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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Budget Public Hearing, Thursday, April 13, 2023

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[00:00:05] And welcome, everyone, to our third and final day of budget public hearings, April 13, 2023. And again, this is a public hearing on the county executive's proposed FY 2024 advertised budget plan, the advertised capital improvement program for fiscal years 2024 to 2028, the CIP, with future fiscal years to 2033, and the current appropriation level in the FY 2023 revised budget plan.

[00:00:34] And just as a reminder, I will call speakers from the speakers list who have signed up in advance. If you hear your name or you know you're on deck or close to being on deck, if you can make your way down close to the podium, that would be appreciated. We do have today 37 speakers who have signed up in advance to testify.

[00:00:54] And since this is the final day of testimony, when we reach our final speaker who is present, which is speaker number 32, I will at that time ask if there's anyone else in the auditorium who has not signed up who would like to testify to give those individuals an opportunity to testify as well and then our final testimony will be a series of videos that have been submitted to the county as part of budget testimony and so with that we're going to begin with our first speaker of the day which is sean corcoran chairman of the fairfax county employee advisory council he will

[00:01:28] be followed by kyle stone chairman of the fairfax county park authority board followed and and Following that will be Maggie Godbold, Vice Chair of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board. And I

know all three of them are here. And at this time, we would welcome Speaker No. 1, Sean Corcoran.

[00:01:44] The floor is yours. Thank you, Chair McKay, members of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Hill and staff. Thank you for having us here today. My name is Sean Corcoran, and I'm joined by Jennifer McCullough of the EAC, of the Employee Advisory Council.

[00:02:01] As you know, the EAC is recognized throughout county ordinance as a peer advocacy organization supporting the over 10,000 merit employees of Fairfax County throughout the General County, Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department, and Sheriff's Office.

[00:02:16] As members of the council, we recognize the incredible benefits that the county provides and work to create a work environment where employees can not just work but thrive. We do this on a number of different levels, such as annually awarding the Don Smith Awards, providing morale boosters like food or snack trucks to work locations throughout the county, attending and supporting agency-specific training or events, and working, even on an individual level, with employees in workplace challenges or grievances.

[00:02:45] I am proud to say that my fellow colleagues who stood on your Employee Advisory Council volunteer their time and energy because they are not just invested, but they are emotionally invested in the success of their fellow colleagues and the county as a whole. Another role that we take part in is that of advocating on behalf of our fellow employees to county leaders.

[00:03:05] While the topics can be as diverse as the incredible people that comprise the county workforce, our focus over these past few months has been effective employee compensation during the next fiscal year. I will readily admit that discussing compensation can be challenging. Rarely does the topic bring a level of appreciation that can be seen in other matters.

[00:03:23] As the main role of local government is that of service, and that service is provided by people, it would stand to reason that employee compensation will be a significant item in the budget, especially as we try to attract and retain the best. But the challenge we have with compensation in Fairfax County is that for far too long, we have balanced the budget on the backs of employees.

[00:03:45] Having been here for 21 years, I remember a time when what you were told you would earn is what you received. Merit steps and performance increases came on time. Benchmark studies appeared to be consistent and equitable. And cost of living or market adjustments were implemented in what appeared to be properly.

[00:04:02] But those days seem like a distant memory. Especially over the last 15 years, we have seen employee compensation be pushed to the side in an effort to balance the budget, while other initiatives may have taken precedence. Just in the last 10 years, the market rate adjustment has only been fully funded in three out of those 10 years.

[00:04:21] In addition, the merit and performance pay systems were frozen, sometimes for years on end. Now, to be fair, these cuts were made with the result of historic challenges, the Great Recession and the pandemic. However, the perception is that employee compensation is the first to be cut and often is the last to fully return, and often begrudgingly.

[00:04:39] It has also been disheartening in the past when trying to address these issues that a popular retort would be that at least we didn't have to lay anyone off. While our skyrocketing vacancy levels

throughout the county would answer that, we didn't need to. Many have just left on their own. This and many other issues are symptomatic that our current philosophy is not sustainable.

[00:05:00] We need to commit to effective, equitable, and transparent employee compensation. This budget is hopefully a start, especially as we embark in a new era of collective bargaining. Fully funding the merit, performance, pay, and longevity systems is absolutely vital and is a bedrock of our compensation systems, and we're very appreciative to see those in the budget.

[00:05:20] With the county executive and staff for ensuring these matters were in the advertised budget, so many of the challenges we are trying to address now through compensation and benchmark studies is directly linked to the abandonment of pay systems over the years. We all must do everything we can to protect our pay system so that we don't find ourselves enmeshed in the challenges we see today.

[00:05:41] We must also fully fund the market rate adjustment. The current advertised rate of 2% out of the 5.44% is simply unacceptable. While the MRA was fully recognized as advertised last fiscal year, there was only a fraction of the inflation the market truly saw. Not only have basic staples of life skyrocketed, but also benefit costs such as insurance have been spiraling out of control.

[00:06:03] It is vitally important to stress this is not a raise. It is reflective of market inflation and simply allows employees to make basic ends meet. You have said repeatedly that employee compensation is a priority and is a top value. Please make it so, because as has been said before, you show us a final doubt about the budget and we will show you what you value.

[00:06:26] On behalf of the Employee Advisory Council and employees throughout this county, thank you for your time and thank you for your service. Thank you very much, Sean, and thank you for your work on the EAC. I appreciate that. Our second speaker is Kyle Stone, the chairman of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board and a speaker number two.

[00:06:45] Welcome. Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and fellow board members. My name is Kyle Stone, and I have the privilege of serving as chairman of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board. Thank you for providing the opportunity for me and my colleagues to address you this afternoon. Our park system, all 24,000 acres of it, and its hundreds of courts, fields, and facilities, plays an essential role in the everyday lives of individuals, families, and entire communities that hold vastly diverse ages, abilities, and interests.

[00:07:15] Over the years, thanks to the steadfast support and partnership of this body and the ingenuity and dedication of an outstanding staff, the Park Authority has consistently risen to meet the needs of the changing county and the involving needs of its residents. In the process of doing so, we have cemented ourselves as a gold standard park system.

[00:07:34] But as we look to the future, I worry if a system so reliant on a revenue fund to support its operations can truly meet its obligation to public service. Parks in Fairfax County should not be seen as a business, nor should they be run as one. But at present, more than 60% of the park authority's operating budget is generated by a user fee of one form or another.

[00:07:54] A model not utilized by any other large park system in the country, it makes maintaining the infrastructure we have and preserving the county's cultural, historic, and environmental resources more difficult. And it certainly does not enhance the equity or accessibility of our system, but rather widens the gap.

[00:08:13] While this budget nods several times in the right direction, to truly take a step forward requires a different sort of action. Let me illustrate using a few examples. We are immensely appreciative of the investments you made as part of the third quarter in the amount of $500,000 for forestry operations and $400,000 for bamboo removal.

[00:08:31] This will make a real difference for two consequential priorities. That said, as it is one-time funding, it does not appreciably improve the underlying long-term dynamics. And unless it becomes part of the final FY24 budget, it will be a recurring request in the future. We are equally grateful for the $500,000 in funding that enabled us to hold the line on summer camp fee increases this year.

[00:08:54] Your investment here will benefit hundreds of families, particularly those that rely on scholarship subsidies. These camps, the same that were recently named in Northern Virginia Magazine's Best Of list, are vital to enriching the lives of our youngest residents. But again, similar to the previous example, this commitment is more promise ring than wedding ring at the moment, and without future support that would allow us to hold or reduce fees and thus limit the burden placed on families, profitability and equity will again be competing.

[00:09:25] Addressing these needs and others like it through a strategic re-evaluation of the baseline funding of our park system requires priority attention. This fall, we will be providing recommendations from our equity consulting partners. It is our hope that this will begin a dialogue in partnership with the Board of Supervisors on how we could remake our system into a more equitable enterprise.

[00:09:49] I recognize that the Board is challenged in its ability to expand county revenue. The General Assembly has limited the options available to you, and the obvious choice, the real estate tax, already poses a significant burden to many county residents. I do believe, however, there is at least one alternative that merits real consideration.

[00:10:07] The transient occupancy tax has been levied at 4% since 2005. Arlington sits at eight and a quarter, Alexandria at nine and a half, and Virginia Beach at nine percent, just for reference sake. Based on the numbers provided in the county's general fund revenue overview, it appears that each percent to the transit occupancy tax is worth around $5 million.

[00:10:28] When compared to the $5.1 billion operating budget of the county, such a sum may appear inconsequential. But raising this tax, borne almost entirely by non-county residents, and allocating it to parks would represent a roughly 15% increase in the general fund transferred to the park authority.

[00:10:45] Fairfax County parks are beloved by our residents, and they would not be what they are without the support we have received from you, the Board of Supervisors. I can recount dozens of park projects, issues, and needs that each one of you personally got in the trenches and advocated for, and the end result was the betterment of our county.

[00:11:04] And for that, we thank you. But the next challenge is still before us, and we need to take action soon. Thank you for your time. Thank you very much, Kyle. And speaker number three is Maggie Godbold, who is the vice chair of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board.

[00:11:20] And following her will be speaker four, Dr. Adu Hewton, who is here, and speaker number five, Anita Herrera. Welcome, Maggie. Thank you so much. Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Maggie Godbold, and I serve as the Vice Chairman of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board.

[00:11:38] I've served on the Park Board since 2016, representing the Sully District. The county and the Park Authority are well-versed in pivoting to meet evolving needs amid changing conditions. In good times and in difficult ones, we have always found a way to deliver quality programs and facilities.

[00:11:59] As the county's largest landowner, the Park Authority has a complex system of buildings, pools, open spaces, athletic fields, courts, forests, trails, and more, all with diverse requirements. As a steward of both environmental and physical resources, we strive to demonstrate the highest standards and best practices in managing this system.

[00:12:23] We are grateful for the Board's support for our stewardship role of natural spaces and resources. Last year's approval of $750,000 and three new ecologist positions provided us the resources we needed to see our restoration efforts through to maturity, protecting habitats at Rock Hill Park, Elk Lake Preserve, Poplar Ford, and others.

[00:12:49] And with that said, though, our system is continuing to grow, and our efforts to be responsive to new priorities on a larger scale year after year requires a longer-term, reliable funding stream. This year, we are aiming to be a model for recycling in support of the county's zero-waste plan.

[00:13:10] Although we could recycle as much as 50% of the waste in our parks, a lack of funding prevents us from buying containers and equipment, creating signage, and hiring dedicated staff to collect trash and recyclables.

[00:13:25] Trash collection and recycling is currently done by our maintenance staff, who already have many other critical assignments. Those same maintenance staff work tirelessly to maintain safe and high-quality places for all of our residents to enjoy.

[00:13:41] But far too many of the 700 pieces of our maintenance equipment are older than the people operating them. Limited funds have left us deferring replacements, and a full one-quarter of our equipment still in use is past its effective lifespan.

[00:14:01] As a result, maintenance costs are increasing, safety is compromised, and in many cases, equipment failure is imminent. With an additional $370,000 restored to the park authority budget baseline, we can replace equipment that's in the poorest condition and be better positioned in managing and maintaining the tools we need to perform our work.

[00:14:27] Our park system must continue to grow to meet the needs of our growing county. This requires a growing investment. Maintaining the natural and physical resources requires constant investment of dedicated funding. Thank you for listening and for supporting our parks. I appreciate it.

[00:14:46] Thank you, Maggie. Speaker number four is Dr. Abina Adu-Hewton, and after that we will hear from Anita Herrera and Laura Eakin-Urlacher. Welcome. Thank you.

[00:15:03] Good afternoon, members of the board. My name is Dr. Abna A. Du Hewton, and I have the pleasure of serving as an at-large member on the Park Authority Board. I am also an Associate Professor of Tourism and Events Management at George Mason's College of Education and Human Development.

[00:15:21] My fellow board members have spoken eloquently about the significant positive impacts of our park system on the lives of our residents and of our vision to pursue greater equity. by removing barriers to these benefits.

[00:15:39] You might not be surprised to learn that I intend to follow suit. The Park Authority has worked hard to make our services accessible to as many residents as possible, but we need to do more. Here's an example of how we can achieve this.

[00:15:55] Prior to the pandemic, the Park Authority tested a pilot activation program, which included presenting a series of temporary pop-up park events with a traveling team of Park Authority staff transforming a parking lot and adjacent plaza into a temporary park experience.

[00:16:17] Separate themed events were dedicated to the arts, nature, fitness, and community engagement. Hundreds of our residents joined us for these events, and most were eager for more opportunities like this. These types of pop-up events are a key step toward providing an equitable park system, but we do not have the $315,000 we need in general fund support to launch a more sustainable activation program throughout the county.

[00:16:53] With your help, we can change that. We also face persistent challenges to protecting residents and providing an equitable standard of quality among our parks. The Park Authority is struggling to deal with acts of vandalism, littering in our parks, parking, and other patron safety issues.

[00:17:13] Over the past 18 months, we have seen an increase in the need for an enforcement presence in our parks to check the behaviors mentioned, but also to educate guests about conservation, park and trail etiquette, and their role in maintaining these treasured spaces.

[00:17:33] The Park Authority has proposed a park ranger program similar to successful programs implemented in other park systems throughout the region to help educate the public, enforce park rules, and ensure that all our parks exhibit the same safe, secure, and appealing environment regardless of location.

[00:17:59] This program would also help alleviate some of the pressures on the Fairfax County Police Department, but without the general fund support, this will not be possible. Achieving greater equity comes with a price tag, and the sustainability of this long-term goal is tied to the sustainability of the funding sources to support it.

[00:18:23] We strongly believe that to secure an equitable future, we must decide to fund it in the presence. Thank you so much. Thank you very much. Speaker number five is Anita Herrera, chair of the Fairfax County Park Foundation.

[00:18:44] Has five minutes. Welcome. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay, Vice Chair Gross, and district supervisors. Yes, I'm Anita Herrera, and I am the chair of the Fairfax County Park Foundation Board.

[00:18:59] Thank you for providing me the opportunity for me and Park Foundation's Vice Chair to speak with you today. The Foundation supports the Park Authority by raising private funds, obtaining grants, and creating partnerships that supplement tax dollars to meet our community's needs for parkland facilities and services.

[00:19:22] That need continues to grow with greater expectations and desires from the community to bridge the gap so all residents have access to recreational opportunities, places to play and exercise, open space, and incredible park amenities.

[00:19:42] Your constituents continue to demonstrate their love of the Fairfax County parks that are important to their quality of life. An increasing number of our neighbors in every district make voluntary

contributions to the extent of their ability while living through uncertain economic times.

[00:20:02] The Park Foundation's status as a 501c3 independent nonprofit corporation enables individuals, organizations, businesses, and foundations to contribute monetary donations, grants, donor-advised funds, vehicle donations, and IRA-qualified charitable distribution gifts.

[00:20:25] I am very proud of our contributions over the years, which exceeds $14.5 million to date. Since our inception in 2001, I have seen remarkable growth in our capabilities and our focus.

[00:20:44] Every day, we strive to maximize the benefits of our philanthropic efforts, which relieve some pressure on the Park Authority. It's some pressure, but not all. There are many accomplishments worthy of mention, and I will touch on only a few.

[00:21:02] During the last fiscal year, the Park Foundation secured more than $1,123,000 from thousands of donors for 75 Park Authority programs, events, and projects. More than 38,000 people enjoyed the ever-popular summer entertainment series of 190 concerts, movies, and shows held in every supervisory district.

[00:21:31] For the Future Stewardship Education Center at the Eleanor C. Lawrence Park in Chantilly, generous donors have sponsored interactive stream features, that is science, technology, recreation, engineering, arts, and math.

[00:21:48] Looking ahead, we want to be a partner for the Park Authority's mobile nature centers. A commitment has been secured to support environmental education and program supplies, and now we are seeking vehicles. If the Board of Supervisors would help provide resources for staff, this can become a reality as early as fiscal 2024.

[00:22:12] Many of the vast array of offerings through Fairfax County Parks is already supplemented by the foundation as well as friends groups that support a specific park or area of interest. We are here to do our part to help ensure that equity becomes reality.

[00:22:29] The Park Foundation Board was an early adopter of the One Fairfax Racial and Social Equity Policy. Our work to help ensure that all Fairfax County residents have access to high-quality parks and enriching environmental education is demonstrated through RECPAC Summer Camp Support and packed scholarships for children in homeless shelters and supportive housing.

[00:22:58] As previously shared, there is so much opportunity to do more with your support. These select accomplishments do narrow the gap between resources and demand for services. Yet more is needed to meet the massive public demand from the Park Authority, which will help Fairfax County implement the One Fairfax Policy and the Green Environmental Initiative here.

[00:23:24] Please help us and the good work of the Park Authority to accomplish even more. Thank you. Thank you very much. And we are now on Speaker 6, Laura Eakin-Urlacher, and after that, Speaker 7, Felicia Smith.

[00:23:42] Is Felicia here? Felicia is here, excellent, and Natera L. is also here, excellent. Laura, welcome. The floor is yours. Thank you. Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to address the board on the recommended budget. My name is Laura Aiken Urlacher, and I serve as vice chair of the Fairfax County Foundation Board of Directors.

[00:24:03] I follow in the footsteps of others in my family to continue the legacy that began in 1951 when Leroy Aiken Sr., my great-grandfather, affectionately known as Daddy Roy, donated 14 acres of land that became Fairfax County's first park.

[00:24:22] This was followed by the Aiken family's gift of 240 additional acres, which ultimately became the Fairfax County Park Authority. Today, our popular parks, trails, and open space are being utilized more than ever. Park benefits ranging from the tranquility of nature to active exercise supporting the collective mental and physical health of those in our community. We know that tax dollars alone cannot support all that the park authority strives to accomplish. Donations to the Fairfax County Park Foundation support park authority staff to develop new programming,

[00:25:02] build new facilities, and expand their outreach to increasing numbers of children and adults in the community. Each year, the Park Foundation is proud to recognize meritorious individuals and organizations with the Aiken Philanthropy Award, presented each fall at the Ellie Doyle Park Service award honoring the significant work of park volunteers the recipients generosity and commitment to our parks inspires others by example and further enrich our parks the park foundation's volunteer board of directors represent those in our community who offer a wealth of business

[00:25:41] experience fundraising abilities and a shared passion for our parks our volunteer board and dedicated foundation staff remained committed to continuing service as your partner to engage citizens and to support the long-term success of our valued park system as a board member at the foundation's inception over 20 years ago with a decade out of the area back to now i am more committed and enthusiastic about ensuring the fairfax county community where i grew up spending

[00:26:15] countless hours at Park Authority fields, trails, rec centers, from Braddock to Drainesville District over many years, that these areas continue to thrive because of the Fairfax County Park System. You can make a lasting difference by funding the Mobile Nature Center staff and other important requests of the Park Authority. With my gratitude and behalf for the foundation. Thank you. Thank you very much, Laura. And we are on speaker seven, Felicia

[00:26:51] Smith, case manager with United Community. And then we will hear from Natara L. and Steve Luteran, if Steve is here. Felicia, welcome. The floor is yours. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay, Supervisor Lusk, Supervisor Stewart, and members of the board. I am Felicia Smith, a case manager for United Community Stepping Stones program. The Stepping Stones program is our oldest program providing emergency support for our most vulnerable neighbors for 54 years. As a case manager in the Stepping Stones program, I am determined and dedicated to fulfilling

[00:27:30] the agency's vision of breaking the cycle of multi-generational poverty. The Stepping Stones Case management has evolved with the understanding that we help individuals overcome their emergency crisis and move towards enhancing their overall well-being.

[00:27:51] I serve on the front lines and in the trenches of the largest island of disadvantage in all of Fairfax County. The diverse population we serve consists of predominantly black and brown people who are veterans, seniors, returning citizens, documented and undocumented immigrants.

[00:28:12] The people on this island receive TANF at a rate twice as high as the rest of the county. Their medium household income is less than 40% of the county's average. The life expectancy for a baby born

today on this island is 8 to 12 years less than a baby born in Fairfax County's two wealthiest censored tracks, McLean and McLean.

[00:28:42] By a socially constructed definition, my clients are vulnerable, underserved, and low income. Yes, most of them have endured systematic institutional structures that have disadvantaged them. However, in the work of empowering and equipping individuals, a mind shift must occur.

[00:29:06] See, my clients do not view themselves and their family as a deficit, but as human beings overcoming their barriers. They understand that they are more than societal labels. They are experts of their own lives equipped with a tool to go dig their way out of poverty into self-sufficiency.

[00:29:26] To make sure that's right, I said goal, G-O-A-L, digging. My clients take charge of their lives by purposely planning their future, by generating goals and methodically creating and taking action steps to work their plans.

[00:29:42] As a Staff and Sales Case Manager, I have the privilege and the honor to serve and to partner with resilient and resourceful people who are determined to improve their situations for themselves and their families and break the cycle of multi-generational poverty.

[00:30:02] We've helped many families, such as a young widow of three children. She is using her strength and skills to break the cycle of poverty by breaking mental and physical barriers that have hindered her from being employed full-time.

[00:30:18] Or tenacious mother of three children is breaking the cycle of poverty for her and her family by getting her criminal record expunged. With a clean record, she can increase her income with a better-paying job to have a healthier life for her and her children.

[00:30:35] Or an undocumented single mother with four beautiful children is knocking down barriers daily. Her goal is to become self-employed to break the cycle of multi-generational poverty for her and her family. The list goes on and on and on.

[00:30:52] In the Seven Stones program, our clients are focused and committed to breaking the cycle of poverty. As you can tell, I love serving, assisting, and watching my clients overcome their situation. However, the most challenging part of my job, the job that keeps me up at night, that I struggle with daily, now that COVID relief is ramping down, is the lack of funds to help my determined clients knock down barriers that hinder them from breaking the cycle of multi-generational poverty.

[00:31:31] The next speaker that you will hear from will be Ms. L. She is a stepping stone client who has torn down barriers and is gold-digging her way into self-sufficiency. Thank you. Thank you, Felicia. A tough act to follow.

[00:31:48] Yes, it is. I'm one of her clients. Thank you. Welcome. My name is, well, good afternoon, Supervisor Lusk and members of the board. My name is Natara L., and I am a United Community Stepping Stone client. I have lived in Fairfax County, Franconia District for over three years.

[00:32:07] To really shed light on the power of United Stepping Stones, I must tell you a bit about my story. I have been the sole provider of my family, my mother, and my children for over 20 years. In 2021, my financial picture changed, and I needed help.

[00:32:23] In 2022, I entered the Stepping Stone program to get assistance with my utility bill. Asking for assistance was very challenging, and like others, I'm sure, I feared I would be looked down on. And at the

time, my spirit was very low, and I really wanted to just give up.

[00:32:40] I spoke to CJ, who was the senior director of Stepping Stones. Mr. CJ's in-tech process made me feel comfortable and respected. He was one of my angels. He later referred me to my caseworker, Ms. Felicia, who you just heard from, who is a phenomenal being.

[00:32:58] She asked me specific questions about my goals, long-term and short. Her attitude towards me was encouraging and uplifting. I have chronic heart failure. The doctor said I would not live long, and I accepted their verdict.

[00:33:16] When I heard Ms. Felicia encouragement, she gently pushed me to set goals, even in that time. It brought me back to life, and I decided to follow her leadership. I set goals with her and accomplished them.

[00:33:31] I am now a substitute teacher for the Fairfax County, and I have successfully taken my mortgage licensing class. So my message to you today is first to thank you for all that you have already done for United Community and to ask you to continue funding their program like stepping stones.

[00:33:50] I was able to get assistance that allowed me and my family to have electric and food as well as purposely planning for my future. Mr. CJ and Felicia acted as a light for me in my time of darkness. They were very instrumental in me accomplishing my goals and moving forward to self-sufficiency again.

[00:34:12] Without the program, like United Community Stepping Stones, I would have suffered in silence and people really need them. Thank you. Thank you, Natira. We are on speaker number nine, Steve Luteran, who will be followed by Stacey Kincaid, Fairfax County Sheriff, and Bettina Lawton, who I know is also here.

[00:34:34] Welcome. The floor is yours. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay, Supervisor Stork, and Supervisor Lusk and other members of the board. And thank you, Ms. L and Ms. Smith, for that inspirational testimony. I am Steve Luteran, the Chief Program Officer at United Community.

[00:34:50] I oversee all the programs and services at our agency. Though we provide an array of social services, I'm going to highlight and speak specifically about food insecurity along Richmond Highway. In response to the economic challenges brought on by the pandemic, United Community expanded its food operations as the need for food grew when people were losing their jobs.

[00:35:15] United Community is now the largest provider of emergency food in Region 1. During the pandemic, our food distribution program experienced a 267% increase in demand for food.

[00:35:33] That equates to serving over 33,000 individuals each year. And that demand continues today during COVID recovery. There's a chart at the end of my testimony that will give the details. In the summer of 2020, at the height of the pandemic, we launched a mobile food distribution program at six new site locations.

[00:35:58] These six mobile food sites located in trailer parks, community centers, and low-income, high-density apartment complexes aim to alleviate residents' barriers of transportation and affordability and ensures that the community has access to healthy food choices in areas commonly known as food deserts.

[00:36:23] At the mobile distribution site, we provide three days' worth of emergency food to those who are food insecure. I invite you to join us at a mobile distribution, as Supervisor Lusk has done. There you will see community-serving community and neighbor-helping neighbor.

[00:36:45] The distributions are cost-effective that they are fully managed by an Opportunity Neighborhood Ambassador who serves as the food site coordinator, along with four to six community volunteers. Distributions are scheduled daily throughout the location.

[00:37:03] Food lines are long and they're growing. People will line up two hours before we give out food. Our mobile program typically serves close to 400 families per week across the sites. And our food pantry located on Fortune Road will serve an average of 200 families each week.

[00:37:25] United Community supports Deputy County Executive Chris Leonard's recommendation to utilize 10 million of the 20 million general fund pandemic reserves for human services needs, including food access.

[00:37:43] United Community is focused on both critical and urgent food solutions, as well as long-term sustainable solutions in Region 1. There are ways in which we can immediately deploy funds from the third quarter carryover toward these solutions during this fiscal year.

[00:38:03] Specifically, we ask you to invest $230,000 today so that United Community can purchase two refrigerated, insulated, and branded box trucks with lift gates.

[00:38:19] This investment will allow us to continue food delivery to those who are food insecure. Our current fleet of trucks are old, in constant need of costly repairs, and are at the end of their life cycles. We have three trucks. We're down to two right now.

[00:38:35] Without funding for new trucks, our mobile sites may be at risk of closing down. Thank you for your consideration to our request. Thank you very much, Steve, and thank you to all our folks who are here from the United Community supporting your testimony.

[00:38:53] We appreciate that. We are now on Speaker 10, Stacey Kincaid, Sheriff of Fairfax County. Welcome. Welcome. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Chairman McKay and members of the Board of Supervisors and County Executive Hill, Mr. Hill. So as many of you know, the sheriff's office currently has an 18 percent vacancy rate for sworn positions and is currently that's currently facing many public safety agencies.

[00:39:21] We remain focused on recruitment and retention and our previously submitted budget requests in these in this regard can all be absorbed within existing appropriations. Despite this vacancy rate and through hard work and adjustments, my staff continues to ensure the safety and security of all people that we serve.

[00:39:42] I'd like to spend a few moments talking about our non-personnel funding requests. The requests concern extending pilot programs that provide life-saving opportunities for inmates facing serious and chronic illnesses in the adult detention center.

[00:39:58] The first pilot offers treatment for individuals with hepatitis C who will be incarcerated for at least 12 weeks, which is the required course of treatment to cure this condition. With a strong correlation between hepatitis C and IV drug use, this offers further healing opportunities for people with substance abuse disorders.

[00:40:20] I am pleased to tell you that our medical staff has cured our first two hepatitis C patients. The second pilot builds on our voluntary medication for assistant treatment program known as MAT, which we launched in 2020.

[00:40:37] We prescribe and administer Suboxone, an oral form of buprenorphine. This drug is given daily to weaken intoxication from other steroids, from other opioids, prevent cravings and withdrawal symptoms, and allow individuals to transition from a life of addiction to a life of recovery.

[00:40:56] Last summer, we began offering Sublocade, an extended-release buprenorphine that is injected subcutaneously once a month, an alternative to the daily dose needed for Suboxone. We are listening to the people we are serving who say that needing to make a decision once a month to sustain recovery is a lot easier than needing to make this decision every single day.

[00:41:22] We have more and more inmates expressing a preference for the monthly dose of Sublocade. My agency's treatment of opioid use disorders has been extremely successful. Facilities and organizations around the country are connecting with us because they want to replicate our model of care.

[00:41:42] We are now treating an average of 14% of our inmate population, introducing treatment and recovery to people while incarcerated, and offering our extensive wraparound services at release, which can change the life and reduce the overdose death rate in Fairfax County.

[00:42:00] We are requesting $200,000 to support the medications we use to treat opioid use disorder and hepatitis C. I am very proud of the work that my sworn and civilian staff continue to do to give Fairfax County and surrounding area residents their best chances for a safe, productive, and healthy lifestyle.

[00:42:21] And our county should be proud that we have the best sheriff's office in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Thank you all for your time, attention, and support. Greatly appreciate it. Thank you, Sheriff Kincaid. Thank you to all of the deputies who have joined you today, too, for your service.

[00:42:42] We are now on Speaker 11, Bettina Lawton from the Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board. Welcome. Thank you. I am back. So good afternoon, Chairman McKay and members of the board. I am Bettina Lawton. I am the Hunter Mill representative on the Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board, and I am the immediate past chairman.

[00:43:02] The CSB provides services to over 20,000 people in our community with challenges relating to mental health, substance use, and developmental disabilities. We can provide this level of service to the most vulnerable in our community because of your ongoing support.

[00:43:20] I am here, and two of my board colleagues will testify by video to offer our thoughts on the 2024 advertised budget. We ask that you support the funding for employee compensation increases, employee retention and recruitment efforts, and contract provider increases.

[00:43:38] The CSB has a long-term priority of addressing the behavioral health workforce crisis, which recently has attracted frontline headlines, and not for welcome reasons. With most health care-related employers in the area competing for the same small group of qualified candidates, we need to ensure that we have competitive salaries.

[00:44:01] We welcome the $2.5 million employee compensation increase and the $750,000 identified to support employee recruitment and retention that will help the CSB's efforts to retain existing talent and attract qualified talent.

[00:44:17] The increase of $2 million will support negotiated contract rate adjustments for providers of critical community services who have also seen their costs increase. Your ongoing leadership and support are critical as we navigate these workforce challenges.

[00:44:34] The advertised budget will significantly affect CSB's ability to meet the mandated support coordination services for individuals receiving new Medicaid waivers in the upcoming fiscal year. There will be an immediate impact later this year as new Medicaid waivers are issued under the state budget to support individuals with developmental disability.

[00:44:57] Although amendments to the state's biennial budget are still being negotiated, CSB will get at least 120 new Medicaid waivers in FY 2024. While the CSB's vacancy rate for support coordinators is at its lowest level in two and a half years, new support coordinators will be needed to support the new waivers that are going to be issued.

[00:45:23] Approximately six to seven new support coordinator positions will be needed to help CSB meet the requirements of mandated service support coordination for individuals receiving the new waivers. Without these new positions, the CSB will have to reclassify other critical clinical staff to support coordinator positions to meet the service mandate of new waiver recipients.

[00:45:47] Based on the 120 new Medicaid waivers, CSB will need to reclassify six full-time positions that currently provide intensive case management, peer support service, healthcare compliance operations, finance team operations, and the management of multiple CSB grants.

[00:46:06] State budget negotiations may also result in a higher waiver number. While welcome, this will exacerbate our staffing problems. There could be as many as 200 new waivers received by the CSB, which would require the creation of one new supervisor position and 11 new support coordinator positions.

[00:46:27] This would require an additional five full-time staff positions to be reclassified and would have further impact on CSB operations. These new Medicaid waiver slots, whether 120 or 200, are essential and a county legislative priority each year, as there are 920 individuals on the Priority 1 wait list in Fairfax.

[00:46:52] CSB is likely to see an unprecedented number of new Medicaid waivers in FY 2024. With new waivers come the need for new positions to manage, caseload, and ensure CSB is in compliance with the service requirement. CSB is committed to providing support coordination services to over 5,000 individuals, but our other clients should not be disadvantaged for lack of staff positions to help them.

[00:47:20] We thank you for supporting the most vulnerable people in our community and for listening to this testimony. Thank you very much, Bettina. And Bettina, are you able to circulate a copy of your testimony to us? Yes. That would be very helpful, because there were a couple things in there that really piqued our interest, and we want to make sure we can follow up on.

[00:47:38] Well, good. Thank you. Thank you, Bettina. Our next speaker is Speaker 12, Tati Karnes, and following that will be Speaker 13, Carolyn Gamble, and Speaker 14, Kristen Rosenthal. And this is Speaker 12, Ms. Carnes, President of the Friends of Historic Huntley. Welcome.

[00:48:01] Thank you. Mr. Chairman and Supervisors of the Board, I appear before you as the President of the Friends of Historic Huntley. Located in the Alexandria area of the Franconia District, Historic Huntley is a federal period villa overlooking the Mount Vernon District. It is a Fairfax County Park Authority FCPA property.

[00:48:21] The Friends of Historic Huntley strives to support this site. It also avidly supports the Fair Parks initiative of about eight different FCPA friends groups networking together in recognition that a thriving system of parks operates to the benefit of each constituent park.

[00:48:38] Last year, I appeared before you asking for the funding necessary, at least 1% of the general fund's budget, to pay for a world-class park system available to everyone. To break the park authority's over-reliance on revenue generation and substitute a more balanced revenue and general fund construct that treats parks as the public service sites they should be.

[00:49:01] In response, you provided some $700,000 to combat invasive species and $500,000 in equity funding, some of it to be used for retaining an equity consultant expected to address, at least in part, a better funding system for the parks.

[00:49:17] Thank you for these FY2023 monies. As we noted last year, however, for many years now, parks have not been properly prioritized in their share of general funds support. That remains true of the proposed FY2024 budget, which fails to recognize that the park authority is in financial crisis.

[00:49:39] It is in a personnel funding crisis, ironically compounded by the proposed budget. The budget mandates a deserved wage increase for county employees, which for the park authority translates into an immediate requirement that it raise $1 million to provide an equal pay increase for its revenue fund employees.

[00:50:01] That will almost certainly lead to increased fees to tour Historic Huntley and access other park sites and services, meaning that fewer people will be able to experience these ostensibly public places and resources. In a move that we support, you've raised salaries for your successors.

[00:50:19] Now, please provide $1 million to do likewise for Park Authority Revenue Fund employees, saving the Park Authority from further revenue fund pressures. The Park Authority is in a trash removal crisis. One of our unmet requests from last year was sufficient general funds to contain and haul away trash from our parks.

[00:50:40] The park authority acknowledged that it has a trash problem and responded by requesting $2.9 million in FY 2024 general funds for a comprehensive zero-waste program. The amount approved in the advertised budget before you is $0.

[00:50:57] We have been advised this is because no new programs are being funded. Overflowing trash bins in a number of our parks, however, is an old, festering problem, and it would seem that current trash collection protocols could be supplemented to address it.

[00:51:15] Surely the choice is not $2.9 million or nothing. Surely we can find the means to haul away trash from our parks. This is basic, basic stuff. And yet a year after the problem was spotlighted and acknowledged, it remains.

[00:51:32] One reason the problem remains is because the Park Authority is in a forestry funding crisis. Despite repeated requests for appropriate general funds, the Park Authority's allotted funds for forestry have not been enough even to cover removing all trees presenting an urgent threat to life and property, let alone deal with non-urgent but necessary removals, and to say nothing at all of proactive forestry conservation measures.

[00:52:00] Desperate for funds to deal with urgent tree removals, the Park Authority has resorted to diverting into its forestry accounts funds intended for other purposes. It has acknowledged that such funds siphoning has contributed to trash remaining in the parks.

[00:52:18] We understand that one-time funding to help meet urgent forestry needs will likely be forthcoming from third quarter funds this year. While this is something, it's akin to putting a band-aid on a sucking chest wound. Our parks need adequate forestry funding built into their baseline general funds budget so that it is there every year for both urgent and routine forestry maintenance.

[00:52:44] And so that other park needs do not go wanting because their funds have been stripped away for forestry. At heart, budgeting is an exercise in prioritizing. As one friend to another, please give our parks the priority they deserve and help their funding crises by providing them, as a start, with at least 1% of the county's general funds budget.

[00:53:09] Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Carnes. And we're on Speaker 13, Carolyn Gamble. Welcome. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay, supervisors, and county staff.

[00:53:25] Thank you for holding these public hearings on the FY24 advertised budget. So by this time, you've heard lots and lots of words on the budget topic. So I'm here to mainly leave you with a visual, my poster here.

[00:53:46] Trees don't pay fees, but they do pay dividends. And I will explain how you will hold that. Okay, so more and more people are waking up to the fact that the Park Authority needs fixing.

[00:54:02] Just been hearing about that, and Kyle Stone of the Park Authority Board speaking of that as well. Friends groups watch their beloved parks deteriorate due to staff shortages, and citizens are increasingly frustrated with the inequity of rising fees.

[00:54:22] So what's the problem? You've heard it. The Park Authority's operating budget is majority fee-based. The revenue fund was seen as a great way to expand the agency without burdening the county's general fund, and the agency has expanded, but it's now at a tipping point.

[00:54:44] There have been negative consequences. With an operating budget that is largely fee-based, the mission of the park authority is effectively do what it takes to keep the revenue fund solvent. Park authority operations that do not generate revenues such as maintenance and resource stewardship are woefully underfunded and are not prioritized.

[00:55:10] Maintenance and resource stewardship are two very basic services that we expect our tax dollars to pay for, like taking care of the trees. A lot of people have been speaking about trees here because of the environmental dividends they provide us and because the county's forests are declining for a number of reasons.

[00:55:33] As temperatures rise with climate change, we are increasingly grateful for the essential cooling trees provide. We need trees more than ever, and the Park Authority is responsible for a significant percentage of the county's trees. Please empower the Park Authority to pick up the trash and care for our forests by increasing its slice of the general fund pie to at least 1% and returning the Park Authority back to a majority tax-based operation.

[00:56:05] I know you're waiting to hear the recommendations from a consultant this summer, but I'm asking you to use some of the $90 million discretionary fund to bring funding back into balance now. Let's bring the mission of the Park Authority back, to enrich quality of life for all members of the community through an enduring park system that provides a healthy environment, preserves natural and cultural heritage, offers inspiring recreational experiences, and promotes healthy lifestyles.

[00:56:39] Thank you for your time. Thank you very much, Ms. Gamble, and for your supporters, some of which have been here all week. So congratulations on that, too. Our next speaker is 14, Kristen Rosenthal, who will be followed by Speaker 15, Jim Ball, and Speaker 16, Judy Burnham.

[00:57:01] If you are here and can make your way down closer, we would appreciate that. And Ms. Rosenthal, Speaker 14, is a board member with Faith Alliance for Community Solutions. Welcome. Climate Solutions, yes, thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay, Supervisor Stork, County Executive Hill, and the rest of you wonderful supervisors.

[00:57:20] I'm Chris Rosenthal. I'm a resident of the Mount Vernon District for over 30 years and a board member for the Faith Alliance and an active member of Mount Vernon Unitarian Church. As a representative of FACTS and a citizen, I want to thank you all and the county executive for adding two positions to the OEEC this year and for the new county climate dashboard, the gold and silver lead standard county buildings, the Charge Up Fairfax initiative, and many other initiatives. And kudos on winning an award for the resilience plan.

[00:57:52] I thank you for naming FACS as a climate champion. We look forward to working with the OEC, and now that there's some federal money flowing, we think that maybe we can get things moving towards green. In a few minutes, you'll hear more from FACS about specific aspects of the CCAP that we'd like to highlight today.

[00:58:11] And before that, I want to give you three stories about the world that we all live in simultaneously because our actions are guided by each story, And so it makes a huge difference which outlook you've got. First, we're all living in business as usual. For elected officials such as yourselves, this means balancing many demands on the budget, which we're hearing lots of today, while keeping a AAA bond rating and facing elections every few years.

[00:58:35] Business as usual keeps some wages below poverty level, which puts a strain on county support systems. And business as usual can be a depth of bureaucracy that makes cross-department solutions difficult to create. It means a huge geographic sprawl built on a reliance on cars.

[00:58:53] And it means a strong momentum to keep doing what we've been doing. That's business as usual. Secondly, we're all living in the great unraveling of our natural systems. We hear that from the invasive vines to this wonderful June day in April to the wildfire threat we had this week.

[00:59:10] The wildfire smoke that blew in from North Carolina last week. We all carry plastic in our bloodstreams. Healing ourselves and the planet's systems from severe exploitation while reinventing our sources for energy is a heavy lift. And what's the third story? It is emerging bit by bit as people collectively reimagine how we might live in ways that foster all life.

[00:59:34] It is partly about the practical aspects like installing heat pumps and solar on roofs. It's partly about reimagining transportation, neighborhoods, food use, and land use. I hear this story in the promise of one Fairfax, which recognizes that entrenched inequality is hazardous to all of us.

[00:59:53] I hear it in people forming groups like Friends of Fort Hunt Park, where people cut down invasives together. In the food rescue program at Bull Renown Elementary School, initiated by a FACS volunteer. I hear the new emerging with the Conference for Spanish-speaking Landscapers to learn about native plants in Spanish.

[01:00:11] And a new institution such as the WISH Center, which I hope will foster careers that support electrifying everything. Maybe the motto for the new story is hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up. Humanity has been endlessly creative and bold throughout our some 8,000 years of existence.

[01:00:30] And now is definitely the time to be bold, to encourage the emergence of new ways and paths. As I talk to people around the county, I hear a lot of fear and despair. And after listening to them, I tell them what's emerging. I tell them about CCAP, about Resilient Fairfax, the JET, and I encourage them to find one group to work with and roll their sleeves up too.

[01:00:53] So as you weigh the aspects of the budget, and I don't envy you that process, please try to recognize when you are living in business as usual and ask yourself if that's the right answer, if that's the right story for that funding. Could some particular use, resource be used better in a different way for energy efficiency, for ending heat islands, for nourishing the health of trees and plants, which nourish our air and our souls?

[01:01:17] Does our use of our money and resources reflect the urgency for a new way of life? We need bold and courageous leadership and a chief energy officer with cross-department powers. We have an excellent staff at OEEC. We have the plans, and you can choose to fund them fully.

[01:01:36] Getting the Green Bank off to a jump start, for instance, would be a really bold and wonderful move. Please keep reaching to all of us, businesses, citizen groups, faith communities, institutions, and we can create the new emerging ways together as a community. Thank you for your dedication towards a path toward carbon neutrality and a livable planet.

[01:01:56] Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Rosenthal. And we are now on speaker number 15, Jim Ball, who is also a member of FACS. Welcome. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay, members of the board and County Executive Hill. I'm Jim Ball. I live in the Providence section of East Falls Church, and I'm a member of the Faith Alliance Climate Solutions and Northern Virginia Ethical Society in Vienna.

[01:02:22] I also volunteer with Earth Sangha. I appreciate that this is about accounting, so let me speak personally and briefly. Transportation is our county's biggest contribution to carbon emissions. Cars are a terrible investment and lose value the moment we drive them off the lot.

[01:02:39] Starting out, my wife and I didn't have a car until our first child two years later. She took a bus near our home in Tyson's to Marymount University, and I biked to work. We saved money. Public transportation provided steady jobs and transportation for working-class people.

[01:02:56] Public transportation keeps roads narrow, keep cars off the road and trees up, absorbing carbon, providing shade and reducing our energy bills. It mitigates water runoff and provides cleaner air. Wider roads destroy property values.

[01:03:13] I ask that you price these benefits in when considering the estimated $9 million loss in yearly ridership revenue when making bus trips free. That you include the savings of not building and maintaining roads.

[01:03:31] replacing removed trees, the financial health of those on the margin of not having to buy a first or second car. Don't push those unaccounted costs to a future date. Scientific American suggested recently that the last summer may have been the coolest summer we may all experience in our lifetime. I have asthma and I dread especially bus and truck fumes, but also cars as I ride the streets in Fairfax. And no

matter how many trails, which we welcome, it's not possible to commute in Fairfax without using streets and I can bike here faster than take by public transportation

[01:04:07] by the way. I ask that you shift investments from highway and arterial expansion to electrifying and expanding public transportation and putting affordable and public housing nearby. Expand the charge up Fairfax pilot program to apply for funds from the Nebby formula program for EV charging stations. The county DOT to apply for funds from the bipartisan infrastructure law to get the best return on our public investment. And I humbly ask you for those people that are too busy at their first or second job or too busy to know that they can ask, that we make bus transportation free for

[01:04:46] everyone and without bureaucratic hoops. My daughter has a disability and though she could benefit from Metro Access, we have yet to find time in our busy lives to get to the Metro Access to renew our pass. I ask you to build complete streets, to create steady jobs, improve the health and wealth of our county for the welfare of all of us, the best kind of public action that we as individuals cannot take alone. Mobility is upward mobility. I thank the board for its time.

[01:05:14] Thank you very much, Mr. Ball. We are on Speaker 16, Judy Burnham, and following her will be 17, Josefina Dumbia, and 18, Nancy Verona. Ready? Okay. Ms. Burnham, welcome. Thank you, Chairman McKay and members of the board, thank you for having me.

[01:05:39] My name is Judy Burnham. I'm a resident of Springfield for over 40 years. I support and volunteer with the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, and I'm an active member of Messiah Methodist Church. I'm here to talk about trees, which has been a topic on many of the others, so you'll hear the same thing probably, but especially mature trees.

[01:06:02] Among their many benefits, trees produce the oxygen we breathe, reduce pollution and stormwater runoff, capture carbon, and provide shade to reduce temperatures. The Chesapeake Canopy Tree Network values a Fairfax County tree canopy at more than $52 million in benefits annually.

[01:06:24] Mature trees are the lifeblood of our communities. However, we are steadily losing our existing mature tree canopy, largely due to development and the impacts of weather and also road widening. The widespread invasion of non-native fines on Fairfax County Parkland is also a significant factor in the decline of the tree canopy.

[01:06:50] From 2014 to 2018, Fairfax County has lost 718 acres of tree canopy. One of CCAP's greenhouse gas reduction goals is to expand the tree canopy a minimum of 40% by 2030.

[01:07:08] It's critical to assess now the state of the tree canopy in Fairfax County, including the invasive vine threat, in order to strive for meeting the CCAP goal. The Fairfax County Park Authority requested a budget of $739,453 to better manage parkland forests, which you've heard in the earlier speaker.

[01:07:32] But astonishingly, the county executive advertised proposed budget is only $57,000, a gap of over $682,000. It's critical to fund the Fairfax County Park Authority budget for forestry maintenance to proactively address their maintenance needs and the removal of invasive vines.

[01:07:52] In addition, please consider establishing a budget line item to fund a study to assess the state of the Fairfax County tree canopy. to identify vulnerable communities. Taking advantage of the Inflation Reduction Act grants for forestry conservation could fund these additional needs.

[01:08:14] Thank you for your time. Thank you very much, Ms. Burnham. And thank you to all of the folks who are here from FACTS. I understand Speaker 17 from FACTS will not be joining us, but we are on Speaker number 18, Nancy Verona, to be followed by Speaker 19, Dr. Larry Maxwell, and speaker 20 lula bauer welcome miss verona thank you very much good afternoon my name is nancy verona and my husband and i are 13 year residents of mason district john i john and i

[01:08:49] appreciate the board's great interest in creating a thriving fairfax county like many others we have seen our residential property and car taxes increase dramatically we were dismayed therefore to learn of the proposed 2024 property tax rates and budget we hope that reigning in taxes and costs are part of the board strategy when we moved to fairfax county in 2009 key criteria for our

[01:09:23] new house and locale were being senior friendly now increased property taxes other county cost increases and compromised services are such that we are led to consider moving to a jurisdiction that offers quality of life along with reduced or lower taxes. We know of others in our retirement age group and younger folks that are of a similar mindset. In addition, we know of young families

[01:09:57] and downsizing adults who moved to the DMV who opted to live in nearby alternative jurisdictions for these same reasons. We have just heard the many pleas for funding and so we definitely understand the challenges. Yet we encourage the county to find savings by increasing efficiency and cost effectiveness. This includes looking at budget items and determining where cost savings can be achieved through program and process efficiencies, improved coordination among

[01:10:37] agencies and departments, outsourcing if appropriate, and other methods. So in spite of these challenges, John and I are confident that these goals can be achieved. Reducing taxes and tax rates and enhanced use of the budget are key, are vital to keeping and to keeping and attracting residents. Thank you. Thank you very much, Ms. Verona. Appreciate your testimony. And speaker number 19 is Dr. Larry Maxwell, president of the ANOVA Women's Services

[01:11:14] line at ANOVA Health System. Welcome. Chairman McKay, Vice Chair Gross, and other distinguished members of the board. Thank you for the opportunity to address ANOVA's enduring partnership with you on the Fairfax County Childhood Longitudinal Study.

[01:11:34] I'm Dr. Larry Maxwell, president of the Women's Service Line for the Inova Health System, and I'm the person that oversees this longitudinal study. As we approach the 10th year of the collaboration, I want to express our appreciation for the county's generous support and commend the board for its vision and commitment to the growing Fairfax County's research potential.

[01:11:57] Fairfax was our first major partner in launching the groundbreaking translational research and since then have leveraged their support to attract other regional and national partners. These collaborations are helping to advance new discoveries and research programs that will improve the health outcomes for our residents for generations to come.

[01:12:16] Today, I'm pleased to share that we are embarking on a new partnership with George Mason University College of Health and Human Services and School of Public Health to help house and sustain the support and research into the future. We're excited to explore new research grant opportunities with George Mason with this unprecedented collection of data and tissue resources with their nationally acclaimed public health specialists, epidemiologists, and biomedical statisticians.

[01:12:45] Similar to the renowned Framingham study on heart patients, this cohort includes nearly 4,500 children and their parents following the children from birth to age 18 to examine the role of genetics in the development from gestation through adolescence and early adulthood, including their risk for autism, asthma, nutritional disorders, disease, and cancer.

[01:13:09] Funds requested for fiscal year 2024 will continue to support several key research-related personnel associated with collection of data on currently enrolled patients as part of our ongoing cohorts, as well as current and future patients affected by COVID-19.

[01:13:27] Support from the Fairfax County has helped NOVA's investigative team forge new partnerships over the past year with researchers at Johns Hopkins and Children's National Medical Center. Through those collaborations, over the past year, we've been recently awarded two additional grants from the National Institutes of Health, one from the National Institutes of Child Health and Development, and the other from the National Institutes of Mental Health.

[01:13:52] The purpose of the grant will be to determine whether COVID infection during pregnancy ultimately affects the pediatric development of the corresponding uninfected newborns over time. Among other things, the data analysts and research scientists supported by Fairfax County will continue to investigate the effects of COVID infection and inflammation on the biological function of the placenta.

[01:14:16] Part of our collaboration with George Mason will look at the prevalence of behavioral health complications during pregnancy, such as stress, anxiety, and depression, particularly among minority populations and associated effects on the mother-child relationship over time. George Mason University experts and health equities have also teamed up with ANOVA to identify disparities in care among different racial populations of the communities served by ANOVA, an effort consistent with the One Fairfax initiative.

[01:14:45] The ANOVA team continues to focus much of its efforts on maternal mortality, given the national attention associated with this growing problem that is substantial even in the state of Virginia. The main causes of maternal mortality are related to infection, hemorrhage, cardiac disease, and behavioral health disorders.

[01:15:04] ANOVA continues to focus its clinical efforts as well as its research-related activities on these areas with collaborations that we've most recently catalyzed with investigators at Harvard. Oxford University and the University of Utah and even preliminary discussions that we've had solicited by senior leaders within the Gates Foundation. The Fairfax County study has offered so many research training opportunities for residents, medical students, and undergraduate students who presented their work at national meetings. Much of this research supported by Fairfax County has created an academic environment for ANOVA to be able to recruit national leaders

[01:15:44] in maternal fetal medicine. Over the past year, we've been delighted to recruit Dr. Scott Sullivan, who's taken over as ANOVA's chief of maternal fetal medicine. Dr. Sullivan serves as the district chair within the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and was elected several months after arrival to be the chair of the Virginia Maternal Health Data and Quality Measures Task Force for the state of Virginia.

[01:16:08] We'll be welcoming two additional nationally acclaimed MFM specialists this summer who have additional subspecialty training in critical care medicine and infectious disease, enabling us to care

for our sicker moms. This and other successful recruitment activities have allowed ANOVA to expand its maternal fetal care in our local community and to find strategic opportunities for ANOVA to become a nationally acclaimed obstetrical program.

[01:16:35] This past year, our OB-GYN program was ranked 10th in the country by U.S. News and Rule Reports, truly enabling us to have a brand as a leading nation's care facility for women. Without question, the partnership that we've had with the county plays a role in that distinction, which should be a source of pride for the community and for this board of leadership.

[01:16:58] We look forward to sharing more about our work to improve the health of all county residents as well as the economic benefits of that work with the board. Thank you again for your commitment to this partnership and for your consideration this year's request. Thank you, Dr. Maxwell.

[01:17:14] Yes, Supervisor Gross. Dr. Maxwell, thank you for your comments. It is hard to believe it's been 10 years. Yes, it is. But it was cutting edge at the time. Probably still is. but it was a little tough to get the board to understand why this was so important. However, we stuck to our guns, and we have now all of this data, and it has played out the way we had hoped it would. With all of the attention given to women's reproductive health care these days,

[01:17:48] this program is just a super, super example of the kinds of positive things we can do to ensure that women have appropriate reproductive health care. Thank you, Dr. Maxwell. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, Supervisor Gross. And our next speaker, speaker number 20, is Lula Bauer, Chairwoman of the Fairfax County Athletic Council.

[01:18:09] Following her will be Speaker 21, Larry Zaragoza, and Speaker 22, Judith Harbeck. Lula, welcome. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and the members of the board. My name is Lula Bauer, and I am the Chairwoman of the Fairfax County Athletic Council.

[01:18:25] and a very proud resident of the Franconia district i would like to begin by thanking the board for their ongoing commitment support of youth sports in fairfax county as directed by this board the girls fast pitch equity action plan review team aprt was produced an update to the aprt's 2007 report on the disparity between girls fast pitch softball and boys baseball facilities. Unfortunately, the report has found that the disparity has widened and that the

[01:18:58] quantity and quality of the fields available for girls' softball has been reduced. The equity achieved in 2007 for girls' fast-pitch softball community users have been negatively impacted. Girls often must play on non-synthetic fields, which results in poor field conditions and potential loss of field time due to closures after weather events. Due to capital improvement projects, there have been a loss of fields equipped to handle girls' fast-pitch softball.

[01:19:29] Increased staff support is necessary to maintain fields and reduce safety issues related to installation and removal of temporary fencing. The APRT has made recommendations unanimously supported by the Athletic Council to address the inequities. We would like to thank the board for their unanimous support of the girls fast pitch softball equity review report to adjust the inequities and make the necessary improvement related to field development infrastructures and ongoing staffing support we were requesting the funding of two million inclusive of 1.7 million

[01:20:05] in one-time funding and a $300,000 for reoccurring costs. I think we can all agree that equity and the distribution of quality facilities between boys and girls is important and something that Fairfax

County will always stand behind. On behalf of Fairfax County Athletic Council, we urge you to approve this funding in the upcoming FY24 budget. In addition, the Fairfax County Athletic Council is in support of fully funding the synthetic turf replacement program. So thank you for your continued support and allowing me to address you on behalf of the Fairfax County

[01:20:40] Athletic Council. Thank you very much, Lula. Appreciate your work. And we are now on speaker number 21, Larry Zaragoza, followed by Judith Harbeck and Jeff Flading. Mr. Zaragoza is the chair of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council. Welcome. Thank you very much, Chairman McKay and members of the board. I thank you for this opportunity to speak on EQAC's recommendations on the budget. The EQAC thanks the board for your continued support on environmental issues. This is really important to our quality of life. It's important to retain

[01:21:18] our property values and important to just enjoy our homes and and that's one reason we very much appreciate your continued support we'd like to highlight three areas to today one and these the first one is your continued support for community what the community-wide energy and climate action plan and resilient Fairfax support we're very pleased that funding for these activities is being incorporated into the budget we're also pleased to see that that pilot work is being undertaken.

[01:21:53] But we also see that there's going to be a lot of work to come in the future. We see that things are beginning, but there's going to be a lot more to be done in future years. And we just want to put that down as something to keep in mind for next year. Secondly, we also see some critical needs that are coming up, particularly in DPWES.

[01:22:13] In particular, we note that there are significant understaffing in the sanitary sewer and waste collection areas. The understaffing we're talking about is perhaps up to 30%. And it's important to keep these functions up so that we don't have issues with them.

[01:22:36] And it seems like it's much easier to correct any shortfalls than dealing with fixing things after the fact. Making sure that we're protecting our water environment and litter control are important, I think, to all.

[01:22:55] I also wanted to note that we're going to have a need to better characterize what's going on with both PFAS, given the proposed standards that are coming out, as well as additional work to better understand the impact of salinity on our waters.

[01:23:12] That's an emerging need. The characterization is going to be important. And probably after that, there may well be some need to fund work to deal with these issues. Another issue that's going to be coming up in this area is the need to look to flooding.

[01:23:31] Flooding is something I know that you're looking at. This will be another future need. I also want to echo some of the concerns you've heard already today about the funding for the park authority. Parks are important in terms of amenities for the public as well as ecological stewardship.

[01:23:52] We also appreciate the funds that are coming through the third quarter review proposal, which would have an additional $500,000 in funding. Thank you very much for that. to help keep park fees stable and the nominal increases in forestry and invasive management.

[01:24:11] However, we also recognize that the funding requested for one Fairfax, for taking care of what we have, for the park ranger program to help improve park safety, and also to fully fund the park

personnel requests that have been made are still not met.

[01:24:34] and I'm sure you'll work on these as time goes on. We also wanted to just thank you very much for your continued support, and we look forward to working with you and staff in the coming year. Thank you. Thank you very much, Larry, and thank you for your work on EQUAC.

[01:24:51] Speaker number 22 is Judith Harbeck, and following Judith will be Speaker 23, Jeff Flading. Are you here, Jeff? Oh, I'm sorry, phone call, exactly. And I see Jay Spiegel is Speaker number 24. Ms. Harbeck, welcome.

[01:25:07] Good afternoon. As you said, I'm Judy Harbeck, and I'm representing the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations. We've previously provided you with our resolution, which generally supports the advertised budget. The homeowners of MVCCA are acutely aware of the pluses and minuses that is caused by our hot residential market, especially at budget time.

[01:25:32] And no, I am not going to mention assessments, because I'm sure everyone here has heard plenty about that. But inflation affects us individually but also impacts county and school operations. We find that the 2024 advertised budget strikes a good balance in preserving necessary services while creating an approximately $90 billion discretionary fund which could address tax burden reduction and some enhancements where needed.

[01:26:01] And we urge that any revenue reduction through tax rate changes be limited to this surplus fund. We do not favor precipitous changes because we feel the most significant need right now is for stabilization and preservation in uncertain times. One critical obligation, of course, is funding for Fairfax County schools, and we appreciate that the advertised budget fully funds the FCPS requested transfer, except for the 1% retention bonus intended to try to help stem the tide of teacher loss.

[01:26:36] Today, teachers are leaving at high rates, and they're not being replaced at educational institutions. And one factor is certainly low pay, given the workload and unprecedented expectations, and for FCPS also, the substantially higher pay offered by competitors.

[01:26:56] We urge you, therefore, to fund the 1% retention bonus for our returning teachers. Even for those teachers, salaries will fall below inflation and competitors' offerings. And I think would also be a signal to teachers that their actions are appreciated and respected, which you sometimes don't seem to feel if you read the news.

[01:27:21] Addressing climate change is also a commitment of this board and MDCCA, and we would ask that climate-related expenditures and green initiatives should be more clearly set forth and incorporated as a recurring line item so citizens can better understand and evaluate activities, costs and benefits. Climate change is already increasing stormwater and flooding issues. However, insufficient funds are provided for the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, which impedes its ability to

[01:27:55] assist homeowners with rising, no pun intended, problems. The current stormwater tax also does not provide enough revenue for its mission and needs to be addressed by FY25. Many ongoing park authority activities which you've heard about also need to be addressed and they've been a constant concern of the Mount Vernon Council we brought it up many times and we would I can say we concur with pretty much everything that's been said here today by the various park authority supporters and we would also support those who were

[01:28:35] talking about underfunding of trash collection and the wastewater treatment plant which is currently operating with unsustainable staff shortages with obviously negative implications for health and welfare. In short, we would ask you to look at our resolution and adopt the advertised budget using the discretionary surplus fund for needed tax property tax relief and for funding the other enumerated needs. Thank you very much and by the way we didn't we didn't have a problem with the with your increased salaries. Thank you. Thank you

[01:29:10] Thank you, Ms. Harbeck, and thank you to the work for all the folks involved in the Mount Vernon Council. We appreciate it. Speaker number 23 is Jeff Flading, who has joined us by phone. Mr. Flading, can you hear me okay? Yeah, can you hear me? We can. Welcome.

[01:29:25] The floor is yours. Thank you. I intended to be there in person, but I had a home maintenance emergency come up, so I'm glad to be chipped over to on the telephone. I did want to just add my voice to the others I know have spoken to about concerns about the police staffing emergency.

[01:29:43] I know the police groups have spoken in more detail to the fact that they're hemorrhaging on retention and recruitment. And the budget, as proposed, was really just a Band-Aid. I mean, we've spoken before.

[01:30:00] I know you've heard from others. We have the lowest starting salaries. A bonus doesn't really change that long term. We have below inflation raises proposed. We're working the force at 12-hour-plus shifts, and there's no immediate need or no immediate stop for that in sight.

[01:30:18] So we're really grinding on the force. And I would just, once again, add my voice to the others to ask the board to focus on correcting this staffing emergency. It's headed back in the right direction. It took a few years of budget inattention to contribute to the police staffing emergency, And the proposed budget doesn't show the focus on getting us out of this emergency situation.

[01:30:42] So I'd like you to seriously consider adjusting that this year. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Flading. And speaker number 24 is Jay Spiegel. After Jay Spiegel, we have speaker 25, Chris Burns. Chris Burns here? Okay, excellent.

[01:30:58] And speaker 26, Steve Monahan. If you all are here and can come down closer so that when we call you, you're ready, that would be appreciated. Mr. Spiegel, welcome. The floor is yours. Thank you. Chairman McKay and members of the board, thank you for holding this hearing. There is an elephant in the room, but it is an elephant that I believe most taxpayers don't see.

[01:31:18] The elephant is the ability of the board since last November to enact a meals tax without being required to conduct a referendum, although a referendum can still be employed. Since enactment of a meals tax during the 2023 fiscal year would impact revenues, this is a relevant topic for this hearing.

[01:31:34] Referenda on this subject were put to the voters in 1992 and 2016. They both went down to defeat. The 2016 referendum was defeated despite the ballot question requiring the revenue generated to be split between our school system, county services, capital improvements, and property tax relief.

[01:31:52] Whenever I have heard supervisors attempt to justify imposition of a meals tax, the sales pitch always says that we need to diversify sources of revenue, not increase revenue. This is an election year, and the meals tax is an election issue. In my opinion, any supervisor running for re-election and any candidates to unseat a supervisor must come clean with voters as to their intentions concerning a meals

tax, including whether or not they favor it, the proposed amount of the tax, the proposed uses of the tax, and whether they pledge to the voters that any meals tax enactment will be revenue neutral.

[01:32:24] In other words, any additional revenues generated by a meals tax should be fully offset by corresponding reductions in the real estate tax and the BPOL tax. If there is a primary election for a supervisor seat, these public statements must be made prior to that election so the taxpayers will know their position on this issue.

[01:32:42] This brings me to the proposed budget. We have all heard about board members, besides Supervisors Alcorn and Herity, voting to give the board that will be constituted in January a 30% raise. What is not commonly known, which I found out when reviewing the proposed budget, is that the proposed budget proposes to increase the amount of money allocated to supervisor offices by 24.7%, from $5.6 million to $7 million.

[01:33:09] In so doing, the proposed budget does not authorize supervisors to increase the number of personnel in their offices. The proposal increases the office allocation for the chairman by $230,000, a 37.4% increase. The other nine supervisors will have their allocations increased by about 23%, over $120,000 per office.

[01:33:29] Meanwhile, the remaining county employees are offered a 2% MRA adjustment, while inflation is north of 6%. Since it is unlikely the cost of running a supervisor office inside a county building will significantly increase, these dramatic increases can be used to give supervisor staff a raise multiple times the amount the remaining county employees receive.

[01:33:48] This would be truly unconscionable. I urge the Board to reduce the increased allocations to supervisor offices to be commensurate with the MRA adjustment remaining county employees receive. Finally, there has been a debate concerning whether a supervisor job is a full-time or part-time job. In my opinion, a supervisor staff of seven employees with a budget of $556,000, $616,000 for the chairman as allocated in the 2022 fiscal year budget, should permit a supervisor to delegate sufficient responsibility to the staff such that the supervisor job can remain part-time.

[01:34:20] Thank you very much for listening to me today. Thank you, Mr. Spiegel. And our next speaker is Speaker No. 25, Chris Burns, and Speaker 26, Steve Monahan, to be followed by, well, let's get through Speaker 26.

[01:34:36] Is Steve Monahan here yet? I have not seen him. Okay. Ms. Burns, welcome. I believe the first time I spoke to this board was in 2014.

[01:34:54] I am a victim of domestic violence, a witness to family violence, who has lost my home, lost my right to raise my children, and for a third time I am homeless. With all the county agencies, at that time in 2014, what I recommended is that Fairfax County is a big county.

[01:35:14] Accidents happen, mistakes happen, and that we should have a designated fund for when those kinds of mistakes happen to regather the county agencies involved, find out where the breakdowns happened, and have money devoted to that process in providing remedy.

[01:35:33] I apologize for being long-winded, but I did want to say that I have approached this board before, and I believe that at this point in time, our community is less safe. We are less able to share life, health, and safety, which is the goal of this board, constitutionally established through law in Virginia.

[01:35:56] There are three places where I think we need to address as a county of one million people. We are actually suffering a humanitarian crisis that we are not acknowledging. And there are three places where I think the board has both the authority and a duty to intervene.

[01:36:20] Virginia Code 15.2-853 gives a county the authority to enact an ordinance prohibiting discrimination. It lists out the specific places where that discrimination can happen and the specific people that can be affected by that discrimination.

[01:36:38] But Virginia law gives this Board of Supervisors the authority to enact ordinances, local laws, in order to prevent human rights violations. The way that that is done, from what I understand, is through Statute 15.214.18.

[01:36:57] It would be calling a special meeting, which could be called by you, Mr. McKay, as the chairman, or any two supervisors of the board. The three places that I think the board has a duty at this point in time to consider entering local ordinances are, number one, housing.

[01:37:17] I was hoping to speak at the last, more recent meeting on the 21st regarding housing. We are a community of one million people. If a person in this county earns $15 an hour, which is considered to be a, quote, living wage, that person takes home $2,000 a month.

[01:37:37] A one-bedroom apartment in this county is about $2,000 a month. By default, that creates a humanitarian crisis. The people who work in our gas stations, at our grocery stores, at our local restaurants, and as administrators in medical care, am speaking on behalf of two children I hope that gives me two more minutes does does mean that we have about 300,000 people in this county that cannot afford housing our buffer is gone the basements that people went out more affordably is

[01:38:13] are now holding family members and friends and an ordinance needs to be set in order to ensure that everybody works in this county can afford housing The second place where I think a human rights ordinance should be set is for a crime victim and witnesses.

[01:38:32] By Constitution and law in Virginia, we have a right to be protected. The money that you are giving to our county agencies cannot just be given. The budget alone does not solve the policy problems that have law enforcement sometimes targeting victims of crimes for criminal prosecutions.

[01:38:52] The third place is that there are specific violations of law that are occurring within our courthouse, one of which is an abuse of guardianship law in which an individual with the support of a single clerk of the court and a single attorney who gets appointed to a case can take the legal rights of another human being by order of the court.

[01:39:18] This is a means through which somebody who commits crimes against an individual can then, without notice to that individual's family members or community members who care, obtain orders of that person's legal rights in order to avoid accountability by restraining a victim and a witness to crimes.

[01:39:38] Those are three places that I hope that I can get support for a special session where we can talk about what kind of local ordinances in support of Virginia law could be set in order for us locally to say no to these kinds of abuses. Thank you, Ms. Burns.

[01:39:54] Thank you very much. Speaker number 26, Steve Monahan. Is Steve here yet? How about Speaker 27, Siobhan Chase? Speaker 28, Anu Sahai? 29 Casey Utley. Okay we will now hear from speaker

number 29 Casey Utley representative showing up for racial justice in northern Virginia and while she's coming down is Christy Carl speaker 30 here

[01:40:30] she is okay and Candace Ashton speaker 31 okay welcome Miss Utley. Thank you my name is Casey Utley, and I'm here today to speak on behalf of Showing Up for Racial Justice, the Northern Virginia chapter, and the broader Defund Nova Police Coalition, many of which couldn't be here today because this time is prohibited for working people. Despite what you may have heard from Chief Davis, there is a defund movement here. I am joined by comrades who have also submitted testimony

[01:41:05] written to ask for substantial reductions in the police and sheriff budgets for Fairfax County and reinvestments of those funds into resources for community care. Here in Fairfax, often eclipsed by national news, stories of police harm are regularly documented in the media and lifted up by local organizing.

[01:41:26] Police regularly deliver people in our community to sites of violence, even death in our county jail. According to their own use of force reporting, local police have been shown to use more force in situations involving black and brown people. This is a consistent trend from year to year, yet police budgets and police presence in our communities continues to increase.

[01:41:48] Even in situations where lethal force is not used against community members, black and brown people face daily harassment, surveillance, and violence at the hands of our police. Unhoused people are particularly targeted, as are disabled people, all of whom have been victims of police attacks here in recent years.

[01:42:09] Fairfax County has spent over $6 million settling misconduct suits and civil cases over the course of a decade. Local police have abused their power, even sexually assaulting community members, and providing cover for sex trafficking. All of this has been reported in the Washington Post.

[01:42:26] Since implementing so-called police reform practices recommended by an ad hoc commission a few years ago, Fairfax police use of force has increased with six shootings last year and two so far this year. Shortly after sheriff's deputies killed Natasha McKenna in a brutal taser attack, this county moved to create an all-carry taser policy that ensured every officer would be armed with this weapon.

[01:42:53] Not long after forming a mental health diversion program, Giovanni Martinez was killed outside Inova Hospital by a supposedly crisis-trained deputy after seeking help from police for mental illness. Last year, police killed trans man Aaron Lynch in his home following crisis calls for help.

[01:43:14] This year, Timothy Johnson was brutally killed outside Tyson's Corner Mall, and just last week, FCPD shot another person. These names join John Gere and many more who've lost their lives to police violence here in this county.

[01:43:34] Our local police have also participated in acts of violence against political organizers. Following white supremacist attacks in Charlottesville and D.C., our local police in Fairfax County were used as personal security for high-profile neo-Nazis using the metro in Virginia to rally in D.C.

[01:43:51] Local police have attempted to intimidate and surveil organizing networks led by black indigenous people of color and incarcerated organizers. Despite all of this documented harm, you, the Board of Supervisors, are planning to increase the annual budgets for Fairfax County PD and the Sheriff's Department at a time when our community needs deeper investments in affordable housing, as you just

heard, education, as you heard earlier, health care access, as you've also heard today, and safe spaces for our community, as you heard from the folks at the parks.

[01:44:27] you must refrain from putting more money into harmful systems of social control. We are not safe with increased policing. We will only be safe when our communities are resourced and empowered to thrive. Across the country, progressive leaders are working with local organizers to find alternatives to policing and imprisonment.

[01:44:47] The movement to divest from policing and invest in community solutions is growing, while Fairfax County holds fast to protecting the status quo over its people. You have an opportunity to do better this round. We want care, not cops.

[01:45:02] Defund the Fairfax Police. Thank you, Ms. Utley. And Speaker 30, Christy Carls. Is Christy here? And Speaker 31, Candace Ashton, we'll follow her. Ms. Carls, welcome. Thank you.

[01:45:20] My name is Christy Carls, and I'm here today representing Quiet Clean Nova. I'd like to thank the board for committing to phasing out gas-powered leaf blowers and transitioning to electric-powered blowers and other equipment on county property.

[01:45:39] However, the county should also address the much greater use of gas-powered blowers by landscapers on private property throughout the county. Gas-powered equipment continues to be the default technology of most landscapers. Now, I know the county does not have authority to regulate the use of gas-powered equipment, But one solution, possibly, could be to develop a rebate program for landscapers that are willing to switch to electric equipment.

[01:46:08] For example, Washington, D.C.'s sustainable energy utility offered up to $250 in rebates for each purchase of an electric leaf blower. Gas leaf blowers disturb the peace in our neighborhoods, they pollute the air, and they expose landscape crews to high levels of noise and dangerous exhaust.

[01:46:32] The landscape industry overall is a significant contributor to climate change. In 2018, the industry used approximately 3 billion gallons of gasoline. A transition to battery-powered leak lowers and other equipment used by all landscapers would help lower our carbon emissions, would help the county reach its C-cap goals, and improve our air quality.

[01:47:01] You might be aware that Northern Virginia is considered a marginal attainment zone for ozone. The California Air Resources Board reported that operating a commercial leaf blower for one hour emits as much pollution, or comparable, to driving a new light-duty passenger car about 1,100 miles, or 15 hours.

[01:47:24] So one hour of a leaf blower equals 11 hours of driving a car. Electric equipment is also much less noisy than gas-powered equipment. People who use gas-powered leaf blowers are exposed to over 100 decibels of sound near their ears. This exposure leads to headaches and, over time, hearing loss. And of course, we all know how noisy our neighborhoods can be when this equipment is being used. A transition to electric

[01:47:59] leaf blowers, as well as other landscape equipment, would be a win for the environment, a win for peace and quiet in our neighborhoods, and a win for the health of landscape crews. So I'm asking that you please consider developing a program of rebates for landscapers switching to battery-powered equipment thank you thank you miss carls uh speaker number 31 is candace ashton and speaker

[01:48:27] number 32 i've not seen yet rob whitfield uh candace ashton is candace ashton here i don't see candace um okay um we are going to go back to speakers 26 and 27 because i know they have joined us now speaker number 26 is steve monahan the president of the southern state police benevolent association fairfax county chapter and he will be followed by siobhan chase speaker number 27 mr monahan welcome hello there chairman mckay and members of the board it's good to see you all

[01:49:05] again my name is steve monahan i'm the president of the fairfax county chapter of the southern states police benevolent association our vice president siobhan chase is the next speaker and she's kindly yielded her time to me the last time i was in front of you all was to tell you the The reasons you all say you deserved a raise are the exact reasons as to why we also deserve a raise.

[01:49:28] The only change since the last time I spoke to you all, with the exception of Supervisor Herity and Alcorn, you all voted in favor for a significant raise for the board. I'm here today to reiterate those same reasons with the hope that you will agree to fund a significant raise for our police officers.

[01:49:46] Some in the audience may have heard me say the following, and I want you, the board, to hear this as well. For far too long, the rank and file of the police department has been told to be patient. We've been told that raises are coming, and they haven't.

[01:50:04] For years, we've been undervalued, overlooked, now overworked, and increasingly underpaid. We've had our shifts change from three shifts to two shifts. Officers are working longer hours with little to no overlap. Our officers are forced to work mandatory overtime.

[01:50:24] They're regularly spending 15-plus hours at work a day. This is time away from their families, more stress on officers, and it's causing more mental fatigue, something that we cannot afford to have in this profession. In addition to working more hours, they're handling more calls of service.

[01:50:45] Many of those calls are relating to emotionally disturbed individuals, sometimes taking an officer off the street for 12-plus hours. You all have seen the photograph of 15-plus police cars parked outside of Fairfax Hospital multiple times.

[01:51:01] That's at least 15 officers off the street for extended periods of time. As of today, we have 210 openings in the police department. I know it's rarely said, but Fairfax County has a problem. In the last six months, 313 calls had insufficient PD resources in the dispatch notes while calls were holding.

[01:51:24] We're receiving more calls from the public. We have less officers on the street to respond to them. It's taking longer and longer to respond to calls. We need more officers, and we need to convince our current officers to stay. Chairman McKay, after I spoke a few weeks ago, you told the audience that we have 58 new recruits starting in the academy in a few days.

[01:51:44] This is fantastic news. What's not being talked about is that we have 72 officers who can retire with normal retirement today. By the end of the year, there will be an additional 50 officers who can retire with normal retirement. That will be an additional 102 vacancies by the end of 2023 if they all leave.

[01:52:03] What's even more concerning is that there's more and more officers retiring early because it's not worth staying with the FCPD anymore. As I mentioned last time, our officers are in a position right now to make serious life decisions. We have senior officers, detectives, experts, who are unfortunately looking to leave or retire early to meet their financial requirements of being a parent, husband, wife, son, or daughter.

[01:52:31] Today, we have 226 officers who can retire with 20 or more years. Even though our recruitment and hiring team is doing an outstanding job, our staffing problem is nowhere near being fixed. We must show the region that we are the best police department to work for.

[01:52:50] We have to fund our police department so we are on top of the charts when comparing to other jurisdictions. Today, we are one of the lowest police departments by starting salary in the region. With the current proposed fiscal year 2024 budget and giving officers a 2% raise, we will have the lowest starting pay out of 20 regional police departments as of July 1st of this year.

[01:53:12] Not only will we be the lowest paid department by starting salary, our midpoint officer salaries will only be 90% of the market average come July 1st. As you all know, we have met with you, some of you, several times over the last few months. You have the ability to fix these issues.

[01:53:30] Again, we are asking you to give a 15% increase in compensation to the ranks of second lieutenant and below, including animal protection, police, and we're asking you to fully fund the MRA. Be honest with the question about compensation. Consider the majority of the police department cannot afford to live in the county that they serve.

[01:53:49] Think about the officers who are worrying about housing, daycare, transportation, the cost of food. Think about the officers who are working extended shifts and are away from their families. Think about the dedicated officers who persevered to protect the lives and ultimately peacefully restored the Fairfax County community after the 34-hour barricade on Route 1.

[01:54:13] The impact of a significant raise will prove that Fairfax County takes care of their officers. We will hire more officers. Our existing officers will choose to stay, and some will even postpone retirement. A raise will prove to the officers that the county is not overlooking them.

[01:54:30] The county does value them. And due to the higher retention rates and applications, our officers will hopefully no longer be overworked. We cannot afford to wait to July 2024 to solve this issue. Stay true to your commitment to having the best possible workforce in the region.

[01:54:49] Don't think of this as an expense, but as an investment. Think of it as an investment in our officers' experience, expertise, training, and professionalism. Reflect on the number of speakers who have showed support for police over the last few days and weeks. It is in the community's best interest for you all to find a way to fund our proposed raises for our loyal and hardworking officers.

[01:55:13] Thank you. Thank you very much, Steve, and thank you, Siobhan, as well, for being here. We appreciate that. We are going to go to, I'm going to call again Speaker 28, Anu Sahai. Is Anu here? I don't see Anu. 32, Robert Whitfield.

[01:55:30] I don't see Robert. I do have a speaker who's signed up, Patricia Klein. Patricia is here, and Patricia will be speaker number 38. And Patricia is representing Rebuilding Together as Executive Director.

[01:55:49] Welcome. The floor is yours. Thank you, Chairman McKay and Vice Chair Gross and the members of the Board of Supervisors. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the advertised fiscal year 2024 budget plan.

[01:56:05] I'm here today to urge you to approve the consideration item to fund home repairs and accessibility modifications for low-income homeowners. Making targeted repairs on existing housing

stock of low-income owner-occupied homes is extremely cost-effective affordable housing strategy that not only helps individuals and families remain in their homes in safer and healthier conditions but helps to maintain and avoid the loss of affordable housing units as the number of seniors steadily increases there's a growing need for services to support aging in

[01:56:42] place and fall prevention persons with disabilities face many accessibility challenges in the homes some have difficulty getting in and out of their home others find it difficult or impossible to get upstairs where their bedroom or only full bathroom are located.

[01:57:01] Lower-income homeowners typically face a high cost of owning and maintaining a home relative to their incomes. Most low-income homeowners own older homes. National data show that homes typically pose greater hazards that undermine housing quality and threaten occupants' health, which contribute to health disparities by income and race.

[01:57:24] These are not nice to have modifications and repairs, but repairs that are needed to make homes safer and healthier for the occupants. Every day I get calls from people that are desperately seeking help. They need deeper, more expensive repairs.

[01:57:44] The data supports the need in the community, but to really get an understanding of the need, let me tell you about some of the people we've already helped. older adult who lost her job in the pandemic and then decided to volunteer to help provide seniors with meals. All the while in her mobile home she didn't even have a functioning kitchen. She didn't have a sink, no cabinets, no countertops, no working range. She just had a microwave and a refrigerator. We were able to find funding in the skilled volunteers to create a fully functioning kitchen. We received a call from a wheelchair user after learning

[01:58:23] that his insurance allowance for inpatient rehab was almost exhausted he was not able to move back home until a ramp was installed within a week we were able to install aluminum ramps so he could return home multiple homeowners on limited incomes who have been cited by the county or HOA for code violations and the threat of feeds compounding their problems our volunteers have been able to address these violations and hundreds of older adults who simply need few modifications like grab bars, double railings, comfort height toilets, and better lighting to help prevent falls. Our teams provide

[01:59:00] these repairs on a daily basis. What is disconcerting is there are so many others with compelling needs and circumstances that we can't help because funding is very limited and there are only two programs in the county that provide essential home repairs and modifications for low-income homeowners on an ongoing basis, rebuilding together values and works closely with Fairfax County's home repair for the elderly and disabled program. We both make repairs at no charge for homeowners with incomes below 80% of the AAMI, providing services throughout the county. Each rep's team

[01:59:38] size varies from one to three staff, depending on the scope, and covers up to $1,000 in home materials over a five-year period of time and helps about 100 disabled and older adults each year. Rebuilding Together differs in several ways. We can do more extensive accessibility modifications such as stair lifts, wheelchair ramps. We have no hard dollar cap per home, have the ability to hire professional contractors, do work that requires permits. We're able to help low-income families with children as well as seniors and those with disabilities. Rebuilding together leverages a significant amount because it recruits individual volunteers and partners

[02:00:17] with faith-based organizations, corporations, community groups who provide funding and teams of volunteers to perform the work. For a modest investment, together we can help older adults safely age in place, make homes accessible for those with disabilities, improve the energy efficiency in older homes to help meet the county's climate goals, protect individuals and families from health and safety hazards in their homes while keeping these affordable homes well maintained and in circulation in the county's housing stock for future generations thank you thank you very much can i just say one other thing i just want to say congratulations to

[02:00:54] supervisor gross and fast on their retirement you have been such a supportive um board members and so good to the community so thank you thank you miss klein and uh let me call one more time and just make sure speaker number 28 um anusa hi and speaker 32 robert whitfield i don't see them uh let me ask the clerk if we have anyone who has called in yes we have one caller diane bowden from the springfield civic association who will have five minutes diane bowden okay diane can

[02:01:27] you hear me okay yes i can great welcome the floor is yours thank you thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of the springfield civic association regarding the future of Lake Akatink Park.

[02:01:43] As you know, Springfield Town Center plans to build an apartment building and a new hotel. Also, the county's comprehensive plan, SSPA process, outlines proposals for four large multifamily housing buildings within the Springfield Business District, all of which are recommended in the recent Franconia-Springfield market study.

[02:02:07] However, nowhere in the market study is a mention of the recreational facilities needed to support or attract such a large influx of apartment dwellers or the short-term and extended-stay guests of Springfield's lucrative hotel market.

[02:02:26] Our lakefront park offers unique recreational opportunities that make an exceptional attraction. Canoeing, kayaking, and fishing is within 10 minutes of apartment buildings, hotels, and homes.

[02:02:42] A playground encourages park use by families. With the availability of pedal boating added, it is also great incentive for businesses to rent the pavilions for their company picnics. Lake Akatink has been underutilized and under-marketed for many years.

[02:03:02] Many of us remember a time where you could take a Sunset Lake tour in a pontoon boat or attend the cardboard boat races at our Springfield Days Festival. We held our kids' birthday parties at the playground. We remember watching the Newfoundland dog teams regularly practicing their water rescue skills.

[02:03:24] Or we could sign up for a kayaking course that was presented in partnership with a major sporting goods retailer. We remember when lake management was an active participant with the Chamber of Commerce and successfully promoted and marketed the lake.

[02:03:44] Having such an oasis of beauty and respite amongst the frenzied activity of a rapidly changing urban environment is what makes Springfield a unique and desirable place to live. The lake and all that it offers is part of the DNA of Springfield for people of all nationalities, incomes, and physical abilities, and it operates in alignment with the equity principles of One Fairfax. In terms of placemaking, this lake has been and will continue to be a cultural place of

[02:04:24] gathering for not just greater Springfield residents, but all of Fairfax County. Please consider the great asset that Lake Accatink presents to the ultimate success of Springfield's future, as it will be an exceptional, enticing attraction for potential residents to live in the proposed housing units near the Franconia Springfield Metro Center and the new Springfield Community Transit Garage.

[02:04:56] Presently, this lake is a golden thread in the tapestry of Springfield, making it a desirable place to live, work, and play. Funding to preserve the lake, the park's playground, and other amenities will have an even greater impact in shaping the success of Springfield's future.

[02:05:18] Thank you. Thank you very much, Diane. And let me ask if we have any other callers. No other callers. At this time, we are going to then go to speaker number 33, Robert Bartolotta, who has provided video testimony.

[02:05:39] Good afternoon. My name is Rob Bartolotta, and I am the Providence District Representative of the Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board. As a representative of the CSB and our community, I am honored to be here today. My testimony will focus on creating more psychiatric beds through the development of a crisis receiving center in Fairfax Falls Church.

[02:06:01] The community greatly benefits from the county's investments in community crisis and diversion programs to help ensure individuals do not end up in the emergency room or jail. However, the state psychiatric bed crisis is still impacting our community and our ability to provide individuals with the care they need.

[02:06:18] There are currently not enough psychiatric beds to meet demand in Virginia for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. In fiscal year 2022, Virginia State Psychiatric Hospitals had approximately 200 beds offline each day because of state housing, state hospital staffing charges, and related safety concerns.

[02:06:36] The local hospital, the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute, continues to experience periods of 100% capacity. Approximately 57% of all admissions to NVMHI were from other areas of the state. CSB is focused on increasing its capacity to support people in the community through expanded local investments in the crisis continuum, particularly crisis receiving centers.

[02:07:00] Based upon the size of Fairfax County and the National Crisis Now model, we need at least two additional adult crisis receiving centers and one youth center. This new model of care in Virginia will allow adults and youth in crisis to walk in for care, be dropped off by law enforcement, or be referred by a health care professional.

[02:07:18] This model has a no-turnaway policy. It will serve individuals amid a behavioral health crisis and allow for law enforcement to drop off individuals to ensure they are not waiting in hospital emergency rooms. There's a plan to convert the Crisis Stabilization Center in Chantilly into a Crisis Receiving Center, but two additional adult centers and one youth center are also needed.

[02:07:38] There is an opportunity for investments from the state in this critical crisis service as the governor's budget proposal included $58 million, the House budget included $83 million, and Senate had over $88 million for more crisis centers. As we approach fiscal year 2024, CSB will continue to update the board on the status of this critical priority area.

[02:07:59] Thank you for your strong support for creating a local crisis services continuum that best serves individuals in crisis. Thank you very much, Robert. And speaker number 34 is Daria Akers. The CSB greatly appreciates the county's commitments to prioritizing opioid-related programs.

[02:08:23] Opioids remain the number one cause of unnatural death in Fairfax. In 2022, there were 303 total emergency department visits for non-fatal overdoses, an increase of 50% from 2019.

[02:08:42] Youth overdoses have also been trending higher in recent years. The CSB has community-based prevention education efforts and treatment programs to address opioid use in the county. In fiscal year 2022, the CSB saw an increase in the number of requests for revived training.

[02:09:04] Over 850 individuals received this life-saving training and learned how to recognize and reverse opioid overdoses. The CSB also provides medication-assisted treatment, residential treatment, and peer support services.

[02:09:23] The CSB will continue to implement educational programs and provide residential services for adults in the community. However, one of the biggest challenges in dealing with the increase in youth overdoses is a limited number of appropriate treatment options.

[02:09:42] The increase in youth fatal and non-fatal overdoses in the region has highlighted the need for more robust treatment services. These services must offer immediate admission for youth in crisis.

[02:10:01] The CSB is working to add residential services for adolescents ages 13 through 17 with an opioid use disorder diagnosis. The goal is to leverage grant dollars from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Opioid Abatement Authority.

[02:10:24] Grant funds will go towards new services to meet the need for both withdrawal management services and clinically managed residential services for youth in the region. With youth behavioral health a critical priority, we ask that you support the advertised budget's $340,000 investment in Healthy Mind Fairfax for behavioral health navigation.

[02:10:54] This funding is critical for the county's effort to reduce barriers and time to service when connecting children, youth, and their families to the appropriate level of behavioral health services. Thank you for your support and continued partnership.

[02:11:13] Thank you. And speaker number 35 is John Cartmill. My name is John Cartmill. I've been a resident of the Drainingsville District for 28 years. I'm here today to ask you to please increase the budget allocation for the Fairfax County Park Authority.

[02:11:35] The Park Authority comprises almost 10% of Fairfax County's acreage, but only receives about 1% of the budget. The Park Authority is responsible for hundreds of athletic fields, golf courses, trails, rec centers, summer camps, and a myriad of other programs.

[02:11:53] We all benefit from the clean air and oxygen produced by the park's millions of trees, and I, for one, am a big fan of clean air and oxygen. Trees also play a huge role in the sequestration of carbon dioxide and are vital to the county's efforts to get to net zero by 2050.

[02:12:10] The Park Authority needs funding help in two specific areas. The first is equity and the second is forestry. Equity investments are needed to increase community engagement and provide essential services for our county's most underserved residents.

[02:12:30] So they too can benefit from the Park Authority's programs and facilities. The Forestry Department is in dire need of personnel and equipment to address the significant backlog of high-risk tree maintenance needs. Because this work cannot be ignored, funds are already regularly taken from other initiatives such as athletic fields, the maintenance of picnic shelters and playgrounds, as well as zero waste management programs.

[02:12:59] It is critical that the requests get funded to better support a healthy park ecosystem. I would like to take this opportunity to remind the board that in July of 2021, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the FCPA's charter for another 30 years.

[02:13:17] During that hearing, many of the supervisors voiced their support for expanding recreational opportunities and environmental stewardship. The FCPA mission is to enrich the quality of life for all members of the community through an enduring park system.

[02:13:34] I'm asking you to please help make this a reality by providing additional funding for our park. Thank you. And speaker number 36 is Skip Chapels. I'm Skip Chaples, president of Music for Life, a nonprofit headquartered in the Braddock District.

[02:13:58] I'm also a board member of Art Fairfax. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the arts. Music for Life provides music education opportunities to at-promise youth, youth without the resources and support necessary to realize their potential.

[02:14:14] Today, nearly one-third of Quay through 12 students in Fairfax County fall into this category. Extensive research shows that music education effectively equips students with the foundational abilities to learn, to achieve in other core economic subjects, and to develop the capacity, skills, and knowledge essential for lifelong success.

[02:14:36] We formed in 2006 and have served thousands of App Promise youth throughout Fairfax County. Schools find it increasingly difficult to provide music education programming that is accessible by all students. More of the participation costs, both in terms of time and dollars, is being shifted to the family.

[02:14:54] Children in low-income families are disproportionately impacted. Their families cannot afford these additional costs. Both the One Fairfax Policy and Economic Development Plan emphasize the importance of education and social equity. This requires all youth graduate high school with the competencies and experiences necessary to succeed in life.

[02:15:15] The arts plays an essential role in making that happen. At Promise, youth are limited not only by finances, but also because they reside in families and neighborhoods where few, if any, adults have attained those competencies and experiences. Arts programs help close this gap, providing the resources, support, and mentoring these youth need to gain them.

[02:15:37] Leveraging is an effective way to boost return on investment. Nonprofits combine county dollars with those from the private sector and individuals, then invest the sum back into the county. In our case, the return to Fairfax County has been better than 4 to 1.

[02:15:53] Each day in our classes, I personally witness the positive impact arts programming has on the lives of App Promise youth and their families. I strongly recommend more funding to Arts Fairfax and the

CCFP RFP for programs to support important services which build self-sufficiency, provide health programs, assist with financial stability, encourage positive behaviors, and build strong social network.

[02:16:21] Funding they can leverage through grants to nonprofits to help the county meet its goal of equity and prosperity for all. Given its benefits to the academic improvement, social development, and emotional well-being of youth, the arts exemplifies the goal of the one Fairfax policy and economic development plan and provides the county one of its best returns on investment.

[02:16:45] Please be as generous as possible. Thank you for your time in supporting the arts in Fairfax County. Thank you very much. Speaker number 37 is Alan Robertson. Mr. Chairman.

[02:17:04] Supervisors. Mr. Hill. It's a pleasure to again address you, this time on a slightly different issue, that of Lake Akatink Park's playground. The playground is falling into disrepair and is emblematic of much of the issues surrounding Lake Akatink Park.

[02:17:29] It's simply neglect. So much of this park, so many of the assets have been neglected, squandered. It really is shameful. The playground has been closed for months after numerous closures.

[02:17:50] Before that, it simply hasn't been maintained. Platforms in the playground have rusted through. People have stepped through them.

[02:18:06] So there are holes, and the manufacturer isn't in business anymore. So they can't be replaced, we're told. That doesn't make sense. It's just another sign of neglect and mismanagement.

[02:18:24] Those parts could be machined, pretty much any machine shop. Lake Akatink is a special place. Lake Akatink Park is a special place. It combines elements of recreation, community, numerous picnic tables and pavilions that on warm weekends are just packed.

[02:18:48] It's completely full. You can see here another sign of neglect. If we fail to dredge Lake Akatink, we're going to have these mudflats.

[02:19:05] This is their future, if we don't dredge. You can see children with a parent walking on these mudflats. It's going to pose a risk, a hazard, and all of that sediment has value to Fairfax County.

[02:19:32] We are acting like it doesn't, as if letting the lake fill in is going to save Fairfax County money. And I don't think it will. Safe Lake Akatink does not think it will.

[02:19:49] The trouble is, though, no one knows for sure. A comprehensive study, impact study, needs to be conducted. We need to know for certain that it will not cost Fairfax County more money than dredging.

[02:20:11] So I urge the Board of Supervisors to commission a study, a comprehensive impact study, environmental, economic, and otherwise. This park deserves more energy.

[02:20:33] it deserves more resources. It's just been neglected. See, now we're at the playground that's closed. There we are. There's a hole in the platform. You can see the degradation of the surfaces and materials. They're rusting, and there is no excuse for that. These surfaces have

[02:21:09] a useful life, but we shouldn't have children stepping through these metal plates. That's just for maintenance. It's ridiculous. There's several like that. I don't know if you can see it, but there's another one right there. This is a shame. This is just a shame. There's no better word for

[02:21:43] it. We need to maintain these assets. We need to take care of the community, and that's not happening. So I urge you to fund what is needed to bring Lake Acton Park up to the standard that it should be. Thank you. Thank you very much, Alan. And I have two speakers new who have signed up. Speaker number 40 will be Barbara Boardman. Barbara, if you could come on down. And Barbara is with the League of Women Voters of Fairfax County. And she will be, following her will be

[02:22:18] Rose James, speaker number 41. Welcome, Barbara. Thank you. I'm here for the League of Women Voters, and we're submitting testimony in overall support of the 2024 Fairfax County proposed budget with a focus on election services, strong support for sustainable compensation for FCPS teachers, school staff, and county employees.

[02:22:44] We acknowledge the challenge of balancing the need for investment in the broad range of services the county must provide against the unpredictability of our revenue stream and tax burden in changing economic times. The administration of free and fair elections is foundational to the function of our government.

[02:23:02] Ironically, the administration of these services is not free. We strongly support the county's investment in increasing stipends for election officers, election workers, and the general registrar and addition of IT staff. We applaud the efforts of the county to ensure the smooth running of our elections.

[02:23:20] Thank you. The FCPS transfer includes significant investments in employee compensation, which are long overdue. we are losing teachers to surrounding counties where they can receive higher pay quality teachers and staff at the core of the education system that brings families to our county these increases are necessary to restore the quality of the school system that defines our county retention and recruitment of quality employees is an issue throughout the county and we depend on a myriad of their services these workers service for safety protection maintenance of many

[02:23:57] essential services and it is untenable that those who provide our services to often can't afford to raise a family in our county. The current increases in compensation for school and county employees are not sufficient to correct the current problems, particularly in the time of inflation and economic change, but the budget is a move in the right direction, and we support these budget proposals.

[02:24:22] Responsible fiscal planning for a large county must balance the need for services against the tax burden, and the proposed budget recognizes and addresses these pressures by supporting the cord budget and addressing the employee and addressing employee compensation while maintaining the actions that the board has taken to expand tax relief for the elderly and disabled as well as tax relief on the personal property tax we note that these economic pressures are reflected in the budget while there have been adjustments that allow for increases in support for services to children the elderly and the vulnerable however these adjustments were made without any net

[02:25:01] increase in over all positions we are disappointed and concerned about the lack of investment of county funds that has been made in certain county priorities such as affordable housing in environment and energy projects we do worry that this is being dangerously short-sighted we hope that the board of supervisors and the county executive take steps direct to rectify this in subsequent best budgets thank you thank you very much Ms. Boardman, we appreciate your testimony and speaker number 41 is Rose James. Is Rose here?

[02:25:37] You could come on down. Is there anyone else present who has not already spoken who wishes to testify? Anyone else present at this time? Okay. Ms. James will be speaker number 41. Good afternoon. I'm Mr. McCain and Board of Supervisors. My name is Rose James.

[02:25:57] And the reason for me coming today, I would like to add to the budget because I heard about you guys' presentation for, I think you had a three-days presentation. And so I wanted to be here for you guys to hear me out as a citizen in the community.

[02:26:13] I would like to add some ideas of how you guys can help the homeless community to have a better environment for the elderly, women and children, and also single man and woman. I want to thank Ms. Jill LaCrosse for sending me this email.

[02:26:33] My first proposal idea are to have a sustainable development with the community for mental health facility. I heard a lot of the CBC speaking about behavioral health, and I think that we don't have enough, I think, psychiatrists, doctors, or counselors that are basically filling these jobs to help the neighborhood.

[02:26:58] Another bullet point I had was a more shelter for the homeless, financial literacy, low-income, multifamily, community development, first-time homebuyers program. And I thought about number seven on my bullet point was like a holistic approach for development, government internship with jobs and community outreach, second chance program.

[02:27:29] and please could you guys close the gap of the revolving door like someone like me this is my second time being in front of you guys last time I was in front of you guys I was in homeless shelter um Kathleen Hanley that's probably about a mile or two away from here and my 11th is um affordable child care and there is not enough help in the community to address this problem that is affecting a broad spectrum in our society please try to tame some of these flares

[02:28:08] that that's out of control if you watch the news there are small flames that are flaring in the United States here in Fairfax County and Loudoun County and throughout small community that does not make it to the news to help many lives that are affected by the trauma that's going on throughout the world as the world turned because the economy is changing. And I just wanted to

[02:28:37] kudos to the governor of Kentucky, Andy, hold on a second, Andy Bestard. He said on the 10th that our mind is not built for the trauma that lives have to give and for us to pray together. And my biggest thing was we're the church in the community, two more minutes please, that is basically trying to heal the community stepping in to heal the community and I would like to see some of these investor invest in building community low-income families and when we're speaking about low-income

[02:29:14] family I'm not just speaking about homeless people I am speaking of like regular people who basically serve the community like the first responder family departments the police departments and all of the service community their service on a regulated basic one of the most important thing for me is like stop this revolving door just like helping the community and allowing the money that you guys get from the federal government to go these non-profit organization and hold these

[02:29:54] non-profit organization accountable for the money that is given to them and making sure that they're growing the community and not just reciprocating the money and it's not going towards what is needed in the community and i yield my my time and i'm so grateful thank you so much thank you very much uh thank you for your testimony uh and let me verify again that there's no one here present who has

not already spoken who would like to address the board on this matter anyone else present this is a public hearing seeing and hearing no one let me verify we have no additional

[02:30:31] callers no additional callers that brings us to the end of our third day of public testimony on the budget and at this time i would move that the board close the public hearing while leaving the record open for written testimony until may 2nd 2023 that will allow and permit persons who wish to testify on this matter to continue to do so over the next several days by providing written testimony after the close of the public hearings i'd be happy to second that motion is there discussion on the motion? Seen and hearing none. All those in favor of the motion please say aye.

[02:31:05] Aye. Any opposed say nay. Any abstentions? That motion carries Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much Vice Chair Gross and that brings us to the end of this extended meeting on Thursday April 13th 2023 and the board is adjourned.



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