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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Budget Policy Committee - Budget Pre-Markup, Friday, April 28, 2023

Date	Friday, April 28, 2023
Place	Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Virginia
Length	1h 20m (video)

- Official meeting video (Fairfax County): https://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/player/clip/2842
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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-04. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] welcome everyone to our budget policy committee meeting of uh what april 28th 2023 and for those of you i just need a quick refresher uh the reason why we are here today is this is called budget pre-markup uh our actual markup will take place on tuesday uh in the board auditorium but

[00:00:28] This is an extra step in the process, of course not required, but that we generally put forward on Friday afternoon before that Tuesday what the proposed package is for the budget based on a lot of the testimony we've heard, based on conversations with my colleagues and a lot of input.

[00:00:47] we put forward a package today. I do not expect really any changes to this between now and Tuesday, but this is an opportunity for board members to hear it, formal presentation, and then also to have an opportunity to ask staff any questions, any technical questions they might have about anything that is in this package. And again, we do not ever take action in committees. And so this is really just putting this on the table and trying to solicit any technical questions that board members have and to give everyone a preview of what likely with no changes,

[00:01:25] maybe with minor changes, is what, as budget chair, I will be putting on the table on Tuesday as a part of our formal markup process. And so with that, generally we read through the entire package. I will stop at third quarter to see if there's any questions.

[00:01:41] Then I will stop at the main budget section to see if there are any questions, and then we will go to the budget guidance at the end and, of course, the CIP motions. And so if you can hold your questions until we get to each of those intersections, we can entertain any questions.

[00:01:59] Staff is prepared to answer any questions that folks have about those sections. So to begin, we always begin with approval of the FY2023 third quarter review, and the FY2023 third quarter review as advertised included previous balances of $58 million, identified over $1 million in additional revenue, and included spending and reserve adjustments of approximately $97 million, with a majority proposed for investments in capital paydown and information technology needs.

[00:02:31] As a result, the advertised package included a net balance for third quarter to the Board of Supervisors of $10.7 million. The advertised package included a $10 million allocation to support the county's affordable housing initiatives. However, given the Board's goal of achieving 10,000 new net affordable housing units by 2024, the available balance is part of the process.

[00:02:56] The third quarter recommendation is amended to include an additional $8 million. When combined with baseline funding of just under $30 million in the FY 2023 budget, this results in a total county allocation for affordable housing in FY 2023 of just under $48 million.

[00:03:15] When also including $45 million in American Rescue Plan ARPA funds over the last two years and over $25 million in county funding in FY 2022, the two-year total commitment for affordable housing totals over $118 million.

[00:03:33] Additionally, adjustments are made to allocate $1.7 million to support recommendations for the Girls' Fast Pitch Softball Equity Action Plan review team to address disparities between girls' softball and boys' baseball facilities. This one-time funding will be used to improve fields and related infrastructure for the six fields at Wakefield Park, which can accommodate use by girls' softball teams and organizations. Recurring funding to maintain these fields will be addressed in the FY 2024 budget adjustments later. Funding of $300,000 is also included to

[00:04:10] replace the playground equipment at Lake Akatink Park. This playground, as we all know, has been closed since November of 2022 due to safety concerns, and funding is necessary to replace the equipment, which cannot be repaired as the original equipment vendor is no longer in business.

[00:04:27] As this same vendor was used for other playgrounds across the county, an additional $100,000 is included for the Park Authority to conduct a safety assessment of those other playgrounds and develop a plan for remediation or replacement. Other adjustments to the third quarter package include $300,000 to supplement Fairfax County Public Library's collections, $217,308 in partial year funding to contract for the removal of illegal signs in the VDOT right-of-way, and $60,000 one time to support the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust. And you will see the bottom

[00:05:05] of page two, the chart continues on to page three that outlines all of those adjustments and brings us to a net balance for third quarter of zero. And having said all of that, let me ask if there are any questions. Okay.

[00:05:24] Questions? Yes. No questions, but I had some thoughts, and they are included on the alternative package that I handed out. And that proposal was to set up a park maintenance reserve of $5 million, add $2 million to library collections in increasing hours, and a reduction in the affordable housing amount of $7 million.

[00:05:53] And I don't know how that will get, but we're supposed to be putting things on the table today, and that will likely be a proposal that I will make on Tuesday. And that's in these handouts? That's in, yes. The handout we just got? Yep. Okay. Yeah, it's at the bottom of the front page.

[00:06:11] Okay. Any questions? Okay. We're going to move on then to page four, the FY 2024 budget markup. Add-on adjustments. This package begins, as the board knows, with a balance of $110.38 million available after the adjustments included in the county executive's add-on package of April 12, 2023.

[00:06:36] This balance is attributable to updated revenue projections consistent with adjustments included as part of the FY 2023 third quarter review and reflects updated projections regarding transient occupancy tax and investment interest.

[00:06:53] And you can see these things outlined in the chart below that gives us, again, the balance of $110.38 million. Adjustments recommended by the board. The board recognizes the challenges inherent in developing and balancing this year's budget with rising assessments resulting in higher real estate tax bills, high inflation impacting expenditure projections, and a tight labor market making employee retention and recruitment difficult.

[00:07:20] With the county executive fully funding the Fairfax County Public Schools recurring operating requests as part of his proposed budget, the board has focused its adjustments on providing tax relief and boosting employee compensation. In December of 2021, the Board of Supervisors improved enhancements to the tax relief program available for seniors and people with disabilities, increasing gross household income and asset limits for tax year 2022.

[00:07:50] At that time, the Board also approved enhancements for tax year 2023, including a new 75% income eligibility bracket and a new tax deferral option, as well as capping total taxes relieved at 125 percent of the mean assessed value of Fairfax County homes. Based on these actions, the advertised budget included a reduction of $2.7 million in revenues associated with tax year 2023 changes. Additionally, the advertised budget did not assume $64 million in revenues which

[00:08:27] could have been generated through the county's personal property taxes. Instead, the projection for this revenue category was held flat, which is consistent with the recommendation from the Department of Tax Administration to implement a 90 percent assessment ratio for personal property taxes this year. Our residents may recall that last year the board took the unprecedented step to approve an 85 percent assessment ratio. This action allowed personal property tax bills to be calculated based on 85 percent of a vehicle's assessed value, helping to mitigate the impact

[00:09:02] of significant rising assessments car values last year. With the 90% assessment ratio for this tax year, the average personal property tax bill is expected to be consistent with or slightly lower than last year's bill. One of the most significant adjustments that the board is recommending to the budget is to lower the real estate tax rate from $1.11 to $1.09.50 per $100 of assessed value.

[00:09:30] The advertised budget assumed the $1.11 rate, but left a sizable balance for the board's consideration. By using over $47 million in the available balance to reduce the tax rate, the average increase on the real estate tax bill will be reduced by over 20% from $520 to $412.

[00:09:51] In total, when combining the impact of this reduction in real estate tax rate, the 90% assessment ratio for personal property taxes and the continued expansion of the tax relief program for seniors and those with disabilities, over $113 million in tax relief is provided in this amended budget. The

pay adjustments in the county executive's proposed budget included full funding for merit, performance, and longevity increases, and partial funding of the market rate adjustment, which was calculated at a record 5.44%. As county agencies continue to struggle

[00:10:31] to fill positions, it's important that employee salaries remain competitive relative to the market and preserve employees' purchasing power in the face of inflation. The board has included $54.9 million in this package to fully fund the market rate adjustment, resulting in average increases of 7.83 percent for uniformed public safety employees and 7.50 percent for non-uniformed employees. The police department in particular continues to face recruitment and retention

[00:11:06] challenges. Last year, the board approved a new 25-year longevity step as well as funded an extra step for eligible employees to encourage retention. A $15,000 incentive bonus was also implemented last year to boost recruitment efforts. We are encouraged by the progress being made with the largest recruit class in a decade now at the academy. To further improve the competitiveness of our police officer positions with other law enforcement agencies in the area, the board has included $10.2 million additional dollars to provide a 5%

[00:11:43] scale adjustment for all uniformed police employees. The board also recognizes that the minimum starting salary for Fairfax County police officers, a factor that can impact whether potential recruits will apply for job postings, is lagging behind those of other law enforcement agencies. Recognizing that very few officers are hired at the minimum of Police Officer 1, Step 1, this pay step will be eliminated by combining the ranks of Police Officer 1 and Police Officer 2 into a single Police Officer rank. The ranks of Animal Protection

[00:12:21] Police Officer 1 and Animal Protection Police Officer 2 will also be combined. These changes will have a minimal cost as they will impact the salaries only of those employees currently in Police Officer 1 Step 1, but will increase our minimum starting salary by 5%. The combined impact of all the FY 2024 actions on the minimum starting salary for police officers is an increase of over 15 percent. Pay increases for incumbent police officers will range from 10.44 to 15.44

[00:12:59] percent with an average of 12.83 percent. The board has also included funding to resolve two issues in the fire department rank structure. Currently, the salary for master technician rank is only 2.9% higher than that of a fire technician. Funding of $460,266 is included to increase this differential to 5% and adequately compensate the requirements of the master technician rank.

[00:13:28] The board has also included $1.56 million to increase the grade level of the fire lieutenant, the first supervisory rank in the department, from F-22 to F-23. Although the primary focus of the board's adjustment is on tax relief and compensation, there are a number of other issues that the board wishes to address as part of the markup of the budget, many of which were subject of testimony we heard during our multiple days of public hearings. First, funding is allocated to address several human services initiatives. Funding of $500,000 is allocated to increase

[00:14:06] support for two hotlines for those attempting to flee domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking. This funding will increase staffing support for the 24-hour Artemis House hotline and backup support for the county's domestic and sexual violence hotline. Funding of $412,642 and one new position will support the expansion of opportunity neighborhoods into Centerville. This initiative, which is currently available in five areas across the county, brings together residents, nonprofit organizations, schools, and others to create a shared vision to

[00:14:45] address needs and achieve equitable results for youth and their families. With the board's emphasis on preserving and expanding affordable housing, another cost-effective strategy is investing in opportunities to allow low and moderate income homeowners, particularly seniors and those with disabilities, to remain in their homes. This package includes $350,000 to support non-profit projects to make home repairs and accessibility modifications. It should be noted that funding for this purpose will be provided to the Department of Housing and Community

[00:15:21] Development, and these services will no longer be eligible for consolidated community funding pool resources following the current round of awards. It is also important to note that these funds are separate from the approximately $500,000, which will be available through CDBG dollars for home repairs for manufactured housing. The new manufactured housing coordinator included in the advertised budget will help to administer these funds. Consistent with the recommendation to add one-time funding as part of the third quarter package, this package is also amended

[00:15:56] to add $300,000 in recurring funding to support maintenance for girls' softball fields as recommended by the girls' fast-pitch softball equity action plan review team. Other adjustments include $200,000 in funding to support the operating needs of Arts Fairfax and $96,000 to establish a self-help resource center within the law library at the Fairfax County Courthouse.

[00:16:22] This center will provide legal information only and will serve as an alternative for those who are unable to afford legal services and for whom pro bono help is not available. The next set of adjustments are all related to the board's support for our park system.

[00:16:41] Two initiatives in particular, the management of tree health on park property and the mitigation of invasives such as bamboo, receive significant support from the community during our public hearings. While funding totaling $900,000 was just proposed to be approved as part of the third quarter package to support these programs, additional staff are required to manage the increasing workload.

[00:17:06] Therefore, one position with associated funding of $152,642 is added to support bamboo mitigation, and three positions with associated funding of $293,463 is added to support forestry operations.

[00:17:25] Through the combination of these resources and third-quarter funding, the budget requests for both programs are fully funded. Funding of $114,640 is also included to support partial year operation of a mobile nature center program with vehicles anticipated to be paid through sponsorships, predominantly with the Park Foundation.

[00:17:49] This program will enhance equitable access to park resources by bringing unique experiences to those communities with little green space. Lastly, as county agencies have continued to struggle to recruit and retain employees in a challenging labor market, the board recognizes that prolonged vacancies have resulted in personnel savings for many departments.

[00:18:12] Although the county has taken actions to reduce the vacancy rate, it is anticipated that vacancies will remain high for the foreseeable future, generating flexibility in agency budgets. As a result, $6.3 million is recognized in these savings as part of this package with the expectation that this small relative adjustment of approximately one-third of 1% on average will not impact any county agency operations.

[00:18:39] This adjustment will be made with consideration of the size of each agency's budget as well as current vacancy rates. You can see on page 7 a chart that outlines all of the adjustments that I just have verbally read through. And as a result of these adjustments, we have a balanced 2024 budget.

[00:19:00] And you can see below that the fee structure that we always have for all of the different service fees and the changes related to those throughout the county. And at this time, I'd ask if anyone has any questions about this portion of the presentation.

[00:19:15] Any questions? Yes, Supervisor Alport. Yeah, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Excellent presentation. I think these are all really, really good ideas. I do have one question in terms of one of the consideration items not included here, and this is, I believe, for Ms. Jackson, and that was relating to the Town of Vienna's use of Public Safety Operational Health Center.

[00:19:45] I just want to make sure it's clear on the record that this item actually was not factored into the proposed budget, so therefore it's not included as a consideration item anymore one way or the other. Is that correct? Yeah, that's correct.

[00:20:00] Since we didn't assume that revenue as part of the advertised budget, there's really no impact, and we still have the time to work through that without not having to go through this process. So basically we'll have another year to figure that out and be working with the town. So, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Supervisor Alcorn.

[00:20:17] Any other questions? Supervisor Herity. I had an alternative kind of budget proposal. I don't know when the chairman would like me to do that, either now or after you're done, whichever works for you. If it's related to the funding adjustments in the budget, then we should do it now.

[00:20:35] It is? Okay. Well, I will walk through it. I did hand this out before the meeting, so board members have it in front of me. It starts with $110 million. It includes a reduction of the tax rate of five pennies, which costs about $156 million.

[00:20:56] And Christine and Phil, if you can correct me if I'm wrong. Supervisor Herdy, before you continue, I just landed a stack of papers from you. I'm trying to figure out what it is you're reading off of. It's the spreadsheet that's at the very top. It's that spreadsheet. This chart? Yep. Okay. That starts with $110,000. Reduce the tax rate by five pennies to $156,000 at a cost of $156,000. I'm sorry. Most of these, you've had my budget consideration items distributed already for the $1.1 million to reduce board office support. That was the $100,000 that appeared in our budget last year.

[00:21:36] Couldn't find anybody that owned up to requesting that additional money, so I would suggest we give it back. Eliminating agency trash routes, that was something I first proposed back in 2010, and our Solid Waste Division actually thinks that makes sense under the new director, so I think we've got a savings of a million dollars there.

[00:21:59] Defer capital spending on housing, deferring the $31 million that is in there, the penny, until creative alternatives are evaluated. ARPA funding at $40 million is already going towards affordable housing, and we need to also address the affordability for our homeowners.

[00:22:22] There is a separate discussion that I sent earlier today on the school transfer, and it's a reduction of $100 million in the school transfer, and I'm going to come back and talk about that after I go through the rest of these.

[00:22:39] There is fully funding the MRA and COLA, as I proposed in a consideration item earlier. I think that was this week or last week, one of the two. The 12.5% increase for second lieutenant and below for patrol officers.

[00:22:59] I think I do like somewhat the approach that is in the budget that you presented, Mr. Chairman. I think that addresses the bottom of the scale, but I don't think it does enough to keep us competitive throughout the scale. Non-profit home repairs of $350,000 in addition to the $500,000 allocated from CDGB funds to keep older adults in their homes.

[00:23:24] I added $1.5 million for paramedic incentive pay to slow the conversion of our basic life support ambulances from advanced. We're going from advanced life support to basic life support because of a lack of paramedics.

[00:23:41] domestic violence hotline which is per the consideration item signs in the median which is per the board response or board question response to fund the signs in the median program and that all leaves a balance of 3.3 million dollars if i if my math is correct the school transfer i know sounds like a big number but in each of the last two years i proposed proposed reducing the school transfer by about that amount due to an analysis of student population levels, some very obvious

[00:24:19] over-projections of several non-personnel accounts. In the 2022 budget, my assertions on student population were correct. The schools took a reduction of the following year budget for them. In addition, a quick look at carryover balances for each of those two years show that carryover balances have grown by over $100 million in each of the last two years. The amount of assigned carryover, and I use quotes around assign, grew from $124,000 in fiscal year 21 to $215,000 in

[00:24:54] fiscal year 2022. These assigned funds represent uncommitted requests from schools, most of which have not been thoroughly reviewed or approved. Looking at the 2024 proposed school budget by spending category also shows some unexplained increases. Just in the material and supplies line, the school budget proposes spending $28 million more for fiscal 23 and 24 combined than they did in the previous three years combined. That's 28 more in two years than in the previous three years.

[00:25:35] There are several other accounts in which similar anomalies exist. An overall look at increases over historical trends show that $500 million more than pre-pandemic average spending despite a decrease and student population. Despite the size and importance of the FCPS budget, no other board members or school board members really have asked any questions about those variances. And to me, it's obvious as a CFO, you look at historical trends and you look at, unless there's something major happening, like increased school population, I know inflation's happening, but inflation

[00:26:12] doesn't account for it. And I've got some budget guidance that I'm going to propose later that we need to start taking a little more critical look at this at the school budget the 2024 school budget request also includes a significant increase in administrative positions despite a reduction in number of students they're in both central office and school base including 17 assist additional assistant principals our teachers number one complaint is the increase in administrative burden and I won't read the rest of this I mean clearly despite that investment in administrative positions, teacher attrition, and student achievement gaps

[00:26:51] continue to be concerns. FCPS SAT scores have fallen 27 points, while the rest of Virginia has increased by 14 points. Montgomery County across the river has seen a significant increase in their SAT

scores, so we've got some work to do in that area. The proposed school budget also includes 65.2 requests for additional student population of 2,382 students at a cost of over $27K per student. It's kind of interesting when the student population was reduced, the net reduction

[00:27:31] they took for the reduced per student was $16K, not the $27K for the increase, and that hasn't adequately explained and I will say I asked a bunch of budget questions of schools early last week and I'm still waiting for responses a lot of them having to do with these line items but because of these unexplained projected increases in budget accounts the growth and administrative positions without an explanation I took what I consider to be a very reasonable reduction in the school transfer of a hundred million and I will talk more about that when we get

[00:28:07] to budget guidance, but that is the proposal that in some form of this and yours, because I hadn't seen yours in detail, I will potentially be making a motion for an alternative budget on Tuesday, but we're supposed to lay it out today, so I just laid it out.

[00:28:28] I'd be happy to answer questions from either staff or board members today or over the weekend or Monday on any of these. Okay. Any further questions or questions or comments on the proposed budget changes that are here?

[00:28:50] Okay. We're going to move on next to budget guidance, which is on page nine. Budget guidance for FY 2024 to FY 2025. And the first section involves Fairfax County Public Schools. The board appreciates the continued partnership between the Board of Supervisors and School Board, as well as between the management and staff of both organizations.

[00:29:12] The spirit of cooperation has once again led to the full funding of the school's recurring requirements. With limited projected revenue growth in FY 2025, next year is shaping up, as we know, to be a difficult budget year. The county executive is directed to build his FY 2025 proposal by focusing on the needs of each organization, which are expected to continue to include a focus on employee compensation while balancing spending with maintaining affordability for taxpayers.

[00:29:41] On the state budget, collaboration with the schools will also be required as we address any changes in the state budget. While the General Assembly continues its negotiations, we're optimistic that a compromise will be reached that includes additional funding for localities.

[00:29:57] It is hoped that any additional funding received from the state will allow the county to divert current general fund resources to other shared county and schools' priorities, such as adolescent mental health services and affordable housing initiatives. Staff is directed to report back to the board on additional funding and any recommended changes in funding allocations as part of the FY 2023 carryover budget.

[00:30:22] And as board members know, this is, as we just discussed yesterday at our VACO meeting, that seems to be the pattern at the state level of not passing budgets until we have to make decisions here. And so we will need to monitor this closely.

[00:30:38] It's unfortunately a bad pattern to be in, but something that we're going to have to account for. Next, on children and adolescent mental health, we are facing an unprecedented mental health crisis among children and adolescents. Certainly, we know nationwide and here in Fairfax, the rates of childhood mental health issues have been steadily rising over the past decade.

[00:31:01] However, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the challenges. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the Children's Hospital Association, and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry have issued an urgent warning, declaring the mental health crisis among children and adolescents so dire that it has become a national emergency.

[00:31:22] We must take action now. Therefore, our highest priority is to enhance our mental health system with a focus on children and adolescent mental health. The county is already taking major steps. Last year at my direction and Supervisor Palchuk's direction, the Roundtable on Youth Mental Health and Substance Use was convened.

[00:31:43] The Roundtable delivered a set of recommendations, which are in progress now. Through this budget guidance, the Board is advancing the county's efforts by directing the Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board, CSB, to develop a carryover recommendation for a more robust mental health system.

[00:32:01] This should include the utilization of any additional funding received from the state as well as CSB year-end balances. On employee pay and collective bargaining, negotiations are underway with two employee unions following the election of representatives for the fire and emergency services and police bargaining units.

[00:32:22] We anticipate that more employees will be at the bargaining table this time next year as groups continue to work toward an election in the general government bargaining unit and the school board has approved its own collective bargaining resolution. With increased employee involvement, the board anticipates the development of collaborative solutions to acknowledge and reward employees as well as further improve the quality of services delivered to residents while understanding the fiscal constraints of the budget.

[00:32:52] FY 2025 pay adjustments for many of our county employees will be set by agreements that are reached through collective bargaining with approval of the board in December of 2023. However, there will be a large portion of our workforce that will not be covered under one of these agreements, and it will be important for the county executive to develop an FY 2025 proposal that provides equity and pay and benefits to those employees. On affordable housing, Fairfax County is committed to producing and preserving affordable homes.

[00:33:26] The board has adopted the goal of producing a minimum of 10,000 new affordable homes by the year 2034. Continued capital investments are necessary to meet this goal. Baseline funding of $31.4 million is currently included in the budget, equivalent to one penny on the real estate tax rate.

[00:33:44] Including the actions taken by this board as part of the FY2023 third quarter review, One-time funding of $75 million has also been allocated since FY 2022 for this important initiative. This one-time funding is a combination of utilizing $45 million in federal stimulus funds and $30 million from one-time general fund balances.

[00:34:09] It is hoped that this funding will have a significant impact on meeting the new 10,000 home goal. However, we need to continue to build baseline funding in order to maintain a long-term funding strategy. The county executive is encouraged to add recurring resources in FY 2025 with the goal of reaching a total investment of two pennies in the real estate tax rate by FY 2027.

[00:34:33] The provision of affordable housing is only one aspect of the board's priority. The other is to ensure that sufficient wraparound services exist for the occupants of that housing. This is most often provided by our nonprofit partners.

[00:34:49] However, the funding for these services has often lagged the need. To better address these needs, it is directed that the ongoing cost for these services be included in the initial conversations about developing units and the cost be planned for in the appropriate future operating budgets.

[00:35:05] Similarly, the Board recognizes that additional resources for affordable housing will require additional county staff support in order to utilize the funding in a timely manner. Therefore, the county executive should include a recommendation to address the additional workload as part of the FY 2025 budget.

[00:35:24] As we advance our housing goals, it is important we take action to preserve the affordability of our manufactured housing communities. The Board is pleased that this budget establishes a Manufacturer Housing Coordinator position to support the recommendations of the Manufactured Housing Task Force.

[00:35:40] Staff should engage with the residents of these communities to ensure they are aware of the programs available to them, such as the County's Manufactured Home Repair Program, and should track participation in the program and return to the Board with additional recommendations if resources are not adequate to address the need. Staff should also seek opportunities to utilize our allocations to affordable housing preservation for manufactured housing community acquisition. On parks, the advertised budget included funding for several of the top priorities of the Fairfax County Park Authority. Parks funding was further supplemented with an additional

[00:36:18] $6.5 million included as part of the FY 2023 third quarter review directed primarily towards capital projects. Third quarter funding was also identified for the management of the natural resources of our parks through forestry operations and bamboo mitigation and board action on the FY 2024 budget adds a total of four new positions that are needed to expand these efforts. The county executive is encouraged to identify baseline funding in FY 2025 for the operational costs of the programs that these new positions will support.

[00:36:55] FCPA, our park authority, maintains and operates 420 parks and nearly 24,000 acres of parkland. Providing adequate park security over this vast area is a daily challenge that is necessary to ensure that our residents feel safe while enjoying their parks.

[00:37:10] The Fairfax County Police Department responds to calls at park facilities throughout the county, but has recently faced the same workforce shortages that other law enforcement agencies across the country are experiencing. The board therefore requests that the county staff with representatives of both parks and our police department initiate a review of options to expand the presence of law enforcement within our park system including the proposed park ranger program and return to the board with recommendations. A total of one million dollars has been added to

[00:37:45] the park's baseline budget since FY 2023 to further equity initiatives, and an analysis is currently underway that will provide recommendations for greater access to park programs and a more equitable service delivery model. The board looks forward to the results of this study, which will be presented as part of a Health and Human Services Committee meeting. Continued FCPA Park Authority

progress towards our One Fairfax goals will require additional investments from the General Fund, as well as other sources such as the Park Foundation. The board hopes that the

[00:38:19] implementation of mobile nature centers in FY 2024 can serve as a model for future efforts to leverage a variety of financial resources and potential sponsorships to support equity projects. So further, and the already strong collaboration between the Board of Supervisors and Park Authority Board, members of the Park Authority Board are encouraged to coordinate with their district supervisor in fall of 2023 to discuss budget issues in advance of the preparation of the FY 2025 advertised budget plan. This will provide an opportunity early on the budget process

[00:38:55] to discuss park priorities within the context of early staff projections of FY 2025 revenues. Finally, FY 2025 budget development, the FY 2025 multi-year forecast included in the FY 2024 advertised budget plan presents a relatively bleak outlook for the next budget. Total general fund revenues are projected to increase just over 1%, attributable primarily to the largest revenue driver, residential real estate, projected to be flat over FY 2024 based on the anticipated

[00:39:33] continuation of higher mortgage rates. With this challenging FY 2025 forecast, it's imperative that all options to generate and diversify county revenues are explored, but also focus on identifying expenditure savings or moderating expenditure growth. Therefore, the county executive is directed to undertake a comprehensive review of rates and fees as part of the FY 2025 budget. This examination should include an analysis of the taxing authorities available to the county and options which may be implemented to reduce pressure on the real estate tax rate. Additionally, as no challenging budget

[00:40:12] year is addressed solely by focusing on revenues, the board directs the county executive as part of the development of next year's budget to continue to scrutinize current services and programs to evaluate efficacy and determine further efficiencies or savings that could be achieved.

[00:40:30] The board appreciates the work done by county leadership and all county employees to strive consistently to meet residents' needs through the most efficient and cost-effective means. The creativity regularly employed by staff to streamline processes and innovate with technology helps to curb cost increases and identify savings that can be reinvested for other priorities.

[00:40:55] These actions have helped to minimize operating cost increases in recent years across the county, and similar efforts will be needed to address the fiscal challenges ahead. And that completes the proposed budget guidance. If there's any questions or comments on the budget guidance for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

[00:41:19] Supervisor Herity. Again, I've got some thoughts on some additional budget guidance. And I shared some of those during my meeting with Supervisor Faust on the budget. But I've handed those out there in a separate two page attachment to the one that's behind the spreadsheet.

[00:41:38] The first one, as I referenced earlier, has to do with the county school budget, and I'm just going to go ahead and read it, but it's basically have the auditor to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors evaluate FCPS enrollment assumptions and general calculations. And I am going to wordsmith this a little better than it is now, but since Fairfax County Public Schools budget makes up over half of the county's general fund, 52.2% for 2024. And while the transfer is the largest portion of our budget, it's also the

[00:42:12] least scrutinized. Over the last several years, the carryover has grown to more than $200 million. According to the MCA resolution, the FCPS budget demonstrates a pattern of overestimating

student enrollment using projections not consistent with historical trends and increasing administrative positions despite school enrollment decline. The county currently does not require FCPS return excess funds and does not verify student enrollment demographic or geographic distribution assumptions

[00:42:44] used by FCPS to calculate the requested transfer. So my recommendation is for the FY 2025 budget process. As a part of the FY 2025 budget process, the audit of the board review FCPS enrollment and other key budget assumptions and provide a report to the Board of Supervisors and the county executive.

[00:43:07] It's really, and I'm going to not stop reading, but it's really to get a fiscal look at the budget and let us as the Board of Supervisors know what looks a little out of line, as I did for those couple of categories that I mentioned earlier and have asked questions on.

[00:43:25] The next one has to do with the 2025 budget guidance, and I very, very much appreciate the focus on identifying expenditure savings and moderating expenditure growth. But I think we need to go a step further and ask the county executive come back to us with a budget that results in no more than a 3% increase for the average homeowner. And that budget should also list the proposed reductions and resulting impacts proposed to reach that tax rate. I know many of

[00:44:01] our surrounding jurisdictions, give guidance on what kind of tax increase the county executive's budget should have, and I think we should join the list of counties that do that. Very, very much also appreciate the focus, Mr. Chairman, that you put in there on mental health.

[00:44:19] I think that is important. And I would go a little, wait a minute, this is more a CIP one, so I'm going to hold off on this, that one, because it's CIP, or you want me to do it now, does it matter? Why don't you just do it now? Okay. But it really is a part of the CIP is to have Fairfax County. We've got a detox facility for adults, but not for juveniles. In Fairfax, there have been 1,773 non-fatal opioid overdoses since 2016, 120 of them being 19 and younger.

[00:44:53] We're hearing from partners at FCPS, CSB, and FCPD, the rise of juvenile addiction is a serious concern in our schools. So as a part of the CIP review for 2025, we should review the availability to provide a regional or county-based juvenile detox center. On the second page, I liked what you did with the $6 million for county positions, but I believe we should be having the county executive as a part of the 2025 budget review a listing of the positions that have been vacant,

[00:45:33] Look at the listed and actual responsibilities for each position as well as an average breakdown of how the time is spent. And look to see which of the ones, especially the ones we're not attempting to fill, could be the positions can actually be eliminated because I think we've got some positions that could be eliminated.

[00:45:56] The next one is to set up a reserve for park maintenance projects. I think the board heard a lot of testimony from residents on the state of our parks. I have put out of my discretionary funds, I've put $250,000 into Burke Lake Park because, frankly, it's not in great shape.

[00:46:20] And we've got $300,000 in here for Lake Akatink Park with the playground that was not in great shape. So our parks are obviously an important service we provide to our residents impacting their physical, mental, and emotional health with the frequent use of our parks.

[00:46:39] both during and post-pandemic, we need to make sure we're devoting sufficient funds toward maintenance of these assets. So I'm recommending that we set up a reserve for critical park maintenance projects funded through quarterly reviews and carryover that can be allocated to parks for critical maintenance. I'd asked a budget question that I just got a response on earlier today, so I may be modifying this a little bit as I look to that, but it was interesting that I had put five million in and their number was somewhere along that. But I think much like trails, we're focused on too much. Sometimes we focus a lot on building new stuff

[00:47:17] and not maintaining what we have. And I think we need to really make park maintenance a priority. The last one is fiscal year 2025 budget. One of the things that I requested when I first came on the board, and we started doing two-year budgets, and we moved away from them. So it would be to reinstitute two-year budgets. The county's moved away from considering spending in context of a biennium budget. Beginning with the FY 2025 budget process, the county executives should prepare a

[00:47:56] biennium budget in order to contextualize spending, provide more transparency for taxpayers, and promote better planning by the county. And those are my thoughts on additional budget guidance. Again, some of those I shared with Supervisor Powell.

[00:48:12] Some of them I didn't, but I know the other board members have not heard those. I'd be happy to answer questions on any of those. Okay. Other questions, comments? Supervisor out. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate your draft budget guidance.

[00:48:31] It looks great. I think it's exactly where we need to go. I think we all understand next year is looking like it could be a challenging budget year. So I think getting ready for that is important. I especially wanted to focus on the affordable housing guidance.

[00:48:47] And, you know, I'm on the record as being supportive of two pennies. I have been for a number of years. I appreciate looking to try to do that by FY27. One of the things that I think it's important for us all to remember, this is not a theoretical exercise.

[00:49:05] You know, when we go out of our way to put money towards affordable housing in the budget, there are real projects behind it. And I guess one of the things that I'm hearing is that, you know, thank goodness we've had the one-time funding and, you know, I think the third quarter money is going to be really important.

[00:49:25] But my understanding is that we're definitely not running a surplus in terms of what we set aside for housing, affordable housing, and the project needs that are out there. So I think it would be important over the next year or so to keep up with, make sure that our balance between the projects that are in the pipeline and how much money we're actually putting in the budget um is at least somewhat concurrent or at least consistent so i think it would be helpful for us going forward to see that list of projects even some of them may

[00:50:04] not be identified yet um but to understand uh basically what our needs are looking like on a project specific basis and and some of that might be you know looking at the current fiscal year Some of it might be looking at the future fiscal year. But I believe in all of our districts, I believe we've all got at least one of these projects, including Springfield.

[00:50:25] And so just getting an understanding and making sure that we're keeping up with how much money we're putting into housing and understanding basically what we're planning to do on the ground

would be helpful. So thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Supervisor Alcorn. I appreciate that. And I think the other thing that in full transparency the public should see is the amount of investment being made in affordable housing in its totality.

[00:50:49] And so you're right about the two pennies, but I think a lot of what people forget about is we're at three or four or five to one in terms of actual value added because of the partnerships we have with our nonprofits and others. And so many times this money for these projects is used to make a much larger project happen with our nonprofit or for-profit housing developers.

[00:51:13] And so the return to the county, this is what our investment is, the return to the county in terms of the actual value of all of those units is somewhere between three and five times as much as the dollar amount that's in here. And I think that's one of the things that is forgotten a lot of times and something we should be capturing as well.

[00:51:31] Supervisor Faust. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On that point, it gets a little frustrating sometimes when we put all the money that we do into housing and then we hear, well, it's not one type of money, it's a different type.

[00:51:47] But, you know, I keep saying, you know, ask the people whose houses we're building whether they care whether it was recurring or one time. But the other thing we don't do that we don't monetize to demonstrate our commitment to affordable housing, which I think this board is, you know, I love the progress we've made in that arena, but we don't monetize the value of the land that we contribute, which is very significant which would make you know probably the monetary contributions pale sometimes uh so

[00:52:23] uh anyway and i just wanted to comment i mean i appreciate uh supervisor harry taking time to put this package together but he's mentioned twice that you reviewed these with me uh and the second time i think you said maybe not all of them but i mean i i do recall a little bit of this but not that much. No, just to be clear, I did not review all of this with Supervisor Faust, but I did mention that there was going to be some items that I was waiting for. I knew there was something was coming, but I didn't know what. Thank you, Supervisor Faust. Supervisor Palchik. Thank you,

[00:53:01] Mr. Chairman. I really want to thank the staff and everyone who's worked on this budget. I do, I think, in a difficult year, hopefully next year is not too much more difficult. I think we're in a good situation and a lot more coming Tuesday but a couple things on what was mentioned number one very much again want to thank you and the staff on the work on the affordable housing and I think what's important in there is not just the projects that can be a combination of one time or or continuing funds but also working with you and your team to include and making sure that we

[00:53:36] are funding those wraparound services that are so important and I appreciate that being included as we continue to look at this, as well as knowing that as ARPA funds come to an end, that having, I think, that timeline for 2027 for the two pennies, I think is appropriate, and I appreciate that. And then one thing that's in here that I think wasn't mentioned yet, and that I appreciate the way that we've done our best not having a state budget yet, and that the staff is really being, I think, responsible and not assuming any changes. I think to two of the things that

[00:54:14] were brought up, going back to what you read earlier, that knowing if there are additional funds from the state budget, that we hope to be able to direct some of the general fund services to other shared county and schools' priorities, such as adolescent mental health services and affordable housing

initiatives. So I know you've read quite a bit today. I think it's really critical to highlight that again that um we know we we can't we do most of it locally uh but being able to get some more support especially knowing that the revenues are quite high at the state

[00:54:49] level uh would really help us move further on those critical initiatives uh especially on youth mental health and affordable housing so uh hoping we we have some of that coming forward um but i think this is the right way to present it and to move forward and knowing that um we really need our state and federal partners, uh, to, to really step up on that as well. Um, and then, um, finally, I see that many of our SIU, SIU friends are here today. I know they visited my office and many of you as well this week, and I really want to thank them. I think the most important thing we are doing

[00:55:26] here is that, um, we are not building this budget on the backs of our employees, that they make this county such a great place to live work play and retire and i am very grateful and supportive of being able to fully fund the mra on our side that the schools will be able to fully fund their budget and their cola um and appreciate that you put in here that next year is a critical year first time and it'll be 45 years i believe at that point of collective bargaining uh so we're looking at our county executive to ensure that that goes well with our support and that the areas that are not covered will be covered there. But I know more is coming Tuesday,

[00:56:06] but I really want to thank you, your entire team and staff, and Ms. Jackson and Mr. Hagan for all of their work. Thank you, Supervisor Paucik. And I do want to be really clear on one point, which is the children and adolescent mental health piece that you have in here. And I saw supervisor herity's language you know our fantastic staff is already working and has been working for a while on what's in supervisor herity's budget guidance and my purpose of the budget guidance was to make sure additional funds we get from the state go towards that effort because there's multiple plans including an adolescent mental health center we've opened

[00:56:45] up some of those in the county and supervisor lusk and stork and i recently a one on the route one corridor that we helped open. And so there are centers in the county, but we need to do much better on that front. And if there's something positive happening in Richmond, it seems like it's bipartisan, the efforts to try to deal with mental health. And unfortunately, in Virginia, it's 50 years too late, but it's finally happening. It seems like that there's a bipartisan effort to address mental health and to deal with, in particular, some of the adolescent mental health

[00:57:19] issues that are going on. And so we want to maintain flexibility and not prescribe what the answer is to the problem, but allow our talented staff to pair that additional state funding that may come with available funding that we have to come forward to us in committee meetings and present ways we can more aggressively attack this. And I think part of that will be centers for, you know, adolescent mental health, but there are also some other things that we can be doing and doing better, and we're looking forward to having that conversation. Supervisor Gross.

[00:57:54] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I haven't kept track of the housing investments that we've made in Fairfax County since I joined this board. I wish I had. Christina, I'm tempted to ask a budget Q&A and have you do that research, but I'm not going to. I'm not going to. I am just going to say that when I first joined the board, housing was not a huge issue. And it gradually became

[00:58:27] a bigger issue. And we started putting, I think we did one cent and then two cents for housing on the tax rate. We've taken it way beyond that, way beyond that with our investments. And so the

challenge for us in housing is that we have aging stock plus a growing community, and we're always going to be somewhat behind, I think. But I am glad to see what we've got in this budget. At yesterday's VACO board meeting, there was some discussion about how other counties

[00:59:06] do their budgets, and I was really sort of surprised to find that some of the smaller counties especially they wait until mid to late june to approve their budgets jeff weren't you were surprised with that it was sort of like how can you do that i was concerned more than well most of them you know understood that you have to start earlier in their budget process and they and they agreed that yes they should but the state hasn't done that yet the state has not adopted approved their entire budget and there is some sense that the state budget will not be

[00:59:43] completed until late June, which is after the primary elections. So I think we need to be cognizant of the fact that although there may not be a lot of money to the county from whatever additional money they put into it, we wouldn't be able to get away with not approving a budget until late June. I appreciate on this budget, I appreciate the additional work that was done on employee compensation. Really, really important. I would have supported a larger tax rate reduction

[01:00:18] and I did at the beginning, but I think that we've got a balance now that has been considered with all these recommendations and that's what we're always looking for is balance in our revenues and our expenditures. I do agree with Supervisor Herity on one item in his budget guidance. And that was, he said, reaffirmed commitment to longstanding board policy of not committing one-time funds to recurring expenses. That was the practice of this board for a very

[01:00:53] long time. And I think that needs to continue to be the practice of this board. We need to be very, very disciplined. And so I want to put that out there for this board, the folks who are coming back next year, that we really need to be prudent about what we're looking at for consideration items. They should not, they cannot be built into the base. That is not an appropriate way to grow, to go. And I was sort of bemused that the consideration items on this list, the largest

[01:01:32] number of them that were recurring, came from Supervisor Herity, who says we should remember that consideration items should not be recurring. So I do want to make sure that everybody understands this was a prudent policy of the board 30 years ago.

[01:01:53] It's still a prudent policy of the board. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Agreed. Okay, any other questions or comments? Supervisor Lusk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just start by saying a couple of quick things. One is I really appreciate the work that you've done on the budget specifically and to my colleagues as well in terms of making sure we have a balanced budget. I also wanted to make two points on the pre-markup budget guidance. So the first is

[01:02:26] under the section under parks concerning the park ranger program. I just want to be clear on this point, and that is, I think we should consider this as a potential opportunity. I think that's how it's kind of framed, but I'd like to be intentional here and say that I would request that the chief of police put together specific data that he presents to us on calls for service into our parks. And what I'd like to do is ask him to report that at the public safety committee

[01:03:04] in conjunction with the executive director of the park authority and that we'd have an opportunity to have a conversation and really determine what's the best pathway forward, whether we

continue to have it managed by our police department or do we actually consider giving an alternative, which would be the proposed park ranger program.

[01:03:26] So that clarification I would certainly appreciate. Yeah, and let me do that now. That's the part about returning to the board with recommendations to be clear, we're not directing either the park authority or the police to do anything other than a complete analysis and bring the data back to the board before any decision gets made, because it might be, as you said, additional police presence.

[01:03:49] It might be a park ranger. It might be none of the above. It might be something we're not even contemplating right now. And so that's where we want to let the data, the real data, inform the decisions. And I would say the data that our police department has, but also the data that the park authority has, because there may be incidents occurring in the parks that don't get reported for various reasons.

[01:04:10] And we want that complete picture, and we don't want any decisions being made about any direction until the board is briefed on all of that data. And the intent, again, was having both the executive director of the park authority and the police chief providing that presentation for that very purpose.

[01:04:25] Yes, exactly. Okay. And then I had a second point on a different item, unless you want to continue on this. The next one is under the affordable housing section, so I want to acknowledge and thank the staff here. I know that under the manufactured housing point, we do have community development block grant funds, and I want to say that I've been working diligently with Tom Fleetwood now in excess of one and a half years to try to figure out how to support repairs in the community that I think all of you are

[01:04:59] fully familiar with. I just want to be clear, though, that this is an urgent need now. So from the standpoint of doing everything we can to expedite the hiring of this coordinator is going to be vital because we can't have a program without having that person in place as soon as possible. So my request is can we look at the feasibility of starting that recruitment now to have that person hired by the beginning of the fiscal year? We can let staff answer,

[01:05:36] but I think what we probably need to do is circle back. Let's make sure we get a firm answer to that request. I haven't done this for a while and seen this for a while. There's absolutely no reason why we can't be recruiting for that position now. Once we approve the budget, we don't wait until July 1 until the budget takes effect to begin the recruitment. And so I think a general practice is on something like that as you immediately start recruiting with this budget approval.

[01:06:02] I'm just expressing that the urgency of getting the person in place so that we can create the program is so vital. So the longer it takes, the longer it takes to hire that person, the longer it takes for us to implement this program. That's the point I want to leave. Correct. Thank you, Minister Chairman. Thank you. Supervisor Faust. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I forgot to mention when I spoke last time that I'm very supportive of this package. I think you've done a great job particularly addressing the employee issues that we have. I really feel good about where we're at

[01:06:39] there. But I do want to say with respect to the consideration items, you know, there's basically two types of consideration. In the third quarter, I mean, they are one-time items we've put in there. But when we're asking for consideration to amend the operating budget, the annual operating budget, they are intended to be recurring. So it's not that, you know, a consideration item has to be one-time. Just got to make sure it's in the right pot. Exactly. Yes. Yes. And the long-standing

[01:07:16] practice is vital to us. And I do think there's been great constraint for the most part in doing that. And I think it's, we also have to factor in the last couple of years and what we've been through, because there's been a lot of federal funding that's come in, a lot of things we've had to do, a lot of economic uncertainty. And so I think we need to, as things normalize, budgets normalize, federal funding normalizes, it'll be even more important to adhere to that.

[01:07:45] But certainly during the peak of the pandemic, there were instances where we took advantage of an opportunity that was before us that likely will never be for us again. So just as a reminder to, you know, go back to that level of scrutiny.

[01:08:02] And certainly it's up to us. That's why they're consideration items. So the board gets to ultimately decide which ones to fund and which ones not to. But it's still very good, sound policy to adhere to that when we're putting those requests in. to know at what intersection in the budget process, because for me and I think for most of my colleagues, you know, budgeting isn't a one-day exercise.

[01:08:24] It's an everyday exercise, and we are doing budget activities throughout the entire calendar year when opportunities arise, and so this is an ongoing effort for sure. Supervisor Stork and then Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much.

[01:08:42] I think a lot of great work was put into putting this budget together and it's come very close to what I would ideally have. It's not quite there, but I'm not sure what can be done about it because I think our priorities are right. The first question I have, though, is because of the question that was raised, are there any non-recurring items in the budget that's been presented, the 2024 budget that's here?

[01:09:08] So when we go through our annual budget process and agencies put forward requests, we always look to see if there are any one-time components that could be pulled out and funded at a quarterly. So, no, in terms of what's actually funded as part of this, the recurring items, and it's all supported by recurring revenues. We aren't dependent upon any one-time balances to balance this budget either. So we've met our standard for this budget and making sure that it doesn't have any non-recurring. Good. Okay, thank you.

[01:09:33] And I know we have a multi-year budgeting process that we use. We've talked about it before. Can you maybe identify, is there I know there's some follow-ons that you do with this, and I think that's mostly in the fall is when we take a look at those.

[01:09:49] Are we on track to do that again, essentially, so that we will have the same kind of review that we do every year, which is to look not only at the forthcoming year, but the year after that and seeing what the trends are, et cetera. So that process would still be in place. So we would still be looking at really a two-year budgeting process at least.

[01:10:09] And I know, I think last time it was longer than that. I think it was three or four years was the last. Yeah, as part of the advertised budget, we included the FY25 multi-year forecast, where that's where we talked about the fact that the revenues for FY25 weren't looking as robust, perhaps, as they were this year.

[01:10:26] And certainly after the FY24 advertised is revised, then we'll go back and take a look at that FY25 forecast and update it as part of the adopted. And then we anticipate that we would have our normal forecast presentation in the fall, usually the november time frame so the answer is we do do this every we have model year that we're doing and continue to do it that's not something we've not been doing um i

again i i would i would love to have seen us be able to add at least a two cent tax rate reduction it's still something very important to me it's something that i've worked in and discussed with my constituent i

[01:11:02] know this and they they very much appreciate and would value i know one of the biggest impediments of that at this point for us is we don't have what I think is the other essential part of our revenue source, if you will, is what the state's going to do. And can you maybe elaborate a little bit about what, if any, impact that that has? Because we were, again, as the chairman mentioned, we were at the VACO meeting actually yesterday and spent a fair amount of time talking about that and really the challenges, not only for Fairfax County, but really around the state. And for some

[01:11:36] is their budget is even more dependent upon state funding than ours so for them it's they talked about either not doing a budget and waiting until they got something from the state or doing something and recognizing that they would have to go back and and significantly amend it so if you could at least address that because i for me that was an opportunity that i saw if we had those state monies that we maybe could have also added in a little bit higher tax rate reduction i mean Certainly, if you talk about the non-school side of the budget, you know, state funding isn't a significant impact of our budget.

[01:12:16] You know, certainly I don't know what's going to end up happening at the state level. I anticipate that if there is additional funding, it might be targeted for specific purposes. So then we really have to kind of take a look at whether or not some of that funding comes with expenditure requirements or whether or not there is additional funding that comes our way that is more broad and general and flexible.

[01:12:35] Certainly to the extent that, you know, if the state comes to terms with their budget in the June time frame, as part of our carryover review, we can certainly take a look at those revenues and make decisions there. And certainly if any of those revenues are recurring, that doesn't stop us from then making recurring adjustments with that recurring revenue.

[01:12:53] We just have to make sure that we'd really differentiate between what is one time at carryover and what is recurring at carryover. But, you know, certainly we like to be conservative in terms of making sure that we aren't assuming any funding is going to be coming from the state until we're relatively certain that it's coming.

[01:13:09] In that number, we would have to have, in some ways, a net increase of at least $15 or $20 million that's unaccounted for to be able to look at meeting and getting to a tax rate reduction of $0.02 versus the $1.5 that's in the markup that we're seeing right now.

[01:13:33] I mean, certainly when it comes to the real estate tax rate, I think that would be, you know, a broader conversation just in terms of the timing when those real estate tax bills go out in terms of carryover. So I think that would be, that would take a little bit more investigating to see what our options were, if that's how the board wanted to use any potential recurring money at year end.

[01:13:54] Understand that. Thank you very much. Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I wanted to start on that point, the state budget, and not to belabor it. But I think it will be really important, and I'll be suggesting to the board that we add language to our legislative package this year heading into next year, stressing the importance of the state completing its budget process on time.

[01:14:22] And, you know, they're making the argument this year that, well, we're just waiting until the economic situation is more clear, as if there will magically be clarity on June 21st. Because they're really

waiting for June 20th, and it's an extreme delay, much worse than we've seen in previous years, and it's disruptive for the reasons that Supervisor Stork ably outlined.

[01:14:49] So I do think we, and we talked about this, of ACO, need to start stressing the importance of getting their budget done on time. I want to just add and thank Chairman McKay and Supervisors Smith and Faust for your work on the budget and staff.

[01:15:06] I do think it's a good package. A couple of smaller items that I appreciate. I appreciate the addition of the sign removal funding. That was a big priority for us in Richmond.

[01:15:22] And we asked our delegation to work on a very technical, boring issue on our behalf, and they did. So I'm excited that we're going to be moving forward on that. And also the domestic violence hotline issue. going to spend some time with our staff and nonprofit partners talking about that.

[01:15:42] I think that's really important. It's going to significantly improve our ability to respond to people and families that are in crisis. Just one note on your package, Supervisor Herity, you had the domestic violence hotline as a $300,000 consideration item.

[01:15:59] I don't think there was a consideration item, and it is a $500,000 item based on the conversations I've had with the staff and non-profit partners, but thank you for your inclusion of that in the package. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. I'll make the correction. Okay. Other questions or comments that anyone has?

[01:16:19] So we will move to the last piece of this presentation, which is always the Capital Improvement Program, and as has traditionally been the case, again, this year, this language is lifted straight out of what the Planning Commission recommended, And this, again, is approval of the FY 2024 to FY 2028 Capital Improvement Program with future fiscal years to 2033.

[01:16:45] And this would direct Fairfax County staff to identify and aggressively pursue opportunities for Build Back Better infrastructure investment funding to realize Fairfax County planned but unfunded construction and major maintenance needs to direct staff in the Department of management and budget to work with the Fairfax County Park Authority to, one, determine the specific bonding and cash flow requirements for upcoming bond cycles, review the amounts of future Park Authority bond referendums, and explore all financing options available to support the renovation of Park Authority Rec Center facilities immediately in need of renovation,

[01:17:23] and that in parens is Audrey Moore, Providence, George Washington, and Franconia. Two, identify options to address projected cash flow limitations for fiscal years of FY 2024 through FY 2026 to allow for investment in recreation center facilities now as a bridge to future renovation projects. And three, encourage CIP planning staff to more regularly coordinate with FCPA staff to ensure that major work park projects are considered in planning and scheduling bond capacity. Staff should continue to work together to identify and prioritize specific part capital needs.

[01:18:02] And three, direct CIP planning staff to revisit and reevaluate, I'm sorry, to revisit and evaluate the bond referendum plan on an annual basis to determine if the causes of the bond sale backlog are mitigated and a return to the four-year cycle is desirable. And direct CIP planning staff to identify any significant systemic causes of the backlog in unsold bonds that, if addressed, might expedite bond sales and facility construction.

[01:18:31] And finally, make all necessary adjustments to reflect actions taken during the Board's discussion on the FY 2024 adopted budget plan that impact the CIP. And again, that is the language sent directly to us without changes from our Planning Commission.

[01:18:47] I don't know if anyone has any questions on any of that, but I want to make sure we put that on the table as well. Okay, and that brings us to the end of pre-markup. And as several others have done, I want to thank our staff.

[01:19:03] My colleagues, it has been a long week to get to this point. Certainly thank all those who testified. I do think we have a budget proposal here that accommodates virtually all of the public testimony that we received in one way or another.

[01:19:20] And that shows our process, of course, working. but I do want to thank the staff because it has been a long week. And, again, we will do the formal markup at our meeting on Tuesday. This, again, was just to present where we are and what we're looking at for Tuesday.

[01:19:38] And, lastly, I want to thank Supervisor Faust and Supervisor Smith, my budget co-chairs, for their help, also in particular in getting through this week and a lot of logistics to get us here with what I think is a very good package of several folks have recognized that not only addresses employee compensation, a lot of needs in the community, but also addresses tax relief, both of personal property, real estate, and the senior tax relief program that's mentioned here. And I do think it reflects a balance that our residents expect and that certainly that type of balance and fiscal

[01:20:15] responsibility that we heard through the budgeting process, I believe is reflected in this proposal and look forward to further discussion on this on Tuesday. And with that, our budget committee meeting of April 28, 2023 is adjourned.

