaboration, and creativity for all. And whereas libraries, librarians, and library workers across the country are joining together to celebrate National Library Week under the theme, Find Your Joy.

[00:04:00] Now, therefore, I, Catherine S. Reed, Mayor of the City of Fairfax, do hereby proclaim April 19th to the 25th, 2026 as National Library Week in the City of Fairfax, and encourage the community during this week to visit their library explore its resources and celebrate all the ways that the library helps our community find joy and with that i turn it over to ms suzanne levy thank you mayor i'm honored to be your representative to representative to the fairfax county public library board of trustees i'm in my second year as chairman of the board

[00:04:36] fortunately you can only serve two years so i'll be turning it over to somebody in july but it's a real honor and some of you may know my career was at the Fairfax City Regional Library and so this is just a continuation of what I did for many years and I wanted to introduce our library director Eric Carzon. Elena Corals is the branch manager at City of Fairfax and Jackie Consalvo is the head of the circulation department. So when you go into the library next week to celebrate National

[00:05:11] library week please say hi to everybody and if you don't have a library card we have beautiful new cards that were designed by citizens in the community and you can replace your old card with a pretty new one or you can get a card for the first time we really want to have you coming in our doors seeing all the wonderful things that are going on and check out our book sale the children's book sale is the first weekend in May, and the adult book sale is in the second week of May. And our wonderful friends of the library raise money to support library activities and

[00:05:50] help us purchase materials that are not in the budget to be purchased. So thank you for this honor. We really appreciate the opportunity to be here. And really, if you don't have a library card, Really?

[00:06:10] It's time to get one. Come on in. Well, Mayor Reed has the name to have a library card. That's right. We expect her to be here. This way? Okay. Can we go this way? Yeah. Oh, I'm sorry. Even more? Okay. We're good?

[00:06:28] Oh, you. Okay. Sorry. Okay. Okay.

[00:06:41] Thank you so much. Thank you so much. And thank you for this. And the staff is going to take it back to the library and put it in a prominent place. I will see you at the library. Thank you. Thank you so much. I'm now going to ask Stephanie Kupka, Anna Safford, City Environmental Sustainability Committee members, Faiza Alam, Rusty Russell, and everyone else who is here from the ESC to come down here so we can talk about Earth Day and Arbor Day.

[00:07:19] All right, all right, all right. Well, you know, whatever. And the shoes. There you go. Monarch butterfly later. Okay, not that I want to have any spoilers here. Whereas the city of Fairfax recognizes the natural environment as the foundation of a healthy society and a robust economy, providing essential resources that sustain life and contribute to the well-being of all.

[00:07:46] And whereas the global community faces extraordinary environmental challenges, including environmental degradation, global health issues, loss of habitat, climate change, and water and energy crises. And whereas Earth Day and Arbor Day serve as annual reminders that we are all caretakers of our planet and have an obligation to engage in environmental activism, stewardship, commitments, and sustainability efforts to preserve the Earth's beauty and resources for current and future generations.

[00:08:14] And whereas the first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970, calling upon millions of Americans to act for a cleaner, safer, and healthier environment. And whereas the city of Fairfax has been recognized nationally as a tree city USA by the Arbor Day Foundation for 40 years, setting aside a special day each year for the planting and celebration of trees is vital to our quality of life and environmental health.

[00:08:39] and whereas Earth Day and Arbor Day provide opportunities for the community to come together and participate in activities that promote a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable environment. Now, therefore, I, Catherine S. Reed, Mayor of the City of Fairfax, do hereby proclaim April 22, 2026 as Earth Day and April 24, 2026 as Arbor Day in the City of Fairfax, and hereby encourage our community and businesses to observe these days by taking action to protect and enhance our environment. This includes participating in activities such as planting trees, reducing waste,

[00:09:16] recycling, picking up litter, conserving energy and clean water, and otherwise engaging in actions big and small to preserve our natural resources for the benefit of all living things. And with that, I will turn it over to Faisa Alam. Is this you? I think so. Good evening, everyone. So I'm here to as a science teacher standing here in front of you and the SC committee member to kind of this is a great day for all of us we all are here we breathe oxygen and we all breathe it thanks to our trees so please join us on the Arbor Day event on April 25th and I would also like to make a pitch

[00:09:56] for making our carbon footprint a little better than what we do I am one of the persons who benefited from the city's Solarize Virginia program last year. And I have solar panels on my house and a few other friends who are also in this room have that. And since October, I have not paid anything to Dominion other than \$7 something. And I have exported a lot of power out there.

[00:10:21] So this year, again, the Solarize Virginia is a great program. It's opening up again in April 16th, Stephanie? Yes. 15th. And it will continue. It is a very good vetted program. It's the best rate you're going to get. So just spread the word out and do that. And please join us on the Arbor Day on April 25th. The event begins at 9 a.m. We will have some students who have written beautiful poetries. They will be reciting. We'll have tree giveaways, tree plantations, and a lot

[00:10:49] of fun. So please join us. And I think that's at Pat Rodeo Park. Yes, Pat Rodeo Park. I think

[00:11:03] that's a new venue for us. Okay, picture. All right. So joining Stephanie and Anna, I'm looking

[00:11:38] for Janet Jaworski, Mary Driver Downs, Faza Alam, and Rusty Russell. You guys, where'd you go? More and more things to celebrate. So many things. Whereas the monarch butterfly is an iconic North American species whose multi-generational migration and metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly has captured the imagination of millions of Americans. And whereas both the

[00:12:15] Western and Eastern monarch populations have seen significant declines with less than 1% of the Western monarch population remaining, while the Eastern population has fallen by as much as 90%. And whereas the city of Fairfax recognizes that human health ultimately depends on well-functioning ecosystems and that biodiverse regions can better support food production, healthy soil, and air quality, and can foster healthy connections between humans and wildlife.

[00:12:43] And whereas cities, towns, and counties have a critical role to play in helping save the monarch butterfly by providing habitat at public parks, in median strips, community gardens, and municipal buildings that serve as community hubs, such as recreation centers, libraries, and schools.

[00:12:58] And whereas simple changes in landscaping, ordinances, or school policies can make a big difference for the monarch, educating citizens about how to provide essential habitat for monarchs, and where and how to grow milkweed, which is a key piece of the puzzle in creating habitat and educating citizens benefits other pollinators that need healthy habitats as well.

[00:13:21] Now, therefore, I, Catherine S. Reed, Mayor of the City of Fairfax, do hereby commit to the Mayor's Monarch Pledge. This is a nationwide thing. The Mayor's Monarch Pledge and encourage all residents to participate in community activities that support and celebrate monarch conservation so that these magnificent butterflies will once again flourish across this continent.

[00:13:45] And with that, I will turn it over to Ms. Janet Jaworski. Thank you, Mayor Reed. Following up on the mayor's comments, I have a certified Monarch way station in our yard, which some of you may have heard of.

[00:14:02] It's through Monarch Watch at the University of Kansas. So besides in public parks and public spaces, individual homeowners really can make a difference for the monarch butterfly. Really, even one milkweed plant in your yard can make a huge difference because, as the mayor said, that is the only food that the monarch caterpillar will eat.

[00:14:22] and so if you have a milkweed plant in your yard the caterpillars can start their life cycle and of course metamorphosis into the butterfly the other thing you can do as a homeowner is have nectar plants in your yard particularly late blooming nectar plants in the fall the migration to Mexico in this area is August through October and so if you have a nectar source in your yard that the butterflies can access during that southward migration, that is very helpful to them.

[00:14:53] So some ideas for planting in your yard would be goldenrod or aster so that they've got that nectar source on their way to Mexico. The good news is that in this past overwintering season in Mexico, there was a 64% increase in the amount of butterfly and the amount of monarchs that were there. So we're showing some improvement. We're not really there yet to the goal, but we're moving in the right direction so that was good news from the overwintering sites in Mexico so you can if anyone wants to visit my yard this summer you can reach out to the city clerk and get my

[00:15:29] address but you can actually have butterflies flying around you you can see caterpillars in the yard and it's very exciting many my colleague from the women's club also has a lot of milkweed in her yard Cindy Meyer has milkweed in her yard and there are probably a number of you who also have that it's very exciting it's a science project going on right in your yard I've had field trips from our daycare down the street I've done some stuff virtually for the science teacher at Daniel's Run so it's very exciting so I'm happy to guide anybody who wants to do this project so turn it

[00:16:03] over to Stephanie. Thank you Jen you covered all of it. Well so the commitment to you know and I've got asters in my yard. And these plants are beautiful, too. So think about the fact that when you choose what you plant in your yard, there's all kinds of benefits, like you get to

[00:16:20] have butterflies. Okay, with that, a photo. So I'm going to now invite the Women's Club of Fairfax

[00:17:00] to join me up here so that we can talk about the 70th anniversary of this very august body of women who exist in our city. Everybody, this is wonderful. Everybody in, everybody in. Lovely to see everyone lovely to see everyone is everybody in okay we all here okay whereas the women's the

[00:17:36] women's club of fairfax was established in 1956 by friends wanting to make a difference in the community and further their commitment by registering their club with the state and national general federation of women's clubs and whereas as the town of fairfax became the city of Fairfax, the area grew from a quiet rural community into a bustling region. The Women's Club was an active participant in keeping the history and small-town feel alive through generous contributions of time and financial support of many worthy causes. And whereas the Women's Club of Fairfax continues to contribute funds and volunteer services to Fairfax cultural and civic organizations

[00:18:16] and events such as the Independence Day Celebration, City of Fairfax Band Association, Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department, the Inter-Service Club Council, and the Chocolate Lovers Festival, and has adopted the School Street Park, providing quarterly maintenance of weeding and planting, as well as donating a park bench to encourage use of the park.

[00:18:38] And whereas the Women's Club of Fairfax supported the construction of the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial in Occoquan Regional Park, and annually offers an achievement scholarship to a graduating local high school senior who will attend a Virginia university or college. And whereas the Women's Club of Fairfax offers programs focusing on issues of importance to women, families, and the community, and continues today as a unified and diverse group of women dedicated to enhancing the lives of families and strengthening their community through volunteer service.

[00:19:11] Now, therefore, I, Catherine S. Reed, Mayor of the City of Fairfax, Virginia, in concert with the City Council, do hereby commend the Women's Club of Fairfax on their 70th anniversary and encourage all citizens of the City of Fairfax to recognize, commemorate, and celebrate the wonderful contributions the Women's Club of Fairfax has made to the betterment of the City of Fairfax.

[00:19:33] And with that, who is speaking? Martha, come on, the President of the Women's Club. Good evening. I just want to say that we feel very fortunate to be a part of the city, and we enjoy doing as much as we can to be supportive of the city.

[00:19:55] And I think it's pretty impressive that we have sustained ourselves for 70 years, considering all the different ups and downs of the past 70 years. And we look forward to serving you for many more years. Thank you. Thank you. All right.

[00:20:10] I'll now ask our Fairfax City police dispatchers

[00:21:12] to come down here so we can celebrate you. Come on. It's cool to stand up here and just be stared at. Trust me, not awkward at all. All good. All good. You guys are important. So important. Very

important. All right. Everybody in the cutest. All right. Whereas the week of April 12th through 18th, 2026 has been designated as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, a time to raise

[00:21:51] awareness and recognize the critical contributions of highly trained telecommunications professionals who provide vital 911 emergency assistance to those in need. And whereas emergencies requiring police, fire, or emergency medical services can occur at any time, and the prompt response of police officers, firefighters, and paramedics is essential to the protection of life and preservation of property. And whereas the safety of police officers, firefighters, and paramedics depends upon the quality and accuracy of information obtained from citizens who contact the city of Fairfax Emergency Communications Center. And whereas public safety telecommunicators are the

[00:22:30] first and most critical point of contact our residents have with emergency services, serving is the vital link between the public and emergency responders. And whereas public safety telecommunicators contribute substantially to the apprehension of criminals, the suppression of fires, and the treatment of patients, demonstrating professionalism, understanding, and dedication in every call they handle. And whereas within the police department, a dispatcher of the year is nominated by police personnel to recognize an individual for exceptional performance, exemplifying the commitment and excellence demonstrated by all emergency dispatch professionals in our city each

[00:23:10] and every day, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Now, therefore, I, Catherine S. Reed, Mayor of the City of Fairfax do hereby proclaim April 12 to 18, 2026, as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in the City of Fairfax, and encourage all members of our community to join in extending our warmest measure of gratitude and support to our public safety telecommunications dispatchers, including our award recipient, Aaliyah Tibbs. Aaliyah Tibbs? Elijah. Okay.

[00:23:43] Elijah Tibbs, the 2025 Dispatcher of the Year who provides critical and essential services daily to the countless number of residents, business owners, and visitors within our community. So with that, Elijah.

[00:24:03] Chief. Good evening, everybody. You know, it's a great opportunity to be here with you and celebrating such an important, important group of professionals in our public safety world.

[00:24:21] I just want to introduce everybody really quickly. Our dispatcher, Ms. Araceli Gonzalez, Ms. Courtney Ellis, Elijah Tibbs, who was just introduced as our dispatcher of the year for 2025. Our communications and records supervisor, Ms. Cynthia Tetterton. Our lieutenant, Ms. Stephanie Sharp, who oversees the entire operation.

[00:24:40] And then Captain Brock Rutter, who oversees the administrative services division. With them, there's another six dispatchers that help answer all the phone calls from people within our city. Whether you're living here, working here, visiting, if you have any type of emergency, if you need direction somewhere, you call the police and they answer.

[00:25:01] And it's something beautiful to watch if you ever have the opportunity to be in a 911 center and to see what happens, particularly when there's a critical situation occurring in the city. And all of them come together. And whether it's, you have to understand what they do.

[00:25:16] They take the phone call. They're a detective. They're asking questions. They're figuring out what it is that's happening, where it's happening. What's that vital information that has to get routed to our

responding police or fire personnel? At the same time, they're typing it all and routing it to the police officers and emergency personnel, real time.

[00:25:34] As they're typing it, figuring out what to ask, what's the next question, typing it in and routing it to the right people, and assigning the right personnel to respond to that call. It's incredible. And so I really thank all of our dispatchers, appreciate everybody supporting them, and for our proclamation.

[00:25:50] Mayor, thank you so much. And who is, who is this officer? Officer? I got to introduce Sherry. Officer Sherry? Okay, Officer Sherry?

[00:26:08] Okay. Wonderful, wonderful. Support everybody. So we are going to now have a picture.

[00:26:19] We can move on to the adoption of the agenda.

[00:27:22] Is there a motion to approve the agenda? I move to adopt the agenda as presented. Is there a second? Second. The motion has been made and seconded. A roll call vote. Council Member Amos? Aye. Council Member Hall? Aye. Council Member Hardy-Chandler?

[00:27:39] aye council member peterson all right council member bates aye councilman mcquillan aye motion passed unanimously sorry all right we will go on to initial general public comment i had 10 speakers sign up by five o'clock p.m today so i will call the first one up which would be anita light good evening mayor reed and members of city council my name is anita light and i'm here uh tonight in three capacities uh first is the chair of the fairfax village in the city

[00:28:17] Advisory Board, resident of Fairfax City, obviously, and as an older adult. As chair of the Fairfax Village in the City Advisory Board, we wanted to emphasize our support for the Willard Sherwood Center as noted in our letter to you all dated April the 6th. In that letter, we noted that supporting the new Willard Sherwood Center would help make accessibility for older adults easier and safer. We also noted that this project was a community partnership effort with the county as well as the residents of both the city and the county. And finally, we highlighted that this

[00:28:56] project is a long-term investment for the future of the city. And as an additional note on the advisory board, and for a more important reason, we really support advancing the Willard Sherwood center to help enhance the villages expo that we had this past friday which was a huge success and if we had even even better facility with better parking it would help that event even better and as a city resident of the city i support the willard sherwood center because this facility will afford a generational opportunity for programming for older adults and children and support the

[00:29:36] health care needs of our city. The partnership with the county has been longstanding, and as a result, the city is able to do more for the residents than they would otherwise be able to do, for instance, on social services, emergency dispatch, libraries, court services, and schools, to name a few. Without these partnerships, the cost to our residents would be significantly more if we had to provide these basic services on our own. I've been a lifelong proponent of continuous improvement in organizations and while the Willard Sherwood Center is not an organization it is a joint partnership with the county that needs to be

[00:30:14] continuously improved and nurtured to avoid even further costs as an older adult which I'm getting older and older by the minute I support the Willard Sherwood Center project because participating in programs at green acres is potentially hazardous to my physical well-being when I attended events at

the Green Acres Center. I had had recent knee surgery, and since parking at the Green Acres Center is at a premium, walking to the entrance was very difficult, and walking down those steps to get to the front door was even more difficult. And then once you get inside the

[00:30:53] building, you have more steps to get to some of the rooms, and that gets increasingly difficult for the older people get. Having access to a new, modernized Willard-Serward Center. Oh, so while I urge you to, while there is a cost to modernization and there will be additional costs to the center, I urge you to support its development that will help the more than 9,000 older adults in Fairfax City.

[00:31:21] And we appreciate and thank you for your consideration. Thank you. Our next speaker is Kevin Anderson. I want to thank you for this opportunity.

[00:31:44] I'm a county resident and a member of the Young at Heart Senior Center Council, and I'm here to speak in favor of the Willard Sherwood project. Green Acres is an apt name when you consider the ball fields and the surrounding grounds, but the building, the HVAC system, and the utilities can hardly be considered green.

[00:32:14] Since I don't have access to the specifics of Green Acres, I utilized AI to assist me with my research. And I could have used the AI to write my comments for me, but I was thinking that might be a little bit of cheating.

[00:32:29] Plus, I didn't want to sprout a six-finger on my hand either. So my research found that a 41,000-square-foot school built in 1961 currently has an average cost for utilities ranging from \$30,000 to \$54,000.

[00:32:49] Considering the GSA, GA, I'm sorry, has the original 163 steel frame windows and six exterior doors with windows, all single pane, I'm pretty comfortable with the idea that the expense is on the higher end of that range.

[00:33:15] Compared to the energy efficient and sustainable features planned for the project, the anticipated savings would be in the 30 to 50 percent annually, and it could be even as high as 70 percent. This, of course, will have to be observed with the actual charge that we incur to see what percentages actually saved, but I'm willing to bet that it'll be on the higher end.

[00:33:43] Beyond the potential cost savings, there are numerous environmental benefits to the project design, and it'll have a positive impact on the planet that we hand off to our children or, if you're like me, to your grandchildren. Some of these elements are the fact that the project is LED gold certified, and it has features like rooftop solar panels, indoor water reductions features, LED lighting, light pollution remediation, and high performance building elements to retain heating and cooling, and many others.

[00:34:21] Another subject I'd like to talk about is routines. We all have them. They usually evolve over life events. But if this project fails to move forward and Green Acres has to close down for major renovations or rebuild, it's going to be an abrupt change to many of our members' routines.

[00:34:44] And basically what I'm saying is that if we build a new center and we do a gradual transition to the new one, it'll be more of an evolutionary change to the routine. And so I beseech you to approve this project, and I thank you for your time. Thank you.

[00:35:01] Our next speaker is Douglas Stewart. Good evening. Douglas Stewart, 10822 Maple Street.

[00:35:18] I'm here to also voice my support for moving forward with the Willard Sherwood Center. I appreciate the discussions you've had about this project. My wife and I have lived here for 22 years, and I

realize this project has both operating and capital costs that we have to reckon with.

[00:35:37] And that we'll see in our tax bills. The costs are significant, but I believe the benefits will far outweigh them. And really, we're talking about a multi-generational community center, something for all ages, with first-class preventive health services.

[00:35:53] We're talking about a new third place for our youth and people of all ages. We're talking about outstanding facilities that the whole community can congregate in and enjoy. People from 8 to 80 to 90, or even 6 to 90. There's something in this for everyone. And also, just the preventive health, including serving our residents in Fairfax City, will be outstanding, including dentistry. It's going to improve quality of life for so many people in so many different ways. The costs are significant. We know we're going to see higher

[00:36:30] tax bills. We know that. And sometimes when you're looking at the future, what are we going to have in the future here, it's uncertain. It's an investment. But it's going to be here for generations. And I'm confident that in 30 years, our kids today or the grandkids of our kids are going to be talking about this and have memories. I did this. Do you remember when we did this at the community center? It's going to be part of our community, and it couldn't be in a better place right near our signature park and our downtown. So I think it's a fantastic investment.

[00:37:09] The previous speaker mentioned the LEED gold, and I just would just emphasize that I hope you stick to that LEED gold standard. That's a really high standard for energy and water efficiency. And if we hold to that, as the previous speaker mentioned, we're going to significantly save in energy costs and other costs from like stormwater management. So I think this is going to change people's experiences of the city for generation, and I strongly support it. Thank you.

[00:37:38] Our next speaker is Janet Jaworski. Good evening, Mayor Reed and members of the city council. I also am here to, Janet Jaworski, 3621 Heritage Lane, for the record. I also am here to lend my support to the Willard Sherwood project. I do wear a number of hats in the city, as you know, so these are my comments as a resident and not representing any organization or department for

[00:38:12] which I volunteer. Pete and I have lived here for 26 years, and honestly, I think the need for a community center has been part of the dialogue for the entire time that we've lived here. In fact, during my six-year tenure on the planning commission from 2014 to 2020, including a three-year stint on PRAB, this was a huge topic of conversation, and this is going back more than 10 years from now, the need for a full-service community center.

[00:38:42] So I do support it for all the reasons that you've been hearing from all of the other residents coming up to support it. I'm going to focus on something a little bit different, although I am a member of the senior center, but I'm going to try to highlight some benefits for adults of all ages.

[00:38:58] As a former competitive athlete, I think the walking track, the gym, the fitness center are going to be so key to both the physical and mental health of our residents. As we all know, mental health and physical health are intertwined, and a happy, healthy, both mentally and physically population here is really something that you cannot put a price tag on.

[00:39:23] I realize, as Mr. Stewart said, we all know there's a price tag involved. Mindful of that. But to me, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. I love the fact that it will be multi-generational. You know, our city motto is live life connected. I think this is a great way that we can all connect and share experiences together. There will be a number of meeting rooms there, as you know, so it will be a place to

gather, exercise, and really build community. Secondly, it's going to be walkable for a lot of us. I know that's not true for all

[00:39:59] neighborhoods, but for my neighborhood in Daniels Run Woods, it will be walkable and we can get a jump start on our workout routine by walking to and from, which I think will be great. It also is accessible for public transportation, which is wonderful. Lastly, our relationship with the county. I was so pleased to hear that you had a successful meeting with the county last week.

[00:40:24] That's fantastic. I appreciate the fact that there were no objections to the timeline, and that's really great news. I think continuing to nurture that relationship with the county is huge, and this is a great way that we can partner with the county moving forward. So I would ask for your yes vote on April 28th to move this forward, and I appreciate your time. Thank you.

[00:40:48] Our next speaker is Janice Miller. I'm a little shorter than Janet. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

[00:41:06] Mayor Reed, members of council, staff, residents, and guests, my name is Janice Miller, and I am here to support moving forward with the Willard Sherwood Project, and I support council members authorizing the EDA to sell revenue bonds to finance this project.

[00:41:22] Questions have been raised recently regarding the economic advantages of this proposed project. please consider the following. Willard-Sherwood would be a long-term economic anchor. It would strengthen downtown vitality due to its central location.

[00:41:41] It would generate consistent weekday activity that will support downtown retail and services. It would increase pedestrian activity in the downtown area. It would reinforce Old Town as a hub for daily life and not solely as a spot for dining out, nightlife, and or special events.

[00:42:03] Willard Sherwood would demonstrate capital leverage and fiscal efficiency. The capital costs are divided between the county and the city based on programmatic usage. The city avoids land acquisition costs, demolition costs, and site preparation costs.

[00:42:21] The shared infrastructure and parking reduce capital duplication. Energy-efficient design lowers operating costs. Willard Sherwood will support workforce and talent competitiveness. It will help attract and retain public and private sector employees and professional households.

[00:42:42] It will reinforce the city's identity as a service-rich community. It will enhance the city's appeal relative to competing jurisdictions. Unlike market-driven projects, the center provides enduring economic value across all business cycles.

[00:43:01] All these factors support office occupancy, mixed-use development, and economic security. Willard Sherwood advances the city's strategic priorities and economic development goals. It maximizes limited land resources and preserves green space through joint development.

[00:43:20] It uses external funding to reduce city exposure. It strengthens downtown vitality. It supports quality of life. It builds on past city-county partnerships and establishes a model for future city-county collaboration.

[00:43:38] In summary, by providing the opportunity for enhanced business tax income, this project will deliver sustained economic value that will ultimately far exceed its direct fiscal cost. There are many in the audience who support Willard Sherwood.

[00:43:53] Would those who support this project are willing to pay reasonable fees for usage and approve of their tax dollars paying both capital costs and operating costs, please stand up. Our next speaker is Dale Lucina. Thank you.

[00:44:16] Good evening, Madam Mayor, City Council members, and Assembled City staff.

[00:44:40] I have, I'd like to speak to just two issues in my allotted time. The first is the Willard Community Center. All the good things that have been said about it, I support. I would add one other thing that I didn't hear yet, and that is combining the community center in the center of the city.

[00:45:03] I think it just makes sense to me, and it's a great opportunity to reinforce Old Town as a hub of daily activities, which has been necessary for a long time, and we've talked about that quite a bit.

[00:45:20] So I recommend that you support that issue. The other one has to do with the Fairfax Renaissance Housing Corporation, which is an organization that provides the city of Fairfax homeowners an attractive opportunity to upgrade and improve the quality of the city's residential neighborhoods.

[00:45:42] Over the past 23 years of its existence, it has provided funding to 290 improvement loans and has not lost a single penny to a bad loan.

[00:45:59] Plus, the city gets back money from the Housing Corporation program due to the permanent improvements that are made, and thus the tax that goes with that permanent improvement goes with the home.

[00:46:21] Okay? And so when the increase comes for that, the city receives a return on its investment, and it continues and continues. So this program was not funded last year, and now we can't do any loans at all because they don't have funds for it.

[00:46:45] And so I strongly urge that this city council fund it for next year so that we can continue this program because it returns money to you and the people that get the improvements like it a lot, believe me.

[00:47:02] I thank you for your kind attention. Our next speaker is Rebecca Rader. Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you tonight.

[00:47:23] My name is Becky Rager. I live at 4141 Evergreen Drive, been there for 31 years. I'm a current member of the Fairfax Village in the City Advisory Board. I spoke to you last month in overall support of the Willard Sherwood Health Center and the Community Center.

[00:47:42] I'm here today to briefly express how the village and the city could enhance services as a result of the new facility. I'm mentioning a few possibilities today. As we move forward, the advisory board members, village members, and volunteers can brainstorm other possibilities for expanded services that directly support older adults and those with disabilities beyond what is currently available.

[00:48:09] We will also work with the Willard Health Center and the Green Acres staff to create new programs, which could include, and I'm just listing a few, intergenerational activities such as tutoring or reading to the children in the child care center, working on shared craft projects in dedicated spaces where projects could remain until completed, growing and maintaining a rooftop herb garden and creating a gardening circle,

[00:48:40] Working with the neighboring Willard Health Center to have a memory cafe once a month where people who are in the early stages of cognitive impairment and their caregivers can meet, socialize, and trade ideas. Developing workshops designed to improve memory and cognitive function.

[00:49:00] Creating a digital storytelling club where seniors use technology and record their life stories. and conducting a vintage hat and fashion showcase where members bring in their vintage collections and show them and then discuss the stories behind them.

[00:49:20] All of these proposed suggestions could be done without additional staffing costs as members are not just consumers, they are staff. Our village consists of members and volunteers with an extensive variety of backgrounds and experience. For example, a member might receive a ride to the doctor one day and facilitate a workshop the next.

[00:49:43] This creates a sustainable model for future programs without additional costs. I believe the new Willard-Sherwood facility, with all the infrastructure enhancements we'll provide, is necessary to continue to deliver modern, equitable services for the entire community.

[00:50:02] Thank you. Our next speaker is Alan Glenn. Thank you. Alan Glenn, long-time resident of the city and now a resident just outside the city.

[00:50:24] I wanted to speak tonight also in favor of the project, the Willard Health Center-Sherwood Center. I'm both on my wife's behalf, Judy Blanchard, and myself. We're strongly in support of it. We've benefited from some of the services over the years.

[00:50:43] Our kids were vaccinated at the health center in their early childhood period. We've had other counseling and services over the years. Both of us have used the senior center and continue to be members there.

[00:51:02] I think the expanded opportunities for child care and public health that will be offered and available through this project are very much in demand. To me, this project is one of a number that I consider crown jewels in the community where the city partners with the county in coming up with a wonderful facility to serve everyone, included the public schools where both our kids went and the public library that we've used

[00:51:35] and the health centers. Personally, I think you all have a difficult job as elected leaders to a two-year term where you have to consider the strategic needs of the community and balance them against costs and budgetary issues.

[00:52:02] But I think in this case, the project will solve a need to re-update and replace the senior center that's now at Green Acres and provide better health and public services in child care and early childhood health for residents.

[00:52:22] The nice thing about this is it serves everybody in the community, regardless of age, income, strata, or which neighborhood you live in. So to me, it's definitely needed, and I strongly support it.

[00:52:38] Thank you very much. Oh, as long as I've got 30 seconds left, let me just say, Mr. Lastina, who was the previous speaker, I would like to endorse his comments. I served on the board with him for five years of the Housing Renaissance Corporation. That was one of three city boards that I've had the privilege to serve on over the years.

[00:52:59] And I think that board and the funding from the city served an important need to maintain and upgrade existing housing stock in the city. Thank you. Our next speaker is William Pitchford.

[00:53:18] Good evening, and thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. My name is William Pitchford. I live on School Street in the city of Fairfax.

[00:53:34] In two weeks, at the April 28th City Council meeting, you will be asked to approve a resolution to proceed with the Willow Sherwood Health and Community Center project and a resolution for the Economic Development Authority to issue bonds to finance such capital projects.

[00:53:55] I'm asking you to approve both resolutions, as it is the best option for the citizens of Fairfax City and the city's overall economic and infrastructure development. I'd like to offer a few points on why you should approve these two measures. As you have heard throughout this evening, the citizens of Fairfax City are in desperate need for a community center that meets their needs and have expressed this with broad support for the project through two years of design reviews and approvals from previous and current city council.

[00:54:34] This is probably the most vetted capital improvement project the city has undertaken. The New Wheeler-Sherber Community Center will be a joint venture project with Fairfax County. The cost for building and operating the facility is shared, significantly reducing the burden to the city taxpayers.

[00:54:55] This is a generational opportunity for citizens of Fairfax. Another opportunity like this will most likely not come around again in our lifetime. The current Green Acres facility is completely inadequate to meet the community's current and future needs.

[00:55:13] The facility was built in 1961 as an elementary school. That was before schools had air conditioning. It was retired in 2000. It was never intended to be a community or senior center. The building is well beyond its useful lifespan.

[00:55:31] It's located in the center of a residential community, has no public transportation access, poor ADA compliance, and a dangerous parking lot, especially at night. I had the honor of attending a Fairfax City Citizens for Smarter Growth meeting at Green Acres in February of this year.

[00:55:54] Like most community service organizations, this is where they have meetings. And just like this council meeting, it started at 7 p.m. Unlike the normal council meetings, it ended at the decent hour of 8.30, which was still well past sunset.

[00:56:12] When leaving the meeting, I was absolutely shocked to walk out to a darkened parking lot, having to reverse the narrow, steep staircase to find my car. I tried to imagine what someone 10 to 15 years older than I would do.

[00:56:30] Basically, they would stop participating in their community after dark. For those of you who have any reservations about the NEFRD project, I would challenge you to hold an official city meeting at Green Acres. It doesn't have to be the next council meeting, but it could be a planning commission or economic development authority meeting.

[00:56:51] In conclusion, I'm asking you to approve the two resolutions at the April 28th council meeting. Thank you. Our last speaker is Toby Sorensen. Good evening.

[00:57:15] Toby Sorensen, 101-37, Spring Lake Terrace. Mayor Reed and council members. The reason I am once again here to speak about supporting the Willard Sherwood Health and Community Center is

because many of us still do not know whether you are going to vote to fund it on April 28th or not.

[00:57:32] If any of you are still undecided to vote, please consider the following. If you vote for the funding, there are many things we do know. We know what the city's share of the joint project will be, thanks to the guaranteed maximum pricing contract. We know what the operating costs will be thanks to the research done by the project consultants.

[00:57:54] We know the basic level of class and rental fees that will cover operating expenses. We know the higher level of class and rental fees that will cover operating expenses plus provide a surplus that can be put toward the yearly bond payment.

[00:58:10] We know what the bond payment will be if the city goes to bond this spring. We know that we will be able to keep a senior center and have it located in a modern facility with better services. We know that we will be able to keep a much-needed preschool in the city.

[00:58:27] We know that we will have a well-located community center that will draw people and businesses to the downtown area. We know that we will have continued access to important health department services right in the middle of the city. Finally, we know when this project will be completed.

[00:58:45] If you do not vote to fund Willard Sherwood there are many things we will not know. Would we begin again to create a plan to build or rebuild a community center? How much would that new planning cost? Would a new project be located at Green Acres? Would a new project be located elsewhere?

[00:59:05] Where would that be and how much would it cost? How far into the future will we be looking and how much will the cost of bonds be at that time? If we do nothing, will we lose the senior center and the preschool? Since the city council and the county board of supervisors signed a letter of understanding for full design and construction of the joint project, would the county expect the city to compensate them for the money they have spent on the project so far? Would the county expect the city to compensate them for the money it will need to begin their planning and design process

[00:59:44] anew. Would the county choose a different location for the health center, one that would not be in the city? If the county chose a different location, what would they decide to do with the land that they own next to the Sherwood Center? We want to continue to have a senior center and a preschool and community spaces for our residents, as well as to have a health department located within the city. If you believe you have a hard decision to make about funding Willard Sherwood, think also about the really hard decisions you will have to make if you don't vote to fund it. Thank you for

[01:00:22] listening. We can move to the consent agenda. Okay, before we move forward, I want to make a take a moment to briefly address consent agenda items 6F through 6K and 6M. These items are administrative in nature and represent the first step in a multi-step process, what we refer to as the introduction phase. This step is intended to formally notify our residents and business

[01:00:55] community of the city's proposed actions. There will be a full opportunity for public input at the next stage, which is the public hearing scheduled for our next regular meeting on April 28th. Following that, the third and final step will be council consideration and action as part a budget adoption night on May 5th. So again, tonight's action is simply to move these items forward in the process and ensure the community is informed and has the opportunity to participate.

[01:01:31] Are there any questions on any of the items on the consent agenda from the dais? Seeing none, is there a motion? I move to approve the consent agenda items 6A through M as presented and the Accompanying motions in the staff reports is there a second second. We have a motion made my council member Stacey Hardy Chandler and seconded by council member Peterson a roll call vote Council member McQuillan aye council member Bates aye council member Peterson aye council member Hardy Chandler aye council member Hall

[01:02:09] aye council member Amos aye motion passed unanimously We'll go to appointments to boards commissions and advisory committees. Is there a motion to approve the appointments to boards commissions and advisory commissions councilmember hardy chandler i move to appoint the following applicants commission on the arts appoint melissa miller for a remainder of a three-year term extending through july 9th 2027 appoint kenneth kraft check for a remainder of a three-year term extending through october 26

[01:02:41] 2028 appoint anne morrison for a three-year term extending through april 14th 2029 reappoint sharon clark chang for a three-year term extending through february 11 2029 continuum of care appoint james gillespie for a two-year term extending through april 14th 2028 environmental sustainability committee appoint lauren oliver for a remainder of a three-year term extending through february 11 2028 appoint david fleischer for three-year term

[01:03:16] extending through april 14th 2029 and exclude nova nova park's appointment until may 12th is there a second second there has been a motion and a second is there discussion on this motion yes council member peterson may i ask why the final two appointments are being pulled council member hardy chandler there has been additional clarity on procedure that allows more input while safeguarding conflict of interest, and I want additional time for that to happen.

[01:03:53] Can you clarify that? I'm not following that. Each candidate can be considered individually, and while I would recuse myself from one of the candidates, I do want to have input on other candidates. Are you saying that you are going to vote on slots in which your husband is an applicant?

[01:04:15] I'm going, individual people are on their own merit, and I would like to have input on the individuals who are candidates on their own merit. So we have three applicants for two slots, one of whom is your husband. Right. Okay. Under state law for jurisdictions that follow it, that's normally considered a conflict of interest. I would recuse myself as I have historically on the vote for my husband. For the slot. Will you recuse yourself from the slot in which your

[01:04:45] husband is one of the applicants? It is my understanding that there is appropriate input that can be made on other candidates for this position, and I would like to have that input. Okay, so the simple question here is whether you are going to be voting on a slot.

[01:05:07] There's two slots with three applicants where your husband is an applicant because normally, under state law, for jurisdictions that follow it, this is regarded as a clear conflict of interest. Each slot is independent, and they're not the same slot.

[01:05:24] Okay, I think that's... Let me recognize Councilmember McQuillan. Our residents applied for these roles in good faith. They interviewed in good faith.

[01:05:42] Council discusses these applications through the established process. We should respect the process. Vote and move forward. That's how I feel. Thank you. Councilmember Hall?

[01:05:57] I also think that we have taken a very, very long time, especially on this one item. There are two people that are currently serving in this role who are now one year beyond their designated term, and I do not and have not thought that it was appropriate that they continue to serve simply because this council can't come to an agreement, and I think we had what I thought was a very productive meeting a few weeks ago where we came out with two

[01:06:31] names that you can see on the motion. And I understand that maybe you have a different thought now that you understand maybe you can vote on a different spot or different thing. But I still think that this is very messy. And I think that we are in a situation where we are at a split vote. And unfortunately, math often is used against certain members of council when it comes to making decisions on other things there have been many high density housing options

[01:07:09] that have passed simply because there is a vote and it is split and the mayor can break a tie and i do not agree with that in its own merit and i simply do not agree with it now thank you and i would point out that the first 63 years of this city's history the mayor was not excluded from the discussions or appointments to boards and commission until this council and so whether i have feelings about that or not. This council decided that, which is why we have an even number of people voting on these appointments. Up until this council, as far as the mayors that I have

[01:07:46] spoken with previously, this was not an issue. So there are issues here, for sure there are, on many fronts. Councilmember Amos. So when the initial discussion happened in March, I was clearly not here for that towards the end since I was out of the country.

[01:08:04] I got back in my understanding was there was supposed to be a recusal. And I really think for me there's only one question that really needs to be answered, and that would probably come from our city attorney, is that per your review, should Councilmember Hardy Chandler have been included in the vote for two of the appointees, excluding her husband?

[01:08:25] So one of the nice things about the state and local government conflict of interest act is that decision is left to the individual member. I have my opinions as to whether it's appropriate for a member to vote for a position in which his or her husband, family member, is a candidate.

[01:08:53] I will say I think the answer to that question is not really a legal one. So Councilmember Hardy Chandler is taking her own counsel on this, and that is all I will say on that. Thank you. So to follow up on that, I completely understand that this is a frustrating circumstance and has been for some time.

[01:09:13] Ultimately, due to policy and procedure and the existing rules, it would be on Stacey Hardy-Chantler, which means I believe that it would be necessary to push it to May 12th and have additional discussion. Council Member McCollin.

[01:09:30] I have questions for you, Mr. Lefkman. And can the city attorney confirm for the public that the city of Fairfax operates under a council manager form of government and that the appointments to boards and commissions are made by the city council as a body? Yes, that is clear in the city charter.

[01:09:48] Thank you. Can the city attorney confirm that interviews and deliberations on applicants occur in closed session and the final appointments are voted in open session at a regular meeting? Yes. And can the city attorney also clarify for the public whether any individual member's recusal on a particular appointment does or does not change the council's collective authority to proceed under its established appointment procedures?

[01:10:11] Could you restate that question, please? Whether any individual member's recusal on a particular appointment does or does not change the council's collective authority to proceed under its established appointment procedures? An individual's recusal simply changes the number of votes required.

[01:10:31] And it also, even if a majority of council members recuse on an item, it doesn't affect the quorum for purposes of voting on an item. So it just simply becomes the remaining members vote on the particular appointment. Excellent.

[01:10:47] Thank you. The city's own materials say appointments are made by city council and coordinated through the city clerk. I'm asking that we simply restate the city's own rules on the record. That's all I'm doing. I also want to, I do have a few more questions.

[01:11:05] Sorry, I'm kind of going through here. Okay, I asked those, just double-checking, making sure my notes here. Sorry, I'm just going through my notes because I knew this was going to come up.

[01:11:32] May I read and ask a question in the meantime? Is that okay? Council Member Hall? Yes, of course. Go for it. Council Member Hardy-Chandler, to my recollection, each time we have met to discuss this board and commission, you have refused yourself. Okay, so every single time we've had discussions and conversations, you have, on your own, chosen to remove yourself. That was without clarification that I could have input on the other candidates. Having received that clarification, I want to exercise that I see an appointment for a four-year term extending through April 14, 2030, and serving

[01:12:10] as a representative to Parks and Recreation Advisory Board as separate from the other appointment, which I recuse myself from, extending through September 30th, 2029. These are separate independent appointments. If these candidates were coming up for candidacy separately, if that was without the second one, I would certainly have a voice on the other position.

[01:12:38] So in my opinion, with this new information, I do want to have input on this other position, which is a separate appointment. Okay and I understand your perspective on it. I happen to disagree and I think that if a spouse or family member serves on a border commission it makes perfect sense to be recusing and clearly the state code seems to support that. I did have one other question in the meantime before I pass the floor back to Councilman McQuillan. Mr. Lubman are you aware of any times in which the mayor has voted on a border commission nomination? In the 20 years I've been city attorney? Well, I'll turn it around by saying my experience has been that most

[01:13:17] appointments to boards and commissions tend to be close to unanimous by the body. Okay. That's the fair statement. So I think we can inter that to how we would like it to, but it sounds like in most cases a mayor's vote would not be needed. But is the charter wording such that the mayor does have a vote in that? The mayor can vote on procedural aspects related to the appointment. So For example, deferring action on an appointment, those type of things are perfectly legitimate.

[01:13:47] I have always taken the position that the appointments to boards and commissions legally is the province of the city council. It is also true, and people throw the word tradition around, it is also not an incorrect statement how it was characterized previously as to previous actions by previous councils and mayors.

[01:14:08] But that is not a legal requirement. That is just simply an agreement among the parties. Okay, so I think if we have hired you as our attorney and we tend to consider you an expert in all things city

legal, and we thank you very much for your service frequently, we should understand that you are making a statement that says that the mayor legally is not entitled to vote on these things and that it has been counsel that votes on boards and commission nominations.

[01:14:36] I'm not making a legal statement on the mayor voting. I didn't write the city's charter. I understand, but we rely on you to interpret and to give us your best legal opinion. Absolutely, and it's also true that on matters such as recusal, et cetera, those are the province of individual members of this body and the mayor.

[01:14:53] Yes, okay. I will give it back to Council Member McQuillan now. No, actually, I give it back to Council Member McQuillan because I'm running this business meeting, so thank you. So let me clarify. Let me clarify by saying when I said vote, I don't mean vote from the dais. What I'm saying is when discussions were held in closed session about appointments to boards and commissions, there were seven people, if there were even seven people in the room, who gave input.

[01:15:15] This is not about my voting from the dais for this. This is about the body acting like a body. What a concept. And I am still running this meeting. So, Council Member McQuillen, would you like to make further comments? Yes, please. Thank you.

[01:15:32] What concerns me is the appearance problem. If a member properly recuses from a specific appointment because of a spouse's candidacy, but then after learning the outcome seeks to delay the process because the full result is not what she wanted, that creates an appearance of personal influence over a public appointment.

[01:15:54] Even the appearance of that is damaging. That's my concern. Thank you. Council Member Hardy Chandler. I think that would be an issue if I had a concern about my husband being appointed. So in my absence, my husband was appointed, and that has nothing to do with me.

[01:16:12] I want no input on that, whether he's appointed or not. What I want input on are the other candidates for the other positions, just as I have input on the other candidates for other commissions. Councilmember Peterson. So as a matter of practice, in this case, which is common, we have more than one slot open on a board and commission.

[01:16:34] we have multiple candidates and it is not uncommon for the council to exercise flexibility and discretion on where those appointments fall among those set of slots that exist this has happened frequently in fact it has involved council members councils actually appointing appointing applicants to other committees than they had actually applied to so this is certainly within the discretion of the council to decide who is appointed to which slot the practical reality

[01:17:09] again is that it is very common to have multiple applicants for one or more slots as a consequence of that in the in this case and anything like it we have a candidate an applicant who is the husband of a council member who has applied for two different slots by virtue of applying in this area, and the council could be making appointments for that person in either of those slots. And as long as that applicant is still an applicant, and as long as these slots, either of them are still open, then the dilemma that we have here is we have a spouse making an appointment

[01:17:47] of another spouse. And that, to me, is not just something that appears improper. I think this is an ethical issue. And I can't imagine that this council would want to exist without proper conflicts of interest procedures to prevent this very kind of thing from happening. And we see that state law intends

very clearly to avoid this and very clearly for localities to follow this. Whether or not we've taken the step we need to in codifying this is another matter. I believe we should.

[01:18:20] But this clearly is something that fits within the realm of our practice, that we now find ourselves uh being faced with a conflict we have a motion on the floor it's been properly made and seconded i let's go to a roll call vote to see if we have votes on this dais to move that motion forward ms shinneberry council member amos hi council member hall i'm sorry read the motion

[01:18:52] please that we are voting on right now um so hardy yeah to me 12. okay hardy chandler hi okay councilmember peterson no with a caveat to just the questions were not finished here some other important details we didn't get a chance to ask about during this process councilmember bates aye councilmember mcquillen no okay motion failed three to three and we are going to move on to

[01:19:24] the public hearings the only public hearing tonight is for the fy27 budget this is the third and final public hearing of the proposed fy27 budget the city manager presented on february 24th, 2026. I had two speakers sign up prior to the meeting. After I call those two speakers up, if there's anybody else in the room that wants to speak on the budget, may come forward. So the

[01:19:49] first speaker is Douglas Stewart. Good evening. So as I mentioned in my previous comments, my wife and I have lived in Fairfax City for 22 years. Our son's a proud graduate of Fairfax High School, and the city provides an exceptional level of public services and education at a lower tax rate than most nearby jurisdictions. But I think that one area where we need to improve is reducing our energy costs. The cost of electricity is increasing significantly, and fuel costs for

[01:20:27] vehicles are, as we know, very volatile. This has consequences both for our public buildings and fleets and for city residents and businesses. Just in our one household, it takes some work to keep track of our utility bill and identify where we are spending too much and could save energy. Now imagine that multiplied by hundreds, if not thousands, of different utility accounts that a complex entity such as our city needs to manage. Who is keeping track of these costs and looking to realize more efficiencies and savings? Solar is now the cheapest, cleanest, and fastest

[01:21:03] to deploy energy source available in Virginia. We should be using solar for more of our public operations and buildings, including our schools. The city has a green building policy that can drive more energy savings, both for our public buildings and for new private development.

[01:21:18] But without dedicated staffing, we can't put it in place. I think a dedicated energy manager can save the city significant energy expenses above the cost to fund this new position. They can also report on the savings so that you as a council and we, the citizens, know what we are saving and what we could do better. Beyond this, an energy manager can also help the city secure more outside funding from grants and connect with financing instruments that will support the upfront costs of new solar.

[01:21:50] For private developments, we can't hold developers to building higher-performance buildings without the energy manager to implement our green building policy. And those higher-performance buildings will save our residents money in the form of reduced utility bills. So to conclude, I would urge inclusion of a full-time position for an energy manager

[01:22:13] in the city budget. Thank you. Our next speaker is Jennifer Rose. Good evening, Mayor and members of council. Jennifer Rose, Executive Director of the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce.

[01:22:37] Thank you for the opportunity to speak and for the significant work by Fairfax City staff that has gone into developing the fiscal year 27 proposed budget. We recognize the real fiscal pressures the city is managing, particularly increases in school tuition and debt service, and we appreciate your commitment to maintaining services without adding new full-time equivalent positions. From the Chamber's perspective, I want to focus on one key issue, ensuring that Fairfax remains competitive for small businesses while making necessary revenue decisions. First, the proposed meals tax increase from 4% to 4.5%. We understand the goal of diversifying revenue.

[01:23:18] However, a meals tax is, in practice, a single industry tax. It places the greatest burden on restaurants, many of them small, locally owned businesses. We know this. They operate on thin margins and on the customers who support them. Restaurants are not just another sector. They are a cornerstone of our local economy. They drive foot traffic, support tourism, and contribute to the vibrancy of Old Town and our commercial corridors. And I would like to point out, for the first time in more than 20 years, our restaurants are finally on a level playing field with Fairfax County restaurants now that the county's implemented its own 4% meals tax. We respectfully urge

[01:23:56] council to reconsider this increase, or at minimum, include a clear sunset and ensure that any new revenue is reinvested in ways that directly support the hospitality and small business community. Second, if additional revenue is needed, there are more balanced alternatives. The chamber supports exploring visitor-based revenue options, such as aligning the transient occupancy tax with regional levels if authorized by the General Assembly. This approach brings in revenue from visitors rather than placing additional strain on local businesses and residents. Similarly, if B-Poll adjustments are considered, it is critical to protect small businesses. The city's current threshold of \$10,000

[01:24:35] is very low and captures many micro-businesses. Any changes should include raising the threshold and phasing and increases to avoid unintended impacts on startups and small firms. Third and just as important, we encourage you to protect economic development capacity. The most sustainable way to reduce long-term tax pressure is not by increasing rates, but by growing the commercial tax base. That requires continued investment in business attraction, retention, and critically faster and more predictable permitting. If we want Fairfax to remain competitive in attracting and retaining businesses, we must continue investing in the systems and resources that

[01:25:13] support the growth. So our request is straightforward. Avoid disproportionate impacts on any one industry, pursue a more balanced visitor-informed revenue strategy, and continue investing in the economic development efforts that will strengthen Fairfax over the long term. Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to our community. We look forward to continuing to partner with you. Is there anybody else in the room that would like to speak on the proposed FY27

[01:25:41] budget? Okay, I will now close the public hearing on the proposed FY27 budget. Budget adoption will be on May 5th, 2026, beginning at 7 p.m. Ms. Cheneberry? We will move forward to second general public comment i had one person sign up prior to the start of the meeting i will call them forward

[01:26:07] mary mcdaniel i'm mary mcdaniel the resident of the fairfax city and my comments tonight are unrelated to my role on the city's electoral board i'm speaking in support of the willard sherwood center and i'm asking that the city council advance this project it's an essential facility for our growing city i have attended a ton of open houses on this and have always supported of the project. As I look at it, it seems very obvious that we should move ahead. And I started

[01:26:44] thinking about why would you maybe cancel the project? And one might be that the services that are going to be covered are not needed anymore. But in fact, the services are needed more now than 10 years ago when project planning started. Speaking to a few of them, the daycare center.

[01:27:03] Our population has grown, and along with that is the need for child care. Public health services, Again, larger population means more demand. On top of that, the federal government has significantly reduced spending on public health and plans to continue to do more. So states and localities have to step up.

[01:27:21] Community space. In the past 10 years, we have learned a lot about the importance of personal contact and mental health. You know, texting is fine for some things, but face-to-face communication is far more important, as is exercise. So the senior center is really critical.

[01:27:38] Something that doesn't get talked about much is parking. The Sherwood Center Parking Center fills up when popular programs are taking place in the evening, so having a parking garage attached to the building would help solve that problem. I am well aware that this building would raise my property taxes.

[01:27:54] I've owned two houses in the city over the space of 35 years. My real estate taxes have never gone down. The rate may have decreased, but the amount I paid always went up, and I understand that because every year the cost of living goes up. In my adult life, this consumer price index has decreased only one time.

[01:28:14] Hundreds of citizens like me have spoken for more than a decade in open houses about wanting this project, and we know that the city will need to raise taxes to do this and may need to sell bonds. This has been openly disclosed and discussed throughout the planning process.

[01:28:30] We've had a ton of experts weigh in, from architects, building engineers, landscape people and the dedicated city staff who have worked diligently to pack as much as possible into this site. Over the years, I've never heard a city council member campaign on the idea of canceling this project, and I don't think now that any of you did.

[01:28:53] What I ask at this point is this. You've heard from the experts about what can be put into this building and how it benefits the community, and you've heard the community speak about the wants that we have. I ask that you follow up on promises that have been made, advance this project, and finance it as needed.

[01:29:14] Is there anybody else in the room that would like to speak under the general public comment? All right. I will now recess the regular... Well, hang on. Before you do that... Excuse me. I have not recognized you, Council Member Peterson. I am now adjourning the meeting to go into a work session.

[01:29:33] We will stay in the chamber. Our work session item is discussion on the proposed FY 2027 budget, City Council identified topics. I'm going to recognize Daniel Alexander, city manager, for the staff discussion.

[01:29:50] All right. Good evening, Mayor and Council. To frame this discussion, tonight will largely be a conversation around revenues and expenditures. It's not going to be the full picture. We've had some conversations up to this point. We have some moving items. We still have some things that we expect out of Richmond relative to their process, and so there will be some additional conversations around how those numbers are shifting.

[01:30:15] But I think for the most part, as where we are in the process, we're a good place to talk about some things that have come up regarding revenues and expenditures, answer some of the questions that you've asked around those items, and then prep us to move forward into a constructive markup session on the 28th and hopefully adoption on the 5th.

[01:30:37] So with that, I'm going to turn it over to our Assistant City Manager and CFO, Mr. Martinez. Thank you, Mr. Alexander, Mayor, Council. This evening, if you can go to the next slide, Ms. Riddle. Tonight's presentation is intended to provide a high-level update on the FY 2027 budget, specifically focusing, as the manager stated, on revenues and expenditures assumptions.

[01:31:02] As a reminder, this is not the final iteration. Staff will return on April 28th with more detailed scenarios and options for Council's consideration as we move toward finalizing the budget. We'll begin with revenues. Listed on the sheet that's on the screen and before you are previously discussed, additional proposed changes of three revenue sources, two within the B poll and one on TOT.

[01:31:29] These three items were introduced earlier this evening and represent a potential maximum increase. As communicated in several respective budget memos, the associated revenue from these increases are listed on the right side. Additionally, the Commissioner of the Revenue, in collaboration with the Budget Director, reviewed and revised upward the anticipated personal property revenue projection originally budgeted in the proposed FY27 budget by an additional \$400,000.

[01:32:03] Let me be clear that this increase does not represent any change to the personal property tax rate and is solely due to a revised forecasting and modeling. Next slide.

[01:32:19] Turning to expenditures, there are a few important updates to highlight. First, health insurance costs have increased beyond our original projections. Specifically, we are now projecting an additional 5.5% increase above the initial 8% forecast, largely driven by higher-than-anticipated claims activity.

[01:32:41] In response, staff is taking a proactive approach. We have a meeting scheduled this Friday with our insurance representative to explore strategies to help curtail future cost increases, including evaluating plan design options and the potential rebidding of our insurance contract.

[01:32:59] Secondly, you will see personal expense savings reflected in the updated numbers. Approximately half of these savings result from a review of current staffing levels where we are prioritizing the reallocation of existing vacant positions rather than adding new FTEs.

[01:33:20] This approach allows us to meet operational needs while maintaining fiscal discipline. The remaining savings are anticipated from projected employee retirements and turnover, which will increase the current budgeted vacancies savings factor.

[01:33:38] Not reflected on the current sheet are two additional items still under evaluation. First, there is a payment to VDOT. Staff is currently assessing the most appropriate structure with a preliminary approach that would phase the payment approximately one-third in FY27 and the remaining two-thirds in FY28.

[01:33:59] Second, we are considering a modification to the timing of school-related debt. Rather than committing the full \$1.7 million in FY27, the proposed approach would include only \$600,000 in the baseline budget through a contingency within the assigned fund balance.

[01:34:20] The remaining \$1.1 million deferred for future consideration. This approach is intended to preserve flexibility as we monitor potential changes at the state level. Specifically, current Virginia Senate bill amendment language would authorize the 1% sales tax dedication to school projects contingent upon voter approval through local referendum.

[01:34:45] Importantly, those revenues would be restricted to construction or major renovation projects and could not be used to supplant existing local funding that has already been budgeted or appropriated.

[01:35:01] That is the key language and the change that is in the current draft language. The General Assembly will be reconvening a special session, and hopefully we will know more by the end of this month or the beginning of May. Next slide. Fund balance, really quickly, provides a high-level look of our fund balance status.

[01:35:23] This is intended as a preview and a reminder of more detailed analysis that is regularly presented during our quarterly financial review with councils that our budget director does. Our next quarterly update is also scheduled for April 28th. That will happen prior to the last budget work session.

[01:35:41] As part of those reviews, we not only walk through the fund balance levels, We'll also provide an updated snapshot of our current fiscal position, revenues versus expenditures, as well as a refreshed five-year financial projection. And then lastly, next slide.

[01:35:59] Thank you. You're probably used to seeing this. We just want to reiterate the last slide outlines our budget calendar and where we are in the process. At this point, we are more than halfway through the FY27 budget development cycle, and we are entering the phase where council direction becomes critical in shaping the final document.

[01:36:21] I also want to highlight one upcoming engagement opportunity. The Engage Fairfax Fiscal Year 2027 Community Budget Exchange is scheduled for April 16th. has been updated. Let me say that one more time. Has been updated to reflect a revised access link that will now be held via Zoom instead of Teams. We were notified by Microsoft Teams that there was a bug, so we had to pivot very quickly. And as of this afternoon, a few hours ago, the communication

[01:36:53] staff has updated all links and all distribution lists with the new Zoom updated link. Looking ahead april 28th is a key milestone with multiple public hearings and our final work session where staff will present again refined options and draft changes for council deliberation in closing tonight's update is meant to keep council informed of where things stand today we will return on april 28th with more detailed analysis refined assumptions and actionable options to help guide

[01:37:26] your decision making happy to answer any questions council member amos thank you uh i know i submitted a number of questions prior to going on my trip, and I know you're still working on those, and I'm assuming generating response to circulate to everyone, or to me, whatever works best.

[01:37:45] The only other question and follow-up I'd like to discuss is specifically, I know that the chamber just brought it up, I would like to have a more serious discussion on adding a sunset to the increase in the meals tax contingent on the 1% being activated.

[01:38:03] And I may be misunderstanding this, but once we get the 1% for school construction, essentially restaurants would be at 5.5% versus 4.5%, at least for the time being until they're paid off. Is that correct? It's going to depend on the current language.

[01:38:20] The last language I saw, I think, on Meals Tax, I'm looking at the budget director because I think she showed it to me. The language may not be applicable to meals or restaurant meals for the additional 1%. That is still something that is being evaluated.

[01:38:36] We won't know, and I think that's sort of the biggest predicament that we're in right now is there has been no final determination by Richmond, so we're trying to be as adaptive and as prudent as possible. Yeah, I know we're still waiting for legislative updates, but once we get that clarification, if that is the case, I think it's worth a follow-up discussion.

[01:38:56] Thank you. Councilmember Peterson? you went through a number of specifics and I don't think we had numbers on slides in front of us is there going to be a listing that we can refer back to with all of this definitely so I think this traditionally is being uploaded the next morning so tomorrow morning and then as mentioned on April 28th we will present at least four to five options or scenarios very similarly what we did last year to council it's my understanding that we also have meetings sort of scheduled one-on-ones

[01:39:34] starting things starting next week with council to sort of walk through some of those potential scenarios but definitely have it in a public forum on the 28th and so thank you to put this in context then you had a series of numbers are these numbers tied to any particular scenario at this stage not 100% so what was displayed in some of the other slides the revenues and the expenditures are what we know of right now the most traditional way that we've displayed this is the budget change sheet that will be a part

[01:40:14] of it that's sort of the debit in the credits the changes that have that are now known as of when the manager proposes budget at the end of February we're keeping track of that we're not anticipating any other changes between now and the end of May other than the two that we've identified that were not listed on here the VDOT repayment and then the potential school deferral on debt besides that we're trying to formulate an option and scenarios for council so when we get back together again April 28 you'll have scenarios for

[01:40:52] us to discuss and we will have a scenario then that this information will be factored into which will be at least one of the scenarios the manager's proposed budget is that correct correct okay and then we will have additional scenarios that you've been developed able to develop based on further work that you've done on all of these items including revenue and expense improvements that you've been able to identify is that fair correct council member okay thank you very much councilmember McQuillan okay sorry going back to what you stated prior to Councilmember Amos' question, could you please repeat that?

[01:41:33] I think you're referring, Councilmember, to the potential 1% sales tax for school capital. Okay, sorry, I couldn't hear the whole thing, so I was just needing a little bit of clarification on that. Thank you. I did want to mention to my council colleagues that I am the representative of the Food and Agricultural Regional Membership Policy Committee.

[01:41:58] farm and we recently had a meeting in which and I just want to share a few little updates and facts this this supports my position on the meals tax you guys all know where I stand on that I've been really open about that national restaurant association reporting this year says that 42 percent of operators were not profitable and had limited ability to raise menu prices further in 2025 it matters because restaurants do not absorb taxes inflation labor costs insurance rent and supply volatility in separate buckets. It's all in one. It all hits the same operating margin.

[01:42:35] Consumers are already paying more. The national CPI shows food away from home is up 3.8% over the year, and full-service meals are up 4.3%. That's their pricing. In the Washington region, food away from home went up 3.7% over the year, with overall food prices up 4.5%.

[01:42:56] So this is not happening in a low inflation environment for food. Also, the Virginia gas prices being elevated. AAA is showing that Virginia's regular gas average is about \$3.99 per gallon. And AAA's national reporting shows fuel prices climbed sharply in early April amid high crude prices and geopolitical disruption.

[01:43:16] That's affecting the grocery stores. It's affecting everyone in the food industry. We're seeing an uptick of food insecurity, especially among our lower middle class families. So please keep all of this in mind when we're discussing increasing the meals tax because it's just not one meal.

[01:43:35] This is several meals. People eat hundreds of meals over their lifetime or over a year. So when we're talking about increasing the tax, yeah, it sounds like a small amount, but it's really hitting our restaurants hard. and we like to brag we're often celebrating the city's restaurant scene as unique and defining these cultural strengths. Just recognize that this is impacting those businesses when we do this.

[01:44:01] That's all I wanted to share. Thank you. Council Member Hall. Thank you. I, in anticipation of the conversation about B-Poll, I reached out to two different people, one specifically with a very large car dealership who does repairs and car sales. And then another person that I reached out to is a professional in the legal area. So the, I think they're both, the car tax was, or the car B-Pol conversation was more about the lesser of two evils of real estate taxes versus B-Pol tax.

[01:44:37] The conversation that we had focused very heavily on the fact that the majority of the B-Pol, I actually didn't realize we collected it on car sales. I thought it was only on the service portion, but that is passed through to purchasers. So while that will have an impact on car dealerships and on service centers, the impact would be likely less than an increase to the real estate taxes.

[01:45:02] I did have concerns after speaking with multiple people about the rate and what we were discussing as far as the professional services. And I will be the first to say I was the one who asked these questions and I was reached out to people intentionally to get additional information.

[01:45:18] So just to say that what they were suggesting was that, unfortunately, people really might pick up and move to the county if we go from the 40 cents to the 48 cents or 0.48, whatever the phrasing is.

[01:45:35] And that, you know, the county, I think, is at 0.31, 31 cents. So there was some concern that an abrupt hike like that would suggest that people are leaving or will leave in the coming years. This person also had some very interesting information with regard to the meals tax and specifically said that there's a restaurant that has a chain here that also has one near us in the county.

[01:46:01] And he said that he purposely doesn't go to the one in the city because it didn't because it had the 4% meals tax. So I think he was fairly shocked when he went to the county counterpart restaurant and found that that meals tax was there now. So he said, I guess I can go back to the local city one.

[01:46:16] However, what he did suggest was that maybe we consider reducing the meals tax rate to 2%. And I understand that will have financial impacts. And I would also just like to have staff's thoughts and feelings on this. But would that be an opportunity for us to capitalize on the fact that county people are unhappy with this?

[01:46:36] It could be a huge promotion that we could do in combination with the Chamber of Commerce, all the restaurants. You know, maybe we talk about trying it for six months or a year or something and see how we are doing with it. I would be open to having this conversation, if it's supported by others on La Deus, to at least entertain it and see what staff thinks.

[01:46:56] I think, you know, we got an email from a woman today. I think everyone got it about, you know, she went to the grocery store and she bought a prepared chicken and, you know, the tax now was four cents higher than it was before. And I mean, she said four cents is not a lot, but four cents consistently all the time felt like a lot.

[01:47:13] And so she was doing the correlation of just what that half cent would be. So personally, I hate the meals tax. I've always hated the meals tax. I'm happy the county now has one because I think it makes us comparable. I also do recognize that in order to generate that \$1.25 million that the meals tax increase of a half a cent, sorry, half a percent will bring in would also require, I believe it's 1.417 cents on the real estate tax rate. So I understand that's a one or the other or a both, but these are just some ideas and some thoughts that I would like to hear about.

[01:47:48] The other thing is, you know, everyone I talk to when I talk about the lesser of two taxes or what if we only had to raise it one cent, all they continue to ask back is why are we not reducing our expenses? And so I'm happy to see some of the slides and things that you're showing forth here that are talking about reductions, but I think it's a very valid question.

[01:48:09] So I don't expect a response now. I do have specific questions that I would like responses to, but I wanted to just give you some overall thoughts. I personally am very interested in seeing ways that we can try to bridge the gap between what the EDA was receiving and then is no longer receiving.

[01:48:27] I personally would really like to see the Renaissance program reinstated. I know I was the one, I believe, last year who suggested that maybe we put a pause on it, and it was truly meant to be a pause. It was not meant to be a removal from future consideration. I did reach out to the staff counterpart today and asked if it were to be reinstated, how many loans would we be able to service and get that similar information that we were provided with last year, which made me more willing to consider putting a pause on it.

[01:48:58] Now my questions are going to come in. So the conversation about the \$600,000 for the schools versus the 1.1 deferred, I understand, or I don't understand, I see. We have school board member Sarah Kelsey here as well as our superintendent, Dustin Wright, and I understand that there was a meeting last night with the school board.

[01:49:15] I didn't get a chance to watch all of it. Are there, was it a good conversation? Are the schools in favor of this? I'd like to just hear from the schools if that's possible. Not to put you on the spot or anything, but you're here, so you probably expected to be brought up.

[01:49:34] Certainly, Mr. Wright, if you would like to add something. Thank you. Thank you, Mayor Reed, and good evening to the council.

[01:49:52] Council Member Hall, I'm here to observe and listen, but I'm happy to answer your question that you just posed. The conversation last night was around our elementary school capital projects and the current state of them and the path moving forward.

[01:50:10] None of it was related to the proposal that you heard this evening. were not aware of that proposal at that time thank you okay i thought that was being discussed with the schools prior to our conversation tonight mr alexander yeah so we we have talked to council about it up to this point we have talked um today with them about it and so i don't know the degree to which mr wright has socialized that with the board yet it is we're we're calling it an option

[01:50:46] in respect to i think the council and also in respect to schools and so it's going to like the other things that we brought up tonight beg some further conversation around that okay thank you sorry to call out the very uncomfortable elephant in the room but i was just curious where schools were on this so thank you councilman peterson i wanted to just build a little bit on some of the inflation related information that council member mcquillen provided because it is an important part of the inflation equation, but it's only a part of the equation.

[01:51:25] And just to note, we heard some testimony tonight about the concern about energy prices. We know from earlier information provided by staff that Dominion Energy has notified us we should be expecting a 32% increase in electricity.

[01:51:44] We know also that we're looking at a 13% increase in natural gas. So on the energy front, those are two sources that serve what we call the stationary source sector, buildings, facilities, et cetera. And it affects the city's own budget, and I understand that our projection on increased electricity costs, if that materializes, will knock on the door.

[01:52:08] \$400,000 incremental expense, is that a correct recollection of the impact of that cost? increase? It is based off of the assumption that that rate increase is going to hold. That has not been confirmed. Dominion put that out. It is my understanding that that will more than likely not happen. You will have a more realistic increase based off historical trends, probably around 10 or 12 percent, not 35. That would certainly be good news if that happened. I know there's a lot of concern that those rates are going to go up and that the unexpected changes will be on the

[01:52:43] upward side, but we're not there yet. It's good to know. But clearly energy is up. I would just note also that health care expenses are up and that may be the highest and fastest rate of inflation for any household expenses that we experienced. The latest that I saw for unreimbursed health care expenses, it's running an increase of 21.5 percent this year. And there's a big caveat there because Obamacare has not been refunded yet, and it's not clear that it will be. So for people who are dependent upon that and the reimbursements associated with it this is a big load for an average family of four in the city of Fairfax the mean right now is looking at about

[01:53:22] \$27,000 a year you translate that out with other household expenses including the ones we just heard about and it's really saying that 150,000 median income is what you've got to have to swing it in terms of dealing with this cost load so health care is a really big one there isn't much if anything we can do about that except to stay well and get all the help we can doing that but there are things we can control and those are our property taxes our real estate taxes and other fees so it's not surprising that people as we've heard are hoping that we will do everything we can to manage that cost agenda recognizing that there are things that are changing in a major way that

[01:54:01] we cannot control but there are things that we can control to switch gears and go to the renaissance housing program just out of curiosity i believe based on prior conversations and some of the staff consultations on housing issues of a variety of types we're taking a really hard look at how we are

approaching our housing programs here in the city and that's not limited to affordable housing but it's looking at the sector and what to do with that as you if and as you come back WITH THOUGHTS AROUND ANY OF OUR HOUSING PROGRAMS, BUT INCLUDING THE RENAISSANCE HOUSING PROGRAM,

[01:54:40] I'M WONDERING IF YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO THINK THROUGH WHAT A SLIGHTLY MORE INTEGRATED APPROACH TO SOMETHING LIKE THE RENAISSANCE HOUSING PROGRAM MIGHT BE, GIVEN THAT I KNOW YOU'RE LOOKING HARD AT WHAT AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO THIS HOUSING AREA MAYBE MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE.

[01:54:57] I'M WONDERING IF THAT MIGHT BE A POSSIBLE THING. I THINK YOU'VE FRAMED IT WELL, COUNCILMEMBER. That certainly is part of the way we'd want to look at, as you say, an integrated program. I don't believe that we're prepared to obviously introduce that as part of the current plan, but certainly should be, I think, should be part of the way we look at our complete approach to our housing.

[01:55:17] So that certainly will be something that we bring back to council as we discuss everything related to housing. So I think you framed it exactly the way we're looking at it. Okay, and then just another note that I think we've talked about before. We are not there yet in terms of going through the efficiency and innovation audit that last year we passed and requested that is going to happen sometime in the not-too-distant future, we hope and expect.

[01:55:48] But I think the point is that we're not there yet in terms of knowing what potential that might have in terms of freeing up financial efficiency here. So we don't have the advantage of plugging that in now, but I think we have something to look forward to. So just to note that. Then on the, just to take a step back, on the energy issue, there is an enormous amount of interest everywhere right now in getting ahead of the curve on that issue.

[01:56:17] And we've heard about it here. This is something that is pretty much everywhere and for very good reason. The load growth issue is not going to go away. It's a very big one. i think the real challenge that we have is um to address this really rapid runaway train we call load growth but to do it in an environmentally and economically friendly manner and i think there's a way to do that this happens to be my profession so i know a lot of people are involved in this right now but i think um as we hear back from you about your thoughts on how the city can

[01:56:52] approach it's part of this issue it would just be great to know that as we're doing that and we're looking through the energy lens we're looking at cost savings we're looking at economic gains from doing this and we're looking at ways in which that can be done in an environmentally friendly manner because I think that's the win-win everybody is looking for and I know we've probably gotten a head start on that because we have talented staff they're looking at that but that thematically is I THINK WE'RE REALLY ALL JURISDICTIONS ARE KIND OF HEADING THIS WAY.

[01:57:23] THANK YOU. COUNCILMEMBER HARDY CHANDLER. AND I HATE TO ASK FOR DATA THAT I DIDN'T PREVIOUSLY ASK YOU TO PREPARE, BUT I'M JUST CURIOUS IF THERE IS JUST HISTORIC KNOWLEDGE OF SORT OF THE, FOR LACK OF A BETTER WORD, SORT OF RESTAURANT MIGRATION SORT OF BEHAVIOR HISTORICALLY WHEN THERE HAVE BEEN CHANGES IN THE MEALS tax i might not be recalling this accurately but i believe that there was sort of some landscape

[01:58:00] multi multi-jurisdictional information that was previously presented i'm just wondering if in addition to the anecdotal conversations that we might have with residents what sort of the trends show in

terms of what actually happens in the what actually has happened in the past when there have been those changes i'm going to try to go off of memory council member we did present something at a work session with some historical data that actually compared the city of alexandria who has a five percent meals tax compared to the city

[01:58:38] they've had it for about 20 years so very similar to our four percent as well additionally in that presentation there was an actual number of increased restaurants over the same 10 to 15 year period in the city so not necessarily a migration out more of an expansion I want to say it was on average two and a half or three and a half per year that we increase the restaurant counts between the time frame that we looked at 10 or 15 years it was actually an increase and that increase

[01:59:13] Here goes. Excellent. Thank you, Ms. Riddle. So go to the next couple of slides and you can actually see the comparison. I don't have my glasses. Here we go. There you go. Go back one. There you go.

[01:59:29] So on there, over the 20-year time frame, 2016 to 2025, a net increase of 59 restaurants, or about 30 percent from where we started, on average, looking at, I can't read it from here, sorry, 3 percent per year, about seven new per year increase.

[01:59:56] So we are seeing an increase overall. I think a lot of that has to do just with the work that our economic development office does. People want to move into the city. Also on the left-hand side, it does show that about 3% is sort of passed through or back to the restaurants while they file their timely receipts to the city as well.

[02:00:18] So over that same course, time frame, over \$2 million was given back to these businesses as a form of collecting the tax on behalf of the city. I'm impressed with how you had that available. So thank you very much.

[02:00:35] Shifting gears a little bit, the Renaissance Housing Program, I believe that there was comment earlier about revenues coming back to the city because of property improvements.

[02:00:51] I'm also curious about whether or not there is flexibility in terms of, I'm not sure if the program's parameters allow flexibility to have input on some targeting around or developing matrices for who gets those loans.

[02:01:17] And if that hasn't been the case, do we have the flexibility to have input on how that might serve some of our longer-term goals a little bit better, or are the program's parameters more rigid? Excellent question, Councilmember.

[02:01:34] And unfortunately, the Renaissance Housing Corporation is its independent body, so it does not directly fall under the city. It receives almost exclusively all its generating revenues or funds from the city. When we do fund them, there are their own independent parameters of how individuals would qualify for a loan what those qualification standards are in the sense of disbursement they have their own limitations to me it would make sense that if the city is providing the majority of the funding that we may if

[02:02:13] counsel so choose and if the city attorney would help we could probably create an agreement to sort of put some structure on maybe put some X number percentage to lower income housing or lower thresholds that would impact a different population.

[02:02:32] So just to clarify, there is an opportunity for like an MOU process to find some common ground to meet the program's aims as well as the city's aims potentially. I would say yes. Good to hear. Thank you so much. Council Member McQuillan. Thank you. I too would like more discussion on the Renaissance Housing Program and to look into that to see what we can do since I think that really is a great program specifically for a certain group that does not seem to qualify for

[02:03:06] a lot else out there. I also just wanted to let you all know or update you on some information I just found from the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. This is about restaurants in Northern Virginia. It says that on average they've grown at an average annual rate roughly of three to five percent over the past decade. So that is what we've seen here. But it says that key factors driving that growth include rising household incomes, urbanization, expansion of federal and tech employment, which we know isn't expanding right now, increased demand for dining and suburban and mixed-use developments, and growth of food delivery and e-commerce. So I just want to

[02:03:43] sense some of those actually correlate to the things that I mentioned, gas prices, things that have increased um the struggle for our small businesses and specifically our restaurants i just wanted to provide that extra information thank you council member hall thank you i had one question i forgot to ask um you mentioned that the health insurance had gone up another five percent which i think was about four hundred thousand three hundred and some thousand okay um and i know that i've asked this question before and i'm sorry i don't remember your answer but when was

[02:04:19] the last time that we did bid and look at our provider and look at our plan types and see are we offering things that are competitive it's been a while um is the best answer that i can give right now but as i stated uh we are meeting with our rep this friday and given the increases year over year i think councilmember Peterson also alluded to these are one of those inflationary increases that we can't necessarily control but we're going to try to get ahead of it and then if need be really look at a potential rebid on that contract or break away from that plan and go independent

[02:04:58] and is that something that could be done in this upcoming fiscal year or are we locked into what we have right now we're pretty much locked in because we are just advertising what those rates are to the employees we have open enrollment may 1 so we would probably have to wait an entire year before we could do that, but we would do that legwork now in preparation for FY28.

[02:05:20] Okay. So I do this for my company as well. And so I know nobody likes to have two deductibles in a year, but what we ended up doing was we actually renewed January 1st instead of doing a July 1st renewal. So we had six months of one plan and then looped it back in. I understand we operate on a fiscal year, so that might create some challenges, but I would think that if it's attractive enough to consider a move that we should potentially see what our timeline options are. My other question is, do we currently offer HSA compatible plans, like high deductible plans?

[02:05:55] We do. We do. And do we have the FSA options as well? We do. Okay. Do you know what our employees tend to choose most of? It varies. We looked at the plan. I'll look at Ms. Riddle, if she remembers little bit better but we had those statistics we just reviewed them again about a couple of weeks maybe three weeks ago when we got the renewal notices I will say that given that the employer the city is not the only one taking some of this burden the employee will also see a increase about 12% that may actually move some people out of those higher plans into lower plans so

[02:06:35] there may actually be some, when I say savings, lessen the impact of the 325 overall, because they're going to see an increase in one plan. While some other plans were stagnant, they may migrate to those. Okay. I know we're not the overseers of all of the things. I just happen to have a personal interest in, you know, education in this area. If it's possible, if it's on our website, or you could direct me to somewhere that I could see what we pay versus what the employee pays just so i can see what that cost sharing looks like is that an option i'm just

[02:07:12] curious like if we cap at a certain rate or you know what we cover for families and other individuals and whatnot the fyi 27 rates have not been released yet to employees but 26 i believe are on the website um okay and i'm assuming you'll get it when seven comes out as it goes to all employees okay my apologies i wasn't really planning on discussing some detail tonight so i didn't look yeah no and just to give you a little bit of context we have just over 80 percent of our eligible employees that have our health insurance. The majority is with Anthem. We have two plans with Anthem. And then we are about, I think it's about 20 to 30% of employees are with

[02:07:52] Kaiser. Okay. Yeah. Okay. And I just have one other thing. And I know I've asked this a couple times previously, and I don't know that we've ever really come to a definitive yes or no, but I would like to suggest that when we either send out our final tax bills or when we send a response saying hey thank you for what you paid i would strongly like to send a letter not me personally but the city that says thank you for paying your real estate taxes here are some of the things that you funded and just make it a more of a personal impact opportunity to let people know that we know things are tough so i don't know if that needs consensus from council or not but that would be something that i would recommend to the finance department

[02:08:29] so thank you council member peterson just another quick note on the inflation thing maybe this is good news. Maybe it's not. But the latest numbers I saw for the area on housing is that the price of housing has gone down a third of a percent this year. The forecast for the Virginia realtors through the end of the year, the high end of that is 1.9 percent. So housing is not one of the inflationary variables in terms of price that's going up. But we know that the cost of

[02:09:04] housing nonetheless is high going back to the a little bit of the big picture here in terms of what we will see as we go forward i i know other council members have talked with you about this in terms of information that is of interest but i so i think one of the things that would be helpful is to the best of your ability to forecast four or five years to see what this trajectory looks like for the city in terms of expenses and revenues to avoid us being on a yo-yo this

[02:09:38] destabilizing pattern that has happened in the past where we've gone too far up too far down and then had to play catch up and it's had a destabilizing effect so if we can understand to the best of your ability what a smoother trajectory looks like and how we are consistent with that so we could avoid the deviations in either direction that would really be very helpful yeah the good thing is we're scheduled for a third quarter third quarter update and within that and i know i've heard it from councilman rahal too of getting an idea about projecting for the future so the timing is is right for us on the 28th to actually have that discussion in conjunction with our

[02:10:18] budget discussion great really really appreciate it again because we saw some roller coaster stuff in the past that i think we always want to try to avoid in the future very helpful councilmember Bates

so as before I support the proposed increase in the meals tax it's much more modest than I was proposed last time around and at the end of the day you know certainly not something that we love to do but even

[02:10:57] if we're able to make up that revenue through an increase in the B poll tax or fees and or you know some other revenue source that ends up being that much less funding that we could use to perhaps further support our employees, our public safety employees who respond to emergencies that occur at the restaurants in the city. At the end of the day housing is certainly more of a necessity than eating at a restaurant

[02:11:33] Certainly some people don't have time to cook, however there are frozen meals filled with grocery store, that kind of thing. So that's also kind of locking ourselves out of if we wanted to use part of that to alleviate some of the burden on our homeowners through the real estate tax rate.

[02:11:58] So it's something that I think I, again, want to encourage caution in ruling out as we go forward. Yes, Mr. Martinez. Thank you, Mayor. I just want to add a couple of clarifying notes.

[02:12:15] Regarding the meals tax, a potential 2% reduction with each half percent being about 1.3, that's \$5.8 million, almost \$6 million that would be reduced.

[02:12:34] Or, I'm sorry, that would be 1.3, so about over \$5 million of the equivalent of almost six cents 5.8 cents on the current real estate tax rates and I think council member Hall made that statement and then additionally just to clarify and it's not on the screen per se but when the manager proposes budget the we realized about 1.3 million dollars in savings from available balances specifically in operating CIP funds that came over to the general fund side and now we've shown

[02:13:10] another \$400,000 so in totality the city has saved about one point seven million dollars in the FY 27 budget so not an insignificant amount given our size just wanted to make those two statements councilmember Peterson am I correct that also in a prior session you indicated that we were looking at an unexpected increase in revenues of two point seven million we were in the

[02:13:46] second quarter financial review the budget director displayed a 2.7 two points some odd million dollar additional revenue that has not been realized but is anticipated for FY 26 with the understanding that that additional revenue would go to unassigned or assigned fund balance to sort of bridge the gap for FY 27 excellent thank you so speaking of the unassigned fund balance we had encumbered funds in anticipation of a

[02:14:19] repayment to VDOT out of the unassigned fund balance for this year I believe but now that we've actually gotten the bill from VDOT for the repayment we are there is there is a plan I believe that is going to be explored about how to repay that and I bring this up because we have the the budget event on April 16th and I think we need to explain how the 3.5 million dollars is going to be paid back and the fact that while we had a come you know we had encumbered but not

[02:14:56] actually allocated that money from the unassigned fund balance there's now a different plan and I just think it's important before we get to April 28th for people to understand what that plan is for the FY 27 and potentially the FY 28 budget so will there be a budget memo or how will you kind of put this that for the sake of transparency to the public when they come to discuss the budget on the 16th how will that be rolled out yeah we we have a process for

[02:15:33] those changes on a change sheet I'm getting a nod in the affirmative that's That's one element of a few elements that we've discussed tonight that we're going to need to work through, some of which we have kind of pushed out just recently. So all of those changes from a revenue and expenditure perspective will be part of the scenarios that we bring to you on the 28th.

[02:15:55] I guess my question is, will there be anything prior to the 28th that, you know, because we're having this event on the 16th and we have not discussed this since it is a very new, it's a very new thing that just happened. Yeah, I think that, and again, I apologize even with the school things, a little clunky, right, as we have talked about our options there. So from a revenue and expense perspective, these things are going to change as we move along. I think the 28th is our opportunity for us to have a full discussion on all of those and all those scenarios,

[02:16:31] which will include how we have given the council options for decisions on how to approach that. we've even brought up tonight are our options and suggestions uh council may not like those and we we may need to pivot and so um we'll have those discussions over the next couple weeks i think thursday is a great opportunity for the public to come out and ask their questions be engaged and be responsive and we'll certainly bring that back to you you don't have that yet either you have we've had plenty of hearings and engagement engage platform's been up we've done a lot of that But that's another element that we're going to bring to you on the 28th

[02:17:08] and have a fully transparent discussion around everything related to revenues and expenditures. Fantastic. Any, Council Member McQuillan. Sorry. I just want to thank you. I recognize that this is not a fun topic to discuss, and I'm sure it's not great unless you're Mr. Martinez to work on it.

[02:17:30] But I just, I recognize the amount of work you're doing, the amount of time it takes. You're continuing to do it with a smile on your face, and I can feel this isn't a fun process for anyone, but you all, this is what you have to do for your job, and you don't get to just decide you're done.

[02:17:50] So I just want to say thank you to all of the employees and staff that are working hard right now, especially you all that are in the room, because hearing the speed in which you're responsive to our requests about engage and the budget, I mean, we're throwing everything at you and you all are just handling it and rolling with it and i just wanted to say thank you because i don't think we do that enough here and acknowledge how much work that is on you so thank you okay any other questions comments council member peterson yeah i just have built on a great thanks to all of you and i think the april 16th engagement is a very helpful and important time i

[02:18:29] know we're all getting emails from people with questions and thoughts and what have you and And I'm encouraging them to please try to attend April 16th or tune in because it's a substantive point in time where you can ask those specific questions and really get into the granular side of this.

[02:18:49] So we've got a lot of that still coming in that really indicates the desire for people to understand things at a specific level. So the event was really made for that purpose, and this is your opportunity. Again, I know you try to make it easy so folks can tune in remotely as well.

[02:19:05] I want to encourage everybody to take advantage of that. And just a note that I personally like Zoom a lot better than I like Teams. Any other questions or comments before we?

[02:19:22] Okay, I'm now going to reconvene the regular meeting. Mr. Alexander, for future meeting topics. Thank you, Mayor and Council. Looking ahead to the 28th, we've had a lot of conversation up to

this point.

[02:19:38] And so, you know, much of this will be focused on public hearings related to the budget. There will be some items not requiring a public hearing to include significantly the Blenheim Boulevard project.

[02:19:54] And then, as we mentioned before, we'll be talking about Willard Sherwood and the items that we've talked about tonight. And also on there is the consideration of bond resolution for general obligation bonds for the school project. Work session-wise, we are, again, planning the third quarter financial review, so we're looking forward to that.

[02:20:16] And then, as we've discussed, the budget draft changes presented and deliberated on that night also. May 5th, committed to budget in its entirety. And then looking ahead, moving forward into May significantly, we'll have items and public hearings on financial costs, capital costs related to the sewer system and bonds related to that.

[02:20:49] Also, we will bring back the noise discussion on that night. We'll talk potential options for detached accessory dwelling units, and the council salaries will be back on that night. We've talked to Council up to this point, getting later into May, about Wilcoxon Trail extension, so we'll bring that back to you with a presentation.

[02:21:15] And that gets us into June. Happy to answer any questions relative to what we've discussed on these meetings or looking out through the remainder of the year at Council's pleasure. Councilmember Peterson?

[02:21:31] On May 5th, the very last item, 7, considering adopting the budget, et cetera, et cetera, is that a single vote that is on both budget and appropriations or are we doing a two-step budget then appropriation I think it's multiple parts I confess I didn't go back and look at last year's script so you caught me a little that's why I'm asking we can go back and look at the agenda from that meeting if you'd like okay it would be wonderful just to have that nice and

[02:22:07] clear so we sort of know what we're doing that other questions on the futures agenda portion of this okay um if there's no more questions on that then we will look for council comments starting with the city manager yeah i will just reinforce our event on the 16th here in chambers

[02:22:43] at six o'clock a few ways to participate remote in person um and so and and just watching on cable if you if you so desire so we look forward engaging public around the fiscal year budget and as you know most of our work has been around that look forward to over the next couple weeks engaging with council answering questions to council member quillen's comment earlier we're thankful to council at the risk of sounding little gratuitous you presented a lot of challenges a lot of questions a lot of good food for thought relative to this process look forward to a little

[02:23:17] more of that over the next couple weeks and certainly help us inform the process as we move forward. So thank you very much. Councilmember McQuillan. Comments? Yes, thank you. April is always an energizing time in our city. Our parks are full, our neighborhoods are active, there's a real sense of connection across the city that reflects the strength of this community. With early voting underway and a statewide amendment on the ballot next week, I encourage residents to stay informed and participate engagement at every level is what keeps our democracy strong at the

[02:23:55] city level we're deep in budget season and these are some of the most important decisions we make all year right now we are focused on ensuring strong support for our schools maintaining public safety services and investing responsibly in infrastructure that residents rely on every day that includes continued coordination through our shared services partnership with fairfax county ongoing investments in roadway and pedestrian safety and critical stormwater infrastructure projects that help protect our neighborhoods long term. We've also continued to support accessible public transportation through our fare-free Q bus system while working through

[02:24:33] ongoing discussions around housing and affordability to help ensure Fairfax City remains a place where people can live, work, and stay. This month also invites us to reflect on our environment. And I'm proud of the continued focus on protecting our green spaces, improving resilience, and ensuring we are planning thoughtfully for the future of this city. With that, I'd also like to congratulate the women of influence that received her award this evening. Katie Johnson, congratulations. Thank you for all you've done for our community. I'd also like to just point out

[02:25:08] though what guides my work most are the conversations I have with our residents. Whether it's concerns about safety, affordability, or overall quality of life, I deeply value all of those perspectives. They directly shape how I approach the work we do here. I also want to recognize how important it is that everyone in our community, especially students and families, feel supported and safe and that there's confidence in coming forward when something is wrong. This month, as we observe Sexual Assault Awareness Month, that message feels especially meaningful and timely.

[02:25:46] It's a reminder of the importance of fostering a community where individuals feel heard, respected, and protected, and where speaking up is met with support and care. I want to close by sincerely thanking everyone who has taken the time to reach out, share your thoughts, and engage in these conversations.

[02:26:04] That participation matters. It's democracy at work, and I truly value it. Thank you. Councilmember Bates. I want to second the comments in support of survivors of sexual assault in recognition of the Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

[02:26:23] Thank you. Council Member Peterson. I wanted to share a personal health note, really as a part of just general awareness to help everybody. So it's sort of a funny thing. You know, after you turn 65, suddenly your doctors start spending a lot more time paying attention to you and they start running you through all kinds of tests that you probably should have been doing like 25 years earlier.

[02:26:51] And it's like, oops, you know. So interesting process, takes a little time, just heads up. But I ended up, as a part of that, having a sleep test and finding out that I had sleep apnea. And for those of you who don't know, it means you stop breathing while you're sleeping, which is not exactly a great thing to do.

[02:27:09] And there's various levels. I have what's known as moderate sleep apnea, which means technically between 15 and 30 times an hour, you stop breathing. And in my case, it's 17. And while that may not seem like a big deal, it adds up.

[02:27:24] So you could end up losing a couple hours of sleep every night from that. I mean, the average in terms of how much people stop breathing for a moderate is not that long, 10 to 20 seconds. But for some of us, it's a whole lot longer. For me, it's between 50, 5-0, and 130 seconds per episode when I stop breathing.

[02:27:43] So, you know, you get a little bit tired the next day if you're trying to get to sleep like that. So the bad news is that. But the good news is it's eminently treatable. It's very easy to get a sleep test. It's just take it home.

[02:27:58] You do it. It's not a problem. And the remedy for it, if you have apnea, is to wear a sleep mask. I do that. And what a game changer. I can't say that I'm leaping tall buildings, but pretty close to it. It really has been a complete game changer. One of the things I learned is that people are apparently really good about detecting acute fatigue, really terrible about detecting chronic fatigue until you've gotten over it.

[02:28:26] It's like, oh, my God, I can't believe all this time I did that. So I would encourage everybody, if you haven't already, to seriously consider getting a sleep test and don't wait until you're 65. my doctor says, you need to be doing this at 40 and go tell your insurance company, you know, to take care of you and do that. And there's a lot of things in that category. So I would heartily recommend it. Again, easy to do. The thing to be aware of also is it can be lethal. And so unfortunately, my family has friends and relations who didn't survive these episodes that took place

[02:29:00] at night. So it's serious business. The other thing, just to be aware of, is that it can catch up with you if you don't treat it at pretty inconvenient times. So somebody in our family, no names mentioned, fell asleep at a stoplight. And the person behind him thought he was texting, right? So he came up and knocked on the window, which is a good thing. He said, dude, what are you doing here? And he was like snoring. So you should try to protect yourself, but just remember we share the roads and we need to protect each other too. So we have a responsibility in our

[02:29:38] personal health to avoid health impacts to other people at the same time. So it's just one more reason to do this. And I would reach back also to the earlier conversation we had about health care. We're very fortunate. This area has, bar none, the best health care anywhere. We are really, really fortunate to live in an area that has the kind of advanced accessible health care we do, but it comes at a price. Not everybody can get access, and we'll talk a bit more about the Willard Sherwood Center and the health center there, but public health is an incredibly important

[02:30:14] part of our system, but then the commercial health care system and the insurance-based system as well, but it's not equally accessible to everybody, and this is a pretty tough time right now because we haven't gotten reimbursements for Obamacare. A lot of people simply don't know what they're going to do we do hear a lot of people saying they're making very hard choices about funding their health care and getting groceries things like that and those are really for real conversations that I think we need to internalize and appreciate as we go through what we can do here in the city to take care of all these things so the other thing I would just say based on our earlier discussion this evening is I would like I think a resolution here that would

[02:30:52] be quite timely and constructive would be for the city attorney to come back to us at some time and the not-too-distant future, with a recommendation on how we might put in place a conflicts of interest policy that would deal with the potential for family conflicts related to slots that are under consideration for appointments.

[02:31:16] I think this is done rather commonly, and there are probably standard templates for that. I think it would be very helpful for us to be able to have a look at that and get the benefit of your advice on how that might be handled. I think it also would be very helpful for us to see what the options might be for

us changing our holdover policy because it seems to become a point of conflict and concern for the council.

[02:31:38] So I would hope that the committee would be open to, or the council rather, would be open to having our attorney come back and provide us best advice in both of these areas. And let me just ask if there's anybody who doesn't agree with that. Mr. Lubkeman.

[02:31:57] Appreciate the promotion. Just so I understand, we have talked with every council in the 20 years that I've been here about doing a code of ethics generally, and councils have not adopted it. Are you all suggesting that we bring back a suggested code of ethics?

[02:32:17] We're certainly prepared to do that. We have the materials that we've updated year after year. Or are you suggesting bringing forward a one-off related just to that discrete issue, which is a different thing but could be included in your policy with respect to boards and commissions for example i just want i want to understand the tasking i'm sorry well sequentially the latter but then ultimately the former i mean i think we're overdue having a code of ethics but the proximate thing we need to deal with here is a conflict we did not advance board and commission

[02:32:55] appointments tonight because of the distraction and, frankly, destabilization associated with the conflicts of interest issue. And I think that's a shadow that is cast over the whole appointment process that we need to remove the way the state has encouraged us to remove it through adherence of policy here. So that would be the first order of business to take care of that and then turn to the broader issue of the code of ethics. I would note that we all credit to you and to our city clerk for working very hard putting in place for the first time a board and commission handbook that covers many many issues including conflicts of interest we I think

[02:33:35] recognize that was a work in progress there were outstanding issues that would need to be updated and added to that I think tonight's discussion underscores the urgency of doing that in key areas and this is one of those areas that is urgent and needs to be done so that we can get back on track with our board and commission appointments, which at this stage are apparently frozen. So just looking at the calendar, considering you're in the middle of budget season, I would assume that perhaps the meeting or a couple meetings after budget adoption would be a good target for this discussion. And it will be a discussion because I assume there are

[02:34:15] differing views on this, but we'll be prepared to bring some information back at a work session if that's the will of the council. Happy to do it. We can, yes, and we can look to the city manager to look at a futures list to put that discussion. Thank you. Councilmember Hardy-Chandler?

[02:34:32] I want to acknowledge the Civic Connections kickoff that happened April 8th. Jennifer Rose and her curriculum trying to support residents and business owners to understand the inner workings of our city and come from an informed place and an engaged place, I think, was a second cohort.

[02:35:01] We even have alumni from the first cohort here. So it really is a program that I hope we can continue to support and rally around. So I was very honored to be there and to welcome that cohort. So thank you very much. I also want to highlight a very successful Home for Life Expo, i continue to be honored and impressed with being the liaison to the village in the city and to emphasize every time i get an opportunity that that is a working very healthy very dynamic

[02:35:38] advisory group and the work that they do not only for the city but as a role model nationally i it's really tremendous my understanding is that the home for life attendees were significantly higher than last year so continuing to expand access to resources and information for various people throughout our community and I think that the benefits of that will go along beyond April 10th I also want to acknowledge the Commission for women event today I was very honored to be a

[02:36:17] part of the commission during the time when the woman of influence award was created during my five-year tenure on that commission so I know that they do good work and really want to celebrate contributions to the community beyond that I also want to just highlight in spite of the discussion today you know part of being a servant is that you're going to work with people who have differences of opinion and express those differences that's healthy so I think that there was a dynamic discussion earlier and although we come from this

[02:36:54] come to this with different perspectives I was raised and will continue to respect everyone and that that respect comes through no matter whether there's agreement or a disagreement and I do believe that one of the aspects that would have prevented the discussion earlier or can prevent future conflicts is more expedient appointments because I think that part of the delay contributed to the dynamic that that happened but I really hope that we can

[02:37:31] get people on boards earlier so with that I'll just wrap up and and appreciate it. Council Member Hall. Thank you very much. I want to thank the county and our staff for putting on a great joint meeting last week. I don't think we had an opportunity with the work session to properly thank you all for doing that. I know there were a lot of questions that were answered and communication was really good and it was nice to just have an open and upfront honest conversation

[02:38:05] which I think was very very helpful. I had a great time at my very first ever fire truck push-in ceremony on Friday. I was very happy. I actually asked the question. I'm like, they're going to turn this on, right? Because otherwise, like there's some older people here, somebody might hurt their back. I was feeling like risk management for a moment. And they were like, we got this. It goes in reverse. It's all good. So it was fun. There were so many people there. I was barely able to like touch part of the truck, but I did get to push. That was very exciting. We had a great, great turnout. It was really, really great to see all these retired chiefs and all these other positions that have worked here for so long and now have gone off to retirement and

[02:38:44] come back. And they just, there's such this camaraderie that you just see with firefighters and police too. And, you know, there's some, you know, finessing between the two departments, I think too, you know, they rub each other and in good ways, but it's just such a great group of people that just get together and just, they just exist and they all support each other. And it was a really, really great opportunity for community, I'll say. There was an adorable little boy named Fireman Schultz, and he apparently was told to show up at 10 a.m. in order to be there for the push-in. He got there 10 minutes early, but we had already pushed it in, and I felt terrible for

[02:39:23] this little boy, but I will say they all did a great job. They took pictures of him in front of the truck, but my heart went out to this little kid who clearly was, this was like the highlight of his month so um i am excited for the women's club of fairfax fashion show on saturday uh there is also on sunday april 19th a spring community cleanup at van dyke park starting at 9 a.m i want to give a huge congratulations

to katie johnson who is still here to the bitter end uh for being our 2026 woman of influence uh recipient and your time your energy your dedication it is it is seen

[02:39:58] it is recognized and you are just an amazing resident here. And I think one of your greatest abilities is the ability to rally those around you, right? Anybody can go out and pull weeds and do whatever, but you do it in such a way that makes people want to be a part of whatever organization or entity or group that you're working with. And you can find common ground with anybody on all of these different things. And it's just very, very spectacular and impressive to see. So thank you. I do also want to tell people that my campaign slogan when I ran was

[02:40:34] this is your city and your opinion matters. And I wholeheartedly stand by that. And just as a reminder, you have two more weeks essentially to reach out to council, to send us questions, send us comments, let us know what you think about things. I hope you won't save it until the very last minute. So we're scrambling, you know, the morning of the 28th. But I do know that we also get to see many of you throughout our days and nights and, you know, the things that we're doing. So this will never be your last chance to have input on a budget, right? It's a living document that kind of goes on and on. Yes, we set it for one year, but then we immediately

[02:41:09] move on to the next one. So I would strongly encourage you to attend the virtual or in-person event on Thursday. I will certainly be there because we know budget's my jam, right? I enjoy it so um thank you and again please please please continue to share your thoughts and ideas honestly on ways that we could do this whole thing better so thank you council member amos i would also extend that to remember the noise ordinance is still open for discussion and comment until may 12th so keep that in mind i'm going to apologize in advance i wish i didn't have so many announcements but i'll try to run through real quick i want to echo the congratulations to katie johnson for your

[02:41:49] award very well deserved I know that the county held an absolutely wonderful celebration for Michael Fry at the government center I know I saw the mayor there former supervisor who did a lot especially when it comes to animal rights and protections and has the animal shelter in the county named after him so just wanted to echo our sentiments to his family and that he was such a phenomenal human being for everything he's done Colombia was great if you all want to see pictures just talk to me after or another day because i know uh interesting night

[02:42:22] i do want to share that tomorrow at fairfax high school is the hire a lion fair i'm going to look at general jennifer rose very sharply because it was really uh really thanks to her so i would love to thank the fairfax forward foundation central fairfax chamber city schools dan phillips and maureen kim came in so clutch on making this happen uh my colleagues on the dais and all the businesses who signed up. We ended up hitting our max for businesses tomorrow, so it should be very solid turnout, good mix of folks. Wish I could have gotten in contact with Woody's Ice

[02:42:58] Cream, but I tried. I tried. So there should be 20 vendors there, and it should be a really good time. Hope everyone can make it, starting at 9.50 a.m. during Lion Time. Also excited to share Poetry Night for Spotlight on the Arts. I guess I kind of got put in charge of that for some reason. It's not my intention, but it kind of just fell into my lap. And it's very well fitting for National Poetry Month. And I've always said that I feel like so much attention is given to the visual arts. I would love to see more emphasis on the literary arts. And Sharon Chang has talked to

[02:43:32] all of us about that. But also excited to announce that we confirmed that Angelique Palmer, the Fairfax Poet Laureate, will be in attendance. So she will be headlining the event. So we're very excited to have her there it'll be monday april 27th starting at 6 p.m at in the top section of old fire station 3 so very excited for that and then the last thing i will say is i just wanted to give a special thanks to leadership fairfax for honoring me with the 40 under 40 award earlier today um i i have a weird feeling about awards i i greatly appreciate it you know starting off as

[02:44:09] car salesman when i first got here and kind of being relatively unknown to where i am now i just feel like i'm a culmination of everyone i've ever met and i'm just eternally grateful for everyone i've met and those who came before me and that's it uh councilmember hardy chandler apologies just one more follow-up i did want to acknowledge the celebration of the educational and charitable foundation celebrating 25 years serving the fairfax region and that celebration as always

[02:44:44] offers scholarships to incredible students that definitely give you hope and optimism for the future and i really appreciate the mayor coming to the event and doing a proclamation and acknowledgement of all of the work that the educational and charitable foundation does for our region really dedicated to community service and also a great interview with an author but thank you mayor for coming to that so april super busy month uh spotlight on the arts got to talk about it because in 1985 our former mayor john mason really put together spotlight on the

[02:45:20] arts i think that it it showed our commitment we recently got an award for being one of the best small towns in america with our art scene and spotlight on the arts has a number of events the poetry event is one of them that um council member amos not only is apparently organizing the whole thing but he is presenting there because council member amos is a poet own it um there is an event on the set on friday the 17th there is a spotlight on the arts event there is also the opening reception on april 24th which is the following friday but there are events for the

[02:45:56] the rest of April and into the first part of May, so please check online for all of the events happening all over. Fairfax High School has their Rotten Tomatoes show at the high school, and there's a lot of other events, music and theater going on in the next three weeks that celebrate the arts and is an important part of Spotlight on the Arts. So with that, I am now going to adjourn this meeting at 9 46 p.m on tuesday music



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