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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Meeting, Tuesday, April 22, 2025

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- Official meeting video (Fairfax County): <https://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/player/clip/3772>
- Official Board of Supervisors page (Fairfax County): <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-30. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:13] We're going to go ahead and get started. We're going to go ahead and get started this morning. Thank you very much. We're going to go ahead and get started this morning.

[00:00:28] We have a full auditorium and a lot on our agenda this morning, so we will try to move through the agenda as efficiently as we can. But before we begin, we always begin our meetings with a moment of silence to be followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:00:43] And before those who are able can rise for the moment of silence, we ask board members to announce people who we have lost or folks that we would like to keep in our thoughts and prayers this morning, and I'd ask for people's patience because I do have a long list here, and I'm going to ask as I go through each one if board members very briefly want to comment on those individuals that they do that at that time so that we can try to be efficient with the large crowd that we have here in the auditorium, and I want to just start by saying how happy we all are that Supervisor Herity is back from medical procedure

[00:01:21] and we're glad you're back here at the dais with us. And we, of course, kept you in our thoughts and prayers. I know it's been a struggle at times, but we're glad you're back here. And with that, I do want to mention a few other folks that we've lost since our last meeting. And I want to begin with one that I know hits this board really closely, and that is the loss of Claudia Arco.

[00:01:44] For folks who knew Claudia, you knew that she was Fairfax County's legislative director. She passed away peacefully in her sleep at her rest in home on April 2nd. She was born in Miami, Florida to Arnold and Perla Hantman on January 11th, 1970, during the middle of the Super Bowl.

[00:02:03] She was loving, emotional, and intelligent from a very young age, and most importantly to a lot of us, someone we called a friend. Claudia was raised in Miami Lakes and had a love for politics and public service instilled in her from her godfather, the late Senator Bob Graham, who then became Florida governor and U.S. senator.

[00:02:24] Claudia went on to study at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and earned a master's degree in international relations at GW. She served as an advisor to Maryland Congressman Albert Winn, worked for the Senate Budget Committee, and after growing her family, took a job here as a legislative aide with Fairfax County, serving Fairfax County residents and this board for 20 years. While Claudia's achievements were many, she was far more proud of her family. Claudia and Michael adopted three beautiful children from Russia, Nicholas, Siena, and Allegra. Claudia was their super mom, a role to which she

[00:03:02] was uniquely suited. She was PTA president, hockey mom, soccer mom for all of three of her children's travel clubs, and community teams. She was their most fierce advocate, cheerleader, and support system and dedicated herself to each of them. Claudia was preceded in death by her parents and is survived by her husband, three children, three siblings, mother-in-law, two sisters-in-law, loving nieces and nephews, and many, many more. And I know several of us were able to attend her memorial service, which was really moving, but also great to see how many people current

[00:03:37] and pass from our county staff who came out to celebrate not just Claudia and her life, but the difference that she made for all of us in Fairfax County and somebody who will be deeply missed and someone who is respected in every hallway in Richmond.

[00:03:52] I've heard from a lot of members of our General Assembly delegation who speak very highly of the work she did on behalf of Fairfax County in Richmond during each year's legislative session. And I'm going to ask if anyone else would like to comment on Claudia, certainly Supervisor Walkinshaw.

[00:04:10] Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for everything that you shared. This one hit me particularly hard. As you know, Mr. Chairman, on the Legislative Committee, kind of a unique assignment, and Claudia and I spoke and worked together almost every single day and spent a lot of time together.

[00:04:31] I'm going to miss, you know, one of the great things about Claudia is if you asked her a question, you would get a very detailed response. And I'm going to miss those lengthy responses from her. She was so devoted to her work on behalf of this board and on behalf of the people of Fairfax County.

[00:04:54] She worked quite literally around the clock during the session in Richmond especially, but throughout the year. She never stopped, and she made a real difference. She was instrumental in making some of our key priorities happen, equal taxing authority, the authority to prevent people from bringing guns into our libraries and our rec centers.

[00:05:20] Just this year, she convinced the General Assembly to finally eliminate the cap on state funding for support positions in our schools. She was instrumental in securing funding that saved Metro and kept Metro alive.

[00:05:39] She had incredible accomplishments, and those of us who were able to attend her memorial got to hear about her personal accomplishments and her accomplishments with her family as well, which was really moving. So I'm going to miss her.

[00:05:56] I know the entire Fairfax County family will miss her. One of the things she did in her role was interact with almost every agency and office and person in this government, and I know each and every one of those folks will miss her, as I will.

[00:06:16] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Supervisor Walkinshaw, Supervisor Behrman. Well, yeah, it's kind of amazing to think how she did interact with every single agency in this government, and yet she always picked up the phone when I called, when little old me called.

[00:06:32] As a newish board member, she was extremely, extremely approachable, helpful, talked through things, worked hard. But I think I would just say that I found, you know, you go down to Richmond, the session's very quick, there's a lot going on, you're in politics for a long time.

[00:06:56] It's a business that can breed some degree of cynicism. But what Claudia always seemed to have was a great mix of both optimism and realism. She was optimistic about what we could achieve.

[00:07:12] She was realistic about the guardrails. And that approach was extremely refreshing, and she was just a great friend. So I'll leave it at that. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Beerman.

[00:07:28] Supervisor Lusk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, I'll just say I just immensely appreciate her professionalism and her commitment to her work. And I will always, always remember her smile, just an incredible smile.

[00:07:46] And just thinking about how valued she was to this county. My thoughts are with her family, her co-workers, and her friends at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Supervisor Luss, Supervisor Stork. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[00:08:03] I'm not sure I have much to add because what's been said, I think, really captures the Claudia that I know and the difference that she made really for our community. But more importantly, how she balanced, I think it was said earlier, the professionalism and pretty much the matter of fact as well.

[00:08:19] Here's the situation and here's what you can do about it or here's what maybe you can't do about it. And it was done in a way that was just really easy to work with and incredibly responsive, incredibly responsive. And not only in terms of non-session times, but in session times, you would engage with her and you would get a response back within 12 hours for sure.

[00:08:40] And you're assuming in the middle of a session that's a huge challenge for anybody. But more importantly, her humanity, her willingness to work and connect with each one of us made a huge difference. And she will be deeply missed by me and I know in many others. So thank you very much for your comments earlier.

[00:08:57] Supervisor Alcorn. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your comments and my colleagues, my other colleagues. I have heard from several folks in Reston who knew her and were also shocked at the news.

[00:09:17] And I do particularly appreciate, Mr. Chairman, your comments about her most proud achievements relating to her family. And certainly that came through in the folks from Reston who contacted me. So thank you, and she will be missed. Thank you, Supervisor Alcorn.

[00:09:33] And at her memorial service, her kids did an amazing job, in particular her one daughter who spoke for her children. And I told her at the end to just try to get a laugh out of her to Supervisor Walkinshaw's point that Claudia got an award of achievement from me for sending me the longest text message in text messaging history to her completeness.

[00:09:55] She made sure every part of it was accurate. And so we will certainly miss that and so many more things about Claudia. Next, I want to mention Barry Mayhem. And, you know, this is another tough one hit close here to our county family.

[00:10:12] Fairfax County Fire and Rescue and all of our Fairfax County family mourn the line of death duty of Captain Barry Mayhem from occupational cancer on March 31st, 2025. Captain Mayhem was hired as a firefighter in 1999 and served with our Fire and Rescue Department for 25 years.

[00:10:31] He was a dedicated member of the world-renowned Urban Search and Rescue Team here in Fairfax County, deploying disasters across the world and locally. He recently retired to focus on fighting repeated recurrences of cancer. Captain Mayhem was an exceptional leader, mentor, and friend.

[00:10:49] He served the department with unwavering dedication that no doubt will have a lasting impact on so many in our department and community. His commitment to helping others extended beyond the Fire and Rescue Department. He volunteered with Veterans Fishing Adventures, a nonprofit dedicated to taking disabled veterans on free fishing trips.

[00:11:08] He's survived by his wife, Amber, and children, Bryce, Michaela, McKenna, Britton, and Trevor. And I know all of us have paid tribute to Captain Mayhem for his career. I had an opportunity to attend a memorial service. I know our board was in session that day, which made it difficult.

[00:11:26] But the outpouring of support from the community and from the department, not just our department, but from fire and rescue departments around the region, was really moving. And so we definitely want to keep Captain Mayhem and his family in our thoughts and prayers, but also our entire Fire and Rescue Department.

[00:11:45] This was a line of death duty due to occupational hazards involving cancer, which is something that we all know too well our Fire and Rescue Department is exposed to. And during the memorial service, there was a lot of comments made about how good Fairfax County deals with this, with our occupational health program and resources that we have for our Fire and Rescue Department.

[00:12:07] But even despite all of those resources, this is a very dangerous job. And so we also want to thank, in keeping our thoughts and prayers, our Fire and Rescue Department, who was impacted very emotionally and directly by the death of Captain Mayhem, Supervisor Stork.

[00:12:25] On that, specifically, Gray Mayhem was also an instrumental part of the Mount Vernon District community, particularly Mason Neck and Lorton, his tenure at Gunston Fire Station, and just really the connectivity to the community was overwhelming. So I just wanted to add to that my comments and really to personalize when you lose somebody like Barry to something as horrible as cancer and you do it and it's for occupational reasons,

[00:12:53] you recognize the sacrifices that people make, not only professionally but personally, because it's not just him but his family and really a community that's really been hurt and devastated by the loss of somebody who cared and was so committed to all of us. So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[00:13:08] Thank you, Supervisor Stork. Next, I'm going to mention Janie Strauss, and this is another one that just hits home really hard. Janie Strauss passed away on April 11th. Janie, of course, was a member of the Fairfax County School Board for 26 years.

[00:13:28] Two years as an at-large member and 24 years representing the Drainsville District. She served multiple terms as chair, vice chair, and budget chair. During her tenure, two elementary schools, Colvin Run and Coates, were opened and 15 schools in Drainsville District were renovated.

[00:13:44] FCPS also advanced initiatives such as full-day kindergarten, additional advanced academic programs, and later start times for high school students, all of which Janie was a key element in supporting. She loved the arts and was instrumental in the National Capital Area Cappies.

[00:14:00] And I had a text message with one of her colleagues, and I said, I don't think going to the Cappies will ever be the same without Janie back there kind of behind the controls in an official or unofficial capacity. She was big into academic programs, award programs that trained and respected high school theater and journalism students to be expert writers, critical thinkers, and leaders.

[00:14:27] And Janie was one of the first school board members I remember having an in-depth conversation with. And when I ended the conversation, I felt like I had been with a very, very well-trained preschool teacher because of the way she handled herself and the calm demeanor that she had.

[00:14:47] And then to come and find out that is what she had done for a long time professionally. And so she served not just Drainsville District, but Fairfax County on our school board with great distinction for a long 26 years. And her impact on our county, and in particular in our school system, is legendary and will be here for a long time.

[00:15:08] And I know several of my colleagues served with her. And before I recognize them, let me recognize Supervisor Bierman from Drainsville District. Yeah, you said most of it. But I think the one thing I want to highlight, again, I mentioned earlier, sort of optimism and creativity. Janie was, you know, you go around knocking on doors. I knocked on Janie's door during the campaign. She invited me in, had a good conversation about public service.

[00:15:38] I mean, but creativity, the Cappies, is just such a creative program that Janie came up with, because it wasn't just about helping the kids who are on stage. It was also about helping the kids who write the newspaper articles about the kids who are on stage.

[00:15:54] It was about helping the kids who are backstage. She had this way of trying to figure out how to expand the pie of people that she was helping. And, you know, she was a great member of the school board, a great friend, and I'll leave it at that.

[00:16:10] Thank you, Supervisor Smith. So when I was first considering running for the school board many years ago, one of my first calls was to Janie to find about, you know, what was the school board like. And she provided excellent advice, but Janie was really focused on the whole child and the academics of the kids.

[00:16:32] And I think my fondest memory is that all of her emails, she signed, cheers, Janie. And that simple closing just really describes who she was, a positive outlook. And I was fortunate to serve with her for 14 years and be able to learn a lot from her.

[00:16:53] So she will be sorely missed. Thank you. Thank you. Supervisor Pouchik and then Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first memory of Janie is also meeting with her, having coffee in one of her favorite shops at McLean when I was thinking about whether or not to run for office.

[00:17:11] And at that time, I was studying. I was working on my master's in education, and we started talking, and I realized the book I had read was actually written by her late husband, Bill Strauss, about the generations. And the thing about Janie is that she didn't take credit for any of the things that they worked on together.

[00:17:29] The Cappy, she said, was Bill's project. The generation, so much of the work that she helped and helped ensure it happened. She did it, as was said, kindly. I called it her Wisconsin wisdom. She was always thoughtful, cheerful, and made sure that not only did we think about the whole child, but the whole community, right, and how we bring everyone in and how we think about the arts and culture and bringing so much more to the community

[00:18:01] through education, not just through the outputs and the tests and the curricula, but through the humanities and through building future leaders of our community. So much so that when I was going back through my old high school diploma, I realized that she had been the chair of the school board when I graduated from high school and was the one who signed that along with our principal. It's really hard that we are where we are. I know many of us had the opportunity to visit with her and her family recently and it is absolutely heart-wrenching

[00:18:40] but also knowing that she leaves such a legacy not only through her incredible children and grandchildren, but through all of us who are the children, grandchildren, and sometimes great grandchildren of those who've been able to benefit so much from all the work and the richness of the culture, the humanities that she brought to our schools in Fairfax County. I don't think we would be who we are without Janie's legacy on the school board, so she will be greatly missed.

[00:19:15] Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I think the comments that have been made are spot on. And we clearly would not be the school system that we are today without Janie's engagement for a couple of decades. I served with her for about a dozen years.

[00:19:32] Her leadership was a key part of how we got things done because her positiveness, her willingness to work with everybody, Frankly, her focus on education and really maximizing what the Board of Supervisors would support for education and funding in so many other ways.

[00:19:51] She had a way of bringing people together and finding kind of common ground to really ultimately achieve the key things that I think are monumental in our successes, which is excellence for sure. Full-day kindergarten, those are key parts of it.

[00:20:07] And I have to come back to Cappies and to Bill Strauss in particular. People don't really understand how the system really for the last 50 years or maybe thousands of years before that was very focused on athletics and some activities.

[00:20:26] But anything beyond just education in the classroom was very athletically based. And she and Bill saw an opportunity, a vision, to bring kids who had other interests. You know, whether it's writing or acting or behind the scenes or construction.

[00:20:42] I mean, there's so many different ways to bring them into the same kind of opportunity to show their excellence and to learn and develop those own skill sets for themselves. So that was a huge part of it. And then the final thing I would add is a personal note.

[00:21:00] This is hard for me, but Jenny and I had innumerable conversations about our kids and some of the challenges that our kids had and our own efforts to help kids that were our kids, but we had helped to bring into our families to help them really do well.

[00:21:21] And that's never easy. It's always a challenge, and those conversations mean more to me than anything else. And then ultimately to see her pass on with the challenge of her disease and how much it really slowed her down.

[00:21:39] But it didn't really dampen her indomitable spirits because when I met with her, I still got the same energy and positive and just the same love and truly is love that came out as part of that. So I know it's hard to explain that to folks, but I just want you to feel kind of the positive, really connective, you know, passionate energy that Janie brought to all of us and to our community especially.

[00:22:04] So thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. And for the public's awareness and my colleagues' awareness, I know there is a celebration of life for Janie Strauss scheduled for Sunday, May 18th at 11 a.m. at the McLean High School Auditorium. seems like an appropriate, certainly an appropriate venue for that, and so there will be more opportunities for us to celebrate her life at that point. Next, I want to mention Jess Hebert.

[00:22:32] Many of us probably read about this in the newspaper, but she was a former U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. Jessica Jess Hebert passed away way too soon, on March 22nd at the age of 43, leaving behind a legacy of love, kindness, integrity, and service.

[00:22:50] Jess was known to be a force, brilliant, yet humble, dedicated, yet selfless. She clerked for the US District Court Judge Hannah Lauk in the Eastern District of Virginia's EDVA famed Rocket Docket, an experience that solidified her calling for public service.

[00:23:06] For 12 years, she served as an assistant US attorney, where she tackled some of the most complex and high stakes criminal cases. Jess was also a champion of rehabilitation, playing a key role in shaping the Richmond Drug Court program into a national model and certainly similar to what we have here in Fairfax County.

[00:23:27] Jess is survived by her loving partner and her daughters, her parents, her sister, her brother-in-law and sister-in-law, cherished nieces and nephews, and a large extended family on her maternal side. She leaves behind a vast network of dear friends and colleagues across the globe who were touched by her warmth, generosity, and unwavering spirit.

[00:23:47] And I had an opportunity to meet Jess. She was introduced to me by our police chief. And no one would guess where this happened, but it was on Richmond Highway in the High Blue Valley area in an apartment complex on National Night Out.

[00:24:02] And Jess Hebert believed that part of our criminal justice system was protecting our young people and making sure that she could hear from them and see their experiences and feel the challenges that they had in her neighborhood.

[00:24:18] And I remember the chief introducing him and with a chuckle saying, you don't find very often somebody from our court system this high up in our court system out on national night out celebrating our community. And while she did not live in Fairfax County, she lived in neighboring Alexandria City.

[00:24:37] She was not a stranger to Fairfax County and at the very ground level wanting to understand the challenges in our community. And so the nation really lost a real treasure in Jess's sudden passing. And we certainly want to keep her family in our thoughts and prayers.

[00:24:55] Next, this is another one that hits close. I think all of us got notice over the weekend about a terrible accident that occurred in the Mason District involving a Tesla in one of our communities. And as if that wasn't bad enough, it's one of those times when you get the notice and you read the victims and you realize you knew those people really well.

[00:25:18] We're a small-knit community here in Fairfax County, and so I want to honor Ashraf and Nazir Bagat. Ashraf and Nazir tragically passed away, as I mentioned, Sunday, April 20th, when the car Ashraf was driving left the roadway and hit a tree.

[00:25:35] Ashraf, 75 years old, was pronounced dead at the scene, and her husband, Nazir, 81, succumbed to his injuries later that day after being transported to the hospital. Many of us know Nazir and Ashraf through their involvement in the Lake Barcroft community and Fairfax County politics, and certainly Nazir, who had been appointed to several different boards, authorities, and commissions, and would also show up to greet us at different places with a smile, but then also an idea, an idea of something we could do better.

[00:26:07] And I always look forward to seeing Nazir. He had a long, dedicated public service career of his own, but he made sure in his retirement that he still was a force for seniors and issues involving seniors for history and preserving our history in Fairfax County and was somebody I always look forward to seeing.

[00:26:28] And so it was a tragic event, but all the more tragic when you hear that you lost two friends and two people who made a real difference in Fairfax County. Supervisor Menas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we in Mason District are shocked, and there was so much sadness and grief during this time.

[00:26:46] It was very shocking to hear this news, as I'm sure it was for many of you. The begots were beloved members of our community, specifically the Lake Barcrop community in which they resided. You know, I had gotten to know Nazir over the last few years and appreciated his advocacy on behalf of our community, especially, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, to seniors.

[00:27:05] And I especially want to extend my sincerest condolences to their loved ones and say, you know, we're here for you. We are a tight-knit community, and it's times like this where our communities mean so much because that's when we come together. So thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Supervisor Jimenez.

[00:27:23] Next, I want to mention Joe Blackwell. Joe was a retired lieutenant colonel from Alexandria, Virginia, from the Franconia District, passed away on April 19, 2025, at the age of 85 after moving to Olympia, Washington, to be near his immediate family.

[00:27:40] After earning his MBA and many, many accomplishments and medals from the U.S. Army, Joe retired and began his second career with the Fairfax County Department of Tax Administration, where he

retired as the director of the personal property division. While with Fairfax County, he served as a member and then chair of the Board of Equalization, volunteering his time in so many ways in Fairfax County, including volunteering at our local Fairfax County Rec Center.

[00:28:08] Joe was a generous and loving father, survived by his immediate family and son-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and I had the opportunity as Franconia District Supervisor to appoint him many times to the Board of Equalization, and it's not something we think about often, but it is a vital, vital activity in Fairfax County and hard to find people who have the expertise to serve on that the way that Joe Blackwell had, and he was so well-respected by the entire Board of Equalization, but also all the staff at the Department of Tax Administration. Just such a kind, generous, gentle soul who was always

[00:28:48] propping up and celebrating the accomplishments of our county Department of Tax Administration in particular. And so I want to keep Joe Blackwell and his family in our thoughts and prayers as well. In addition to that, another member of our county family, James Vincent McGettrick, passed away on February 6th at the age of 74.

[00:29:11] And Jim McGettrick was a longtime resident of Fairfax County and worked for the county attorney's office from 1981 to 1989, and then 1991 until his retirement in 2016, for a total of 33 years of county service.

[00:29:29] Jim received his undergraduate degree from Georgia Tech and studied law at Georgetown University and American University. and Jim was a resident expert in tax and public financing matters. Among many other important projects, Jim played an instrumental role in drafting the legal documents that supported the construction of the Silver Line Project and extended Metro Rail service to Tyson's, Reston, Dulles Airport, and served as the lead in-house counsel for the Mosaic, CDA, TIF, and beyond.

[00:29:58] His legacy will be ongoing through these projects, as well as the many appellate court victories he achieved for local government, for our taxpayers, and his expertise on public finance matters. And I know I had an opportunity to work with Jim on a number of projects over the years.

[00:30:16] And he was witty, but he was direct. And no matter what question you asked him, he had an answer to it. It might take a long, legal, winding road to get to the bottom line, but that long, legal, winding road he was proud of. But most importantly, he served for a long 33 years to this county and provided us immense service and a remarkable career in the courts and in the community.

[00:30:43] And so we want to keep Jim and his family in our thoughts and prayers, certainly our county attorney and our county attorney's family, who had the benefit of working directly with Jim for a lot of years, and that was a tough loss for sure. I also want to mention Keith Martin.

[00:31:01] Keith Martin of McLean, Virginia, passed away peacefully with his family by his side on April 10th at the age of 69. Keith grew up in McLean and spent his professional life as a zoning and land use attorney in Northern Virginia, appearing right here at this podium in front of us countless times.

[00:31:18] He graduated from Wake Forest University, received his Juris Doctor from the Wake Forest School of Law in 1981. As the father of four children, he was a self-proclaimed sports dad, loyally following games from Little League all the way to the college level. Despite his allegiance to his Wake Forest Demon Deacons, and this will get a rise out of at least two of my colleagues, his four children, all of whom went to the University of Virginia, made him an honorary Wahoo, whatever that means.

[00:31:48] Keith dedicated hundreds of volunteer hours to the McLean Little League, McLean Mustang Football, McLean U Soccer, and CYO Basketball. And Keith is preceded in death by his parents and survived by his wife Kathleen, daughter Julia and son-in-law Christopher, daughter Lindsey and son-in-law Derek, son James and daughter-in-law Caitlin, daughter Lauren and sister Jane, as well as three granddaughters.

[00:32:17] And noteworthy, he was also survived by his constant companion, Ollie, his beloved dog, who I actually had an opportunity to meet a couple times. That's how tight they were with each other. But Keith was somebody all of us on the board knew and certainly somebody that we want to keep in our thoughts and prayers.

[00:32:34] And then finally, I think all of us were shocked to hear the passing of Pope Francis. And I say that as a Catholic. I know there's several other Catholics on this dais. But what was astonishing was how much this meant to all people.

[00:32:50] It didn't matter what religion you were, but Pope Francis' passing really affected a lot of folks for the progress that he made, for the humanitarian life that he lived, and from always looking at things from the bottom up and trying to always help the most vulnerable.

[00:33:07] As we know, he died on April 21st at the age of 88. He was the first pope from the Jesuit order and first from the Americas, specifically Argentina. He served as pope from 2013 until his death and made his last public appearance somewhat fittingly on Easter Sunday.

[00:33:27] And so obviously, as I said, this is the passing of someone who will be known forever for the progress, advancement he made in the Catholic Church, but mostly for the humanitarian way in which he provided services to the community and reached well beyond the Catholic faith and moved people in a direction of humanitarian work.

[00:33:50] And for that, we will always remember Pope Francis, Supervisor Jimenez. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As an active Catholic and also someone from South America, Pope Francis was a beacon of hope, a true humanitarian. He held true to Catholic teachings, advocating for humanity, and the less fortunate with the emphasis on mercy in creating a church in God's style.

[00:34:11] Pope Francis will be missed, but his impact and legacy on the Catholic Church and other faith-based groups will live on for years to come. Thank you, Supervisor Jimenez, Supervisor Palchuk, and then Supervisor Lusk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[00:34:28] As a Jewish Argentinian-American who often took the bus past the church where he was ordained before becoming pope. It was wonderful to know that we were known for someone other than Leo Messi, who's wonderful.

[00:34:46] But the pope was also a big fan of Leo Messi, though he stopped watching TV while he was in the Vatican. But more seriously, I think to those of us who've dedicated our lives and are in public service in order to ensure that we focus on the most vulnerable, the most needy, and on especially our most vulnerable populations. He truly was a spiritual and really guiding light leader for the whole world. And one of my favorite quotes, he had many,

[00:35:21] but one of them that he gave, I believe back in 2016, was, it's hypocrisy to call yourself a Christian and chase away a refugee, or someone seeking help, someone who is hungry or thirsty, toss out

someone who is in need of my help. And I love that he reminded us every single day, from the shoes he wore to the people he went and visited and helped and gave his blessings to, that we are here to serve. And that is our duty here in life, especially as leaders. So he will be greatly missed.

[00:35:59] And I do hope, as the next pope is chosen, that he will continue that dedication, especially as he did to the most vulnerable, to women, and to LGBTQ+ community.

[00:36:15] Thank you, Supervisor Paucic. Supervisor Lusk. Thank you, Mr. Sherman. And I'll just add on to the comments that were made by you and my colleagues here. I'm not Catholic, but I'll say when I first saw him in one of his original acts as pope, he washed the feet of 12 people, and he kissed their feet.

[00:36:40] And I just cannot express the feeling that came over me as I watched him do that. His humility and humanity were so present in everything that he did. He tried to help us understand our common humanity.

[00:36:59] He tried to help us build bridges, regardless of race, gender, or religion. And as Supervisor Palchek noted, he was a vocal person on some of the most pressing rights, and that includes LGBTQ+, on climate, and really on the plight of migrants.

[00:37:20] I can't think of anyone who has committed their life and shown such great grace and humility in every, again, action and deed. He will be truly missed, but his message of compassion without judgment will not be forgotten.

[00:37:39] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Supervisor Lusk. And let me ask at this time, that is the end of my list. Let me ask if there's anyone else that the board would like to recognize. I'm going to start on this side and work our way through. Supervisor Lusk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very quickly, there's two items. Mr. Chairman, I will ask that the board keep in their thoughts and prayers Ed Joseph, the chair of the Frank County District Land Use Committee. Ed has recently lost his parent who lived out of state. It is important for him to know that our thoughts and prayers are with him at this very difficult time. And then

[00:38:17] second, Mr. Chairman, I wanted to acknowledge someone that we've worked with very closely here on this board, Mark Vianney, who is a land use attorney with Bean Kenney. Mark has been recently lost his father, and I ask that we keep Mark and his family in our thoughts and prayers as well. Thank you. Thank you. Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm very sad to share the news of the passing of Tom Lucas, who was a longtime treasurer of the Friends of Lake Akatink Park. He passed away on March 19th. He was a longtime resident of Ravensworth Farm,

[00:38:54] an active community member and volunteer, somebody you would see regularly walking the trails in Lake Akatink Park and a great neighbor and friend to many. Tom, his wife Cindy, and their two children, Sarah and Michael, moved to Ravensworth Farm in 1977. And he made a tremendous impact where he was employed for many years at the IRS until he retired in 2012 and began his part-time work as a consultant and treasurer to the Friends of Lake Akatink Park. Time will be

[00:39:30] missed, and I just ask that we keep his family and friends in our thoughts and prayers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. Supervisor Bierman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maya Huber passed away on Friday, April 11th, at the age of 93. Maya was a titan of the McLean community. She led environmental efforts to preserve open space by lobbying the General Assembly for small district agricultural preservation, stream protection through the Chesapeake Bay Ordinance, and she helped start the McLean Farmers Market, which was the first in

[00:40:04] the county. She moved to McLean with her husband John and three small sons in 1964, and by 1973 She was starting serving in numerous civic organizations, the McLean Citizens Association, the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Association, the McLean Planning Committee, and on the McLean Community Center Governing Board.

[00:40:27] She also served as an at-large member of the Planning Commission, and she chaired the Occoquan Basin Study Citizens Task Force. She was busy. Supervisor Faust named her as the Drainsville District Community Champion in 2010, which was 15 years ago, and she stayed very active till the end.

[00:40:46] She was a true role model for Citizen Action, and she will be missed by many friends and colleagues in the McLean community. So my condolences to her family and friends and ask that we keep her in our thoughts and prayers. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Beerman. Supervisor Palchek.

[00:41:01] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have two thoughts and prayers to share. The first is for the family of Germán Gómez. We were very saddened by the loss. Germán Gómez, 87, died while attempting to cross Route 29 and being struck by a vehicle on April 2nd.

[00:41:21] I have been in communication with his son, Peter, and we have sent support, but we know his widow, Stella, Herman's widow, is very grateful for the outreach of family and friends as they cope with this loss.

[00:41:38] We know that incidents like this, and as we continue to focus on our pedestrian safety and awareness, especially as we celebrate Older Americans Month and the vulnerabilities that many of our older Americans are facing as they work to age in place and to be able to get around safely in our community. He, I believe this was the seventh person overall on the third pedestrian to be killed in a traffic crash in Fairfax County this year. And our thoughts and prayers and support are very much with Herman's family, with his widow and his two sons.

[00:42:18] Also, and I believe in about 10 minutes, is the funeral service for the next person, which is Howard Allen Nachman. On April 18th, 2025, Howard Allen Nachman passed away at the age of 75.

[00:42:34] A man of strength, humor, and deep love for his family, faith, and community, Howard far outlived the prognosis he received in 2004. Howard grew up in Herndon, where his family ran Nachman's department store in the Drainsville District. He was a dedicated volunteer with the Herndon Fire Department as well as vice mayor.

[00:42:56] For the past 37 years, Howard and his wife Rona made their home in Mantua. He's an active member of the civic and spiritual community in the Providence District, serving as treasurer of the Mantua Citizens Association for six years and as president of Congregation Olam Tikva.

[00:43:12] He is survived by Rona and by their wonderful daughters, Candace and Natalie. His funeral service is being held this morning at Congregation Olam Tikva, and we know that the thoughts and prayers and the community support both of the Mantua community, the Olam Tikva, and the Chabad community are with Howard's wonderful family, Rona, Candace, and Natalie.

[00:43:38] Thank you. Supervisor Alcorn. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. An announcement, another Planning Commission-related announcement. Sally Carter, who was the wife of Hunter Mill Planning Commissioner, John Carter, passed away last Thursday evening after a battle of cancer.

[00:43:56] So I did get a chance to see John and his son over the weekend, but I just want to make that announcement and let them know that our thoughts and prayers are with him and the rest of the family. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Alcorn. Supervisor Stork.

[00:44:14] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to recognize the passing of Mariana Yanidis Uwano. I think most people here would know her as the proprietor of Mama's Kitchen, and anyone who knows quality food in Fairfax County has found their way to Mama's Kitchen.

[00:44:40] Mama's Kitchen is located in Highville Valley, actually, Franconia District, But across the Richmond Highway and, again, all throughout the community, very, very well known. She was a graduate of West Potomac High School and was known to many in our community, not only for her quiet demeanor but really her entrepreneurial spirit, which, for those of you who know, not only the Mama's Kitchen but other facilities that she's done.

[00:45:04] But, again, she passed on recently, and I wanted to make sure we recognized that, you know, Good people and good food go together, and she brought all those things together in one individual. So thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Stork. And let me make sure no one else.

[00:45:21] Okay. We're going to rise for a moment of silence to be followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Please face the flag.

[00:45:58] I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Thank you all for your patience this morning. That was longer than we normally need, sadly,

[00:46:34] but also an opportunity to really celebrate a lot of champions in our community and properly remember them for their contributions. And this morning, for presentations, we have four, and I will announce the proclamation and invite the designated speaker down to the podium in front of me. We'll then read the proclamation after our speaker's remarks. We will pose for a picture from the dais. And first up this morning, we have a proclamation to designate April 2025 as Autism Acceptance Month in Fairfax County. And this was requested by myself and by Supervisor

[00:47:10] Herity. And I understand I don't see Ken Crum here from a service source, but I understand Lisa McCarthy is here. And I see Lisa McCarthy, the Vice President of Long-Term and Community The integration services is coming on down, and while that's happening, I'll recognize Supervisor Herity for the proclamation.

[00:47:30] Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have a proclamation to move, whereas April is Autism Acceptance Month, promoting inclusion and understanding of individuals on the autism spectrum, with about 1 in 36 children and over 5.4 million adults in the U.S. affected, including over 155,000 Virginians. And whereas the diagnosis of autism has increased due to greater awareness and understanding, however, autism spectrum disorder remains a complex developmental condition

[00:48:04] that presents unique strengths, challenges, and needs for each individual. And whereas young adults on the autism spectrum have low employment rates among those with disabilities, despite their unique skills and talents. And whereas with supports like modified hiring practices, job coaching, and work opportunity tax credits, individuals with autism can thrive in the workplace, demonstrated by a 59% employment success rate after vocational rehabilitation.

[00:48:35] And whereas Fairfax County hosts exemplary organizations like Service Source and the Phillips programs, providing critical services and promoting meaningful employment for individuals with autism, particularly as they face the steep services cliff in adulthood. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on behalf of all residents of Fairfax County does hereby proclaim April 2025 as Autism Acceptance Month in Fairfax County and urges all residents to show respect and compassion to those

[00:49:12] on the autism spectrum and encourage business and employers to utilize existing incentives and strategies to assist them in hiring people with autism. So moved. I'm happy to second that motion. Multiple seconds.

[00:49:28] Discussion on the motion? Supervisor Herdy? Yeah, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you, Lisa, for being here and thank you to ServiceSource for all you do and for being a great community partner. ServiceSource has got a phenomenal reputation because of their support it provides to so many people of diverse abilities.

[00:49:47] Service Service Continuously advocates for our residents on the autism spectrum, making our community more inclusive. Our residents who are on the autism spectrum do have a wide variety of aptitudes that make our economy more innovative and efficient.

[00:50:04] And as all of us remember at an Economic Advisory Committee meeting not too long ago, It's exciting to hear that we've got adults on the spectrum that really are doing exciting work protecting our nation from threats by analyzing info from the dark web, utilizing their unique skills, skills that none of us probably possess.

[00:50:27] I'm happy we're again here recognizing Autism Awareness Month. Thank you again, Lisa, for all you in service source do to raise awareness about the challenges and as well as the opportunities that those on the autism spectrum provide us.

[00:50:43] So thank you. Thank you. Others who would like to be recognized, Supervisor Smith. So I appreciate Supervisor Herity bringing forward the Autism Acceptance Month proclamation with Chairman McKay to raise awareness, promote understanding, and foster acceptance of individuals on the autism spectrum.

[00:51:03] In doing some research, I found out that the recognition had started out as autism awareness, but awareness doesn't lead to the same actions as acceptance. The actions that need to take place with acceptance include making accommodations, fostering a sense of belonging, and advocating for policies that support inclusion.

[00:51:31] It also means accepting autism as part of the human experience. When Supervisor Herity brought forward his board matter for the proclamation, I asked that it be made clear that when we are encouraging businesses and employers to hire people with autism, we are also talking about our county government.

[00:51:55] This aligns with the expectations of our One Fairfax policy that was adopted in 2017 that I read again yesterday. The CDC just came out with a report that said that one in 31 children were diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in 2022, and they credit the increase to better screening.

[00:52:21] And it's not just children that are getting diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. I've been reading a book called Neurotribes, and when I look at things from the 1900s and the changes and the recognition, things that have just changed 2008, young adults that were in school previously didn't have the benefit of the knowledge we have now to understand autism spectrum disorder.

[00:52:49] So, this means that we will need to support neurodiverse employees so that they can hold a job and be contributing members of society who can provide for themselves and their families, which is what it states in our One Fairfax policy.

[00:53:06] As we learn more about autism spectrum disorder and being neurodiverse, we are learning about the strengths of those who look at life differently. They are fully capable of being contributing members of our society and our county government.

[00:53:26] My expectation is that county leadership will take the necessary steps to implement the intent of this proclamation. These are not words. These are changes that we need to make to embrace people who are fully capable of working.

[00:53:47] Thank you very much. Thank you, Supervisor Smith. Supervisor Beerman. Oh, you didn't? Okay. Anyone else? Oh, Supervisor Lusk. Cool. I was just going to make a point that when I worked at the Economic Development Authority, one of the assignments that I had was to oversee our Industrial Revenue Bond Program, and that program was used to support programs like the work of ServiceSource and had the opportunity to come out and visit and see the great work that you're doing.

[00:54:16] And I just want to commend you for continuing to grow and expand that work. And I want to thank the Phillips Academy as well for the work that they're doing around these opportunities as well. And I appreciate the comments that were just made by our vice chair.

[00:54:34] And I think we do need to do more to support and help those individuals because we want them to be productive and we want them to be self-sufficient here in our community. So thank you, Mr. Chairman. Supervisor Palczyk.

[00:54:50] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to add briefly because I haven't heard yet noted our two excellent career centers in Fairfax County Public Schools, the Pulley Career Center and the Davis Career Center, and the incredible work that they do and that their staff and paraprofessionals do partnering with industry to prepare 18 to 22-year-olds to be able to have the skills and the training that they need, and truly the confidence and the support and the case management to be able to graduate with the ability to choose the paths that all of our students have the opportunity to choose.

[00:55:29] So as we think about our workforce, I think it's also very critical to think about our partners, both in the nonprofit sector, but also in the Fairfax County Public Schools, who help prepare our kids for tomorrow. Thank you, Supervisor Palchuk.

[00:55:44] Supervisor Alcorn. Thank you. I also want to thank Supervisor Herity for bringing this forward. And I want to thank Supervisor Herity. That was an amazing statement. That almost sounded like a board matter. Maybe it needs to be. I was going to say, I'm in, if you want to do that.

[00:56:02] But I think it actually underscores how important it is. We do proclamations like this, but there actually is action that comes along with it. And that's what makes it more than just symbolic and visibility. So thank you, Service Source, all that you do, and I look forward to moving forward on that.

[00:56:21] Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Alcorn. And let me also thank all of our community partners that do work in this space every day. And I appreciate the comments that my colleagues have made. I think there's another important reason why we do these proclamations, and that is for our entire community to hear what the priorities are of their county government and what it is that we do and what it is that we respect.

[00:56:46] And we know that we're at a point in time where every single person in this auditorium knows somebody well who has autism and understands all the great things that they can do. In some cases with an extra level of support, in some cases without that, in some cases doing jobs that the rest of us can't do.

[00:57:09] And so showing our full support for our autism community is important, but it's also really important right now. And this is, you know, not something I take lightly, but the conversation that's happening at the national level about autism is disgusting.

[00:57:27] It's outrageous. And it's important for this board, on behalf of the people we represent, to say that's not at all how we think about autism and people on the spectrum and the kind of supports that they need and their ability to do anything that anybody else can do.

[00:57:45] And I think as a baseline, that should be something that we all feel very strongly about. And so to hear some of the things that are being said that violate all science, that violate the humanity of human beings that we're talking about here, who are productive, important parts of our community, is terrible.

[00:58:06] And I think the more we speak loudly about it through these proclamations and through our avenues, To reject that and to stand up and fight for the people who sometimes need our extra support but can do great things is a really vital role for this county board and for this county community, all of us, to be doing collectively.

[00:58:26] Supervisor Stort. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to reinforce the points you made as well as the vice chair's points. I mean, it's kind of the personal and it's the societal issues that we have. And they do come together, for most of us, with people that we know, right?

[00:58:43] I mean, whether it's children or adults or others, and we can make a difference. We have made a difference, and we know we can make even more of a difference. And diversity is diversity. It's not just about neuro. It's not just a neuro. It's obviously the gender and all the other things that go with it.

[00:59:00] I think we know so much more and we can respect so much more. Not that we understand it fully. That's, I think, the reality of it. But we know there's something there, and we're going to keep focused on trying to understand it better and hopefully find ways to each of us to realize our full potential.

[00:59:16] So thank you all very much. Thank you, Supervisor Stork. And with that, all those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. And with us is, as I mentioned, Lisa McCarthy, Vice President of Long-Term and Community Integration Services.

[00:59:34] Welcome. The floor is yours. Thank you, Chairman McKay, Supervisor Herity, and really thank you all for your poignant words. As you mentioned, I'm not Ken Crum, but I'm going to hope that I've learned from him and can channel him in this moment. I'm Lisa McCarthy, Vice President of Community Integration at ServiceSource, a non-profit here in Fairfax County that has been serving people with autism and other developmental disabilities for over 50 years.

[01:00:02] And I have with me today a whole great group back there of individuals and staff from two of our programs in Oakton. Through the decades, we've forged a strong relationship with the Board of Supervisors. And that relationship has been pivotal in our ability to provide support to people with autism.

[01:00:21] We know that people who are more engaged citizens not only lead richer lives, but they also enrich the lives of all of us. We're grateful to the Board of Supervisors for your steadfast support of our mission and the individuals we serve.

[01:00:39] As you just heard, in 2000, the CDC reported one in every 110 children were identified as having autism, and now that number is one in every 31. Here in Fairfax County, 125,000 of our neighbors are identified as autistic.

[01:00:57] ServiceSource provides specialized programs and employment support for more than 300 people with autism in Northern Virginia. And as the numbers demonstrate, there's never been a greater need for programs like ours that empower people with autism to reach their potential and live fulfilling lives.

[01:01:15] In my role as service source, I oversee our 14 community integration programs, and many of these programs were developed through and continue to succeed because of our partnership with Fairfax County. I know many of you have seen firsthand the benefits of our work.

[01:01:35] Recently, Supervisor Alcorn visited the Elmore House program located in Frying Pan Park, which exists through a collaboration with our county's resident curator program. I was at our wellness center for older adults when Supervisor Walkinshaw spent time there with the people we serve at that location.

[01:01:55] And this summer, we're really looking forward that we'll be opening our newest program in both Supervisor Herity and my home district. And it will be in partnership with the county's Burke-Springfield Center for Active Adults. So on behalf of the people we serve, I thank you for this proclamation, recognizing April as Autism Acceptance Month.

[01:02:18] We look forward to continuing this partnership with the Board of Supervisors to build strong communities in Fairfax County, where each person's unique talents, abilities, and contributions are recognized and valued. Thank you. Thank you very much, Lisa, and thank you and your entire team for all the work you do.

[01:02:37] And with that, we're ready for a photo. And if there are folks here with you there, yeah, welcome to come on down for the photo. And Supervisor Herity and I will join you.

[01:02:45] And next we have a proclamation to designate May, Older Americans Month and Adult Prevention Month.

[01:04:54] And this was requested by myself, Supervisor Alcorn, Palachuk, and Herity. Our speaker today is Kathy Cole, who I know is here, who is chair and at-large representative of the Fairfax County Commission on Aging, who's making her way down. And I am going to turn to Supervisor Alcorn for a proclamation.

[01:05:15] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Whereas Fairfax County hosts a vibrant, growing older adult population that enriches our community with wisdom, resilience, and ongoing contributions to civic life, family, and neighborhoods. And whereas May is recognized nationally as Older Americans Month, with

this year's theme, Flip the Script on Aging, encouraging us to challenge stereotypes and celebrate aging as a period of purpose, growth, and meaningful connection.

[01:05:46] And whereas, Fairfax County supports the ability of residents to age in place with dignity, independence, and security through its implementation of the Shape the Future of Aging plan, offering programs and resources that promote engagement, learning, and volunteerism for older adults, And whereas these efforts include community events, services, and supports that empower older adults to stay active, involved, and thriving throughout their lives.

[01:06:16] And whereas in 2024, the Aging Disabilities and Caregiver Resource Intake Line handled 21,269 calls, and Adult Protective Services investigated 1,313 cases, reaffirming our commitment to protect adults.

[01:06:35] to protecting vulnerable older adults from abuse neglect and exploitation as well as to ensure the safety of all community members now therefore be it resolved that the fairfax county board of supervisors on behalf of all residents of fairfax county does hereby proclaim may 2025 as older americans and older americans month and adult abuse prevention month in fairfax County and urges all residents to acknowledge the contributions of our older adults while promoting programs and activities that enhance connection, inclusion, protection, and support for them.

[01:07:15] I'm happy to second that motion along with Supervisor Herity, Palachuk, Jimenez, a lot of folks. Discussion on the motion, Supervisor Alcorn. Yeah, just very briefly, I know we have May that we're recognizing, actually June 3rd is when we have our next Older Adults Committee meeting.

[01:07:33] So we're just going to keep rolling right through May. But Kathy, I want to thank you and everybody that's working on all of our critical older adults issues. Certainly, you're making a difference.

[01:07:49] And I appreciate the opportunity to work with you and look forward to that June 3rd meeting. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Supervisor Herity. Yeah, I'm just going to do a thank you, Supervisor Alcorn, the proclamation and just going to do a quick public service announcement it is older adult abuse prevention month and the scams have gotten incredibly complex but silver shield a program penny gross help get going is having the hosting scam jam which will educate our older adults on

[01:08:22] scams and how to avoid them that's going to be april 30th 9 30 to 3 at the ernst community Cultural Center on the NOVA campus, and that is one I'd highly encourage our older adults or even siblings of older adults to watch so that they can educate the older adults.

[01:08:41] It is important because we hear far too often how our older adults are scammed. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I should have mentioned the first item on the June 3 meeting is scams, so we will be talking about that during older adults as well.

[01:08:59] Thank you. And we talked about it at our last board meeting here as well. And so this is something we can't stop talking about because, unfortunately, it's happening every minute of the day. Supervisor Palchuk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to everyone here to celebrate with us.

[01:09:15] It's funny because language doesn't always translate well, and I've been trying to find a way to translate. In Spanish, we say la tercera edad, the third age. It doesn't translate as well, but it's just a beautiful way that I think sounds even more beautiful than our older adults.

[01:09:33] And in addition to working to protect our older adults, many of us who live with them or are working to help them age in place, there's also celebrating, and we've been celebrating the arts today in so

many areas. And I also want to highlight, I guess it's a PSA, but the National Council on Aging does a yearly photography contest, And we had the opportunity to have the photographs in our office last year.

[01:09:57] This year, the contest is called This is 75, Grow Old with Me, the Best is Yet to Be. The winners, and you can Google it, National Council on Aging Gallery, you can see all the photographs online. And between now and May, let me get the correct date, May 30th, you can actually vote on the People's Choice Award.

[01:10:21] I highly recommend it if you have not checked out the contest. These are self-taught photographers who have taken photographs often of family members, neighbors, or friends, and just showing the beauty of aging and celebrating our community and aging across the country, across the nation.

[01:10:42] And so I highly recommend looking at it and maybe getting inspired for our local photographers who may want to submit for next year. But to that, I definitely believe that aging in place and helping our community be multi-generational really is the best way.

[01:11:04] And the last thing is, as we were talking about autism and making our community adapted to everyone, I keep thinking about curb cuts. Curb cuts were created in order to allow, through the Americans with Disability Act, better access to sidewalks.

[01:11:21] But as we know, it makes it safer for everyone. So to me, as we talk about being inclusive and making our environment more adaptable, not just for those who have special vulnerabilities, but it really makes it a safer place for everyone and a nicer place to live.

[01:11:37] So thank you to our councils on aging and our community members who have been advocating and continue to through the years. - Thank you very much. Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for bringing forward the resolution and, of course, the recognition that we all have for the generations that have preceded us and the importance of us honoring them, because we'll hopefully soon be there, right?

[01:12:04] So thank you all, and I feel like I'm one of the more senior citizens here, and I greatly appreciate adding to that. The facts are as standard as they are, right? You're not going to join me, Kathy? Kathy's not going to join me, so all right.

[01:12:20] Well, okay. I'm on my own here. I'm on my own here. Well, we do have a senior summit in Mount Vernon District at the Lorton Community Center on May 2nd that everyone is invited to. It's our fifth or sixth annual one that we've done. We have 30-plus vendors that will be there.

[01:12:38] We have a number of speakers and lunch and so forth is provided. So it's a great opportunity to learn more about your community but also learn about different opportunities that seniors can engage in as well as obviously the safety part of that is a key element of all that we do. But May 2nd starts at 10 o'clock.

[01:12:55] It's 10 to about 1. Please join us, the Wharton Community Center, on May 2nd. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Behrman. Yeah, just for all the kids watching at home, we also have a senior safety summit at the McLean Community Center tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[01:13:10] So hope to see folks in the McLean area tomorrow as well. Thanks. Thank you, Supervisor Behrman. And these programs are for everyone. One of the things that I think we forget many times is,

you know, for various reasons, there may be somebody else in the family who can attend these and share information that's important to our seniors.

[01:13:30] And I know several of us on the dais are in this sandwich generation of, you know, caring for children, but also trying to help out where we can support older relatives and parents in our community. And a lot of times that is ability to stay in their homes.

[01:13:46] I'm just going to wrap up by saying I think we all know this, but a lot of other people in the community don't. Thanks to the work of Kathy and her committee and others, we did do a senior survey in Fairfax County, and the results showed overwhelming that our seniors love living in this community for a lot of the reasons we all know.

[01:14:07] Strong economies, safe streets, all the attributes that are important to our life in Fairfax County are the same things that many of our seniors are looking for. And when I look at the flip the script on aging piece, this is not a hard thing to imagine because anywhere you go in Fairfax County, you will find seniors and in many cases volunteering their time in a lot of our county facilities to try to make sure they stay active but also to give back to our community that they have given so much to already through many, many years.

[01:14:40] And so the work that the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging does is important because while we know we're a good place to live for seniors, we also know that there's many other things we can be doing and doing better as we all age and want to continue to age and live in Fairfax County.

[01:14:57] And so I do want to thank Kathy and the Commission on Aging for all of their advocacy over all these years. um there's a whole list of accomplishments that have happened in this county in front of me i'm not going to read them all i think the survey speaks for itself about how we treat these issues in our community and how we again as in the last presentation do everything we can to respect and help all people living and contributing to our community with that all those in favor of the motion please say aye aye any opposed any abstentions and that motion carries and kathy

[01:15:32] is with us here. And again, she is at large representative of the Fairfax County Commission on Aging. Welcome. Good to see you. Thank you very much. Good morning, Chairman McKay and the members of the Board of Supervisors. On behalf of the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging, thank you to Supervisor Alcorn, Supervisor Palchak, and Supervisor Herity for honoring older members of our community with your proclamation of Older Americans Month and Adult Abuse Prevention Month.

[01:16:02] I will stumble too. As the federally mandated advisory board for the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, the COA also thanks all of you for your year-round support of older adults and their family caregivers. And while you have just listed a number of ways in which you are promoting the well-being of older adults in our community, I'm going to address the actual theme of this Month's Older Americans Month. So as you have just heard, the theme for Older Americans Month is flip the script on aging. The Fairfax Area Commission on Aging has taken this direction

[01:16:41] very seriously. We are embarking on a campaign to reframe aging. Our first steps will be to ensure that the language we use in our SHAPE initiatives do not continue negative perceptions. We have incorporated this analysis in our equity assessments of each initiative. We will start to watch for words, images, that without thought convey the image of life in decline. It has always confused me as to when I started aging. Was it 55? 65? 70? What determines that a person

[01:17:19] is aging? I'd like to put it out there. The one person, that one starts aging the minute one is born. That aging is a process, an evolution, a journey, a metamorphosis, so to speak, a life full of learning, development, contribution at every age of the process. Ageism is one of the last acceptable stereotypes, and we are often ourselves the promoter of this stereotype. The idea of retirement takes on the aura of the end of usefulness. We retire or leave our position of

[01:17:55] responsibility? Contribution to begin what? The long wait for decline? What hill are you over when you turn 40? How many times do we say we are having a senior moment? How many times do you see stock images or emojis of older people with walkers or canes? Search for images of older people and what do you get? We talk about people still driving, still living in their own home. What images do these words convey? What about describing someone as young at heart? What does it mean to say you

[01:18:32] don't look a day over what? Words matter. Words convey feelings, prejudices, and stereotypes. Flipping the script means a societal shift in the perception of aging. For one of years of decline to one of continuing to live life to the fullest, whatever that may mean, from one of incapacity to capacity. Becca Levy, PhD, said based on her research presented in the Breaking the Age Code, and I quote, the single most important factor in determining the longevity, more important than

[01:19:09] gender, income, societal background, loneliness, or functional health, was how people thought about or approached the idea of old age. Dr. Levy continues, age beliefs, it turns out, can steal or add nearly eight years to your life. There are strengths and vulnerabilities at all times in life.

[01:19:31] These are to be celebrated as well as protected. We are very lucky that here in Fairfax we have services in place to support our residents at all stages of life, from children to older adults. That is the way society should operate. What we need to do now is change the narrative from supports for those who are in decline and vulnerable to supports for every stage in life. Flipping the script will require a thoughtful examination of our own personal views of growing older. I heard someone say they support older adults, but they are not one

[01:20:08] yet. Really? When will you become an older adult? I ask you to flip your script and join us in Reframing Aging. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you very much Kathy and I think for everyone who just heard that you can see why Kathy keeps us all in order well said and with that I think we're ready for a photo and if there's anyone else here for this that would like to come down please come on down and join us for a photo and I will be joined by

[01:20:48] let's see Supervisor Alcorn, Palchek, and Herity. Great next up we have a important resolution to

[01:23:21] honor the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon. And I know our speaker today is Wyn Dinh, who's here. If you could come on down. And we will, of course, have everyone come down when it's time to pose for a photo. And you are here. And with that, I am going to hand the gavel for a moment to Supervisor Smith so that I can read the following resolution.

[01:23:45] Whereas April 30th, 2025, marks the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon, a pivotal event that concluded the Vietnam War and led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese people who fled their homeland in search of freedom.

[01:24:03] And whereas these refugees risked their lives, faced perilous journeys, and encountered numerous challenges, with many resettling in the United States, forming a large Vietnamese-American

community of over 70,000 in northern Virginia, including thousands in Fairfax County.

[01:24:20] And whereas over the past five decades, the Vietnamese American community has significantly contributed to Fairfax County's culture, economy, and civic life through active participation in the military, public service, entrepreneurship, education, community building, and service on state and county boards and commissions.

[01:24:42] And whereas Vietnamese Americans have built successful businesses, cultural groups, and places of worship in Fairfax County, especially along the Eden Center Corridor, known as the heart of the East Coast Vietnamese community. And whereas last year, Falls Church City honorarily designated the 6,600 and 6,700 blocks of Wilson Boulevard as Saigon Boulevard in the Eden Center of Falls Church to honor the contributions of the Vietnamese American community.

[01:25:12] And whereas Fairfax County recognizes the deep historical trauma caused by the fall of Saigon and the courage, the courage of those who rebuilt their lives in new communities while contributing meaningful to the fabric of American society.

[01:25:29] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, on behalf of all residents, hereby commemorates the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon and honors the Vietnamese-American community for its enduring resilience, strength, and countless contributions to the life in Fairfax County and across the United States.

[01:25:50] I'll second that motion along with Supervisor Palchuk and Bierman. Any discussion on the motion? Yes. Thank you, Madam Vice Chair. This is a really important resolution. Obviously, the 50th anniversary is what prompted this, but I think it's also a really important time for us to honor all the contributions that the Vietnamese community makes to Fairfax County on an everyday basis.

[01:26:16] And I think anywhere you go in Fairfax County, you can see this. But this particular resolution marking the fall of Saigon and the 50th anniversary is important for a lot of reasons. One, like I always say with history, is so we never forget.

[01:26:33] We understand what happened, and we always try to do better. To me, that's one of the major roles that history plays. The second reason is 50 years is a long time. So we, of course, have a lot of children in our community now. that maybe don't even fully comprehend or understand what the fall of Saigon meant, and even in our Vietnamese community, making sure that we understand that and that we know those challenges moving forward and that our children and all of our children never forget these things.

[01:27:07] So certainly an educational opportunity, but also a celebration for how far we've come. I was really glad to be out there when we unveiled with some of my colleagues, when we unveiled the new road name at Eden Center, which to some folks didn't seem like a big deal, but it was a really big deal because not only do we celebrate places like Eden Center every day, but it's important for us to say that this community has a lot of people from Vietnam originally and that we want them to be able to continue to celebrate proudly

[01:27:42] uh, their culture, uh, and still proudly be Americans contributing, uh, to our community. And, and those things are so important to, to always reinforce, um, especially at a time where there's a lot of talk about immigration and, and other challenges, uh, in our community. It's important to realize that our nation was built, uh, on immigration, um, and that we're proud to be a richly diverse community in

Fairfax County that adds value every single day. You know, I've, I've said this many times before, I'll say it again, one of the greatest things about our Fairfax County Public School programs is that any classroom you're in, you can travel

[01:28:22] the world without ever leaving that classroom. Just talk to your classmates, learn. One of the most pivotal memories of my childhood and someone that I'm a very close friend of who introduced me to my wife, her parents had recently immigrated from Vietnam to United States. And because of my friendship with her in kindergarten, I learned things and I learned things about Vietnamese culture, about food, about things that get celebrated that I would have not known had I not been able to have that interaction. And those are the kind of things we can never take

[01:28:58] for granted in Fairfax County. And that's what a richly diverse community brings value to all people, and including certainly with our Vietnamese Americans. And so as we think about this 50th anniversary and think about the trauma and the challenges that so many people faced 50 years ago, we know that some of those challenges are still here, but that we are a much, much better community today because of our cultural diversity, and that's something we can never forget. So thank you, Madam Vice Chair.

[01:29:30] Thank you. Supervisor Palchuk. Thank you, Madam Vice Chair. Thank you so much to everyone who's here. I know we have a long meeting ahead, and I just want to give a small shout-out. As the chairman said, there are so many generations now, right, that 50 years, that have been living here, that have their children and grandchildren here, and that while a large portion of the community may be based at the Eden Center, so much of the Vietnamese community, the arts, the culture, the food, the businesses, The members, the students are across the county and across our region.

[01:30:08] The leaders, I believe I see in the back hiding, a delegate, and she is here. Okay, yes. Are there more? Yeah, a delegate, Tran is here, and Tram is here as well. Nguyen, I believe, is that Tram in the back too?

[01:30:24] Yeah, they're hiding. So we have some leaders who are now leaders in our community. And recently, this past couple of years, I have had the opportunity to meet with two groups that are really making and continuing to make a difference in the community. One of them is the Viet Place Collective, and I believe some of you are here today.

[01:30:44] And those of us who do work in, especially in culture and advocacy, are always learning something new. And I want to thank all the members, the volunteer members of the Viet Place Collective, some of the leaders who are here today, for the work they do to, as they say, build power across generations to uplift and uphold the Vietnamese community's legacy in the DMV.

[01:31:07] And I thank you, and I know we thank you for your collective efforts in all that you do. I also want to thank, I don't think she's here with us today, but Van Nguyen, who created Mosaic Arts, who leads the Aging Adults Photography Contest, and who spends her time ensuring that everyone in our community, our immigrant community, our community members of all ages, have a place to display, to grow their art, and to be fulfilled both financially, but also in the words and in the emotions and in the work of the arts,

[01:31:45] and the arts especially of our immigrant community. And she has a model for a sculpture that's sitting in my office that makes me cry almost every time I see it. And it is members standing in line,

holding up boats, and it's called Migration.

[01:32:06] and it really shows the beauty and the strength of migration and what it brings to our community, and that people of all ages, of all backgrounds, of all abilities should be welcome here and should have the opportunity to thrive.

[01:32:21] So I want to thank everyone here from our elected leaders to our representatives and our groups who help ensure that we do an even better job every day and learn how to better uplift and build that power across our community members.

[01:32:38] So thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Powchick, Supervisor Herity. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm in charge. I get to take a break finally. I have Supervisor Walkinshaw Jimenez and then Herity. Thank you, Madam Chair. I was sharing this morning with some of the folks who came for the reception about my grandfather.

[01:33:05] And my grandfather immigrated to this country from Scotland. He was six years old. He was an orphan. He came on a boat from Scotland. He went on to become a foreign service officer, and he worked for an agency called USAID.

[01:33:24] And he worked in Vietnam. In the years before the fall of Saigon, he was a pacification chief. So he worked alongside the Vietnamese government in Saigon and the U.S. military to do economic development projects throughout Vietnam to build schools and to help communities and villages thrive and grow.

[01:33:49] And he had complex views on the war and the way that leadership in Washington administered the U.S. involvement in the war, but he did not have complex views on the people of Vietnam. He loved the people of Vietnam, and he was so proud that this country embraced those who fled Vietnam on April 30, 1975, and was so proud till his final days of the contributions that Vietnamese people made to our community here and to our nation.

[01:34:28] So it's an important reminder to us today that we're a richer community. We are a richer nation in so many ways because we welcomed so many thousands of refugees from Vietnam. And I thank you all for coming here to join us today to help us recognize that.

[01:34:47] Thank you. Thank you. Supervisor Jimenez. Thank you, Madam Chair. And what a great way to start off this morning, but with this wonderful reception that we had. And it was so great seeing so many friends, so many folks from amazing came out. You know, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, you and I were there at the Eden Center when the honorary naming of Saigon Boulevard happened.

[01:35:08] And it was a great day with so many folks just attending and such happiness. And it was a great way to honor Vietnamese Americans. And we continue to do that today, the culture and the food and all the contributions that are made, not only here in Fairfax County, but throughout the country.

[01:35:25] And, you know, it is so important, Mr. Chairman, as you mentioned, to shine a light on these contributions, not only from the Vietnamese American community, but so many different communities that have contributions. And I know that that's something that's important for us in Mason District, where we look at diversity as not a weakness, but our strength.

[01:35:43] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you. Supervisor Herody. Yes, and I just want to say I appreciate your shirt that you're wearing today. You know, the Vietnamese community is just such a great

example of the American dream. where if you work hard, you can get ahead and anything is possible.

[01:36:02] Your successes as a community in business, in the arts, and in our school system, and in education, is just a great example of the American dream. And thank you so much for what you do for our community to make it a better place.

[01:36:19] And congratulations on all your successes. Thank you. Seeing no further discussion, all those in favor of the motion say aye. Aye. Anyone opposed? any abstentions that motion passes unanimously mr chairman thank you vice chairman smith and i appreciate all of my colleagues support of that resolution i also want to add i should have mentioned this earlier that i know and i can tell we have a significant number of vietnam war military families here and we really appreciate you making the time to come out as well and that But also, they're reviewing this with national media, SBTN, national TV station,

[01:36:58] well-known, the Vietnamese community, to also make sure that this word of our celebration today certainly extends well beyond this auditorium. I want to thank them and the other media sources for covering this important event today in Fairfax County as well.

[01:37:14] And with that, I am going to turn the microphone over to Wyndon. Welcome. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. members of the board, distinguished guests behind me. Thank you for inviting the Vietnamese American community to join you for this historic occasion, not just for our community, but for American history. It's been exactly 50 years since the fall of the Republic of Vietnam, the end of the Vietnam War. My mom, who's sitting in the front row, reminded me today, 50 years ago, we fled Vietnam.

[01:37:46] So, well, so many things could have happened, but millions of Vietnamese civilians lost their lives and over 58,000 Americans sacrificed their lives in the name of freedom. All of our families bear the scars of the Vietnam War.

[01:38:03] Since 1975, several millions of Vietnamese people have fled Vietnam and risk perishing then to live under communist rule. The U.S., Canada, the U.K., France, and Australia agreed to accept Vietnamese refugees as those numbers swelled in the late 1970s, particularly with the massive boat people exodus out of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

[01:38:30] Today, the global overseas population of the Vietnamese people is about 6 million, and in the Commonwealth, the latest numbers I could find on open source is about 60,000, with the preponderance in the great Fairfax County, right here.

[01:38:47] First generation of Vietnamese arrived in the Commonwealth and in the United States in 1975 at the end of the war. They are our parents, our grandparents, fleeing an imminent communist regime, seeking freedom and opportunity for their families.

[01:39:02] They worked multiple jobs, long hours, learned a new language, culture, and a new way of life while raising their families, paying taxes, and building a life. For my dad, the hardest thing was understanding the rules of American football. If you don't understand it, dad, let me tell you one more time, but he is a lifelong Washington Commanders fan.

[01:39:24] Even though they shouldered these war traumas, personal grief, and other challenges, they were determined that their kids would take advantage of the magnificent Fairfax County public education system. Many of us in the audience are products of the county's public school system.

[01:39:42] I, for one, I'm just going to shout out Garfield Elementary, Key Intermediate, and Herndon High, Herndon Hornets grads. So there you have it. Representing some of our founding families in the county are also behind me. These are the faces of the community's first families, if you will.

[01:39:59] They built these businesses, contributed to the tax base, and raised their families to establish today's thriving Vietnamese-American community. In the 50 years since the Vietnamese people arrived, we're proud to establish or contribute to various business sectors. As you all well know, academia, governments at state, local, federal levels.

[01:40:18] And right now, I'd like to highlight one of our great examples of leaders in our community, Ms. Bibi Nguyen, who leads the Reston Community Center. Bibi, can you stand? She exemplifies excellence.

[01:40:35] Collectively, the Vietnamese-American businesses in the Fairfax County cannot be oversimplified. Their businesses ranging from professional services, medical, dental practice, law firms, salons, spas, restaurants, cafes, media, entertainment, and tons of pho restaurants.

[01:40:51] The economic impact of American businesses means a thriving community, great food, prosperity for the county's tax base, which allows for the best public education, parks, and other vital county services.

[01:41:07] Today is a reflection honoring those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the name of freedom. And if you would just give me a couple minutes, I just want to say thank you to our older generation and their native language.

[01:41:21] and while I still remember it.

[01:41:58] I know we make fun of them, but really, thank you to the Boomers for having the fortitude to leave Vietnam. Today, also to recognize the combined efforts of the tens of thousands of Vietnamese Americans who choose to live in Fairfax County and make it their home. A place to raise their families, build new businesses, contribute to the very fabric which makes America special.

[01:42:20] It is through their leadership, by example, that my generation, and we're getting old too, And the following generations will have a template of what it means to be a good citizen and a good neighbor in Fairfax County. So thank you very much. Thank you, Winn.

[01:42:36] Thank you very much, Winn. Inspiring words, well said.

[01:42:51] And you pointed out a star here for us in Fairfax County, and so you started something dangerous. And that is I'm going to point out a star who's my deputy chief of staff who did a lot of work making sure that today was successful as well. and that is Natalie Nguyen-Woodrup, who's been here.

[01:43:08] And so I really appreciate all of you being here today for this big event, and it is that. And we must leave here making sure we're continuing to celebrate, remember the challenges that still rest in our community, but also continue to prop up all who live in Fairfax County and always honor the great success stories of our Vietnamese-American neighbors here in Fairfax County.

[01:43:40] And so with that, before we take a picture, I'm going to stand by for one moment because I know we also have with us Fatima from Congressman Jerry Connolly's office, who also has a surprise. She wants to share with us. And then after that, we will all pose for a very large but very beautiful photo.

[01:44:00] Hi, everyone. I have a congressional record from Congressman Jerry Connolly. I don't know if you can see, but it looks like this. So I'll read a bit of it. I won't read all of it. just to save time. So April 30th, 2025, marks 50 years since the pivotal moment that signaled both the end of the Vietnam War and the beginning of a new chapter for millions of Vietnamese refugees, many of whom have made extraordinary contributions to communities across the US, particularly in the Northern Virginia area.

[01:44:34] On April 30th, 1975, the world watched as the city of Saigon fell. For many, it marked a day of loss, loss of country, of family, and of home. Yet it also marked the beginning of a remarkable story of resilience, strength, and hope.

[01:44:49] In the years that followed, hundreds of thousands fled Vietnam in search of liberty and opportunity, many finding a new beginning here in the U.S. Northern Virginia is home to one of the largest and most vibrant Vietnamese communities in the country.

[01:45:05] The businesses, traditions, and values that the Vietnamese-American community upholds continue to enrich our region and make invaluable contributions. The Vietnamese-American community story is one of perseverance, courage, and hope. Their contributions have made our community stronger and better.

[01:45:23] Their journey embodies the ideals we hold deep, perseverance through hardship, strength in adversity, and an enduring hope for a better future. I ask that you join me in honoring this history, paying tribute to the lives lost and forever changed, and reaffirming our commitment to the universal value of freedom, democracy, and human dignity.

[01:45:45] Thank you. Thank you, Fatima. Thank you, Fatima, and thank you, Congressman Connolly, for supporting that, being put in the congressional record. And with that, I think we're ready for a photo.

[01:46:02] So if all of you are here for this photo, can come on down and join us. We will pose.

[01:46:15] Two rows. Get them as tight as possible, okay, if you can help us. Two rows. Female footer? Male footer? Good to go. Either side. Two rows.

[01:46:30] Stand by.

[01:48:46] We're going to move on.

[01:51:19] We're going to move on to our next and final presentation, which is a proclamation to recognize April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. And this was requested by myself, Supervisor Palchuk, and Supervisor Lusk. And our speaker today is Ani Lee Malera, who is here with Healthy Families and is a parent ambassador.

[01:51:40] If you're here, if you could come on down. And you are not alone, which is great to see coming down. And then also with all these folks in the audience, we're going to have a challenge, Tony, with another big photo here in a moment.

[01:51:58] I can feel it coming. And with that, I am going to turn to Supervisor Palczyk to read the proclamation. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I'm so excited to see our auditorium full of blue and our youngest five-year-old member coming down who sat so patiently through all of this.

[01:52:17] Whereas childhood trauma, including abuse and neglect, remains a critical public health issue, often leading to lasting psychological, emotional, and physical effects for children that can extend into

adulthood. And whereas prevention and early intervention are essential to reducing the prevalence and impact of child abuse and neglect.

[01:52:39] And whereas Fairfax County is dedicated to preventing childhood trauma and supporting families through the Department of Family Services, human services agencies, public schools, and community partners. And whereas in FY 2023, nearly 3.1 million children nationwide were involved with child Protective Services, according to the Federal Administration for Children and Families, and whereas in Virginia alone, more than 53,000 children were involved in CPS in fiscal year 2024, including more than 3,600 children right here in Fairfax County, highlighting the ongoing

[01:53:16] need to ensure every child's safety and well-being in our community, and whereas through education, advocacy, collaboration, and active community awareness, the trauma of child abuse is preventable, and we can create a future in which every child grows up in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment.

[01:53:36] Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, on behalf of all residents of Fairfax County, does hereby proclaim April 2025 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Fairfax County and urges all residents, community agencies, faith groups, and businesses to renew their commitment to protecting children, strengthening families, and promoting resilience, healing, and well-being across our county. I'm happy to second that motion, along with Supervisor Herity. Discussion on the motion, Supervisor Palchuk. We've had a long morning.

[01:54:13] I think everyone's ready to hear from our members, and I just want to thank everyone in this room and everyone out in the community who is working every single day to help ensure that we provide prevention, that we educate and protect our families, and that we support them and help ensure that it truly takes the village and our Fairfax County village to ensure that all of our kids are able to grow and thrive in a safe and protected environment.

[01:54:42] So thank you all for everything you do, and thank you for being here today. Thank you, Supervisor Powczyk. Further discussion? Supervisor Lusk? I'll just quickly echo some of the comments and thank our chair for our Human Services Committee for the comments that you made, because I think this issue is such an important one.

[01:55:02] And I had the opportunity when my wife worked in Child Protective Services, going out on some of the calls. Back then, they didn't have the police accompanying the case managers and didn't have the opportunity to have support in some of those outreach calls.

[01:55:20] And I had the opportunity to make sure that if something happened, I was at least there and I could help. And I know how important that work is and appreciate our family services department here in Fairfax County, their partnerships with nonprofits as well as the schools and thinking about how we have a network that can help identify when a child is in danger and to put in place the mechanisms to address that.

[01:55:49] And I think that is so vital and so important. And when we think about the future, we have an obligation to make sure our kids are safe and that they have every chance possible to be successful. And this morning I had the opportunity to meet with Ryland, amazing, amazing dog that is used to provide some of the care services.

[01:56:16] Such a sweet, sweet dog. And I can only imagine how important his role is in helping some of the kids to tell their story and to feel safe. So I just want to acknowledge I had a few minutes to spend with him and just can imagine how impactful he is in the work that's trying to be done with family services.

[01:56:39] So with that, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Supervisor Love. Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Probably 15 years ago now, I was reading then-Supervisor Cook's sporadic beacon. I was a diligent reader of it. And there was an advertisement for a county mentoring program that was looking for mentors.

[01:57:00] And it said that they needed men who could pass a background check. So I said, finally, something I'm qualified to do. And I signed up, and I was matched with two young boys who had experienced abuse.

[01:57:17] And I saw over the course of a decade plus with them the incredible work that so many people in Fairfax County do to support families like theirs. And I saw what it did for them.

[01:57:32] And today, one of them is a student at a university here in the Commonwealth of Virginia. I won't name it. Anger some folks up here. It's not UVA, but a great Virginia university. And another is in the workforce here in Fairfax County, and both are thriving.

[01:57:54] And they're thriving because of their efforts and their mother's efforts, but also because of the work that so many people in county government, in the school system, in the nonprofit sector did to give them the supports that they needed to thrive.

[01:58:09] So what you all are doing is so important, and I'm deeply appreciative of the work that you do on behalf of so many kids and families in Fairfax County. Thank you, Supervisor Walkinshaw. And let me also thank all of you. This is Team Blue up here, and I know this is not nearly all the folks who are involved in this work, both, you know, as Supervisor Walkinshaw mentioned, in the public and private nonprofit sectors.

[01:58:34] I mean, this takes a whole team. I also want to acknowledge the emotional toll this work can bring. Some really great moments that I know are the reason why so many people come back to this work, those great success stories, but also just hearing the stories and seeing the challenges that some of our young people are facing has got to be really tough.

[01:58:59] And we up here appreciate that, the emotional attachment to this work and the fact that it's not for everyone. Thankfully, you all are here doing that work because it's so, so important and can make the lifetime difference in a child's trajectory, without a doubt.

[01:59:17] And so we very much appreciate our entire team who work on these issues. And you can't have a proclamation to recognize April as Child Abuse Prevention Month if you don't have a team out there actually doing the work behind the words on this proclamation.

[01:59:33] And we see you and know that and appreciate you. And so with that, I think we're ready for a vote. All those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. And as I mentioned, we have with us today Annalie Melara with Healthy Families.

[01:59:51] As a parent ambassador, welcome. The floor is yours. Thank you so much. Hello. How are you all doing? My name is Annalie Melara, and I am a former Department of Family Services, Healthy Family Fairfax participant, and a current Healthy Family Parent Ambassador and advisory council member.

[02:00:08] I started my journey with Healthy Families in 2019 when I was pregnant with my second child. This was my first pregnancy in the United States, so I felt many emotions, but I was excited but nervous to be having a baby in a new environment. When my healthy family's family support specialist, Miss Sonia, and I had our first visit, I wasn't sure how it would go, but I can now say healthy family changed my life.

[02:00:34] Miss Sonia gave me the confidence I needed it and always affirmed the good things I was doing as a mother, and she worked with me and my daughter, Rose. We loved our scheduled home visits and anticipated activities Ms. Sonia would bring next. I enjoyed sharing the new things that Rose was learning and she developed.

[02:00:53] Our relationship grew, and I really appreciate how Sonia valued me as a person and wanted me to grow as a mom. I never felt judged, which was really important to me. She also helped us with things that were good for my entire family. It was a challenging time when we realized Rose had possible development delay.

[02:01:11] Ms. Sonia referred us to infant-tolder connection to support Roe's development, and it was just amazing to see her progress, master new skills, and start developing on task. I had to learn to be patient through this process, and Sonia always listened, gave advice, and encouraged me.

[02:01:27] When I was assigned to graduate from healthy families, I couldn't believe how much my daughter and my entire family had developed in three years. I shared things that I learned with my husband, Brian, and it made us stronger parents. Misona included my other children in her work with us, and the program support meant a lot to me.

[02:01:46] Then I joined the Healthy Family Parent Ambassador Program, which allowed parents to connect and participate in their community. At first, I was very shy, but over time, I realized I needed to speak up and have a voice so my daughter feels she can have a place in the world. This group has helped me build my confidence and made me want to help other parents.

[02:02:06] It has given me the opportunity to meet with other families from different backgrounds and learn from each other. Serving on the Healthy Family Advisory Council has allowed me to meet with new community leaders who care about the opinion of family. It's improved my communication skills and inspired me to help other families in the future. Every time I see a mom with a baby, I wish I could run and tell her, "Hey, have you heard about Healthy Family?" Healthy Family has helped my family in so many ways and I am happy to have been part of this amazing program. Thank you so much.

[02:02:40] Thank you, Analee. Thank you for telling your story, but also thank you for all the work you continue to do. And thank you, Rose, for being here. We're so glad you're here.

[02:02:56] And with that, I think we're ready for a photo. And if the folks who are here could come on down.

[02:03:03] We're going to move on. Next on our agenda is board matters.

[02:06:56] And these have been distributed digitally. We'll go alphabetically by district, following myself and Supervisor Smith. And I am going to turn the gavel to Supervisor Smith for a moment. Let me make sure we have, we can be heard here.

[02:07:16] I'm going to turn the gavel to Supervisor Smith for a moment so that I can read the following board matters. First, I move to approve without objection the proclamation requests listed in this

document. You can see there's a lot of them. I'm not going to read all of them.

[02:07:32] I will take advantage of this opportunity, though, to tell my colleagues that this is all it takes to get a proclamation. So maybe we can all shorten our board matters this morning and in the future because listing them is sufficient. We'll read the whole proclamation when the groups come forward or when we go to the event for them.

[02:07:51] And so I would move without objection those proclamations listed in this document. Without objection? It is so ordered. Thank you. And then finally, I just have a quick announcement, and that is that we have changed the chairman's New Year's reception, and we've moved this to a spring social instead, partly because I had a couple rounds of COVID that canceled it, partly because it's just safer to do it in the spring than it is to do it in the winter based on weather and other issues going on.

[02:08:20] And so I announced that that is on Tuesday, May 20th, 2025, from 5 to 7 p.m. here at the Government Center. This event is on a Board of Supervisors Committee Day, at the conclusion of a committee day. And I will also say that we normally do a Fairfax County Animal Shelter donation drive at our event.

[02:08:41] And since this year is the Friends of Fairfax County Animal Shelter's 20th anniversary, And to honor this milestone and support their mission, they have requested and we're encouraging those wishing to contribute to make monetary donations through their official website, which is ffcas.org backlash donate.

[02:09:01] And this ensures your generosity directly benefits all of the pets at our animal shelter. And again, these funds fund vital programs such as emergency medical care, dental treatments, parasite prevention, and more for animals that are in need in our Fairfax County animal shelter.

[02:09:19] And so we'll be distributing more information about that when the date gets closer, but wanted to make that announcement for my colleague's awareness. And with that, we are going to move on. And these board matters are what these board matters and the rest of our agenda this morning are what stand between us and having a chance to have a lunch break. So I would encourage folks to be short and sweet supervisor smith thank you mr chairman this is a motion to change the date and time of a public hearing the board of supervisors public hearing on the proposed zoning ordinance amendment for secondary uses in planned development housing and planned development commercial

[02:09:56] districts and submission requirements for final development plans is currently planned for may 13 2024 at 4 pm due to scheduling issues and the need to accommodate another hearing that is anticipated to have significant public testimony on May 13th, this public hearing will need to move to a future date. The Board matter on March 4, 2025 referenced the proposed hearing date of May 13, so I am making this motion to ensure clarity in the record. The scheduled Planning Commission public hearing on May 7 will not change as a result of this motion. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board of Supervisors reschedule its public hearing on the proposed zoning ordinance

[02:10:34] amendment for secondary uses in plan development housing and plan development commercial districts and submission requirements for final development plans from may 13 to june 24 2025 at 4 pm and then chair will second that motion is there any discussion seeing and hearing none all those in favor please say aye aye any opposed any abstentions that motion carries supervisor smith thank you um i have a board matter asking for a recognition of nikita ramakrishnan an eighth grade student who

attends rocky run who won the fairfax county spelling bee and will be going to scripts and i'm asking that can be either inside or outside of the board without objection that

[02:11:12] is so ordered supervisor smith i do have one announcement that the board offices have already been notified that there's a vacancy on the board of zoning appeals the fairfax county board of zoning appeals has an upcoming opening to fill a vacancy created by a member who will be resigning in June to move out of state. The term will begin in June and run through April 15, 2028.

[02:11:34] Interested candidates should apply by Friday, May 9, 2025, to the Fairfax Circuit Court. Information about the position and the application process is available on the BZA's website. The easiest way to find that is to go to the county's website and search BZA.

[02:11:49] The Department of Planning and Development and the Office of Public Affairs are publicizing the vacancy, and have sent information to each board office to include in your newsletters. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Supervisor Smith. Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[02:12:05] I have two board matters. First is a proclamation recognizing Air Quality Awareness Week, which is May 5th through 9th. Mr. Chairman, I'll ask without objection that the Board of Supervisors direct OPA to draft a proclamation designated May 5th through 9th, 2025 as Air Quality Awareness Week in Fairfax County for presentation at the Clean Air Partners Lawn Equipment Exchange event at Ace Hardware on May 24th and to publicize the Clean Air Partners Lawn Care Equipment Exchange Program. They need a shorter name for that in cooperation with the OEC. And without objection, that is so ordered.

[02:12:43] Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Next is a proclamation recognizing the 10-year anniversary of the Friends of Royal Lake. Mr. Chairman, I ask without objection that the Board of Supervisors direct OPA to draft a proclamation to honor the contributions of the Friends of Royal Lake on the occasion of their 10th anniversary for presentation at their anniversary celebration at Royal Lake Park on April 28, 2025. And without objection, that is so ordered. That's it. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Walkinshaw. Supervisor Beerman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Brevity's never been my strong suit but i'll try um first i have a board matter appointing john goodwin godwin to

[02:13:22] the young adults advisory council we usually do this not via board matter but we aren't going to have appointments until june 24th so therefore i move that the board of supervisors approve the appointment of john godwin to serve as the drainsville representative on the young adults advisory council effective immediately and i'm happy to second that motion is there any discussion Seeing and hearing none.

[02:13:43] All those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. Supervisor Beerman. My second board matter is with Supervisor Herity. It is to recognize Langley High School for having won its fourth consecutive Northern Virginia Scholastic Hockey League Championship on March 5, 2025 with a 6-4 win over Battlefield High School, obviously taking some inspiration from Alexander Ovechkin.

[02:14:10] I therefore, Mr. Chairman, I ask that the board direct staff to prepare a resolution to recognize the 2025 Langley High School hockey team for their fourth consecutive NVSHL championship to be presented at the May 13th, 2025 meeting, along with the other winter sports recognitions.

[02:14:32] And without objection, that is so ordered. Supervisor Behrman. Great. Board matter number three is McLean Community Center Election Candidates. The board matter itself includes with it a letter

from the McLean Community Center with 15 Drainsville Small District 1A tax residents, six adults, and nine youths who have successfully petitioned to become candidates and have their names placed on ballots for the McLean Community Center Governing Board elections.

[02:15:03] Three adult and two youth board positions are open. So I ask without objection that the record reflect receipt by the Board of Supervisors of the attached list of candidates for the MCC governing board election. And without objection, that is so ordered and good to see a lot of youth candidates on there.

[02:15:23] Watch out, Supervisor Behrman. Supervisor Behrman. Yeah, exactly. The last board matter is a board matter jointly with everyone up on this dais at the moment, proclaiming June 2025 as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Pride Month.

[02:15:44] I will save most of my remarks on this board matter to when we present the proclamation, but therefore I move that the Board of Supervisors proclaim June 2025 as LGBTQ plus Pride Month in Fairfax County and direct staff to prepare a proclamation recognizing June 2025 as LGBTQ Pride Month to be presented to the Nova PRISM Center at the June 10, 2025 board meeting and to invite members of the LGBTQ plus community to that meeting.

[02:16:15] Thank you. And we're going to vote on that. The chair is happy to second that motion. Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing and hearing none, all those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? And that motion carries nine to zero. Supervisor Herity being out of the boardroom. Supervisor Beerman.

[02:16:34] I miscounted because I think I said fourth when I was only on my third. I have a fifth board matter. This is the statewide bus and maintenance Rodeo. Fairfax County recently hosted the annual statewide bus and maintenance Rodeo at the Westox Bus Garage.

[02:16:52] Bus operators and maintenance professionals from jurisdictions around the Commonwealth participate in the annual Rodeo. They compete in several timed events that test problem-solving and technical skills in key areas. Maintenance technicians took a knowledge exam and then identified and diagnosed a range of mechanical issues across vehicle systems.

[02:17:12] Bus operators compete in a timed obstacle course designed to evaluate driving skills, including serpentine maneuvers, difficult turns, reversing, braking, vehicle inspection, simulated bus stop, and navigating a diminished clearance scenario. And we will have the next one be televised.

[02:17:27] Thanks, Rebecca. Fairfax Connector continued its outstanding performance in the annual competition, winning the overall combined maintenance and operator score and bringing home the Virginia State Bus and Maintenance Rodeo Traveling Trophy. Therefore, I move that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to prepare a resolution to recognize the Fairfax Connector winners of the Virginia State Bus and Maintenance Rodeo to be presented at a future board meeting.

[02:17:51] And without objection, that is so ordered, Supervisor Bierman. Great. We will have to have some video testimony when we have that proclamation. Thank you. That's all I've got. Thank you, Supervisor Bierman. Supervisor Lusk. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've got two items.

[02:18:09] The first is the Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week in Fairfax County. This is a joint board matter with all the members here on the Board of Supervisors. And very quickly, the Peace Officers

Memorial Day is recognized annually on May 15th to honor the police officers who have fallen or who have been disabled in the line of duty.

[02:18:31] National Police Week is the calendar week during which the memorial falls. This year, National Police Week will be recognized May 12, 2025 through May 18, 2025. Fairfax County Police Department has lost six personnel in the line of duty. I will reference those individuals at the date of the proclamation.

[02:18:50] So with that, Mr. Chairman, I move the Board of Supervisors designate April 15, 2025 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and designate May 12, 2025 through May 18, 2025 as Peace Week in Fairfax, Police Week in Fairfax County to coincide with the national observances.

[02:19:10] To further move, the Board of Supervisors direct the Office of Public Affairs to promote these observances and to prepare proclamations to be presented either within or outside of the boardroom. And without objection, that motion carries. That is so ordered. I'm sorry. Supervisor Lusk.

[02:19:25] Okay, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And then second, Stroke Smart Board Matter. Again, Mr. Chairman, stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in Virginia and the United States. Strokes are the leading cause of long-term disability, putting a tremendous emotional and financial burden on individuals, families, and communities.

[02:19:43] Every man to stroke goes untreated, 1.9 million brain cells die. Someone experiencing stroke only has four and a half hours from the time symptoms begin to receive clot-busting medication. So with that, Mr. Chairman, I will therefore move that the Board of Supervisors designate May 2025 as Stroke Smart Month in Fairfax County to coincide with National Stroke Smart Awareness Month.

[02:20:10] I further move the Board of Supervisors direct the county executive to assign the Office of Public Affairs to prepare a proclamation to be presented within or outside of the boardroom and to implement a public awareness campaign with the goal of educating Fairfax County residents on recognizing stroke symptoms and the importance of dialing 9-1-1 immediately.

[02:20:30] Thank you. I'll second that motion, saying a motion. All those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. Is that it, Supervisor? Thank you very much. Thank you. Supervisor Alcoy. Thank you.

[02:20:46] I have one board matter and a couple of quick announcements. The board matter has been circulated, so I won't read the whole thing, but it relates to Fellowship Square's 65th anniversary, which was started in 1960. There are two Fellowship Square facilities in Reston.

[02:21:04] There's the Lake Ann House and there is Hunter's Woods. So these provide 240 units and 224 units of senior affordable housing, respectively. So this is a wonderful anniversary. So without objection, I would ask that the Office of Public Affairs prepare a resolution to celebrate Fairfax Square's 65th anniversary to be presented out of the boardroom on May 29th.

[02:21:33] Without objection, it is so ordered. Thank you. Thank you. And then a couple of announcements. First of all, today is Earth Day, but the Hunter Mill District Office is going to hold an Earth Day event on Sunday, April 27th, from 3 to 5 p.m.

[02:21:50] in what has become known as Tyson's Forest. This actually is a much longer name, but I won't get into that now. This is happening in conjunction with the Tyson's Community Alliance, and there will be

family-friendly activities. It's going to be a stream cleanup, a nature walk, a native seed ball distribution, which if you haven't done, is actually kind of fun.

[02:22:11] And also, I'll be presenting the board's proclamation to recognize International Dark Sky Week. So we'll have a number of organizations preparing, including the Jane Goodall Institute's Roots and Shoots Program at Langley High School, Dark Sky Nova, Northern Virginia Bird Alliance, Sustainability Matters, and Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions.

[02:22:32] So I hope everyone who's interested can join. I want to make sure that's out. And then finally, Madam Vice Chair, later this afternoon, there is a subcommittee at the state level that I serve on known as the Joint Subcommittee to Study Growing Transit Needs in Northern Virginia, also known as SJ28.

[02:22:52] So I'll have to miss any closed session that we have today. That meeting's from 2 to 4 p.m. in Tyson's, but I shall return after that meeting is over. So, thank you. Thank you very much, Supervisor Alcorn. Supervisor Jimenez.

[02:23:09] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have three board matters. The first one is a joint board matter with yourself, Supervisor Lusk, and Supervisor Beerman. Mr. Chairman, the Deferred Retirement Option Program, also known as DROP, is a means of providing employees who choose to work beyond their normal retirement dates the flexibility to elect to receive some of the retirement benefits in a lump sum, rather than continuing to earn additional years of retirement service and higher monthly annuities.

[02:23:40] There have been many benefits since DROP was approved and implemented to staff and the county more generally. The program was adopted in response to employee interest in added benefit flexibility and management's recognition that DROP would assist in workforce planning, given that it both encouraged employees to stay beyond their normal retirement date and provided a more definitive date of retirement for planning purposes.

[02:24:07] Given the success of DROP, I believe there are ways to enhance the program further that could include potential cost savings to the county by adding value to the sick time accrued by those in the program. As it currently stands, sick time is not paid. out once an individual either completes their three-year period that drop allows for or exits the program sooner. Specific to public safety and due to minimum staffing requirements, if an employee calls out sick while in drop, the county must pay that employee their hourly rate as well as the rate

[02:24:40] to the individual who replaces them on any given shift. The rate of the employee who is called in to work can in some instances be higher than that of who they replace. The dollar amounts can be more significant over the course of a fiscal year than a time when we face challenging fiscal realities.

[02:25:00] However, it is my belief that it is a worthwhile endeavor to examine the potential benefits of adding value to sick time accrued while in drop as another tool to lower overtime costs. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, while I recognize there are variations in the duration that individuals remain in drop, I request that the Department of Management and Budget, along with any other appropriate county agencies, develop a pilot program specific to the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department that allows payout of sick time accrued while in drop. Such a program should be presented at the Personnel Committee, at the Board of Supervisors, with

[02:25:37] varying options to the level of payout. And I'm happy to second that motion and add that This is a request of staff to come back with this as an option to the committee for us to vet. Not approval of this,

but it is approval to have staff do the work to develop a pilot program that will be presented to us at a future committee meeting.

[02:26:00] Any further discussion? Supervisor Herity. Thank you for that clarification. So we're not approving the pilot, just the bring back the pilot. It's a study to go to the committee. Yes, second question. If it's a part of that presentation, we could get the amount of sick leave that's used during drop historically just so we kind of have a feel for how much is used.

[02:26:24] I'm more than happy to have our staff so work together to make sure that I think I'd like to understand how big that problem is. Absolutely. Thank you. That'll be part of the information coming back. Thank you. Okay. Any further discussions? Seeing and hearing none. All those in favor of the motion, please say aye.

[02:26:40] Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. Supervisor Jimenez. In trying to speed up some of this process, I'm going to be quick here. We have a proclamation requesting Ronald Kendall for his service on the Fairfax County Park Authority Board.

[02:26:58] So therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board direct the Office of Public Affairs to prepare a proclamation to be presented outside the boardroom to Ronald Kendall in his recognition of his years of dedicated service to the Fairfax County Park Authority and to the residents of Mason District. And without objection, that is so ordered. Supervisor Jimenez.

[02:27:16] Thank you. In my last board matter, first off, I'd like to say hello to Rose Chu, who's in the audience today. Thank you for being here, Rose. Mr. Chairman, after nearly 38 years of dedicated service to Fairfax County Health Care Advisory Board, Ms. Rose Chu has concluded her long and distinguished tenure as the Mason District representative. Since her appointment in 1987, Ms. Chu has been a steady and thoughtful voice on health care matters, contributing her expertise in health, economics, access to care, and insurance policy to help guide the county's public health initiatives. Her commitment to this work has been

[02:27:55] marked by integrity, empathy, and the tireless belief in equitable care for all. Throughout her time on the board, Ms. Chu demonstrated consistent support for the Fairfax County Health Department its critical mission of protecting the health and safety of all who live and work in our community.

[02:28:10] She served for many years as vice chair of the Health Care Advisory Board and most recently as one of its representatives to the county's Coordinating Council on Aging and Adults with Disabilities. Ms. Chu also played a pivotal role in expanding access to affordable health care through her service as chair of the Community Advisory Committee to the Community Health Care network from its inception in 1990 until its transition to the federally qualified healthcare center model in 2019. Her leadership helped ensure the delivery of consistent, compassionate, and high-quality care to the county's most valuable, vulnerable residents. Ms. Chu's

[02:28:49] contribution over nearly four decades have made a lasting impact on the health and well-being of Fairfax County residents, and her legacy of service will continue to guide her efforts in building a healthy, more equitable community. Therefore, without objection, I move that the board direct the Office of Public Affairs to prepare a proclamation to be presented in the boardroom to Ms. Rose Chu in recognition of her exceptional service to the Fairfax County Health Care Advisory Board and her enduring

commitment to the residents of Mason District and all of Fairfax County. And without objection, that is so ordered and Rose barely looks 38 years

[02:29:28] old. It's hard to believe that she was appointed 38 years ago, but Rose, amazing, and I know we'll have you back to properly recognize you, but amazing. Thank you. Supervisor Jimenez.

[02:29:48] Mr. Chairman, that is the last of my work matters. Thank you very much. Next up is Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The first item is a joint one with you to recognize May 11th through 17th, 2025 is economic development week. And economic development plays a critical role in all that we do. We start with the Economic Development Authority, our own Department of Economic Initiatives, economic development managers as well for the towns of Vienna and Herndon.

[02:30:17] The network, the partnership really that we have among all of us, chambers of commerces, colleges, universities, business support organization, it all really comes together to make Fairfax County really one of the most successful counties in the country. It's their tireless work, our focus on vitality of our community, quality of life, those all come together.

[02:30:38] And really the strategic initiatives that are a key part of that are all essential elements of how we create and have been so successful with that partnership. But the professionalism that they bring is the core element, the pathways, the career pathways and opportunities that come from that.

[02:30:54] Again, we can all be very, very thankful for all that they do on our behalf and for our community. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors hereby proclaims May 11th to 17th, 2025, this Economic Development Week in Fairfax County and honors the individuals and organizations whose mission is to strengthen and promote economic opportunity across our communities.

[02:31:16] And without objection, that is so ordered, Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The next item is adoption of the performance order to the Board's April 2025 quarterly report. That's jointly with Supervisor Bierman and Jimenez. The performance auditor to the board drafts draft reports for the third quarter fiscal year 2025 were presented at the April 8th, 2025 Audit Committee meeting.

[02:31:40] The first report, County Facilities Energy Efficiency Study, included recommendations to support the county's goals of reducing energy use in county facilities. The second report, EMS Billing Follow-Up Study, evaluated management's progress implementing previous recommendations from 2022, as well as current EMS billing practices with a recently onboarded billing vendor.

[02:32:06] The Audit Committee concurred with all recommendations, and the performance auditor to the board will follow up to ensure recommendations are implemented. Reports can be found at the committee meeting link below and have been distributed to board members electronically. And that link is Board of Supervisors Audit Committee meeting April 8, 2025, Board of Supervisors.

[02:32:25] Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we move that the Board of Supervisors approve the performance auditor uttered to the Board's April 2025 reports. I'm happy to second that motion. Discussion on the motion? We really had a robust discussion, and we've frankly learned a couple things.

[02:32:43] Number one is we have a long way to go with our operational energy strategy. We've made progress, but to some degree, maybe it's luck and to some degree, hard work. But we know our very aggressive goals for 2030 and 2040 are going to continue to take our focus.

[02:33:01] And on the EMS side, we have a new EMS vendor. The previous vendor was UnitedHealthcare. They had challenges, as we all know of, with, again, a number of challenges. We have a new vendor. They have been, I think, making good progress in not only marking or getting the backlog down, but also getting better results.

[02:33:19] But I think we have some real opportunities to generate millions of dollars of additional revenue by, I think, doing that work even better. So those are opportunities, particularly in our tight economic times, that can serve the county very, very well. Thank you, Supervisor Stork.

[02:33:37] All those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Fairfax County's, as I like to say, semi-quincentennial celebrations and the United States Army's semi-quincentennial birthday, this is jointly with yourself, Supervisor Laskin, Supervisor Herity. This year marks the beginning of our nation's semi-quincentennial celebrations, our 250th celebration. I'm going to summarize this to say there's many more things that are going to be happening, but on May 4th, 1775, George

[02:34:14] Washington departed his beloved Mount Vernon to attend the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, where he ultimately was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the newly created Continental Army. This moment will be recognized as part of the Revolutionary War Weekend at George Washington's Mount Vernon on May 4th at 1.30 with remarks from George Washington, as well as myself and Mount Vernon President and CEO Doug Bradburn.

[02:34:39] We hope that, Mr. Chairman, you'll be able to come as well, as well as the U.S. Army Secretary, Driscoll. Following those remarks, there will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony to be held at the Patriots Path, which is Mount Vernon's brand-new installation of military encampment for guests to visit year-round.

[02:34:56] There's many, many other things that are happening, but this year marks the 250th birthday of the United States Army, a milestone that honors the service, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment of our nation's oldest military branch. Again, established June 14, 1775, the Army has played a vital role in defending our freedoms, upholding the values of our democracy for two and a half centuries.

[02:35:20] Here in Fairbanks County, we are honored to have Fort Belvoir and the National Museum of the United States Army located in Fairbanks County in Mount Vernon, Fanconi, and Springfield districts. Again, many, many more things related to that, but I will close with, therefore, Mr. Chairman, in honor of the kickoff of Fairfax's 250th celebrations and the United States Army's 250th birthday, we move that the Office of Public Affairs prepare a resolution to be signed and given to the Commander-in-Chief George Washington inside the boardroom on June 10th.

[02:35:53] We also move that the Office of Public Affairs prepare a separate resolution to be signed and given to the United States Army Museum on June 10th inside the boardroom in celebration of 250 years of service, sacrifice, and dedication to our nation and a recognition of the museum's role in preserving and sharing the Army's rich history with the public.

[02:36:14] Lastly, we direct the Office of Public Affairs to publicize the Fairfax 250th celebrations. And without objection, that is so ordered, Supervisor Stork. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman. The next item I have is Holland Meadows Elementary School's 60th anniversary.

[02:36:31] Holland Meadows Elementary School has been a cornerstone of our community for 60 years. They opened their doors in 1965, and they primarily serve the Holland Hills community. In the school,

they are home to more than 20 different languages in their homes among its families and staff.

[02:36:50] They also were one of the first, Fairbanks County's first math and science-focused school, and an early adopter of full-day kindergarten. as well as they've been really leaders in outdoor learning and get-to-green programs, as well as the school garden that promotes healthy lifestyles. One of the proudest moments is in 2009, First Lady Michelle Obama and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack visited Hollow Meadows to present the school with a silver medal through the Healthier U.S. Schools Challenge.

[02:37:15] And in 2011, the school earned a prestigious Intel Award for their excellence in elementary mathematics. So it's an amazing community, families, staff, and the PTA has been awesome, awesome. It is a community of suburbia as well as a community along the Richmond Highway corridor of apartments and individuals who maybe come from all over the world.

[02:37:39] So it's one of those really unique and maybe I shouldn't say unique, more typical Fairfax County schools. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we ask without objection to direct the Office of Public Affairs to prepare a resolution honoring Holland Meadows Elementary School 60th anniversary to be presented outside the boardroom in celebration of the school's 60 years of contributions to our residents and students.

[02:38:01] And without objection, that is so ordered. Supervisor Stort. Yes, Mr. Chairman, this is also Military Spouse Week coming up May 4th through 10th, and this is jointly with yourself, Supervisor Herity and Lusk. The freedoms that we Americans enjoy are made possible by the efforts of the 1.3 million men and women who serve our nation as active duty armed forces service members.

[02:38:24] In Fairbanks County, Fort Belvoir is home to 6,386 active duty service members and 2,207 military spouses. And Fairbanks County is also proudly the home of 79,000 military veterans and their spouses. Military Spouse Week is observed on May 9, 2025, and it's really recognition of the incredible contributions and sacrifices made by military spouses.

[02:38:49] On average, military spouses move 8 to 12 times over the course of a 20-year military career, often starting each nucleation and working hard to find community and connections. Also on May 7th, we are co-hosting a networking and hiring fair for transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses, as well as, of course, our federal employees at the National Museum of the United States Army from 10.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

[02:39:16] Therefore, Mr. Chairman, in honor of our heroic and supportive military spouses, including those residing here in Fairfax County, we move without objection that the board recognize May 4th through 10th, 2025, as Military Spouse Appreciation Week. We also move that the proclamation be signed by the sponsor of this board matter to be presented to Army Community Services at the Networking and Hiring Fair.

[02:39:38] The board also directs the Office of Public Affairs to advertise and promote the Networking and Hiring Fair on May 7th. And without objection, that is so ordered, Supervisor Stort. And, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. That is the end of my board matters. Thank you, Supervisor Stork. Supervisor Palczyk.

[02:39:55] Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I have two verbal announcements, and then I will just quickly read my two written board matter subject lines, I think, to keep us going. Number one, we are very delighted to have here with us the newest member of the Providence District Office. Morgan Stanley is

here with us today. Morgan, originally from Kentucky, will complete her Master of Public Affairs from Indiana University's O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs this May. Morgan moved to Washington, D.C. to start an internship with the U.S. Department of Transportation. After her offer was rescinded, she connected with our office

[02:40:35] to bring her skills to Fairbanks County. She brings a strong background in policy analysis, advocacy, community engagement, with experience in local government, housing policy, and transportation policy. We are very lucky. She also previously worked with the Louisville Metro Government's Office of Housing and Community Development assisting with eviction prevention efforts. She has a very deep commitment to inclusive and equitable approaches to policy making. It's a pleasure to work with and she looks forward to bringing her expertise to support the

[02:41:07] impactful work we do here in Fairbanks County. So a warm welcome for Morgan. Yay for local government. Next up, an announcement, because I meant to put it in, but wishing a very much of luck to the four finalists, who are grand prize winners of the Virginia Science and Engineering Fair from Fairfax County Public Schools, that will be heading to Columbus, Ohio, on May 11th.

[02:41:41] We have Sarah Park of Thomas Jefferson High School, Alina Albeek of Marshall High School, Nikhil Krishna and Naved Nandakumar of Thomas Jefferson High School, and Anush Defqar and Ansh Mahotra of Thomas Jefferson High School.

[02:41:58] We're so excited that they'll be heading to the International Science and Engineering Festival in Columbus, Ohio, as well as there are many, many first through third place winners who place very highly in the Virginia competitions. We are so excited for them.

[02:42:14] And as a long-time advisory board member of the national or what will be the Northern Virginia Science Center, we love, to me, this is the Super Bowl that I like to watch and follow and very excited and wishing all the best to our FCPS students.

[02:42:31] With that, just two board matters. One is jointly with Supervisor Lusk to designate May 2025 as Mental Health and Youth Mental Health Awareness Month, and we are asking for recognition without objection to be held outside the boardroom to the Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board to recognize this month and to excellent work done by CSB as well as all of our county providers to help address students and adults dealing with mental health challenges and as well as the prevention services.

[02:43:11] So that's without objection. Without objection, that is so ordered. Supervisor Palczyk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And my second one is also with yourself and with Supervisor Lusk. Request to designate April 2025 as Fair Housing Month.

[02:43:28] And there will be, and we have it in your handouts, On Tuesday, May 20th, from 9 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., right here in the auditorium, will be the NOVA Resilience Together There is Strength in Unity program being presented by the Fairfax County Office for Human Rights and Equity Programs with a focus on rental and mortgage assistance options, housing rights and protections, the state of Virginia's response to workforce reductions and fair housing outreach and resources. Registration and event

[02:44:02] details are on the website and we are asking OPA to also help us share it out and this is jointly presented by many of our surrounding jurisdictions as well as the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation. So I want to thank everyone who's helped put that together and that we'll be able to to highlight the 57th anniversary of that.

[02:44:26] - And without objection, that is so ordered, Supervisor Palczyk. - Apologies, Mr. Chairman, one final addition, and this is a joint board matter with all board members, also to request a designation, and this is of June 2025, as Fatherhood Awareness Month, to be presented inside the boardroom at the June 24th board meeting.

[02:44:48] I believe without objection. - And without objection, that is so ordered, Supervisor Palczyk. That is all, Mr. Chairman. Supervisor Herity. Well, Mr. Chairman, I will take your guidance on shortening my board matters on proclamations. The first one is to advertise Drug Take-Back Day in Fairfax County.

[02:45:08] Mr. Chairman, I ask we direct the, without objection, I ask we direct the Office of Public Affairs to continue to work with FCPD to advertise the upcoming National Drug Take-Back Day and all the locations and times of the events. I also ask that we declare April 26th's Drug Take-Back Day in Fairfax County and encourage all of our citizens to clear out their medicine cabinets.

[02:45:30] Without objection, that is so ordered. Supervisor Herity. The second one is National Child Care Provider Day. Mr. Chairman, I ask without objection, the board designate May 9, 2025 as National Child Care Provider Day to recognize the service of many dedicated child care providers and have staff prepare a proclamation recognizing National Child Care Provider Day to be presented to the executive director of the infant-toddler family daycare program outside of the boardroom in May.

[02:46:03] And without objection, that is so ordered. The next one is done jointly with Supervisor Palchuk to recognize May as Jewish American Heritage Month. Since we have no spots left in May, we're going to do this outside the boardroom.

[02:46:21] Mr. Chairman, without objection, I ask that we recognize May as Jewish American Heritage Month and direct the Office of Public Affairs to present a proclamation to present it to the Jewish Community Relations Council outside of the boardroom in May. And without objection, that is so ordered.

[02:46:38] Mr. Chairman, the next one is to recognize Lyme disease and fight the bite awareness month. Mr. Chairman, without objection, I ask that we prepare a proclamation declaring May 2024 as Lyme Disease Awareness Month to be presented to Monty Skall, Director of National Capital Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Association outside of the boardroom, and ask the Office of Public Affairs to share the information on preventing and recognizing the symptoms of Lyme disease.

[02:47:04] I also ask OPA to share this information with our partners at FCPS for students and their parents to educate themselves as well. I also ask without objection to prepare a separate proclamation declaring May 2024's Fight to Bite Awareness Month to be presented to Fairfax County Health Department outside of the boardroom.

[02:47:24] And without objection, that is so ordered. Supervisor Herity. Yeah, I have two quick announcements. And the first one, I'm very excited. I've got a new planning commissioner. I now have a new land use aide, Brant McKinney. Brant, you can go ahead and stand up.

[02:47:41] I grew up in Richmond as a bachelor's degree in political science, as well as a master's of urban and regional planning from that great university, Virginia Tech. During his time at Virginia Tech, he earned a graduate certificate in geospatial information technology and received the distinction of outstanding second year master's student, urban and regional planning.

[02:48:08] So we are very thrilled to welcome him to our team. Please join me in welcoming Brant. And I'll try to shorten this one. Really excited to announce, and I know everybody's got one, but our summer entertainment series for the seventh consecutive year.

[02:48:29] It's one of my favorite events to host. We're going to be every Wednesday at Birk Lake Park at 7 p.m. from June 25th through August 20th. Incredible lineup, including many from last year, the Road Ducks, Skip Castro, Randy Thompson, Magic Trio and a couple of new bands. We're also going to have food trucks, two silos, beer, and Peterson ice cream. And many thanks to this long list of sponsors that are supporting that series as well as the general series. So looking forward to some free concerts and the Barks. That's it, Mr. Chairman.

[02:49:06] And without objection, as always we'll ask our Office of Public Affairs to publicize all of the summer concert series and the movies and Supervisor Smith's district. So with that, was that all, Supervisor Herity K?

[02:49:22] That brings us to our admin items, and let me ask Supervisor Smith if she has a motion for admin items 1 through 10. I move approval of admin items 1 through 10. Hold on one second. Supervisor Herity? I was going to request comments on admin 3. I haven't gotten there yet. Let's get a motion first. We do the motion first.

[02:49:42] approval of admin items 1 through 10. And I'm happy to second that. Items board members would like to have pulled either for discussion or a separate vote. Supervisor Herity. Discussion 3, separate vote 7. So admin 3, let's start with admin 3, extension of review period for 2232 application for Centerville High School in the Springfield District. Yeah, just a very quick comment. I'm, and Supervisor Smith does this, I'm very disappointed that we're here. We need a resolution to the zoning issue at Centerville and unfortunately I think we've got a school board and school staff that want to negotiate with the

[02:50:21] county and the Park Authority like we're the enemy instead of the same team and this is something that needs to get resolved very simply and I didn't want to let this opportunity to go without a question we all serve the same people the residents of Fairfax County we need to get this thing resolved and move on with the construction of Centerville High School I don't know if you want to anything mr. County executive or not you jump forward and push your mic so yes supervisor Harrity thank you and supervisor Smith thank you we have been working with the Fairfax County School District to resolve the situation miss

[02:50:59] drunk as well as her counterpart are working together to come up with an a solution as you know we've had several meetings we've had meetings just recently, I believe, maybe last week, two weeks ago, sorry. So we are looking forward to their helping us resolve this situation and hopefully keeping the park authority out of the resolution.

[02:51:25] Okay. And you asked for a separate vote, I believe, on Admin 7, which is authorization to advertise a public hearing under Virginia Code Section 15.2-934 for the purpose of displacement of waste companies to enable formation of a unified sanitary district we will pull that one for a separate vote and so at this time all those in favor of admin items 1 through 6 and 8 through 10 please say aye aye any opposed any abstentions that motion carries and we will go back to admin 7 is there any

[02:52:03] discussion on admin 7 yes mr. supervisor Herity yes mr. chairman just a couple of questions I know we're advertising we're advertising four zones I was I was hoping that we could adjust the

advertisement to go with more than four zones so that we don't shut out our smaller vendors is that possible question for staff sorry could you repeat the question apologies I know I know our Our plan was to advertise for four zones.

[02:52:45] We have not determined the number of zones to be advertised at this top. Where do you see that, Supervisor Herdy? I don't see that anywhere in the item. I'm sorry. I'm taking that from the presentation, so I assumed it was in the advertisement. Oh, no. It's not in the item. No. My other question, I've got two more questions.

[02:53:05] What is the driving purpose of this effort? So the driving effort behind the Unified Sanitation Districts is to have more control over the collection industry and for us to be able to do significant amount of improvements in the system that we are not allowed to now through state legislation.

[02:53:33] And also it is this process and this public hearing very specifically is to allow us to be able to start the process. We are required to begin that legislative process. We'd have to have a five-year waiting period, and this is the first step to do that.

[02:53:51] And one request for information, I was told by industry that two-thirds of county residents currently are served by a single provider, whether that be HOA or the county.

[02:54:09] I'd just like to get confirmation of the number of residents that are served by multiple providers versus served by a single provider, whether that be the county, and that would include HOAs that have a single provider.

[02:54:26] Supervisor Herity, what we're going to do is provide you the revised NIP. We're working on that right now. Okay. If you go to page 36 in your board document, it's creating a resilient system that provides for increased diversion and sustainability. We have been asked by this board maybe a year or even a year and a half ago to look at how we could incorporate all into one unified system.

[02:54:50] We don't have a plan yet. This is just starting the process. And thank you for that comment because it's the we don't have a plan yet part that has me a little concerned. So I'm going to be abstaining on this because I don't think this is ready for public hearing yet. All due respect, the state process allows us to move forward in this fashion. And what we're doing is asking for authorization to start the process, to start the planning. And if you decided that we want to go forward, we'll have a plan in place in a certain time. We'll have a timeline. But at this juncture, it's just the board telling us to move forward with

[02:55:29] starting the process. Right. And I would just say it's not, the state doesn't allow us to do this. It literally requires us to do it this way. If we're to even consider whether this is an improvement in service and oversight for the residents of Fairfax County. And so as the county executive said, there is no formal plan at this point, but not only do we have to authorize and then hold the public hearing, but then we start the five-year period of time. This is not like This is going to be happening anytime soon.

[02:56:01] There's a lot of time for us to get a lot of feedback, continued feedback from the community and from our staff on what a final plan could ultimately look like. Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have spent a lot of time on this at the environmental committee, multiple-- I don't even remember how many meetings-- multiple meetings.

[02:56:22] And I know that every board member has been offered, and I think all have participated in, Numerous one-on-one meetings with staff to answer questions about this. And I appreciate and respect

that there remain questions. I'll just speak to Supervisor Herity's initial question about what is the driving purpose.

[02:56:40] I'll say for me, the driving purpose is to provide the opportunity for our residents to get higher quality service at a lower price. And the survey that we conducted with 3,000-plus responses demonstrated that folks in our community are desperate to have that opportunity.

[02:57:03] We also demonstrated that we have the potential to save, on average, 25%. People could save 25% relative to what they're paying now. I recognize that's not true 100% across the board. Not true for me. But on average, there's the potential to do that.

[02:57:19] And I think it would be very unwise for us not to consider the opportunity to save our residents a lot of money and for them to get better service. And I've had a lot of conversations with haulers, big, medium, and small.

[02:57:36] And we're in a moment right now where the quality of service in the county, I think, is pretty good from private haulers in this moment. However, we have all been through, some of you on this board have been through multiple cycles. We know that the quality goes up and the quality goes down, and if we don't act, the quality will go down again from the private haulers this year, next year, the year after, and our residents will be asking us, what did you do?

[02:58:06] Why didn't you move forward when you had the chance to make a better system? So for me, that's the driving purpose. I look forward to the public hearing and hearing what the community has to say. I think that driving purpose is well reflected in the board item that staff prepared, as well as all the multiple meetings that we've had in the Environmental Committee on this very subject.

[02:58:29] Probably the question we're going to get asked the most from today moving forward is, why are you waiting five years to do anything about it? And I just want to reiterate that that's referenced as a Virginia State Code requirement, that we'll hold this public hearing. If the board moves forward with the process following the public hearing, which is not what we're doing today, that's another day, Virginia law requires the county to provide five years' notice to private haulers.

[02:58:55] And so, you know, first step of this is do you hold a public hearing? That's what we're being asked to do today. The second step is hold the public hearing, which would be 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, if this gets approved. And then that starts the five-year process of consideration, just to be clear with everybody what the timeline is and what the requirements are.

[02:59:17] So with that, all those in favor of admin 7, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Parity, nay. Any abstentions? And that motion carries 9 to 1. I'm sorry, Supervisor Beerman? I think both. I think Supervisor Alcorn and I had brief comments.

[02:59:36] Oh, okay. Supervisor Beerman. It's not going to change my vote because this is an advertisement to hold a public hearing. It is also something that, you know, it's an advertisement to hold a public hearing. It's not ultimately a decision to move forward with this.

[02:59:53] And it's actually not even a decision, by the way, with exactly how we move forward with it five years from now. But I will just say, because I've met with you privately, that there are a lot of questions out there. And I'm going to ask that when you come to that public hearing, that you think of multiple contingencies.

[03:00:10] Just because we haven't told you exactly how to do it doesn't mean that you shouldn't be prepared to answer the question if we ask what the difference between doing it A, B, or C is. So that's just a plea because I think it's definitely true that lots of us have lots of questions.

[03:00:30] And those questions, by the way, yes, I understand that we haven't made the final decision, but it's definitely acceptable to ask those questions right now. Thank you. I definitely agreed with that, and I just want to be clear on one thing.

[03:00:49] If we approve this item and we hold the public hearing, we are not required to implement this. So we do have, it is technically true that we do have five years, and at any point in time, the board can decide they don't want to do it. And five years from now, when we would be asked to actually implement something, it's still entirely the discretion of the board whether or not they want to move forward with that.

[03:01:10] So in other words, this is not a trigger that we're starting that requires some subsequent action. Is that correct? Yes. Chris Harrington, Director of Public Works and Environmental Services, and the answer, Chairman, is correct. Yes. Okay, great. Supervisor Alcorn. Yeah, just to build on some of the discussion, I have a lot of questions, too.

[03:01:27] We've had some good discussions in the environmental committee, but I'm definitely supporting this. As Supervisor Walkinshaw said, this is an opportunity to make the system better. But I think one thing that I think would be helpful for all of us, and I don't know if staff can be ready by the public hearing for this, at some point, we as a board, we need to have a process for how we move forward, particularly during the early part of that five-year period.

[03:01:53] Because it is true that this could require displacement of some of the service providers out there. So, you know, as we can get our process together, I think that would be super helpful for everybody involved. But I look forward to, frankly, seeing improvements in our system overall.

[03:02:10] And that process, of course, also aligned with what the requirements in the state code are that we have to follow that are non-discretionary. Okay. Supervisor Palchik. No, just because we're talking about some concerns, I do want to make sure as we're looking at potential impacts and displacement and with the goal of improving our system, just making sure that those existing county customers are not negatively impacted to me and I think to many in our community, though it's a minority who do receive that service.

[03:02:42] I think that's going to be pretty critical to ensure that we don't break what's working. Thank you. Thank you very much. We already voted on that item, so we're going to move on to action items, and we have a number of these, 11 to be exact.

[03:02:58] Action item one is approval of the reciprocal agreement between the Virginia Department of State Police and Fairfax County during the police unity tour. Supervisor Lusk. Very quickly, Mr. Chairman, I will move the county executive's recommendation for action item one.

[03:03:14] And the chair will second that. Any discussion? Seeing and hearing none. All those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. Action item two is resolution to support the abandonment of a portion of Gunston Cove Road in the Mount Vernon District. Supervisor Stork.

[03:03:33] I move the county executive's recommendation. And I will second that motion. Any discussion? Seeing and hearing none. All those in favor of action two, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. Action three is authorization to execute a revision to the project administration agreement with the Virginia Department of Transportation for the Vienna Metro Station Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements Project in the Providence District, Supervisor Palchuk.

[03:04:03] I move approval of the county executive's recommendation. For the motion, I will second that along with, was that Supervisor Lusk? Any discussion on the motion? Seeing and hearing none, all those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. any opposed any abstentions that motion carries action item number four is authorization to execute a revision to the project administration agreement with the virginia department of transportation for the soapstone connector project in the hunter mill district supervisor alcorn thank you mr chairman i move approval of action item four as recommended by the county executive i will second

[03:04:38] that a lot of people second that wow a lot of people interested in your project uh any further discussion? Yes, Supervisor Alcorn. Yeah, just very quickly, I am pleased to see this move forward. This is a big project. It's been in development for a while. I just wanted to flag for the board and everybody, we have SSPA activity in Reston that could affect some of the specifics of the design. So that's an ongoing conversation we're having with VDOT. But I look forward to this project moving forward. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Alcorn. There's no further discussion.

[03:05:16] All those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. That brings us to Action 5, Authorization to Execute an Amendment to the Project Administration Agreement with the Virginia Department of Transportation for the Fox Mill Road and Pinecrest Road Intersection Improvements Project in the Hunter Mill District. Supervisor Alcorn.

[03:05:36] i move action item five is recommended by the county executive and i'm happy to second that along with supervisor palchek is there any discussion any discussion seeing and hearing none all those in favor of the motion please say aye aye any opposed any abstentions that motion carries uh action item number six is approval of fairfax connector spring summer 2025 service changes in the braddock franconi hunter mill mason providence springfield and sully districts almost the whole county and so i will recognize the chair of our transportation committee supervisor beerman i move approval of action item number six and a lot of us second that um all those who are

[03:06:15] affected it sound like uh is there any discussion mr chairman yes supervisor alcohol just one quick clarification question for staff on the changes to the 598 and the 599 i don't want anybody who rides the 599 to think that there would no longer be service to Crystal City and the Pentagon. The 598 is picking up that stop. Is that correct?

[03:06:40] I'm Michael Felcher with FCTO2. Yes, that is correct. Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you for that clarification. Any further discussion? Seeing and hearing none. All those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. Action item Item number seven is authorization to execute a standard project agreement with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority for the purchase of eight new connector buses in the Franconia, Mason, and Providence District.

[03:07:07] Supervisor Beerman. I move approval of action item number seven. Second. Seconded by a lot of us again. Discussion on the item? Supervisor, any discussion? Seeing and hearing none. All those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions?

[03:07:23] That motion carries. Action Item 8 is adoption of a combined amended resolution on delegation of settlement authority and authority to file suit, amendment of the resolution on indemnification and representation of officers and employees, Supervisor Smith.

[03:07:40] I move approval of the county executive's recommendation. Heard the motion. I'm happy to second that, along with, I think I heard Supervisor Palchuk. Discussion on the motion. Seeing and hearing none, all those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions?

[03:07:56] That motion carries, and that brings us to action item number nine, which is approval of contract award for tax-exempt master lease agreement and other actions associated with the award of contract to provide lease purchase financing for acquisition of equipment. Supervisor Smith.

[03:08:11] I move approval of the county executive's recommendation. Chair will second that motion. Is there any discussion? Seeing and hearing none. All those in favor of action nine, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. Action item number 10 is adoption of a resolution approving the issuance of Fairfax County Economic Development Authority Revenue Bonds Series 2025 for Westminster School in the Mason District. Supervisor Jimenez. Mr. Chairman, I move the county executive's recommendation that the Board of Supervisors approve issuance of the Fairfax County EDA Revenue Bonds and adopt the attack resolution on this board item. The chair will second that along

[03:08:49] with Supervisor Lusk. Any discussion? Seeing and hearing none. All those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. And action item 11 is adoption of a resolution approving the issuance of Fairfax County Economic Development Authority Revenue Bond Series 2025 for Potomac School in the Drainville District. Supervisor Beerman.

[03:09:12] I move approval of action item number 11. And the chair will second that motion. Is there any discussion? Seeing and hearing none. All those in favor of action 11, please say aye. Aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. And that brings us to closed session. And let me ask first the county attorney, how long we need for closed session? Mr. Chairman, I estimate approximately 45 minutes. 45 minutes. So that puts us at 145. Reporting to closed session at 145,

[03:09:46] We have a public hearing starting at 2.30 and a number of public hearings and then 129 budget testimonies this evening. So it will be important for us to stay on schedule. Supervisor Smith, do you have a motion? I do.

[03:10:05] I move that the Board of Supervisors recess and go into closed session for discussion and consideration of matters enumerated in Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 and listed in the attached agenda for this meeting. Excuse me. And in addition, as permitted by Virginia Code section 2.2-3711A7 and 8, Brookfield, Washington, LLC versus Fairfax County, Virginia Court of Appeals, record number 2020-23-4.

[03:10:33] and, as permitted by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711A8, legal analysis regarding the following. I, potential authorization pursuant to Virginia Code Section 22.1-82C of litigation by the Fairfax County School Board against the Virginia Employment Commission and Virginia Department of Taxation to recover student activity funds, and II, Federal Communications Commission, public notice entitled Delete, Delete, Delete, FCC Docket No. 25-133.

[03:11:10] You've heard the motion. It's been seconded by multiple board members. Any discussion on the motion? Yes, Supervisor Alcorn. As I announced earlier, I have to go to a SJ28 meeting, so I'm going to abstain on this motion. I won't be in a closed session. Appreciate that.

[03:11:26] Thank you. If there's no further discussion, all those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? Supervisor Alcorn abstains, and that motion carries. The board will take a brief break and report to closed session exactly at 1.45.

[03:11:44] All right, so the board will take a short recess.

[03:14:28] All right, the board is back from closed session,

[03:20:44] And let me ask first for Supervisor Smith to make a motion to bring us out of closed session. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board of Supervisors certify that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements by virtue of Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which closed session was convened were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board of Supervisors during the closed session.

[03:21:15] I'm happy to second that motion along with Supervisor Palchuk. Any discussion? Seeing and hearing none. All those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. We do have four motions coming out of closed session.

[03:21:31] Let me begin with Supervisor Palchuk. Yes, Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board of Supervisors authorize the county executive to execute a settlement of opioid-related claims with Henry Schein, Insource, and GIV on the terms and conditions outlined by the county attorney in closed session.

[03:21:50] You've heard the motion. The chair will second that. Is there discussion on the motion? Seeing and hearing none, all those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Pursuant to Virginia Code section 22.1-82C, I move that the Board of Supervisors authorize the Fairfax County School Board to institute litigation against the Virginia Employment Commission and the Virginia Department of Taxation to recover student activity funds and seek other related relief.

[03:22:24] You've heard the motion. The chair will second that. Any discussion on the motion? Seeing and hearing none, all those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. Supervisor Smith, I believe you have two motions. Yes, I do.

[03:22:41] I move that the Board of Supervisors authorize the Office of the County Attorney to coordinate with Taxing Authority Consulting Services to resolve case number CL-2021-8089, County of Fairfax, Virginia, v. Gregory Morrison, et al., and the disposition of funds associated with the case as outlined by the county attorney in closed session.

[03:23:02] And the chair will second that. Is there a discussion on the motion? Seeing and hearing none, all those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries. Supervisor Smith. I move that the Board of Supervisors authorize the county executive to execute a settlement agreement resolving certain contractual claims with Avaya LLC on the terms and conditions outlined by the county attorney in closed session.

[03:23:25] Chair will second that motion. Is there discussion on the motion? Seeing and hearing none, all those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? That motion carries, and I believe that's all the motions. There's one more. The one for the FCC.

[03:23:44] Do I have that one? I have it. I thought I gave it to you. Okay. All right. Sorry. Thank you. I'm glad I asked. Let me hand the gavel to Supervisor Smith for one moment and move that the Board of Supervisors authorize staff on behalf of the county to participate in a coalition to file comments in Federal Communications Commission Docket Number 25-133 and participate any follow-up ex-parte meetings or communications with the FCC as outlined by the county attorney in closed session. I'll second that motion. Any discussion on the motion? Seeing and hearing none.

[03:24:23] All those in favor of the motion say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Any objections? That motion carries, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, Vice Chair Smith. And with that, we are going to move on to public hearings this afternoon. And just a few reminders. Individuals wishing to provide testimony have a number of options to do so. They can testify here in person or they can provide testimony by phone or YouTube video. At the designated point in the public hearing, I will call for any speakers from the speakers list and they will either come forward or their video will be shown or they will be connected by telephone. There will then be an opportunity for anyone else who is present in the auditorium to speak to the matter to come down to the podium or to call in

[03:25:03] at 703-324-1020. Speakers testifying by video must sign up and submit their video no later than 9 a.m. on the day prior to the public hearing. For public hearing testimony you're given three minutes to speak as an individual. If you're a spokesperson for a group, you were given five minutes. And with that, I'm going to call our first public hearing of the afternoon, which is on SEA 2005-SU-007-04, Korean Central Presbyterian Church in the Sully District. And could the

[03:25:35] applicant please reaffirm the affidavit? Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the board, Mark Viani with the law firm of Bean, Kinney & Corman. I reaffirmed the affidavit dated April 2nd, 2025. Thank you very much. Are there any disclosures from board members? Supervisor Palchik. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Mark Vianney donated in excess of \$100 to Friends of Dahlia Palchik.

[03:26:01] Are there any further disclosures? Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you. Mark Vianney contributed in excess of \$100 to James Walkinshaw for Braddock's supervisor. Thank you, Supervisor Walkinshaw. Are there any further disclosures? Any additional disclosures? Yes. Yes. Yes.

[03:26:21] Yes, sorry. My disclosure is that I had a donation in excess of \$100 from a person at Bean Committee and Corpsman, Richard Sullivan. Thank you. Thank you very much. Supervisor Beerman, are there any additional disclosures?

[03:26:39] Seeing and hearing none, I will now recognize staff for a staff presentation. Hi, I'm Ciara Downing from the Department of Planning and Development. The applicant, Korean Central Presbyterian Church, requests approval of a special exception, amendment to modify previously approved private school and child care center on the site to expand the grade levels of the private school and increase the maximum enrollment of the private school and childhood center. The application property is located on the south side of Route

[03:27:11] 29, just to the east of Bull Run Post Office Road, 83.77 acres, zoned RC. The site is currently developed as a church. The applicant requests a modification to development condition number 12 to increase the grade level from kindergarten through eighth grade to kindergarten through twelfth grade with an increase in daily enrollment from 100 students to 300. Additionally, the applicant requests a modification to development condition number 13 to increase the maximum daily enrollment of 100 children to 200 children. This proposed change is minor and will not alter school

[03:27:50] operations. No physical changes to the subject property are proposed. The proposed changes are not expected to alter current traffic patterns as the increased student enrollment will be managed within existing traffic management plans. Following planning commission on March 12th, further changes were made to the development conditions, including an additional development condition ensuring that all accessory uses to the subject property remain accessory per the zoning ordinance and a statement indicating that these development conditions will supersede all previous other development conditions, since all conditions are carried forward.

[03:28:28] Thank you. That concludes my presentation. Thank you very much. Are there any questions of staff? Okay. At this time, we'd welcome the applicant. Forward again, Mark Vianney with the law firm of Bean, Kinney & Corman.

[03:28:43] I also have Jennifer Park with the Coran Central Presbyterian Church with me. I would note, you know, this is an operational special exception amendment. There are no new improvements proposed here. We do have community support. We've got planning staff support. We've got planning commission support. And I don't think I could have done a better presentation than what Sierra just did here.

[03:29:01] And I also want to thank very much Sierra and staff for all their assistance in processing. So with that, we'd waive presentation, and I'd be happy to take any questions you might have. Thank you very much. Are there any questions? Okay. Seeing and hearing none, this is a public hearing. I have no speakers who have signed up in advance to testify on this matter.

[03:29:19] Is there anyone here present who would like to speak on this subject? This is a public hearing. Anyone who would like to speak on this subject? Seeing and hearing no one, let me ask the clerk if we have callers. There are no callers. There are no callers. Soon, the applicant waives rebuttal. Closing comments and a recommendation from county staff.

[03:29:36] On March 12, 2025, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the application subject to development conditions since revised and now dated April 8, 2025, and recommended approval of the waivers and modifications discussed in the staff report.

[03:29:54] Staff concurs with those recommendations. Thank you very much. Last chance. Any questions from board members? Seeing and hearing none, I will now close the public hearing and recognize Supervisor Smith for a motion. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I request that the applicant confirm for the record their agreement to the development conditions dated April 8, 2025.

[03:30:13] Again, Mark Fiani with Bean Canning-Corman. On behalf of the applicant, we do accept those conditions dated April 8, 2025. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board of Supervisors approve SEA 2005-SU-007-04, subject to the development conditions dated April 8, 2025.

[03:30:33] I further move that the Board of Supervisors reaffirm the waivers and modifications listed in the staff report, which include modification of the transitional screening requirements along all property boundaries of the zoning ordinance in favor of that shown on the SEA plat. Waiver of the barrier requirements along all property boundaries of the zoning ordinance in favor of that shown on the SEA plat.

[03:30:53] Waiver of the service drive requirements of the public facilities manual, PFM, in favor of that shown on the SEA plat. You've heard the motion. It's been seconded by Supervisor Herity, and the chair

will second that motion as well. Discussion on the motion. Seeing and hearing none, all those in favor of the motion, please say aye.

[03:31:12] Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? And that motion carries. Thank you very much. Next up, we have a public hearing on SC 2022-SU-00004, leaving the jar in the Sully District.

[03:31:29] And could we please have the applicant reaffirm the affidavit? Good afternoon. Mike Venato with the law firm McGuire-Woods, and I reaffirmed the affidavit dated January 28, 2025.

[03:31:45] Thank you very much. Are there any disclosures from board members? Any disclosures from board members? Seeing and hearing none, at this time I would recognize county staff for a presentation. This is Ciara Downing from Department of Planning and Development.

[03:32:02] The applicant leaving the jar is requesting a special exception to permit a congregate living facility. The subject property is located off Bull Run Drive and Brim Lane, zoned RC. It is a single-family detached home on a 5.6-acre plot of land. It is 4,593 square feet of living area and a water supply protection overlay district and is surrounded by low-density residential properties. This proposal would convert an existing single-family detached dwelling for use as a congregate living

[03:32:38] facility in support of children and young adults. It would permit up to 10 children and young adults to live at the facility enrolled in a boarding program. There will also be two live-in staff members making it a total of 12 residents. Thank you, that concludes my presentation. Thank you very much. At this At this time, we'd welcome the applicant for their presentation.

[03:32:58] Thank you, Chairman McKay and members of the board. I really appreciate your time this afternoon. I'll keep my remarks brief. The scope of this zoning application is limited, but the weight it carries is quite immense. The need it serves is immense.

[03:33:14] Unfortunately, human trafficking is a vastly underserved issue around the globe and locally, and that's really what this application and this proposed facility is all about. The applicant, Leaving the JAR, it's a faith-based nonprofit organization based here in Fairfax County that works tirelessly to combat human trafficking and support the rehabilitation of victims of the same. And as staff adequately summarized, the proposed special exception is narrowly focused to utilizing the existing structure on the property as a congregate living facility in support of children and young adults who have unfortunately had these issues in their past. The property's ideal site for this use, privacy is very important.

[03:33:53] The site is heavily vegetated and nearest house is over 700 feet away. The special exception is simply to authorize the use and the structure. There will not be any land disturbances or site improvements other than the interior upgrades and potentially some exterior structure modifications.

[03:34:09] We're delighted that we have a staff recommendation for approval, and we'd like to thank staff, in particular Ms. Downing and Mr. O'Donnell, for their efficient work on this application. We also have the unanimous and enthusiastic support from the Sully District Council of Citizens Associations, and we also have the unanimous recommendation of approval from the Planning Commission.

[03:34:26] So with that, I look forward to your support happy to answer any questions. Thank you. Thank you very much. Are there any questions of staff or the applicant? Seeing and hearing none, this is a public hearing, and I have nobody signed up to speak in advance. On this matter, is there anyone here who would like to speak on this subject? This is a public hearing. Anyone who would like to speak on this matter?

Seeing and hearing no one. Let me ask the clerk if we have callers. There are no callers. No callers. Assume the applicant waives rebuttal. Closing comments and a recommendation from county staff. On March 12, 2025, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the application subject to development

[03:35:05] conditions dated March 10, 2025, and recommended approval of the waivers and modifications discussed in the staff report. Staff concurs with those recommendations. Thank you for that. Last check. Any questions from board members? Seeing and hearing none, at this time I will close the public hearing and recognize Supervisor Smith for a motion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I request that the applicant confirm for the record their agreement to the development conditions dated march 10 2025. yes again mike vanana with mcguire woods and on behalf of the applicant we agree to the development conditions dated march 10th 2025. thank you mr chairman i move that the board of

[03:35:40] supervisors approve se 2022-su-00004 subject to the development conditions dated march 10 2025. i further move that the board of supervisors reaffirm the waivers and modifications listed in the staff report which include modification of the transitional screening and waiver of the barrier requirements pursuant to section 510 8.5 of the zoning ordinance in favor of the existing landscaping as shown on the special exception plan waiver of the loading space requirement pursuant to section 6101 of the zoning ordinance and the chair will second that motion

[03:36:17] is there any discussion on the motion seeing and hearing none all those in favor of the motion please say aye aye any opposed any abstentions that motion carries thank you very much thank you Next, we have a public hearing to consider proposed amendments to the employees, police officers, and uniformed retirement ordinance.

[03:36:42] And as soon as staff is prepared, we would welcome a staff presentation.

[03:36:55] Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the board. I'm Jeff Weiler, Executive Director of Retirement Systems. I'm joined here by Deputy Director Brad Baker and our county attorney staff as well.

[03:37:16] We're here to present proposed changes to the employees' police officers and uniformed retirement systems ordinances, specifically regarding animal protective police officers. As part of the process of reclassifying the animal protective police officer positions from the uniformed retirement system to the employees' retirement system, impacted employees will be given the opportunity to join either the Department of Animal Services or the police department.

[03:37:40] In addition, current employees will have the following voluntary options regarding which retirement systems they will be members in. They can choose to remain members of the Uniformed Retirement System, leave the Uniformed Retirement System, and become members of the police officer's retirement system, or leave the Uniformed Retirement System and become members of the employee's retirement system.

[03:38:03] To enable these possible transitions, the ordinance for the three retirement systems need to be amended as noted in Attachment 1. Specifically, the amendments to the employees and police officers ordinance will allow APPOs to be members of those systems.

[03:38:18] The amendments to the uniformed ordinance will define the process for APPOs to transition to the employees or police systems or allow the APPOs who choose to remain as members of the uniformed retirement system. The cost of the member is based on calculations and assumptions made by the

county's actuary, as noted in Attachment 2, meaning that the three retirement systems will be no better or worse off.

[03:38:45] Funding-wise, the county's liability for future benefit payments will not increase or decrease, and there will be no impact on the county's contribution to the three retirement systems. The three retirement systems boards of trustees have been informed of these proposed changes, and staff recommends approval.

[03:39:03] Thank you very much. are there any questions of staff? Any questions of staff? Seeing and hearing none, this is a public hearing. I do have one speaker who has signed up in advance to testify on this matter, and that is Siobhan Chase, Chapter Vice President of the SSPBA. If you could come on down, and is there anyone else here present who wishes to speak on this subject, on this subject? Okay. Welcome, Ms. Chase.

[03:39:28] Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Chairman, members of the board. Thank you for having me today again. As you know, my name is Siobhan Chase. I'm the vice president of the Fairfax County chapter of the PBA, which is the exclusive bargaining agent for our police bargaining unit. As you also know, I am an animal protection police officer. To start, I just want to make it clear, I'm not here to challenge the decision made by the board last year to eliminate the positions or reclassify them. We respect that the board made a final decision. We are in the process of effects bargaining for the APPOs with the county pursuant to the labor relation administrator's decision.

[03:40:04] I do want to speak about collective bargaining generally for a second. When the board passed the collective bargaining ordinance in 2021, several things were established within the CBO that provided a framework for the county and elected unions to engage in bargaining.

[03:40:22] One, the board ensured that retirement was included as a bargainable matter within the ordinance. Chairman McKay, I believe you made that clear that that is what you wanted included in the collective bargaining ordinance. Two, the board ensured that the county retained certain management rights in order to manage the county government effectively.

[03:40:40] We are not disputing those management rights here. Three, the board ensured that when such management rights were invoked, the employees and their representatives had the right to negotiate impacts of those decisions. I would not normally speak to the status of effects bargaining before the board during negotiations at all, except that the county has forced to vote on an ordinance that is currently the subject of active bargaining. And this ordinance amendment will undermine what we were trying to achieve even while we were still in the midst of bargaining. We have no choice but

[03:41:19] to address it currently here. To be clear, the ordinance amendment that has been presented before you today is not the result of good faith negotiations between the county and the PBA. We do ask that the county allow the APPOs whose positions are eliminated but are staying employed by the county either as an ACO or a sworn police officer to have the ability to transfer their retirement to the relevant county retirement system, ERS for ASOs or POORs for police officers, or stay in the uniform retirement system at their choice.

[03:41:51] However, we were trying to actively negotiate what the cost would be to that employee because ultimately, either way, the employee will be in a different retirement system than their newly hired peers,

regardless of their choice. And this choice was forced upon them in the first place. This is just one way the county can address the effects on the ploy through effects bargaining.

[03:42:10] Part of what we requested was of a fair effects bargaining process from the beginning. However, we were surprised to learn, not from the negotiation process, but from the submission for this public hearing to the Board of Supervisors, that the county was not even considering our retirement proposal.

[03:42:29] And instead, they were seeking to propose amendments to the ordinance in a way that would cut off we were attempting to negotiate. We oppose the attempt to circumvent the negotiation process and submit this retirement ordinance to the board while we were still actively negotiating it. This past weekend, most of your APPO has received a certified letter from the Retirement Administration.

[03:42:49] This letter, which I had to sign for on Saturday, includes a contract which demands a one-time irrevocable decision on retirement options based on the very ordinance that is now here before you for your approval.

[03:43:05] While no one wants to prolong the transition any longer than necessary, our repeated efforts to address key retirement issues have not been addressed in the fixed bargaining and are now being brought before the board prematurely. We are not making outrageous demands. I'm not standing here with contribution rate calculations or asking you to weigh competing options or what formula we use to calculate anything.

[03:43:29] I am not trying to negotiate with the board. We are simply requesting that the county honor its obligation to negotiate in good faith over a matter that this board went out of its way to ensure was a bargainable matter in the first place. I am forced to ask this because the current situation is that the county has submitted this ordinance, which undermines our negotiation, and again, sent certified mail to each individual APPO with an ultimatum that, regardless of bargaining, the board will only allow these specific choices, even before this vote, and that even an employee's non-response would be considered irrevocable and legally binding decision, even before negotiations are concluded.

[03:44:08] I am asking that one of the board members' motion to defer or amend this ordinance update to either allow for the cost to be covered or at least allow us time to complete negotiations with the county regarding that aspect. We do not have an issue with the option to stay in URS no matter which employment position is chosen, but other nuances such as the options for transferring from URS to PORS, the timeframe someone has to make a decision, I apologize, I'm almost finished, and so on are the specifics that we are engaging in further active negotiations about. This past January, the Legislative Committee opposed Senate Bill 917 in the Virginia General Assembly. This was a statewide collective bargaining

[03:44:45] bill. The Legislative Committee opposed this bill because it would have overridden our county collective bargaining ordinance. Specifically, it was mentioned that the state bill did not allow for retirement to be a bargainable matter, while our ordinance did. Supervisor Walkinshaw, as chairman of the Legislative Committee, your response to this legislation when we opposed it was, I think we have to be crystal clear that collective bargaining is working in Fairfax County.

[03:45:09] We would like it to continue to work in Fairfax County. So I'm asking that this board take whatever action necessary, be it a deferral amendment or a vote, that would allow us to proceed in a good

faith and fruitful negotiation process with the county. Thank you, Ms. Chase. Thank you very much. Is there anyone else here present who wishes to speak on this matter?

[03:45:27] This is a public hearing. Anyone else present? Seeing and hearing no one, let me ask if we have any callers. No callers. No callers. We did get a recommendation from staff, but why don't we get that repeated? Any closing comments or a recommendation from staff? No additional comments, just we reckon approval of the code amendments.

[03:45:51] Thank you very much. Last call, questions from board members, Supervisor Behrman. What's the timing necessary on approving this ordinance? Tom Arnold, Deputy County Executive. Our hopes we have the timeline laid out that today it would be approved and we have the hiring process underway for the animal service officers as well as the training and everything lined up to proceed over the coming months.

[03:46:19] So there's not a specific deadline, but based on the timeline that we have built, it would be today. And what would the effect of a deferral be on that timeline? what we were asked for was time for additional bargaining well if we gave you two weeks what would the effect on what you were just talking about be we would have to go back and determine the availability of instructors and all of those involved that would be completing the training for the animal services officer so i can't give you an answer to that we'd have to go back and

[03:46:55] find out i mean i guess my my general feeling is we can we've been asked that this be a part of collective bargaining we don't have to give all that long you got two weeks to try to figure it out can't figure it out come back in two weeks we'll we'll move forward but i can give you some perspective so yeah the negotiations have been ongoing for approximately seven months uh the the county's perspective as it has always been that we wanted to ensure that an appo would not

[03:47:34] be harmed if they were going to move from their current position to the police department and have to go to PORS that they would be afforded the option to stay in the URS and that's what this code is intended to do they have always had the ability to go to from a PPO to PORS as a voluntary decision as it's already laid out in a retirement code and then subsequently the cost would burden would be on them for us to do this and approve it would cost the county approximately 1.2 million dollars and so given any employee who voluntarily moves positions that would move them from one retirement system to the other,

[03:48:13] we think that that would set dangerous precedence for the county, given that the county ordinance already lays out what the role would be and the options for somebody wanting to transfer systems. And so all along, our goal was to ensure that their compensation was not changed and that their retirement was not changed.

[03:48:29] And by approving this ordinance, we can ensure that their retirement is not changed unless they voluntarily decided to do that. And thus, additional two weeks from the bargaining perspective, We have bargained in good faith after the LRA made the decision, and therefore our recommendation to the board would be that we do not make any additional changes to what we're bringing forward to you today.

[03:48:51] So what you're basically saying is we could give it another two weeks, but you're not going to move off your position? Yes, sir. Supervisor Walkinshaw. With the adoption of this ordinance amendment, the bargaining would continue, perhaps with a constraint, arguably.

[03:49:13] I guess one question would be if as the bargaining continues and if there were other elements or nuances that were agreed to in the bargaining that required an additional ordinance change, is there anything preventing you from coming back to amend the ordinance again to be consistent with anything that was bargained?

[03:49:40] The remaining items that we're in discussion about, the county has submitted the last best final offer, and therefore, from our perspective, the bargaining is over. And so now, at this point, the SSPBA has provided feedback on the last best final offer, and at this point, we would follow the ordinance, and given it is the management rights, the likelihood would be, and please correct me if I'm wrong, Patty, we would reach out to determine whether we would, this is not something that would go to arbitration, right?

[03:50:11] Mr. Chairman. Yes. This matter affects bargaining, and the arbitration and mediation process is inapplicable. I'm sorry, inapplicable or is applicable?

[03:50:29] Inapplicable. Right. Okay. That's what I thought. So from our standpoint, there's no further action defined by the CBO for us to take, that it's our management right. And what we have proposed is what would go final with the memorandum of understanding.

[03:50:46] And thus, there is no more negotiating to occur. Okay. Thank you. Any additional questions? Supervisor Herity. No more additional negotiation unless the board directs additional negotiation. That's a question.

[03:51:05] I would have to get back to you the answer to that, sir. I believe the board could direct additional negotiation if we so desire. Sorry, I didn't realize you were waiting for me to weigh in.

[03:51:32] Supervisor Herity, I understand what you're trying to do, so I would respectfully suggest that if you want to delay decision on this item, that you defer the decision only until a date certain, and that will have presumably the effect of continuing conversations.

[03:51:51] I've not had this board direct negotiation on anything prior to this, and I think you get to the same end by making a motion for a deferral. Okay. Any other questions? Okay. Seeing and hearing none, I will now close the public hearing and recognize Supervisor Jimenez for a motion.

[03:52:14] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are going to be moving forward on this today. So, Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board of Supervisors adopt the amendments to Articles 2, 3, and 7 of Chapter 3 of the Code of the County of Fairfax. The amendments are set out of the draft that dated February 27, 2025, which is attachment number one to the agenda item for today's public hearing.

[03:52:36] You've heard the motion. I'm happy to second that along with Supervisor Smith. Discussion on the motion. Supervisor Herity. Mr. Chairman, I would move a substitute motion that we defer action on this item until a day certain of Tuesday, May 13th at an afternoon time. So moved.

[03:52:59] You've heard the motion and that dies for a lack of a second. So we're to the main motion. Is there any further discussion on the main motion? Seeing and hearing none, all those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye.

[03:53:15] Any opposed? Any abstentions? Herity abstain. And that motion passes 9 to 0 to 1. Supervisor Herity abstaining. And that takes us to make sure we get the right time. We do. Excuse me. Our next public hearing, which is a public hearing. Yes.

[03:53:31] It's eight. There's eight of you. Oh, I'm sorry. That's right. Supervisor. Good point. Supervisor Alcorn being absent. And I should have mentioned, Supervisor Alcorn is representing us on a metro committee as we speak, and that's why he is not here, and he will be joining us as soon as he can.

[03:53:48] So thank you for that at 8 to 0 to 1. And next up, I was verifying that we were at the right time, and it is after 3 o'clock. So next, we have a public hearing on a proposed zoning ordinance amendment regarding minor and editorial revisions and changes to reflect Virginia Code updates.

[03:54:05] And at this time, we would recognize county staff for a presentation. Good afternoon, Sarah Morgan, Zoning Administration. I wanted to introduce Pamela Paneros to you. This is her first time presenting before the board, and she is part of the planning team that has been a part of this amendment.

[03:54:20] So I'll turn it over to Pamela. Thank you. Good afternoon.

[03:54:36] My name is Pamela Paneros with the Zoning Administration Division. I am joined by Tracy Strunk, Leslie Johnson, Bill Malin, Sarah Morgan, and the team of planners working on this amendment. This amendment to the zoning ordinance corrects errors and inconsistencies, provides clarification, addresses minor revisions, and aligns with Virginia Code updates.

[03:55:00] The amendment proposes changes to specific uses. For production and processing, the amendment proposes allowing up to 20% of GFA for the consumption of products produced on site. We define the freestanding emergency room as a type of medical care facility and establish an associated parking rate.

[03:55:19] We also clarify that commercial driving ranges that are not accessory to golf courses are an outdoor commercial recreation use. And we amend the definitions of small and large health and exercise facilities to clarify that both small and large facilities involve sports-related training and instruction.

[03:55:38] The only distinction between the two is the size difference. The amendment also proposes changes to parking and loading provisions by allowing the board to adjust required stacking spaces. Additionally, providing an option to provide an adequate receiving facility rather than off-street loading.

[03:55:58] For the Affordable Dwelling Unit Program, the amendment revises terminology, introduces a new example calculation, and requires ADU calculations to be included at time of submission. For transitional screening, staff proposes to remove the requirement for utility facilities and uses in the industrial use classification from providing transitional screening along a railroad, interstate highway, the Dulles International Airport Access Highway, or the combined Dulles International Airport Access Highway and Dulles Toll Road.

[03:56:32] On this slide is an example of the Dulles Toll Road separating a warehouse and single-family dwellings. A list of all the additional and detailed changes for this amendment can be found in the staff report revised on February 20th, 2025. This concludes our presentation. We're happy to answer any questions.

[03:56:51] Thank you very much for that. Are there any questions of staff? Any questions of staff? Yes, Supervisor Walkinshaw. Thank you. Can you put up the, was that 66 or the Beltway or the Toll Road, whatever the highway was, the slide there?

[03:57:12] So I just want to understand the transitional screening requirement that's being removed is the screening between an industrial property such as the warehouse that's at the top of the slide and the

residential community that's on the other side of the toll road.

[03:57:31] Yes, that is correct. Previously, with the landscaping and screening amendment, there was a waiver modification for when transitional screening was required along these areas, and with that amendment, that was removed as an option because it was always approved as a waiver modification, and during the course of that amendment, the utility facilities as well as the industrial uses classification are required to provide transitional screening for uses across the street.

[03:58:01] So they would be required to provide this, but given the amount of land that is between these two uses, we don't believe that it is effectively screening when you have sound walls and other lanes of traffic. And with respect to that residential district that's on the bottom, was on the bottom of the slide, there are other requirements in terms of setbacks from a highway, setbacks from a railroad, correct?

[03:58:30] Correct, there is, yes. And those would not change in these minor and editorial revisions. Okay, thank you. Okay, any other questions? Seeing and hearing none, this is a public hearing. Is there anyone here who wishes to speak on this specific matter?

[03:58:47] This is a public hearing. Anyone wishing to speak on this matter? Seeing and hearing no one, let me ask if we have any callers. There are no callers. No callers. Closing comments on a recommendation from county staff. Staff presented the proposed amendment to the Planning Commission on March 19, 2025.

[03:59:08] The Planning Commission recommended adoption of this amendment with the changes outlined in the staff report, as well as the following changes. The Planning Commission recommends not adopting the before-mentioned transitional screening change to remove the requirement when across a railroad, interstate highway, or one of the dullest toll roads.

[03:59:26] Additionally, they recommend removing the word other as it relates to composite materials for fences or walls. And lastly, for subsection 6101.2.M3, they recommend replacing "may" with "must" to read, "an adequate receiving facility must not block or restrict access to an accessible parking space or an accessible route." Staff concurs with the PC recommendation, however, staff supports adopting the transitional screening change as identified in the staff report dated February 18, 2025, and revised on February 20, 2025.

[04:00:03] Thank you. Thank you for that. Finally, any questions from board members? Seeing and hearing none, I will now close the public hearing and recognize Supervisor Smith for a motion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the board adopt the proposed zoning ordinance amendment for minor and editorial revisions and changes to reflect Virginia code updates, including the proposed amendments to Appendix 1, as set forth in the staff report dated February 18, 2025, and revised on february 20 2025 with the staff recommended options and additional changes as

[04:00:39] recommended by the planning commission specifically to remove the word other as it relates to composite materials in reference to table 4102.4 which addresses the materials for fences or walls additionally in subsection 6101.2 point m three and parens replace may with must to read an adequate receiving facility must not block or restrict access to an accessible parking space or an accessible route finally i move that the amendment become effective at 1201 am april 23

[04:01:13] 2025. and the chair will second that motion is there a discussion on the motion any discussion on the motion seeing and hearing none all those in favor of the motion please say aye aye any opposed any

abstentions and that motion carries thank you very much thank you our next public hearing. It is a public hearing to consider an ordinance to amend the Code of the County of Fairfax, Virginia, Chapter 4, Taxation and Finance, Article 13, Transient Occupancy Tax, and I'm going to give our staff a moment to get organized, and once they are, we would welcome a

[04:01:52] staff presentation. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Board. Phil Hagan, Director of the Department of Management and Budget. This is a public hearing to consider the 2% increase in the transient occupancy tax rate from 4% to 6% that was proposed in the FY 2026 advertised budget plan. This increase would generate approximately \$13 million in FY 2026. That revenue has been included in the estimates shown in the FY 2026 advertised budget plan. Of this increase, 1% or

[04:02:30] 6.5 million would be available for general purposes. The other 1% or 6.5 million must be used to promote tourism after consultation with local tourism industry organizations, including representatives of lodging properties located in the county.

[04:02:47] The FY2026 advertised budget plan proposes to hold those tourism funds in reserve pending a future decision by the board on appropriate uses. Thank you. Thank you very much. Are there any questions of staff? Any questions of staff? Supervisor Herity. Yeah, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to go on a little trip down memory lane because I've got a lot of a lot of familiarity with the transit occupancy tax I was actually on the executive committee the Fairfax County Chamber when we worked with the hospitality industry to to put that in place including the requirement that 50

[04:03:22] percent go to support tourism and tourism related and we established visit Fairfax and the industry supported that tax increase so kind of my my questions here are did we receive a request from industry to raise the transient occupancy tax no sir we do not um do we have a plan for where we're going to spend the one percent on tourism so at present the one percent for tourism is proposed to be held in reserve pending board decision on the uses

[04:03:58] again with consultation with the tourism industry as is required by virginia code so we've had no conversation with industry we don't know where we're gonna spend the 1% you know I know we're not voting on this today but but if you're following that industry they just said they just took a 15% hit they feel their values or their properties are overvalued their latest study showed because of the federal cuts 44% of their federal business is just going away so I think we got a lot of work to do on this and speaking with the I think we before we impose the tax we

[04:04:34] to know where the money goes and how the money is going to be spent and between now and May 6 I would suggest that we we kind of have a discussion with industry and figure out how supportive they are of this and where it should go visit Fairfax we all got the study did a nice study of what success the success they had in marketing with the the cares grant that they was a cares grant that they got through the state but I think we we should know where the money goes before we had levy a tax i think that's part of it but thank you that's all the questions i have

[04:05:14] thank thank you uh for that question supervisor harry supervisor beerman look i i we gotta get started here supervisor harry i you know you sitting there and talking about the effects of the changes at the federal level and how they're going to hurt our county the things that you that you sneered at me when i talked about in october i mean it's a little like killing your parents and then pleading sympathy because you're an orphan. If that's where we're going to go today,

[04:05:47] that's just absurd. And I had to say that. Now, of course, of course, we are going to look at what we do with the money that we bring in, whether it's both for our tourism industry as part of the trans-anoxian can seek tax or the money that goes into the general fund. But if you're going to grandstand here with that BS, we're going to call it out every time. Thank you.

[04:06:12] Let me just make one comment. This is the transient occupancy tax, and so I have taken the time to meet with industry. They came in and met with me, and we had a long, good conversation. And they mentioned there are a lot of things that are going to have to happen, including increased marketing, to try to fill the impacts of the federal cuts.

[04:06:30] And the one thing Supervisor Beerman just said is true. I mean, nine members of this board have been doing everything we can to fight the federal cuts. And what they have said to us is the impacts on the industry for lack of hotel rooms and other things, they could use some help, use some revenue to increase marketing and do other things.

[04:06:50] The social media campaign, we got a full presentation, this board did. I don't know if you were there or not, but we got a full presentation from them on what the merits of that program are and actual the number of hotel reservations that were made directly attributed to those marketing campaigns to bring people into Fairfax County from outside of Fairfax County to support our residents.

[04:07:15] And so it's nice to jeer and cheer that, you know, you're not for a tax increase. This is a tax increase on hotel rooms by tourists paid to offset expenses that otherwise are paid for by the residents of Fairfax County. So it is important to understand exactly what is happening here before we grandstand.

[04:07:33] And there seems to be a lot of grandstanding, but let's make sure we understand what it is that is actually before us here. We're required, if this fee is to be increased, to set aside the amount that was mentioned specifically for tourism activities. So a portion of this money does not come to the board for the board to spend or to do something else with.

[04:07:53] A portion of this goes directly to efforts to increase tourism, to bring more people into Fairfax County, to help support the county. That's what this is we're talking about here. And so I just want to make sure, you know, folks understand the totality of what's before us, not just the slogans that we're going to hear.

[04:08:15] And this is a public hearing to hear from the community. No action on this is being taken today. We know this action will come as a part of our budget. We're getting ready to hear from a couple hundred people on the budget that are going to come forward with perspectives. And what the county executive has done in his budget is proposed ways for us to fill holes and to offset the cost of real estate taxes on our residents.

[04:08:39] And those are options we must consider. And so before we tell people what it is we believe on this and lobby them, let's hear from them. That's what the point of today is. Today is a public hearing to hear from the public, not for us to convince them of something, but to hear what they have to say about this.

[04:08:56] And it does no one any service unless they understand completely what it is that's being proposed and what it is that we're talking about. Supervisor Stork. And just to make another point, but a different point, Fairbanks County spends far less on tourism than most other surrounding districts.

[04:09:13] And so this is an opportunity for us, I think, to look at whether or not we should do more because we think there's more opportunities here. And with those opportunities come additional revenue, which in turn helps this county prosper and grow in many, many, many, many ways, you know, from sports tourism to historic tourism, et cetera.

[04:09:31] So, again, I think the first thing we've got to do is listen to the public, hear what they have to say, and then make good decisions about how do we invest funds for Fairfax County to make a difference. You invest a dollar here, we get additional revenue, \$8 to \$10 over here.

[04:09:47] I think those are the kind of business decisions that we all should be making up here. And I'm looking forward to considering those as part of this process. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Storks. Supervisor Lusk. I just want to echo the point that's been raised around expanding the commercial tax base.

[04:10:05] I mean, I think the problem that we have right now is we see declining values on our commercial properties, which is causing us to rely more so on our residential property owners to pay for the delivery of services here in Fairfax County.

[04:10:22] So going to the point that Supervisor Stork was making, we've got to look for ways to bring in revenues in different methods. So if we're able to invest, invest tourism, invest dollars into tourism, that's going to help us expand the revenues that come into the county to support the delivery of services.

[04:10:45] So I think it's really important that we look for opportunities and look for ways to do that very thing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay, this is a public hearing, and I have no one signed up in advance to testify on this specific matter.

[04:11:02] Is there anyone here who wants to speak specifically on this subject? Okay, if there's anyone else who wishes to speak specifically on this subject, please sign in with the clerk to my right and make sure that you're registered to speak.

[04:11:19] Welcome. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the board. My name is Eric Terry. I'm the president of the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, and Travel Association. Just to follow up on what Chairman McKay said, we did meet with him several weeks ago along with two of the largest hotel owners here in the county, one of whom has just built a brand new hotel or two hotels in Reston, and there is a great deal of concern.

[04:11:42] The hotel industry is off anywhere between 10% to 15% with the cutbacks that have happened. There's been cancellations of government travel, government meetings, other sorts of things, and that's continuing to this day. We're seeing that all over the state, but it's much more pronounced up here in this part of the state.

[04:12:01] You know, to talk about, you know, some of the discussion that we had is really there is a lot of concern about raising a tax during a time when you're seeing a decline in revenues. Sometimes that formula doesn't really work out very well. So that being said, you know, we do believe that Visit Fairfax does a very good job, and as they did when they got the federal funds a few years ago, of delivering to the industry.

[04:12:23] So I would tell you there is some concern about calling that a reserve fund versus dedicating those funds to visit Fairfax. We believe strongly that the funds should be given to visit Fairfax to do what

they did on the last pass. The other concern is that you should understand that the hotel industry is going to pay credit card fees on the collection of these taxes.

[04:12:43] That's a very significant amount of money, 3% to 3.5% that they're charging to collect your tax. So, you know, I would advocate that that may be something you want to think about of providing that dealer discount to the hotels who are collecting the tax on your behalf.

[04:12:58] But, yes, there is a lot of concern of the industry. It is a very dynamic process right now. And, you know, we are concerned about what the future is going to be over the next year. So thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much for that testimony. Much appreciated.

[04:13:15] And let me ask if there's anyone else who wishes to speak who is here present on this specific matter. Anyone else who wishes to testify? Seeing and hearing no one, let me ask if we have any callers. There are no callers. There are no callers. At this time, unless there are additional questions of board members, at this time I'm going to hand the gavel to Supervisor Smith so that I can make a motion.

[04:13:38] And that is that I move that the board close this public hearing while leaving the record open for testimony and defer action on the FY2026 transient occupancy tax rate until May 6, 2025, as a part of the budget markup process followed by action on the proposed ordinance potentially on May 13, 2025.

[04:14:06] The motion. I'm sorry. This one gets winded. Okay. It's been moved and seconded. All those in favor of the motion say aye. Aye. Anyone opposed? Any abstentions?

[04:14:21] That motion passes. Thank you. Thank you very much. Supervisor Smith, and stand by on future items today, because that's how we will make future motions. And next up is a public hearing to consider an ordinance to amend the Code of the County of Fairfax, Virginia, Chapter 4, Taxation and Finance, by adding a new Article 31 relating to the food and beverage tax.

[04:14:43] And at this time, I would recognize staff for a staff presentation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Phil Hagan, Department of Management and Budget. This is a public hearing to consider implementing a food and beverage tax, which would apply to food and beverages sold ready to eat. Although the FY2026 advertised budget plan does not include a food and beverage tax, the county executive recommended that the Board of Supervisors consider such a tax as part of their deliberation on the FY2026 budget to allow discussion with the community in the context of the overall budget, particularly as approximately one-third of the revenue is projected to be generated from out-of-county residents.

[04:15:17] Virginia Code authorizes counties to impose a food and beverage tax at a rate not to exceed 6%. However, the board authorized advertisement of a rate not to exceed 4%, which sets the upper limit that the board can approve for FY2026. The board has the option to adopt a dealer discount, which would allow restaurants to retain a small portion of the tax to offset the cost of collecting the tax on the county's behalf.

[04:15:40] The board advertised a dealer discount, if implemented, at a rate no greater than 3% of the tax collected. Each 1% on the tax rate is estimated to generate \$35 million in annual gross revenue before any dealer discount and before administrative expenses, totaling \$2.8 million and 21 positions.

[04:15:58] Staff recommend an effective date no earlier than January 1, 2026. If implemented on that date, a half year of revenue would be realized in FY2026. I would note that while this public hearing is specific to the proposed food and beverage tax, Individuals may also provide comments on this topic during the public hearings on the budget, which will begin later this afternoon and continue over the next two days.

[04:16:18] Thank you. Thank you very much. Are there questions of staff? Questions of staff. Okay. Seeing and hearing none, I do know that we have a number of speakers who have signed up. And I'll just mention that the motion that I made earlier to receive testimony and to defer decision on this to a time at which we will decide all of our budget matters will also be made on this item.

[04:16:42] So just so you know, that's where we're heading. And with that being said, I'm going to call our first speaker. And again, I have 12 that have signed up in advance. If you're here specifically to testify on this item, you may sign up to be speaker number 13 with the clerk on my right, or you can testify, as was mentioned by staff, later in the context of the full budget.

[04:17:05] And our first speaker is speaker number one, Jim Rafferty, representing Glory Days, to be followed by Sammy Tamimi, Waria Salahi, and Maria Posey. If I called your name, please be down here close in order to testify so that when I call your name, you're ready to step right to the podium. We don't want anyone falling down the stairs and taking a lot of time. So if I called your name, there's plenty of seats right down here on the front. Mr. Rafferty, welcome. Thank you, sir. Good afternoon. My name, as mentioned, is Jim Rafferty. I'm with Gloria Day's Grill here in

[04:17:40] Fairfax County. We started Glory Days Grill in 1996. We've been doing business in Fairfax County for 29 years. We have seven locations in Fairfax County. Everything's been going well, but, you know, times are starting to change in the restaurant industry, as everybody knows. Since COVID, a lot has changed. Cost of goods are going up. Labor is going up. Everything from cooking oil to plate to go packaging, credit card swipe fees, as we just mentioned.

[04:18:12] You know, we used to have probably 80%, 90% cash. Now it's 90% credit card. So those swipe fees do make a big difference. You all see the cost of goods going up when you go to the grocery store. You just want to buy chicken or eggs or milk.

[04:18:27] Everything's going up. Have you been out to your favorite restaurant lately? You know, do you go there as often as you used to? Did you notice that there were less people there than the last time that you went in? The operators of your favorite restaurants have certainly noticed that.

[04:18:46] Restaurants across Fairfax County are facing a critical moment. Cost increases for restaurants combined with economically exhausted consumers have put the squeeze on the Virginia hospitality sector. Making matters worse, a meals tax is really not what we need right now.

[04:19:03] A 4% meals tax, I think, would really be a burden to the restaurant industry. Restaurant industry has the average margin of profit for the restaurant industry is between 3% and 5%.

[04:19:18] Putting a 4% tax on that is putting 4% into the government's, into the county's pocket. And some of the restaurants themselves aren't even making that much on the bottom line. Folks work 50, 60, 70 hours a week to run great establishments for folks to bring their kids after games or have dinner and have social events.

[04:19:39] And this tax is just going to really put a burden on that. A guest, let's say a guest goes out to eat, right? You're on a budget. And let's say, just for simple math, you know, your budget's 20 bucks.

[04:19:55] You go out, you have lunch, and then you see this 4% meals tax is added to it. This is going to hurt the servers and the bartenders in addition to the restaurateurs because if you're on a budget and you

still want to go out, that extra 4% instead of that 20% average tip that goes to the server or the bartender, now it's probably going to be a 16% tip because you're on a budget and you were just charged an extra 4%.

[04:20:16] So I, you know, I know there's a lot of people to speak. I'm just going to finish with, you know, this has been voted down in the past. You know, as an industry, I don't believe this tax is going to help. I think it'll hurt us. And if it ends up closing more restaurants, just remember 4% of nothing is nothing.

[04:20:36] So if the restaurants are closing, we're not making anything. Thank you very much for your time. Thank you. Speaker number two is Sammy Tamimi. Sammy Tamimi here. Sammy Tamimi here. Okay, we're going to go to Speaker No. 3, Waria Salahi.

[04:20:55] Good afternoon. I'm Del Salahi. I'm Woody's brother. I'm speaking on his behalf for Meso-Mediterranean Grill. We do have some certain concerns. For example, we have noticed a great decline in revenue due to many influences, such as inflation and the current food tax, the rise in all kinds of costs that has driven average people, specifically underprivileged people, not to be able to spend the extra

[04:21:33] dollar that they can or they should be able to outside in a restaurant. And I'm afraid that has great burden on the public where they would be inclined to be spending on chips and unhealthy food.

[04:21:50] I do firmly believe in that. But in our business, we have seen such a decline in our revenue that hasn't affected our bottom line for sure. That the food tax, if it's \$133 million in revenue, that equates to \$4.3 million in credit card fees to us as an average in percentage.

[04:22:19] We have already had numerous burdens on us, such as the inflation and other expenses that we have to deal with. And with the vulnerability of tomorrow and uncertainty of tomorrow that this might also increase, we don't know.

[04:22:38] Yet again, we're going to be hit with food tax burden on top of all this stuff, which I believe that has affected us completely with the restaurant chains mainly. I'm afraid this will be, yet again, a negative effect on the restaurant business and the food industry correctly.

[04:23:01] Thank you so much. Thank you very much for your testimony. Speaker number four is Maria Posey, to be followed by Sarah White and Jason Morgan. Again, if I called your name, please be down here close and ready to testify. We're on speaker number four. Welcome. Thank you, Chairman McKay, Supervisor Watkinshock.

[04:23:20] Good to see you. as you know, a resident in your district. So my name is Maria Posey. I live in Burke with my husband, who is a daily doordasher, and our three young kids. Between sports, work, school pickups, and endless cycles of laundry, let's just say prepared meals are a survival tool in our household. So I'm here as a mom, as a homeowner, a voter, and someone who cares deeply about how

[04:23:52] we fund the kind of county we all live in. So I'll begin with the end. Please don't let any meals tax be regressive. My family's total tax bill might not change that much with this proposal because property taxes may go down, meals tax goes up, it's a net for our household. But not everyone has that balance in calculus and not everyone has that choice. A lot of our neighbors don't opt for prepared meals because we want to splurge. We do it because we're juggling, like I am, jobs,

[04:24:29] caregiving, and maybe a toddler who absolutely refuses another bite of broccoli. So the prepared food that we grab on the go may be the only dinner option that we have that day. So I ask, if we move forward with this tax, and others have stronger opinions on that front, can we at least do it in a way

that shields our lowest income neighbors? Can we build in tax relief or more services that actually give people back the time they need to prepare a meal from scratch?

[04:25:01] And I just want to quickly remind us all of the values that guide how we structure our county and our county government. We believe that everyone should have a fair shot at prosperity.

[04:25:16] That doesn't mean that everyone should be guaranteed success, but it means that we all should have a real chance, no matter what zip code we live in, and that government is the most logical vehicle to help us get to that equal opportunity, and that if this is true, then government must be sufficiently funded to be able to provide that opportunity, and that any new revenue that the government needs to provide that equal opportunity at Prosperity should be done with intention.

[04:25:48] Fairfax is a remarkable place to live. We all are here for a reason. We moved here for the schools, the diversity, and yes, for the services. And I know that you, the board, are trying to do the very hard task of balancing a budget that just doesn't add up in this environment.

[04:26:09] But I ask you to lead with those values that many of us hold, equity, opportunity, and a belief that we all do better when we all have enough. So thank you for your service. Thank you for your testimony. Speaker number five is Sarah White, to be followed by Jason Morgan and Rod Dick.

[04:26:31] If I called your name, please make sure you're ready to testify. Welcome. Chairman, members of the board, thank you for giving me a moment to speak today. I'm here again to ask that you not add a meals tax at this time. Though there are many reasons I could give, I just want to go over a few. First, meals taxes are regressive.

[04:26:47] I didn't plan this with the person before me, but we definitely could have. It will absolutely affect those already struggling in Fairfax County far more than it will affect their wealthy counterparts. Houses with one parent do tend to rely more heavily on prepared foods than, say, a family where a parent stays home to cook.

[04:27:04] With meals tax affecting everyone who chooses to purchase prepared meals equally, and with lower-income homes using this option more often, it is clear who will be hurt most by this tax. We live in a county that already has a high cost of living. In the past six months, the majority of my staff we have lost are moving to other states where they can afford to live outside of their parents' homes.

[04:27:26] These are all young adults who went to school here. They went to college here. They plan to stay here to raise their families. We have great schools. Who wouldn't want to stay here and raise their family? And yet we're using those schools to educate people who will never be able to stay here once they move out onto their own. We don't even have a meals tax yet, and already they can't afford to buy a home with property taxes.

[04:27:47] They can't afford to start a business due to commercial taxes. And now they're going to struggle with their job due to the meals tax that will cause less people to eat out in an industry that is already suffering. We've talked about it many times, and Jim already spoke to the fact that restaurants are in trouble.

[04:28:02] And then you're going to add on to that a tax that will cause their paychecks to be lower and their taxes when they go out to eat to be higher. The argument's been made that this tax primarily impacts

tourists to our area. I'm not sure where that thinking comes from. As a restaurant manager who sees people coming in the stores, it's very rarely tourists that I see coming through the doors.

[04:28:24] Those that we see live in our neighborhoods. They're usually individuals, primarily, that don't want to cook at home for one, followed by young families with one or two parents, young children, don't have time to cook dinner. They're coming out spending their dollars with us. They all have tight budgets. How do I know this?

[04:28:40] Because we get to know the people who come in. Not only can I tell you from speaking with people that they don't want this tax, you know from votes in this issue that have already been taken in past years that they don't want this tax. Please listen to your constituents and don't add this tax at this time. Thank you.

[04:28:55] Thank you. Speaker number nine is Jason Morgan, to be followed by Rod Dick, Robert Whitfield. If I called your name, please be ready to testify. Welcome. Before I jump into my main remarks, I want to wish the honorable supervisor from Springfield a full and speedy recovery from his heart surgery.

[04:29:18] We need more compassion, not less, for our fellow human beings, regardless of our differences or preconceived notions. And even though I often disagree with the honorable supervisor, I do appreciate having a variety of perspectives at the dais. Now for my main remarks. Honorable supervisors, we have a revenue problem. We pay taxes to support our neighbors when we leave Fairfax County to dine out. But we turn away tens of millions of dollars each year that they would reciprocate if we had a

[04:29:52] tax on prepared food and beverages. We have a revenue problem. We have long ignored a smart opportunity to use diversification to increase expected tax revenue growth and lower expected tax revenue volatility. We have a revenue problem. We could save households \$59 to \$146 per year through a tax on prepared food and beverages compared with real estate taxes alone. Savings of 21 to 57 percent. Despite these projected savings, some call a prepared food and beverage

[04:30:28] tax regressive. We have a revenue problem. We could give households more control over the taxes they pay. We have a revenue problem. We hear horror stories about how adopting a prepared food and beverage tax will harm restaurateurs, servers, and more. But these claims are speculative, unsubstantiated, at odds with neighboring jurisdictions that have similar taxes and yet still have thriving restaurant industries. I went to lunch last fall to a luncheon held by the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance to hear the arguments that

[04:31:08] they had against a prepared food and beverage tax. Guess where this luncheon was held? This luncheon by this tax-adverse group. They held it in the city of Fairfax, which has long had a meals tax. We have a revenue problem! Opposition to a tax on prepared food and beverage seems to be driven by dogma and self-serving anecdotes, not rigor, logic, and common sense. Those opposed to a food and beverage tax will always find reasons to oppose diversifying our tax space in the same manner that nearly all nearby jurisdictions have done. We have a revenue

[04:31:43] problem. Don't be distracted by claims that we have to first cut spending before we even think about adopting a food and beverage tax. How we spend funds is a different question from how we raise them. We have a revenue problem. Make Fairfax County smarter and more fair in how it raises public funds. Vote to adopt a prepared food and beverage tax. Help solve our revenue problem.

[04:32:10] Thank you, honorable supervisors, for your service to our community. Thank you. Speaker number seven is Rod Dick. Rod here. Again, folks, when I call your name, we're wasting a lot of time here and causing danger. Be down here in the front seats to be followed by Rob Whitfield, Che Riddell Tavasola and Eric Terry. We're on speaker number seven. Welcome. Mr. Chairman, members of the board, I am Rod Dyke, and I address you on behalf of the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance.

[04:32:44] The supervisors are proposing a three or four percent meals tax to take effect on January 1st, 2026. Voters in Fairfax County have previously rejected a meals tax in 2016 and 1992 by wide margins. In the 2023 elections, supervisors did not campaign on adding a meals tax. Now it is being sprung upon us. There are several rationalizations for the meals tax. First, it would provide relief from high real estate taxes. Not really. Because average residential assessments

[04:33:22] increased 6.2% this year, homeowners will have an average real estate tax hike of 6.2%. Instead of reducing the tax rate to offset higher assessments, the supervisors actually added one and a half cents to the tax rate, resulting in a seven and a half percent tax increase for real estate taxes.

[04:33:46] That is the highest real estate tax increase in a decade. The chairman offers the meals tax as an alternative to the one and a half cent rate hike. In that case, real estate taxes would still increase 6.2% due to assessments, which still exceed the increase in household income.

[04:34:09] After its first 12 months, meals tax revenue would only increase with population and inflation and would reduce the tax rate by less than a quarter of a penny. Therefore, even with the meals tax, real estate taxes will continue increasing three times faster than household income.

[04:34:27] As Chairman McKay stated on the WMAU Politics Hour show, the meals tax is not the solution. A second reason for a meals tax is to diversify the tax base.

[04:34:44] Fairfax County already has 177 taxes, licenses, fines, permits, and fees, including dance hall and fortune teller licenses. Adding other tax simply adds to the burden. A third and perennial argument is that schools are underfunded.

[04:35:02] as though more money would improve schools. SAT scores continued to drop each year, even after the pandemic ended, dropping a total of 40 points between 2018 and 2024, while school spending increased by \$600 million. Increasing school spending rewards mismanagement and bad curricula due to administrators that feel no consequences when achievement fails.

[04:35:31] Competition would improve schools more than money. A fourth reason is that the state is allegedly underfunding our schools by \$600 million. However, the supervisors demand \$300 million to give 4% raises to county and school employees, which, if raised each year, would compound annually. Even if the county got \$600 million of more state funding, that would only cover two years of raises. To illustrate, after three years, the cost of raises would be \$900 million more for that year, but state funding

[04:36:10] would still be at the \$600 million. A fifth reason for the meals tax is that many neighboring jurisdictions have meals tax. But why would we want to give up our competitive advantage of having lower taxes? A sixth reason is that one-third of the meals tax would be paid by non-residents. While this may be true, a meals tax raises costs for restaurant customers, making it more difficult for our restaurant businesses. Other revenue streams are stagnant because the

[04:36:45] acts of Fairfax County appear to be business hostile. Businesses already pay 16 taxes. For example, the real estate tax, commercial industrial tax, stormwater, BPOL tax, business personal property tax, 3% state sales tax, user tax. The meals tax would make it 17 taxes and will solve nothing. The meals tax is not part of the solution. It is, however, part of the problem. Instead,

[04:37:22] the county should cut costs and shore up the tax base with business-friendly measures like lower taxes and fewer regulations. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is Rob Whitfield, to be followed by Che Riddell Tavisola, Eric Terry, and Will Radel.

[04:37:45] And Will Radel, hopefully you folks heard your names, and if you did, please come down close and be ready to testify. We're on speaker number eight. Welcome, Rob. Mr. Chairman, members of the Board of Supervisors, thank you. I'm Rob Whitfield, and I'm a member of the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance, and yes, I was there at PJ Skidoo's last November or October, I can't remember, October, because As I remember, it was very difficult to get me into the basement and so anybody that's known me for the last 18 months knows that my life is a challenge these days.

[04:38:21] But I am thankful for the hospitality that we've had there and at many other places I've been to in the last 46 years, 47 years living in Fairfax County. The problem is we're facing very uncertain times in the next few years and yes, the need to diversify revenues is certainly a reasonable issue to explore but I don't know that putting a single industry tax such as on the restaurants is the solution so one of the things that I would propose that if you adopt such a measure that you provide a certain timeframe let's say three years in which

[04:38:59] the meals tax will be reviewed and make it so that we have a proper public hearing on the... Right now, the process that has been followed in the last nine months is there was a meeting in September with the board, and basically this is the first chance for the public to talk about this issue. I can say that I personally have not been to many meals in the last two years, and I doubt that I will be from this point forth, but I look at the experiences I had with my kids. I remember going to Glory Days when they had

[04:39:35] pool hall in Herndon and it was a great place to go and so yes restaurants provide entertainment as well as food so I'm I'm not going to oppose the meals tax per se but I want to have proper boundaries placed on subsequent review so that we we don't just adopt a tax and then forget about it because there's plenty of other taxes we can consider I would suggest one to consider is a tax

[04:40:04] Attacks on attorneys, which I would suggest a 90% a tax on attorneys making over \$200,000 a year, half of which to stay in the county, and the rest to go down to Richmond. So, thank you.

[04:40:20] Thank you. Thank you very much, Rob. Speaker number nine is Che Riddell-Tavisola, to be followed by Eric Terry, Will Radel, and Anna Shannon. If I called your name, please be close, ready to testify. Welcome. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and Board of Supervisors.

[04:40:38] My name is Che Riddell Tabasola. I'm the Vice President of Government Affairs for the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington. For more than 100 years, RMW has advocated for small businesses and restaurants like many of my friends here today. I provide community for them. As we all know, it is more expensive than ever to go out to eat.

[04:40:58] And for that reason, we strongly oppose today's meals tax. We strongly oppose anything that makes the cost of going out to a restaurant further out of reach for a working Fairfax family. In the District

of Columbia, we have a 4% meals tax. And I think it's well known there that as dining there has gotten more expensive, customer traffic has declined and revenues have declined.

[04:41:20] Earlier this year, we released the results of our spring survey package. and we found that 44% of full-service casual restaurants said that they were likely to close this year due to inflation, declining sales, and lingering effects of the pandemic. I want to talk about that very special segment, the full-service casual restaurant.

[04:41:39] We also call it the neighborhood restaurant, and it's really the endangered species of the moment, and it's the one segment that really is disproportionately affected by meal stacks for a couple of reasons. First of all, neighborhood restaurants play very two important roles in our community. First, they are economic engines.

[04:41:56] The average full-service casual restaurant creates 27 jobs. That's more than twice as many as a fast casual restaurant. They're also the jobs of first choice for young adults, returning citizens, individuals who have only high school diplomas. We should be doing everything to lift up and preserve these businesses, not straddle them with more challenges.

[04:42:17] The other piece is that neighborhood restaurants, and you've heard some of this already today, are really important cultural touch points. In an increasingly digital age, you could go to any of our friends' restaurants here today, and you would see a dining room filled with individuals from every background.

[04:42:34] You would see all generations. You see across the tax brackets. And these are really special places that we cannot take for granted. A meal's tax disproportionately affects these segments in a couple of different ways. First, unlike a fast casual, full-service casual restaurants depend on staff, right?

[04:42:52] From the host that greets you and seats you to the server who takes your order, the food runner and the busser. And I'll share with you that as we've seen in the District of Columbia, as costs increase and restaurateurs look for ways to save money, it's the support entry level roles that are the first to go.

[04:43:09] The second is unlike a high-end dining experience, these neighborhood restaurants can't just pass the cost of higher taxes onto the consumer because we depend on regulars. We depend on being an affordable and accessible place for individuals to dine. The last couple points is that this tax disproportionately affects Fairfax residents, lower-income residents, and residents on fixed incomes, and that's just not right. Now is not the time to further increase the cost of dining, and for that, we oppose this meals tax. We thank you for your time today and while I was available

[04:43:45] to answer any questions. Thank you. Thank you very much. Speaker number 10 is Eric Terry. Speaker number 10. Okay, guys, let's try to respect the speakers as I'm calling their names and make sure that they can hear their names. Speaker number 10 is Eric Terry to be followed by Will Radel and Anna Shannon. And if you are here to testify on this matter and I did not just call your name, if you're here specifically to testify on this matter, make sure you sign in with the clerk over here to my far right.

[04:44:20] Welcome. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Eric Terry again with the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, and Travel Association. I won't repeat a lot of what has been said. I think there have been a lot of good points that have been made about what the restaurant industry is going to today. But more importantly, I want you to look at the folks up here from Great American Restaurants, Glory Days Grill, Mezza, who are the employees that are impacted by this.

[04:44:40] And, you know, it will impact their tips, it will impact their business, and they are seeing those impacts. Another point that was made earlier is that we are seeing hotel occupancies drop. If you believe in the premise that tourists are going to pay for a portion of this, it's going to hurt even worse to the restaurant industry.

[04:44:57] So forget about what Fairfax residents are paying. You're going to see a double impact on the restaurant industry. A gentleman earlier talked about credit card fees. At the current proposed rate, those would cost \$4.3 to \$4.5 million on restaurants.

[04:45:14] So you add that percentage on to the restaurant profitability, which was mentioned earlier, and they're basically at break-even. So how many restaurants do you think are going to open in Fairfax County at a break-even proposition, or how many are going to close because they're not making any money? So, you know, you definitely have a difficult situation.

[04:45:31] As was mentioned earlier, this tax does impact the lowest income levels of our population. They eat out a much higher proportion of their disposable household income on meals out of home, so it is very, very important. I would also tell you that I believe today Prince William County, who implemented a meals tax about a year or so ago, is considering reducing that tax because of the concerns that they've had on the impact on restaurants and the fact that some of those restaurants are seeing declines in their business.

[04:46:02] I don't know what the resolution is on that today, but I know that they've had a hearing on it, I know there's been discussion. I've spoken with the chairman of that board about it, and she herself has experienced some of those. So, again, think about, you know, what's impacting and what's happening around you right now.

[04:46:19] But, again, I would implore you to really think long and hard before implementing this tax. Thank you very much. Thank you, Eric. And Eric. Hey, Eric. Eric, I do. Eric.

[04:46:36] Okay, I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for the time that you spent with me, and I think with all of us trying to give us data and trying to give us information, I do want to tell you that's been helpful, and I appreciate the time you've taken to do that. We are now on speaker number 11, Will Radel, to be followed by Anna Shannon.

[04:46:55] Welcome, Will. Friends, neighbors, good afternoon. Born on the 413th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth I's coronation, for whom our commonwealth is named, I was born at Fairfax Hospital.

[04:47:16] I'm in my sixth decade of calling Fairfax County home. The first time I stood here was in 1996, speaking with your predecessor. At the time, I was at a homeless shelter, Eleanor Kennedy Shelter, because I had been going through losing both my parents to cancer at the age of 24.

[04:47:37] We are very lucky and very blessed in Fairfax County, especially southern Fairfax County, where I reside. We have had community heroes like St. Joe, Joseph Garland. We have had owners of local restaurants, businesses, who actually in 2010 came out and publicly spoke in favor of the meals tax.

[04:48:02] Yes, I'm talking about Jeff Todd. He did come out and said that if it was treated fairly, that if people going to a grocery store were paying the tax on prepared meals, he wouldn't oppose it. I think it's clear that there is a need in our community for the resources.

[04:48:27] We are the community with one million persons plus population that has the greatest per capita income. Even though that is true, that we are the highest per capita income among communities with a million plus population, we still have many people who suffer and struggle today.

[04:48:49] And I think we as a community can come together and to do that. And what are we talking about? If we read the materials that are given to the board, we're talking about \$50 on average. And I would like to start with my \$50 because I stood here and I was in need and this community came forward and helped.

[04:49:12] I want to be able to do that, and it's for exclusively public purpose. Therefore, I'm going to give it to the county executive. Thank you. And I think we can lead by example, as you have for decades. Thank you very much, Will.

[04:49:28] Speaker number 12. Speaker number 12 is Anna Shannon. Is Anna Shannon here? We'll see Anna Shannon. And we're to supervise. You are on the line. You are on the phone.

[04:49:43] Okay, Ms. Shannon, can you hear me okay? Yes, I can. Okay, welcome. The floor is yours. Okay. I mostly concur with everything that's said already, and I don't want to repeat some of the points that have been mentioned already because I know I'm not the speaker.

[04:50:06] But from my research, voters did reject Dia in 1992 and 2016. So the citizens have spoken. And I remember reading a year ago in the Mount Vernon Gazette op-ed, It was either the franchise owner or the owner of the corporation for Mike's Grill.

[04:50:33] He mentioned that they did the same experiment in Prince William County, and it didn't work. So those are my points, and I think we are inundated with taxes already, And what's happening with retirees like myself, I don't want to be forced to move away from this wonderful county because of the onslaught of increased taxes every year.

[04:51:08] Thank you. Thank you very much. I do have four additional speakers who have signed up. So when I call your name, please be down here ready to speak.

[04:51:23] Wally Stephen to be followed by Kimberly Adams, Thomas Cranmer, and Douglas Liskerhoff. Uh, Liskerhoff, welcome. Uh, we have, uh, do we have Wally Steven here? Yeah. If I called your name, it's your turn to testify and you will be speaker number 13. Well, I wasn't planning to speak today, but you know, just sitting in the audience for the taxes. I have family here and I came out to help out during COVID. And I, I, sad to say it reminds me when in California where

[04:52:03] everybody moved out of California because they were getting tax, tax, tax, tax. I came to this county and I had to pay a car tax over \$450. And the thing of it is, I wish I wasn't retired and I might have to go back to work the way the taxes are going here in this county or move out.

[04:52:27] And I want to thank James for helping that little River Glen and Ollie Glen. But you have a lot of seniors over there, you know, that they can't afford anymore. They're on a fixed income just like I am okay and the thing of it is they might get their lunch but they don't have breakfast and dinner there they're on their own okay and then a lot of them won't go to the city because it's four percent more and you know where the area is it's right next door so we'll eat the county because it's cheaper and then you have friends from Alexandria and Falls Church and other places

[04:53:04] that come because they they're getting taxed over there they're getting meals taxed in other counties and they come to Fairfax and they meet me for dinner. So I just, I don't know what the statistics are and all the facts and everything, but I know it makes it rough if more taxes are put on me as an individual and also my family that pays the real estate taxes, you know. So I want you to consider the seniors there at Little River Glen. And Allie Glen, you've done a lot for

[04:53:37] us thanks james and then i don't know where drainsville is because i was brought up here from a different state but springfield i've been there and i ate in springfield i don't know where drainsville is but i i won't ever eat there the way you treated that man thank you speaker number 14 is kimberly adams to be followed by tom cranmer and douglas weiser off welcome kimberly Good afternoon, Chair McKay, board members, and my supervisor, Mr. Harrity.

[04:54:17] My name is Kimberly Adams, and I'm a mother of two school-age boys, a high school librarian, and an FCPS employee for 25 years. I've been closely following the county budget for about two decades. The proposed budget this year is one of the first that I can recall in many years, where we're seeing substantial recommended cuts to county positions and services, alongside a significant shortfall projected on the school ledger side.

[04:54:41] I also do not recall hearing many pre-budget forecasts that showed cuts to positions in services prior to ahead of fully implementing necessary revenue diversification. We know that many people in Fairfax and beyond are losing their jobs in the federal service.

[04:54:58] This is not a time to be cutting jobs locally. If we want to keep the services we have in Fairfax without imposing a loss, we must increase and diversify our revenue streams. I am advocating today, as I did in 2016, for a meals tax, or as we're calling it, a food and beverage tax.

[04:55:17] This is a progressive tax that puts the burden on those who can afford prepared foods and those who have the means to eat in Fairfax restaurants and live elsewhere. This recommended 4% additional tax is necessary and long overdue. And as an aside, I just paid 9% in New York City on my spring break, so we are not out of line.

[04:55:36] Surrounding jurisdictions around us have taxes in place that are benefiting them, many since before 2020, when the General Assembly granted this taxing authority. Inaction, in my opinion, on this item in last year's budget, we can no longer implement this until January of 2026, and once it's in place, it will generate upwards of \$100 million in new revenues each year going forward.

[04:55:59] Over time, this may actually help stabilize our real estate tax burden. Which brings me to the \$1.5% recommended increase on the personal house tax bill. To balance that against homeowners, with a meals tax that is paid by those outside of the county, we will see significant potential to reduce property taxes.

[04:56:18] We all know that by continuing to pay our fair share of taxes, we contribute to the well-being of all in our county. I know that you will hear from hundreds of people over the next three days in this room, via email, and other means, as they share their funding priorities with you. And I ask that you listen and take notice that many of your constituents are asking for continued funding of necessary budget line items that support their family and their neighbors and not cutting the things they've come to rely on.

[04:56:47] It is my hope that you can close the funding gap for our schools. It's been ignored by our state and federal funding sources, and our employees and our newly minted collective bargaining agreements

deserve as much attention as you can give. I'm certainly not asking for a competition with the parks, the fire, the police, the health and human services, or others.

[04:57:05] I'm looking back at years in the making of a workforce that throughout this county will finally feel valued and included in the conversation. Thank you for working to make a priority of everything in this county and not balance each of the needs against each other. Thank you.

[04:57:22] Figure number 16 is Tom Cranmer. To be followed by Douglas Weiserhoff.

[04:57:31] Thank you for the opportunity of letting me speak. I'm Thomas Cranmer. I live in Great Falls, and I have circulated a petition from Great Falls Restaurants under the petition by the Restaurant Association for Virginia, saying that they are opposed to single-purpose taxes like this one.

[04:58:11] And at least in front of you should be their statement. So it's very clear that the Virginia Restaurant Association is opposed to this idea.

[04:58:33] And the restaurants in Great Falls are unanimously in favor of getting rid of this tax. Thank you very much for listening to me and looking at the petition by the people in Great Falls.

[04:58:54] Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 16, I appreciate the enthusiasm in here, folks. I do. But there is 150 people that want to come through here and testify and get home to see their families tonight, too.

[04:59:11] So let's be mindful of their time if we can. Speaker number 16 is Douglas Weiserhoff. I hope I'm reading this right, but welcome. The floor is yours. How are you doing today, Mr. Chairman? Whiskerhoff. Whiskerhoff.

[04:59:27] It's been butchered for years, so it's all right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Wackenshaw. You are my supervisor. Also wanted to thank Pat Harity, who obviously had to step away. I've been working in the restaurant business for about 25 years.

[04:59:45] And I chose today not to come up and speak as someone who's working in a restaurant. I chose to just come up and speak as someone who lives in this county. When we talk about being short on revenue, we have to talk about whether we're spending money right.

[05:00:07] We have to make decisions based on what we're looking at with this 6%, right? We're looking at schools and police departments. For our schools, we probably have 20 to 25 percent more administrators in the schools today than when I went to school in Fairfax.

[05:00:27] And when we look at numbers, our education was better when I was in school in Fairfax County than it is today. One administrator equals a \$5,000 raise for every teacher.

[05:00:48] One, if they're making around \$150,000 a year, that's five grand for the people that matter the most in our school system. It's not the administrators. It's not the principals. It's the teachers. And we've got to really look at that. We're talking about diversity in the budget. This is \$100 million, guys. \$5 billion budget. That's not diversity. That's trying to grab money because you're unwilling to look and dig deep to say, hey, do we really need to spend this money here?

[05:01:25] the police. I am by far not one of those people who wants to defund our police department. Schools and safety is why people move here. However, when I see six, seven, eight, nine, ten police

officers showing up to a call where they need four, you got to wonder, do we really need that many? I think we really do need to put the police chief in a corner and say, hey, is this really, truly needed?

[05:02:01] Yes. Officer safety, it's huge. Safety in numbers, huge. We all saw the TV shots of what happened at the CIA building. We have 200, 300 officers there for a mentally ill patient with a gun.

[05:02:20] It's too much. We've got to think about these things. This tax is regressive. It is 100% regressive. 30% of this county is under the Alice mark. That's \$120,000 a year.

[05:02:36] They are having a tough time dealing with food, health care, transportation. That's what we've got to look at, folks. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. So we have one additional speaker.

[05:02:55] Sir, if you could just introduce yourself. This will be speaker number 17. I thank you for the late addition. I didn't plan on doing this today. My name is Gerald Geddes. I am a CPA. I've been a CPA since 1981. My first job when I started work was at Friendly's.

[05:03:11] I bused tables at Friendly's. One thing that I would like you to consider, that working at a restaurant is an excellent job for soft skills. You learn how to not look at your phone all day.

[05:03:29] You learn how to deal with customers. It is an excellent thing. I know you look at it as it may be a luxury. You think that people that can afford it can afford a little bit extra for this tax. But think about the people that are trying to raise a family.

[05:03:46] Think about how expensive it is for child care. Think about how expensive it is to pay a mortgage. And, you know, some people have a 3%, 2.75% mortgage, but think if you bought a house recently. You're paying a lot higher percentage.

[05:04:02] These are huge numbers that people have. They have to work hard in order to pay these bills, and that takes time. They might be working extra jobs. They're trying to do right by their children. They're trying to spend time with them.

[05:04:18] They may not have time to cook a meal. This is not a luxury for many people. This is a necessity. Their time is very precious. The only thing that we all have the same amount of, the resource that's most important to all of us, is time.

[05:04:36] We only have a finite amount of time. And, you know, we all eat three times a day. Some of us eat four times a day, five times a day. But, you know, we all eat. We learn things when we work at a restaurant.

[05:04:53] We learn, you know, I go to Safeway and I see people bagging their own food. They're putting meat that is leaking, blood, and they're putting it with all their other groceries in a recycling bag that they're going to bring next week.

[05:05:10] You know, I'm surprised we don't have everybody dead from, you know, food poisoning. But you learn in a restaurant food safety. It's a very important thing. We're going to eat the rest of our lives. We can save lives if people know how to do this. Look, you know, you've got to look harder at cutting costs.

[05:05:30] That lady before me said that you've got to fund everything. Well, this is not paradise. We can't fund everything. You've got to look harder at cutting expenses. The schools are not doing well. They're doing very poorly. You've got to cut costs and be more effective.

[05:05:49] I just want you to consider this is, you think of it as a luxury. You know, George, the first Bush, George H.W. Bush, he put a luxury tax. It killed the shipping industry. And we don't have a shipping industry, and it's a national defense problem because China can make ships and we cannot.

[05:06:12] So be wary. You think that this is a luxury, it's not. Thank you. And with that, that's the end of the speakers I have who have signed up in advance to testify in this matter.

[05:06:28] Let me ask if there's anyone on the phone. There are no callers. There was no one on the phone at this time. Any closing comments from county staff? Staff recommends that the record remain open for testimony until budget markup on May 6th. Thank you very much.

[05:06:44] Last chance, any questions for board members? Seeing and hearing none, I will now hand the gavel to Supervisor Smith so that I can make the following motion. I move that the board close this public hearing while leaving the record open for testimony and defer decision on the proposed ordinance until May 6, 2025, being part of the budget markup process.

[05:07:07] I'll second that motion. All those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Anyone opposed? Any abstentions? That motion passes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, Vice Chairman Smith, and thank everyone for their testimony. We are now going to move on to our next public hearing, which is a public hearing on proposed amendments to Section 67.1-10-2 of the Fairfax County Code relating to sewer changes, and if staff, as soon as they're ready, we would welcome a staff presentation.

[05:07:44] And if folks could please exit the auditorium quietly, there's plenty of room right outside the auditorium for conversation, and at this time, we would welcome staff for a staff presentation.

[05:08:05] Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the board. My name is Sharam Lissenden. Folks, conversations outside the auditorium, outside the auditorium, a couple steps away from you, plenty of space for conversation. I'm sorry. Yes, welcome. No problem. The proposed increases for fiscal year 2026 are primarily driven by the needs of our aging infrastructure, the proposed increases are as follows.

[05:08:34] An availability charge increase of 2% or \$180 for single-family dwelling units, \$143 for multifamily dwelling units, and accordingly for other types of connections. A sewer service charge increase of 5.9% or \$0.52 per 1,000 gallons.

[05:08:53] A base charge increase of 5.8% or \$0.96 per month for residential units and accordingly varying increases based on meter sizes of different types of units. The total impact of proposed increases on an average sewer bill is 5.9% or \$3.74 per month.

[05:09:18] And lastly, no increases are proposed for connection, lateral spur, and hauled wastewater charges. If you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer. Thank you for that presentation. Are there any questions of staff?

[05:09:35] Any questions of staff? Seeing and hearing none, I do not have anyone signed up in advance to testify on this specific matter. Is there anyone in the auditorium that would like to speak on this subject, specifically this subject? Anyone present who would like to testify? Seeing and hearing no one, let me ask if we have any callers?

[05:09:53] No callers. No callers. Any further closing comments or recommendation from staff? Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt the amended ordinances as set forth in Attachment 1 to this item in the Board package. Thank you very much. Last call, questions from Board members.

[05:10:12] Seeing and hearing none, I will now close the public hearing. I am going to hand the gavel to Supervisor Smith, and I move that the Board close this public hearing. while leaving the record open for testimony and defer action on the FY2026 charges until May 6, 2025, as part of the budget markup process, followed by adoption of the sewer ordinance amendment on May 13, 2025.

[05:10:35] I second that motion. All those who are in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Anyone opposed? Any abstentions? That motion passes unanimously. Thank you very much, Vice Chair Smith. And we are going to move to our next public hearing, which is a public hearing on the FY 2026 effective tax rate increase.

[05:11:00] And at this time, we would welcome a staff presentation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Phil Hagan, Director of the Department of Management and Budget. This is a public hearing on the FY 2026 effective tax rate increase.

[05:11:16] The Board of Supervisors authorized advertisement of a real estate tax rate of \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value, which is the rate upon which the FY2026 advertised budget plan was balanced, and an increase of 1.5 cents over the current real estate tax rate.

[05:11:32] The total increase in assessed values of existing properties is expected to be 4.68%, including an increase of 6.17% for residential real property and a decrease of 0.38% for non-residential property.

[05:11:48] Based on the advertised tax rate and increases in the assessed value of existing properties, effective tax rate would increase by more than 1%. As a result, Virginia code requires this separate public hearing on the effective tax rate. I would note that while this public hearing is specific to the effective tax rate increase, individuals may also provide comments on the tax rate during the public hearing on the budget, which begins later this afternoon and continues over the next two days. Thank you.

[05:12:12] Thank you very much. At this time, are there any questions of staff? Seeing and hearing none, this is a public hearing, and I do have nine speakers who have signed up in advance to testify. As you just heard from staff, this is related to the budget, but this is not the main budget public hearing. So if you're here for the main budget public hearing, that will be coming along next. And so that don't want to deter you from testifying on both, but just want to make sure folks understand the difference because sometimes it can be unclear. With that, I'm going to call speakers again. And if I call your name, if you could please come down close to be ready

[05:12:51] to testify. Speaker number one is Rod Dyke, to be followed by Justin Mastrangelo and Charles McAndrew. If I called your name, please be ready. Welcome back. And I address you on behalf of the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance. Next year's proposed tax increase continues the 25-year trend of raising real estate taxes three times faster than inflation and household income. And the same

[05:13:29] 25-year trend of increasing inflation-adjusted school spending three times faster than the rate of student enrollment. Next year's proposed increase would average 7.5%, the largest in a decade, raising the average property tax bill from \$8,659 to \$9,312. The supervisors don't acknowledge that they are proposing an average seven and a half percent hike in real estate taxes.

[05:14:05] This year, residential assessments increased an average of 6.2 percent. That means unless the supervisors lower the tax rate, the average tax bill will automatically go up 6.2 percent. But a rise in property values does not mean wages have increased proportionally, nor does it mean that the county must increase spending by that much. Yet even a 6.2% tax increase is not enough for the

[05:14:41] Board of Supervisors. Instead of lowering the tax rate to offset higher assessments, the supervisors propose to raise the rate for \$1.125 per \$100 of assessed value to \$1.140. Together with the stormwater tax rate, also included in real estate bills, the proposed rate climbs to \$1.1725. Even with the new proposed meals tax, real estate taxes

[05:15:19] would still increase 6.2%. The taxation facing county taxpayers stems from overspending, not legitimate educational costs or rising property values. County taxpayers deserve relief. Cut the tax rate so the property taxes will not increase more than household income or better yet not at all because of past excessive tax increases. This tax rate hearing is important. It's supposed to

[05:15:56] give owners of the county's 338,000 homeowners the opportunity to testify in real estate tax rate. However few people are aware of this tax rate hearing. It's It's not mentioned on the assessment notices, which only lists the 4 p.m. budget hearing on the back, which is still to come.

[05:16:18] Do the supervisors really want to hear from homeowners who collectively pay \$3 billion in real estate taxes? Homeowners are kept in the dark about the supervisor's proposed tax hikes because the assessment notice doesn't show the proposed rate hike.

[05:16:37] Instead, it says TBD to be determined. Last year, the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance asked the supervisors to follow Utah's example and include the proposed rate on assessment notices.

[05:16:56] This simple step would inform county residents how much their real estate tax might increase. The supervisors refused. In addition to stating what the proposed tax rate is, budget literature should say that the tax increase is 7.5%.

[05:17:14] Show the percent increases for the past 10 years for comparison. Say that the new average tax will be \$9,312. Include the stormwater tax that is included in real estate tax bills.

[05:17:33] Put all this on assessment notices, which go to 338,000 homeowners, and replace TBD with a proposed rate. Homeowners are required to pay real estate bills that have been increasing far faster than household incomes and inflation.

[05:17:52] It appears that efforts have been made to obscure the true extent of these tax hikes and to limit public awareness and participation in related hearings. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number two. Speaker number two is Justin Mastrangelo.

[05:18:15] Is speaker number two not here? I've called his name, Justin Mastrangelo. Speaker number two is not here. Speaker number three, James Parmelee, is on the line. Welcome. Can you hear us okay? Mr. Parmelee, can you hear us okay?

[05:18:37] Yes, yes, I can hear you. Hold on a second. Can you hear me? We can. The floor is yours. Okay, great. Thanks for allowing me to speak today. Earlier today, a number of groups had an anti-tax rally out front of the headquarter of the building there.

[05:18:54] I was hoping, had this, I know you're all very busy today with lots of hearings, my intent was that this hearing would have started prior to the rally. So I could have invited everyone to come out to the rally and certainly happy that Supervisor Herity came out to the rally. But it was a good expression of how many folks, and I think a lot of folks who are in the room right now, were at the rally.

[05:19:17] And it was a good expression of how many people are really fed up with high taxes. And we would be fed up with higher taxes in a normal year. But as the economy has been bad for a number of

years now, we are looking at a real problem in Northern Virginia because you guys keep raising taxes again and again and again.

[05:19:36] And I've heard, while I've been waiting on the phone here, from folks who are complaining about the economy, too, and their expenses. And you are literally costing people their homes in Fairfax County and forcing them out of Fairfax County. So, anyway, being on the phone, I can't tell how much time I have left.

[05:19:55] But I also will be speaking at the budget hearing sometime later this evening. So, thank you for the opportunity to speak, and please do not impose a meals tax. The voters said no twice in Perfect Scouting, so please do not impose a meals tax. Please do not raise any taxes.

[05:20:12] We need to look to cut taxes. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number four is Charles McAndrew, to be followed by Kimberly Adams, to be followed by Robert Whitfield. In that order, we are on speaker four. Welcome.

[05:20:34] Good evening, Mr. Chairman and members of the county board and Mr. County Executive. My name is Charles McAndrew. My wife and I have been homeowners in Fairfax County since 1968.

[05:20:52] I'm here to protest the outrageous increase in the real estate tax assessment. As I understand, the supervisors have proposed a 7.5% increase real estate tax hike, the largest in the past 10 years, costing the average homeowner approximately \$650.

[05:21:12] With inflation running around 2.5%, real estate taxes continue to increase, along with household income, three times year after year and decades after decades. For example, real estate has risen 287% since the year 2000 to 2025, while inflation and household income only went up 88%.

[05:21:37] In the past year, the past 10 years, my real estate taxes from the year 2015 to 2025, which would be estimated this year, has gone up in 2015 \$7,609. And now it's going to be \$11,770 with the estimated taxes for this year, an overall increase of 65%.

[05:22:01] This is an increase of three times the rate of inflation during this time period. It is time for a reasonable common sense increase, no more than an annual increase in household income and inflation. Also, I oppose the proposed meal tax.

[05:22:17] Thank you for your attention. Thank you for your testimony. Speaker number five. Speaker number five is Kimberly Adams. Is Kimberly here? Okay. Speaker number six is Rob Whitfield. I know Rob has already spoken on another matter. I don't see him. Speaker number seven, Jeffrey Leach. If you're here, please come on down to be followed by, I have two callers. If you're here to speak specifically on this tax, effective tax rate increase issue, and you haven't already signed up, please make sure that you sign

[05:22:55] up with the clerk. We're on speaker number seven. Welcome. Thank you. Chairman McKay and other supervisors, good afternoon. My name is Jeff Leach. I'm a Fairfax County citizen, taxpayer, and volunteer who has worked in law and business for over 30 years, running my own business successfully for 10 years. To put it frankly, no offense to anyone, but this budget is a car wreck, not due to the work of the men and women in our Department of Management and Budget, who have done a beautiful job, but due to the county leaders who have been driving the car.

[05:23:32] A call for a rise in taxes beyond inflation to cover our \$271 million deficit, which may soon turn into a \$440 million deficit if you continue to defy executive orders and lose federal funding, is a public

admission of failure to manage taxpayer resources properly.

[05:23:54] Gross overspending began long before any of you came to sit on the board, and there's enough blame to go around between the two major parties. Let me give one example of overspending. During the 40 years between 1985 and 2025, the number of students in the Fairfax County public school system increased by 44%.

[05:24:17] During the same period, however, the total number of FCPS employees doubled at 94%, twice the student growth rate, the number of teachers almost tripled at 186%, over four times the student growth rate, and the number of assistant principals increased at a rate of 306%, nearly seven times the student growth rate.

[05:24:47] Unsurprisingly, this enormous mushrooming of personnel has caused a corresponding rise in costs. In 1985, the county paid an inflation-adjusted \$2025, \$7,651 for each student.

[05:25:04] Today, the total cost per student is \$22,600, most of which the county pays, almost three times higher. During the same 40-year period, the cost of FCPS per household has almost doubled, while real incomes, when adjusted for inflation, have been flat, according to the FCEDA.

[05:25:27] The argument that all these expenditures are necessary for a state-of-the-art education fails, not only because FCPS was delivering state-of-the-art education in 1985 for one-third of the cost in inflation-adjusted dollars.

[05:25:42] As detailed in this book by Dr. Daniel Luke, I mean Duke of UVA, but also because by objective metrics, FCPS performance has been falling for years. In addition to the situation is worsening now that the tax base is fleeing Fairfax County.

[05:26:04] Over 2,000 households have left in the past year, so I implore you, please don't continue down this road. But it's not enough to curse the darkness. With input from many citizens across the political spectrum, I've sent to all of you a workable proposal that balances the budget, lowers, not raises taxes, gives every household in Fairfax County a \$1,600 tax credit, and ends with a surplus.

[05:26:30] Please enact it. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.

[05:26:49] As I mentioned earlier, there's a lot of people that still have to speak, so please be considerate of that. Speaker number eight is Alan Marino, who is on the phone. Welcome. Can you hear us? Yes, I can. Can you hear me? We can. The floor is yours. Perfect.

[05:27:06] Hello, a leading representative. My name is Alan, a proud resident of Franconia District in Fairfax County. Recently, we moved from California to Virginia, not just to be closer to family, but to get away from California's high taxes and to build a better financial future.

[05:27:25] Since then, we've had a number of unexpected financial burdens. Take, for example, Virginia's car tax, a yearly tax on a depreciating asset that was already taxed at the point of sell. It's an ongoing double tax that imposes unnecessary financial strain.

[05:27:44] On the outside, we bought a house, a milestone we're very proud of. However, our home's assessed value went up this year, which is really great on paper. But let's be honest, it translates to another real estate tax increase. At the same time, I think we can all agree that the economy is facing uncertainty.

[05:28:05] Prices are up, retirement accounts are down, and jobs are at risk. Now, add a proposed real estate tax increase on top of all that, and it starts to feel like an endless cycle of rising taxes when there's a sign of relief.

[05:28:21] We're already paying high income taxes, real estate taxes, and personal property taxes. Increasing the real estate tax rate now would only aggravate and compound an already inflated tax environment. Now let me be clear, I believe in paying taxes. We all do our part to support the programs and services that make Fairfax County a great place to live. But at some point, we have to ask, how much is too much? Yes, the county has needs and expectations to meet,

[05:28:54] but even expectations must be grounded in reality and the reality is us residents don't have blank checks to keep paying higher and higher taxes especially now to make ends meet we have to make tough choices we have to re-evaluate phase out projects come back on spending and adjust our expectations sometimes things need to wait and that's okay our government should do the same and sorry and to be blunt right now is not the time for compensation increases across the board

[05:29:32] we all want Fairfax County to thrive that cannot happen as the very families who supported are taxed out and I'll end with this a baby girl my wife and I love living here this is home but it's sad to feel that we have to choose between staying near family or moving to another county just to find relief from these high rising taxes please oppose this tax rate increase And please, don't be another Californian.

[05:30:03] Fight for us. Thank you for your time. Thank you. We're now on speaker number nine. Do we have speaker number nine on the line? Okay, speaker number nine is David Shannon. Welcome. Thank you very much. So some of my points kind of dovetailed in some of the more recent speakers.

[05:30:25] But, you know, my interest was trying to research, because I'm an engineer, what the history of the property taxes have been since their inception to track their progress. I wanted to statistically look at them.

[05:30:41] I moved here 25 years ago, and property taxes, at least statewide, that practice goes back all the way to 1782. However, during the quarter century that I've been here and a property owner, expands significantly, and therefore the number of homes to be taxed has also increased.

[05:31:10] There never seems to be enough money to go around. You know, in countless elections that I've been involved with, I've seen bonds voted on during elections to fund things like school construction. The county is constantly borrowing monies for these activities, and there's an inherent at risk in this behavior and it's unrealistic to believe that one can continue on this path of excess I find it maybe it's not excess but that's a strong word but you can't continue to do

[05:31:44] that indefinitely okay uh you have to put on the brakes at some point uh and you don't have to be a rocket scientist like myself because I actually am one to realize that such a financial model is simply unsustainable. So I challenged the board, the members of the board of supervisors to prove me otherwise.

[05:32:04] I mean, individual households could certainly not continue to run their budgets the way that the county has. So there has to be a happy medium and some things, pet projects, whatever, they may not be possible.

[05:32:31] But, you know, again, when are you going to put on the brakes? You can't continue on like this. We already are running a deficit, as you pointed out. And, you know, that's not going to be mystically,

magically made up by some of these Band-Aid solutions that you're proposing.

[05:32:53] Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 10 is Tom Cranmer. Is he here? Speaker number 10, Tom Cranmer. Okay, if I call your name, please be down here close. 11, Molly Sullivan, and 12, Nicole Miller.

[05:33:10] And then we will go back. I see Rob has returned. So we will go back to Rob as speaker number 13.

[05:33:31] Hi, I'm back again.

[05:33:46] Tom Cranmer, Great Falls. I'm going to be extremely brief. I'm sure that you like that idea. I think that this whole business of effective tax rate increase And the rate is incomprehensible to most people.

[05:34:06] My wife was a math major in Columbia. She has the slightest interest in trying to figure out what in the hell all this stuff means. And what does it mean in terms of our taxes?

[05:34:23] So it seems to me that you should get rid of this whole concept of the effective tax rate increase, Get it down to nuts and bolts about what in the world you are doing and what it's going to cost us.

[05:34:42] You should be able to be articulate enough to get the story out to the whole population and have them noodle with numbers. So thank you very much. That's it.

[05:34:58] Thank you. Now the speaker number 11 is Molly Sullivan, to be followed by Nicole Miller and Rob Whitfield. Welcome. I just have a quick question before I start. I'm speaking tomorrow on something else that doesn't preclude me from being able to do that, correct?

[05:35:14] If you're speaking on the budget tomorrow, you can speak. This is the proposed effective tax rate, so you can speak on this and you can speak on the budget tomorrow. Okay, thank you. I just wanted to ask that clarifying question. Sure. Okay, so hi. My name is Molly Sullivan. I'm an FCPS teacher in the Springfield District and a homeowner in the Sully District. I've sent emails to you, Ms. Smith, Mr. McKay, as well as delegates in Richmond.

[05:35:33] I'm aware that if the governor actually sent an equitable amount back to our county for how much we send to them, that we actually might be able to fix a lot of our budget issues. However, that's unlikely, and I also believe in supporting all Virginians statewide. I'm actually in support of the real estate tax, and many of us are.

[05:35:49] We have attended the local budget meetings. I met Mr. Bierman at one. And just because they're not here tonight does not mean that we don't exist. if you look at the average age, no offense, of the people that are against the tax increase, they are not able to benefit from a lot of the things that the taxes pay for, right? Like better school employees. Just to mention what the gentleman said earlier, we are overwhelmed and we need more teachers. We need the number of assistant principals. And in fact, if we could, we would increase that number every single day because we need to be serving the future of Fairfax County, which is our children and the most important asset that we have. I just want to remind you again

[05:36:27] that there are people that are in favor of what you're doing. We understand that this is not an easy thing that you do. I'm a homeowner. I have to pay the taxes. I love the idea for restaurant taxes because more than a third of the people that eat out aren't actually from our county, and so we'd be able to fund more things.

[05:36:44] I just want to remind you that there are people that are in favor. A lot of the time, only people that complain have the loudest voices, and I just want you to know that you guys do have support here, too. Thank you very much. Speaker number 12 is Nicole Miller. Welcome, Nicole.

[05:37:12] Hi, thank you. I just want to acknowledge that, I mean, I live in a neighborhood, unfortunately, our homes are a hot seller, so there's nothing we can really do about lowering the prices. In Fairfax County, you can't buy a house for as cheap as you can in our neighborhood and remodel it to what you want and still have the same price.

[05:37:28] So unfortunately, we're affected by that, but my house didn't have any improvements this year. Somebody bought my house originally for \$18,000, I bought it for \$470,000, and it's going to sell to somebody else for \$750,000 to \$800,000. That person is going to get an continued increase in their property taxes, which is not like the person who paid \$18,000 for it.

[05:37:48] That person is still, you know, in those price, maybe has their house paid off, while we're still paying a \$2,000 or \$3,000 mortgage. We're adding in these additional property tax increases, which we can't afford. But this year, my family went from a two-family income to a one-family income to maybe back to a two-family income.

[05:38:07] And then by the end of the year, we might be a zero-family income. So any extra money that we pay out of pocket will take away from our ability to just survive when our governor won't raise the unemployment rate and when he won't help us federal employees out. So I'm just asking to not be hit twice with not only the increased assessments, which I agree with, whatever you guys increase it to, I think that's what our homes are worth in our neighborhood.

[05:38:28] And unfortunately, that is what it is. But to be hit with the rate increase, too, is killer for us, especially as federal employees who are watching our neighbors bail from this community because, A, they can't get a job, or B, all the contractors that they would go to after losing their federal job are no longer hiring. And so, you know, I'm going to be in that boat myself, too.

[05:38:46] I want to stay here as long as I can. I love my job. I love the community, but I might not be able to afford to. So hitting us twice with this tax increase is really brutal for us. And I do thank you, but I appreciate it, all of you guys. Thank you. Thank you, Nicole. And we're going to go back to speaker number 13, Robert Whitfield.

[05:39:04] Rob is speaking 13th, but he was signed up as speaker number 6 and was not in the auditorium. So we're allowing Rob to speak. Welcome. Thank you, Chairman. I'm sorry I didn't know you were going into sewer rates. I thought it was time to go out.

[05:39:21] I'm Rob Whitfield with the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance, and I've lived here since 1977. We're facing a crisis here because of the increased taxes for many homeowners. We need to do some comprehensive reform with Richmond.

[05:39:38] That will take time. One of the things that I heard at Pat Herity's town hall last night was that several previous board chairs have instituted tax review panels to discuss priorities for spending, and I think that should be done again.

[05:39:56] But more importantly, we need to renegotiate with Richmond. I was at a meeting recently of the Normandia Transportation Taxpayers Alliance, and the way it was described, that we're 30% of the

population, 40% of the employment, and 50% of the income to Richmond.

[05:40:14] And we need some kind of comprehensive tax reform in Virginia so that the burden doesn't fall as heavily on homeowners as it does at present. And so I don't have today. We need to set up in the next 12 months as we go forward something to study this matter.

[05:40:34] But one idea I have had is that if you've lived here 15 years or more, that you might get a 5% tax rate on your property taxes, 20 years or more, 10%, and 25 years or more, 20% tax discount. The idea is for a lot of the people who complain the most have lived here a long time, and they've paid a lot of taxes.

[05:40:57] Therefore, we need to have some kind of study committee that looks at this in a way that hasn't been done before. And we need to look at other ideas from other parts of the country, what's worked elsewhere, because the present system is not working properly.

[05:41:15] Fairfax County has the highest tax rate in Northern Virginia. Loudoun County just reduced their tax rate to something like \$0.80 per hundred because of the data centers. And Prince William is, I can't remember the numbers. My light in my room failed this morning, so I couldn't see things properly to write.

[05:41:36] But bottom line is I will send you comments in the next few days. But please, let's establish some kind of business community group tax review committee to work with. And Brian Hill, I've got one more thing to say to you. I learned this from Jack Potter of the EMWAR.

[05:41:53] He told me 10 years ago, Rob, I can't control what the board does. I only run the place. So thank you. Thank you for the many Fairfax County employees, many of whom have helped me in the last 18 months.

[05:42:09] And I appreciate ordinary people who I don't even know the names of, but ordinary staff people who work for the county. You've got some wonderful people, and so we've got problems at the leadership level. So, thank you. Thank you, Rob.

[05:42:25] And I have one additional speaker who's signed up. Is Jacob Harer here? Jacob Harer. I have one additional person who has signed up. Okay. If you could come on down and testify. And Jacob is my last speaker.

[05:42:43] Welcome. Thank you, and good afternoon, supervisors. I appreciate being a resident of Fairfax County, and I can say that after having traveled the world, I retired from the U.S. Marines last April and chose Fairfax County as my home.

[05:43:03] I actually lived in Quantico and saw Prince William, or I saw Prince William County great, but Fairfax County better. I'd come here on the weekends to enjoy, like, the diverse food and things to do. So it is an incredible place to live, and our schools are great. my kids go to John Lewis high school which is not it's seen as a bad school i think it's incredible they're learning so much so these are good schools like these are they're they're succeeding and i see my kids getting a better education than i did and i grew up in a wealthy suburb of Los Angeles so i can say that these are good schools worth investing in i can say though

[05:43:39] that also examining what i've seen about Fairfax County over the last years that none of these homeowners should have a tax increase. Like, I agree with that. I think that that's unsustainable in the long term. And I attribute that to a couple of things I've observed is one, regulatory barriers to housing. Like, it's so damn hard to get anything done in this county. Why should it take three years to build like an

ADU, right? And the only one, like, I'm a ride or die progressive. But Mr. Herity here is the one who's talking about governance reform, right? This is something that is important that I think we can agree on.

[05:44:13] If we don't allow the market to grow and build more supply, costs are going to go up. Housing, it's going to be expensive. So we have to allow some regulatory reform, zoning reform, and yes, a bit of density, so that way we can offset these price increases.

[05:44:31] And lastly, being a new Virginian, I'm seeing that we need to re-approach progressive taxes. We shouldn't have to pay the burden. When this is such a wealthy county, we have Lockheed here. We have defense contractors raking in millions. They are the ones that could pay millionaires, wealthy people.

[05:44:49] I will say that the income tax is one of the best things that happened to the United States. It gave the middle class a chance to grow. It strengthened our military. It strengthened our institutions. So we need to talk about that as political leaders, that income tax matters, right?

[05:45:05] We need a progressive tax system, and that needs to be starting here, but also up in Richmond. So that's what I would expect from my supervisors to fight for. Because if not, all the wealth flows upward. That's the only direction that it naturally goes. So I think it's worth fighting for. I think public education and our teachers are worth fighting for.

[05:45:23] And we can solve this if we have the will. So please fight for tax reform, fight for governance, fight for supply. But this status quo, it really isn't sustainable. We cannot have people losing their homes, and they will lose their homes soon.

[05:45:39] So thanks for hearing me. Thank you very much for your testimony. Thank you for that. And let me ask if we have any callers. We do not. We have no callers. So at this time, let me ask staff if they had any closing comments.

[05:45:57] Staff recommends that the record remain open for testimony until budget markup on May 6th. Okay. And so with that, I'm going to hand the gavel to Supervisor Smith and make the following motion. I move that the board close the public hearing while leaving the record open for testimony until May 6th, 2025, part of the budget markup process. That will permit persons who wish to testify on this matter to do so during the public hearing on the FY2026 Advertised Budget Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, or CIP, and FY2025 Third Quarter Review by testifying as described on the Department of Clerk Services page on the Fairfax County website or by providing

[05:46:35] written testimony after the close of the public hearings. I will second that motion. All those in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Anyone opposed? Any abstentions? That motion passes. Chairman McKay. Thank you very much. And we are going to move on to our budget public hearing, and this public hearing will go during three days.

[05:46:57] And so just as a reminder, this is a public hearing on the FY2026 advertised budget plan, the FY2026 to FY2030 advertised capital improvement plan, with future fiscal years to 2035, and to amend the current appropriation level in the FY 2025 revised budget plan as proposed in the FY 2025 third quarter review.

[05:47:21] During this public hearing, we will also accept testimony on the FY 2026 effective tax rate and other taxes. As I mentioned earlier, we have a lengthy list of speakers this evening. I have 124 that have

signed up in advance to speak, and so let me note that anyone who is not already registered to speak has the opportunity to walk in or call in.

[05:47:45] However, those speakers will be heard on Thursday following all speakers who have signed up on the speakers list, and that's likely to be very, very late tonight. So if you came, you want to testify on the budget, but you're not signed up to testify today, please make sure you come down, sign up with the clerk, and you will be scheduled for a slot to testify on Thursday. And before we accept our first formal public testimony, as we have traditionally done, we will always start our hearing by hearing from our Fairfax County School Board. And at this time, I'd like to welcome to the podium Fairfax County School

[05:48:21] Board Chair Carl Frisch. Thank you, Carl, for being here. And thank you for being here. And thank you for being a partner in the school system. And with that, I will turn the microphone over to you. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay, members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and County Executive Hill. I appreciate this opportunity to address you and our community during this budget public hearing. I want to start by saying that for Fairfax County Public Schools and Fairfax County, our excellence is at a crossroads. Simply put, we cannot continue to

[05:48:56] sustain excellence with ongoing underfunding. I hope our friends in Richmond are watching closely. Why does this matter? FCPS excellence matters because families choose to live, work, and pay taxes in Fairfax County because of our public schools.

[05:49:13] They know that FCPS prepares young people for college and career paths in the 21st century with robust academics and high-quality enrichment through fine arts, athletics, and STEM. FCPS's excellence matters because it benefits all of Fairfax County, whether or not someone currently has children in FCPS.

[05:49:32] FCPS excellence matters because businesses choose to invest in communities where strong school systems drive strong, reliable workforce development, and high-quality businesses and career paths help Fairfax County attract and keep skilled, job-ready workers.

[05:49:48] These are the benefits of an excellent public school system. When FCPS is excellent, Fairfax County is also excellent. That is why it is so important for us to meet the obligations of our Collective Bargaining Act that includes a 7% raise to ensure we recruit and retain world-class educators and staff.

[05:50:07] But this excellence, our community's excellence, is also at a crossroads because of ongoing underfunding and budget cuts. For decades, the Commonwealth has underfunded public schools in Virginia. FCPS is not alone, but this underfunding impacts us to the tune of \$587.6 million each and every year.

[05:50:26] That's about \$3,100 per student. Over the past 10 years, FCPS has implemented reductions, cost avoidances, and fee enhancements of more than \$800 million to align with the funding provided. None of those cuts would have been necessary if the state met its obligation to even meet an average standard provided in other states like West Virginia and Kentucky.

[05:50:48] We can't continue this way without impacting the classroom experience. Now is the time to decide what kind of schools and what kind of community we want here for young people in Fairfax County. As I close out, I'd like to extend my appreciation for my board colleagues, as well as Lee Burden, Alice Wigington, Matthew Norton, and the entire FCPS budget team for their incredible work and for supporting the budget process.

[05:51:12] Our students, families, staff for their support and dedication, and of course, Chairman McKay, members of the Board of Supervisors, and the County Executive for their work and their collaboration of the years to support our students and our educators. Thank you. Thank you very much, Carl. Thank you, Carl, and thank you to your colleagues on the school board.

[05:51:34] It's a tough job you have, and we appreciate that as well. With that, we are going to move on to my listed speakers who have signed up in advance to testify, and as we did before, if you can come down close when it's your turn to testify, it would really be respectful to people who are near the bottom of the list and are going to be here very late.

[05:51:53] So we're going to begin with speaker number one, James Quigley. It's James Quigley here, to be followed by Speaker No. 2, Rick Wagner, and Speaker No. 3, James Kilikowski. If I called your name, please be ready to testify. Welcome, Mr. Quigley.

[05:52:11] Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and members of the board and County Executive Hill, who I wanted to personally thank for your team's continued support of our mission. Your commitment to building a vibrant and resilient community is why we successfully compete for world-class business investment, attract top talent to our region, and help foster a high-growth entrepreneurial ecosystem.

[05:52:34] I am James Quigley, chairman of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority Commission and former CEO and founder of one of the largest tech companies that was founded in our county. Today, I come before you at a critical moment in our region's history as we are experiencing a fundamental shift in our economy, shifts that have caused great uncertainty.

[05:52:55] These recent actions don't just impact federal workers. They move through nearly every element of our regional economy. The Fairfax County Economic Development Authority's mission, now more than ever, is critical as we show our region, our country, and the world that Northern Virginia is and continues to be the best place to do business.

[05:53:15] To deal with these shifts in the economy, we have, since the beginning of this year, redirected our resources to focus on helping displaced federal workers and contractors get re-employed. We believe that we have the most productive, skill-based workforce for the economy of the future.

[05:53:33] And even though there is great turmoil, these are the workers companies will want in the future. Through these efforts, we have connected more than 100,000 job seekers to opportunities and resources at in-person events and our digital talent ecosystem board, HubWorkingNorthernVirginia.com, which the board has funded through an increase to our budget five years ago.

[05:53:58] In FY 2024, the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority worked with hundreds of companies, out of which more than 100 announced the addition of nearly 10,000 jobs to the Fairfax County economy and added 1.5 million square feet of office-based leased.

[05:54:15] The FY24 successes included significant wins. These included Aerospace Corporation moving their headquarters from California to Fairfax County and our homegrown space startup Hawkeye 360 growing their campus to the new headquarters in Herndon.

[05:54:32] These successes aren't just numbers. They are anchors of long-term growth and stability. Fairfax County is the launch pad for the industries that will define the next generation. We are heavily focused on three core industries, AI, space commercialization, and quantum computing.

[05:54:50] In artificial intelligence, we're at the center of a \$15 trillion global market opportunity, an opportunity transforming nearly every sector from health care to hospitality, logistics, and legal services. In space commercialization, we're home to 127 aerospace companies, And more than 70 of those have expanded or relocated to Fairfax in just the past three years.

[05:55:16] This sector is expected to grow to \$1.8 trillion by 2035. And in quantum technology, we are hosting over 1,000 global leaders from 30 countries at the Quantum World Congress in Tysons. It is the world's largest quantum conference.

[05:55:33] It establishes our presence on the international stage in this important industry. These are tough times for our citizens who are facing great change in their lives, and we are passionately dedicated to getting everyone back to work. Our community is resilient.

[05:55:51] If you are a company looking for where to grow and find the talent of the future, now more than ever, Fairfax, the heart of the D.C. tech ecosystem, is the place to do it. In this pivotal moment in Fairfax history, we must double down on our efforts to continue to diversify our economy and build on our successes.

[05:56:10] Chairman, members of the board, I want to thank you and the county executive for your vision, for our community, and for your support as we look to accelerate out of these uncertain times. With your leadership, we look forward to meeting this moment with resolve, collaboration, and commitment to the continued success of Fairfax County.

[05:56:31] Thank you for your time and your unwavering support to our mission. And thank you as well for your chairmanship. Much appreciated. And speaker number two is Rick Wagner, who's the vice chair of the EDA. Welcome, Rick. Thank you, Chairman McKay, members of the Board of Supervisors, County Executive Hill.

[05:56:49] So I am Rick Wagner. I'm the vice chair of the FCEDA. I'm also the CEO of Agile Defense, a local defense contractor. It's my honor to speak to you today. And I want to speak briefly about the businesses that are the backbone of our community, our small businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs.

[05:57:05] While the Fairfax County EDA continues to pursue large-scale national and international investments and high-impact headquarters, at the heart of what we do is supporting our small businesses, entrepreneurs, and startups to help them grow and succeed in our community.

[05:57:23] These small businesses, from minority-owned service providers to early-stage space and AI startups, are also faced with the current economic uncertainty, and many do not have the capacity to adapt on their own. In collaboration with our community partners, we will double down on our efforts to provide direct support to these businesses through sector-specific outreach and flexible programming that can be scaled based on industry needs, the continued investment in workforce development, building on our momentum of more than a half a million job seekers connected to opportunities,

[05:58:00] 13,000 veterans hired, more than 1,000 students reached in K through 12, and 17,000 employers talent pipeline supported. And critically, capitalizing on a bold effort to amplify Fairfax County's newly launched global brand identity as the place to build a company, a career, and a future.

[05:58:21] We will be focused on scaling what is already working to capitalize on the momentum we've built. Businesses from deep tech startups to Fortune 500 headquarters choosing Fairfax County not by

chance, but because of the work this county has supported. By working together with you, the members of the board, as well as County Executive Hill and his team, and our many community partners, we will continue to build on that progress. Again, it's been a privilege to speak to you today, and I thank you for your commitment to the county. Thank you, Rick. Much appreciated. Speaker number three is James Kulikowski, who's represented the McLean

[05:59:01] Citizens Association, will be followed by Vestina DeNovo, Janet Trio, and Michelle Jefferson. If I call your name, please be ready to testify. James, welcome. Thank you, Chairman, members of the Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Bierman. I'm here on behalf of the McLean Citizens Association as chair of the Budget and Taxation Committee and will speak on the 2026 budget resolution passed by MCA on April 2nd. Against the current backdrop of intensifying financial challenges, the county's

[05:59:36] 2026 budget proposes a 4.5% increase, nearly double the region's current inflation rate. Because of the county's over-reliance on real estate property taxes, this translates into a proposed average tax increase of 7.6%, three times the inflation rate. This will cause hardship for lower-income families, seniors on fixed income, and those affected by job losses. But in many cases, the increases are much greater. In the Drainsville District, there are streets where the assessment is up across the board by 15 percent. For me, it's up 12

[06:00:13] percent, twenty six hundred dollars more than a monthly Social Security check. There is a one-time opportunity to mitigate some of the increasingly onerous burden. MCA supports a four percent meals tax, but it supports it to offset the current real estate tax rate. Otherwise, a meals tax is just an additional new tax a pylon tax in an already difficult economy a four percent meals tax could lower the real estate tax rate by two cents saving the average resident 159 dollars and since the residents would only pay an estimated two-thirds of the meals tax using it to offset property taxes

[06:00:52] would provide additional net financial relief for residents and the impact would double in 2027. the budget also proposes a one and a half cent real estate tax rate increase mca opposes that tax rate increase and urges the board to pursue all available means to balance the budget without increasing rates the resolution makes four suggestions to accomplish that first the carryover also known as surplus use some of the record carryover surplus the county has been

[06:01:27] running for the past four years to fund items in the 2026 budget and re-examine recent projections that have significantly underestimated revenue and overestimated expenditures compared to actual experience to bring the surplus back from over two percent to its historic level of one percent of the general fund budget this would result in more funds being available at the start of FY2026 and less surplus at the end. Second, increased spending reductions. The \$100 million

[06:02:00] savings in 2010 amounted to 3% of the general fund budget. The \$60 million proposed for FY2026 is 1%. Clearly, there is more to be had given that times are hard. We also ask that you reconsider and replace a few small proposed reductions whose impact in McLean is greater than the proposed savings, restoring 24-7 fire and rescue as Scotts Run, CERT, STEP, Community Fire and Rescue Programs, the Middle School After School Program, and Park Authority Trail Maintenance and Forestry Services.

[06:02:38] Third, provide the additional \$8.5 million for affordable housing out of FY 2025 funds, and fourth, forego the \$6 million in unallocated reserve. Using these suggestions or other available means to balance the budget would remove the need for a rate increase and clear the way for the meals tax to be used to reduce the current tax rate.

[06:03:01] Two additional points. First, on active transportation. MCA reiterates its position on the need to plan for additional AT projects. The chairman's recent comments about potential flexibility in the upcoming \$40 million transportation bond was heartening.

[06:03:20] And second, Dunloring. MCA reiterates its position that funding in the Capital Improvement Program for a new \$80 million, \$80 million Dunloring Elementary School is not defensible and should be deferred. It is not justified by current or future enrollment projections and is in conflict with the Tyson's Comprehensive Plan for a local walkable school.

[06:03:46] The savings should be used for needed school renovation projects now on an unacceptable 42-year renovation cycle. But above all, MCA urges you not to increase the burden on county residents and to seize this one-time opportunity to use the meals tax to reduce the tax rate and give residents a much-needed chance to help weather the storm we find ourselves in.

[06:04:12] Thank you. I understand we're going to have a substitute for speaker number four, and I don't normally do this because it makes life very confusing for us, but I'm going to make an exception here.

[06:04:29] Eva May is going to be speaking in place of speaker number four, and I understand you were scheduled, is it for tomorrow? For Thursday, sir. For Thursday, okay, so that will replace Thursday. Okay, welcome. Distinguished board members and members of the community, my name is Eva, and I'm an addict.

[06:04:47] Before coming to New Generations in March of 2024, I had never admitted that to myself or anyone else. I saw down New Generations because they would allow me to bring my then four-year-old daughter with me to treatment. They have taught me to live life on life's terms while sober and at the same time learning to be the best parent I can be.

[06:05:05] They taught me to love myself and know my worth. The education I receive through daily classes, interactions, assignments, and counseling has been invaluable. This program is what true treatment is. A 28-day placement is not enough time to figure out the why and how to fix it.

[06:05:23] Since surrendering to the program, listening to those who have been through the trenches, and coming out the other side, I have too. I've worked hard for it, and it has not been easy. But it is so worth it. My worst day sober will always be better than my best day using.

[06:05:39] I take care of myself now. And instead of praying not to wake up, I wake up wanting to live. I have a job, and I have a future. Most addicts are using to numb, to forget. I've learned using is a symptom. You can't just stop using and be healed.

[06:05:55] You must deal with all the pain, the trauma, the shame, the guilt, embarrassment, everything. You must start feeling again. And without guidance, that is a scary journey. One I don't recommend. Part of the program is owning your mistakes and acknowledging that we have no power to change our past, only the future.

[06:06:12] We grow daily as we open up and share about what we've been through. We thought we were alone. We aren't. We don't have to hide from what happened. And the more we talk about it, the less power it has over us. Our secrets keep us sick. I was brought up being told we don't talk about our problems.

[06:06:29] Sweep it under the rug, ignore it, and it goes away. Well, that was garbage, and it's produced generations of sick people. Addiction is a disease that nobody wakes up asking for. Some people can have a

drink and never pick up another. But for people like me, it flipped a switch in my brain that there's no off button for.

[06:06:45] My mother was a lifelong addict until overdosing at the age of 56. I'm convinced if more mothers knew these programs, allowed them to bring in a child under four, even those expecting can bring their baby into treatment instead of surrendering them to an already overwhelmed foster system, that we would heal more mothers and even more children.

[06:07:04] I don't understand how anyone can look at programs like these that don't just help women, but their children too, and still vote to cut them. Is it money? If it were your wife, daughter, sister, mother, aunt, cousin, would that change your mind? Because it very well could be.

[06:07:21] But will we have a program for them? Will the 32-year running program New Generations be an option? There's a petition I created February 24th with my story on [change.org slash save new gen](https://change.org/slash/save/new-gen) that I've presented to the panel. With almost 400 signatures today and 61 donations totaling \$778 to promote the petition to save new generations.

[06:07:43] That include testimony of multiple new gen alumni. And I will leave you with this. When you create a difference in someone's life, you impact everyone influenced by them throughout their lifetime. No act is too small. One by one, this is how we make an ocean rise. Please save new generations for our next generation.

[06:08:00] Thank you very much. Thank you very much. And we are now on speaker number five, Janet Trio. Speaker number five, Janet Trio.

[06:08:19] Janet Trio is speaker number five, Janet Trio here. Michelle Jefferson. Michelle Jefferson, come on down. Welcome.

[06:08:42] Good afternoon, Chair McKay. Supervisor Walkinshaw, members of the Board of Supervisor and County Executive Hill. My name is Michelle Jefferson and I serve as the chair for the Fairfax Community Action Advisory Board, also known as CAB. It is both an honor and a solemn duty to speak on the behalf of our most vulnerable neighbors, those who rely daily on the essential services supported by the investments you make.

[06:09:08] This afternoon I urged the board to adopt a budget that fully reflects our shared values equity opportunity and compassion and proprietary prioritize support in three core areas affordable housing housing food insecurity and childcare as identified in the countywide strategic plan these are not just budget categories they are foundation of a fair and functioning society housing will fully support we fully support the proposed half penny dedication to the Housing Production Fund. This commitment is critical to

[06:09:44] expanding affordable using units for seniors, families, and essential workers who deserve the digital, the dignity of safe and stable housing. Food and security. We must continue to fund programs that ensure no child, elder, or working family goes hungry. Expanded access to healthy, affordable, and cultural relevant food is a matter of justice. Childcare is an infrastructure.

[06:10:09] Accessible, affordable child care allows parents to work, children to thrive, and our economy to grow. Several parents stay home and we're losing income, money to the county. We urge continued investment in early education and workforce development for child care providers.

[06:10:28] Health and Human Services Strategic Allocation, the STAR Plan. While we commend the strategic intent of the STAR Plan, the new initiatives and the services provided, We do not support reductions that undercut the very residence it's designed to protect.

[06:10:45] These proposed cuts disproportionately affect families living in poverty, children needing safety and structure, and those who depend on stability, county support to survive and succeed. We ask the Board to reject the following proposed reductions.

[06:11:01] I'm going to list them on the document provided to you. It gives you the reason why. Do not eliminate the Bridge to Kindergarten programming administered by FCPC. Do not eliminate the SPARK program at the Sacramento Neighborhood Center. Do not eliminate the middle school after school program.

[06:11:19] Do not reduce case management services in emergency shelters. Do not reduce the funding for intensive management programs. Do not eliminate two human services workers. Each of these programs play a critical role in creating equity and breaking the cycle of poverty.

[06:11:37] To eliminate them would be a risk, undoing years of progress, and to leave the very people who depend on us most without a voice or a safety net. Fiscal resilience, the CAB supports diversity in revenue sources. It is essential to promoting long-term fiscal health and ensuring funding for human services.

[06:11:58] We encourage innovation solutions, including leveraging state and federal dollars with equity safeguards and engaging private partners to build a more and resilient budget structure. We call for a strengthened cross-sector solution, public-private partnership, the Office of Public-Private Partnership, the EDA, the Economic Development Authority, and Voluntary Fairfax.

[06:12:20] I acknowledge and commend the meaningful contributions that the public-private partnerships have made to strengthen our community and uplifting it. However, in this time of fiscal caution and evolving community need, we must expand the partnership.

[06:12:35] Fairfax County is home to worldwide class corporations, nonprofits, philanthropies, and many of them are already invested in social good. We heard from the first speaker, the AI, and we're at the leading edge of that. I propose that we increase the footprint of the private partnership with the EDA volunteer Fairfax, mobilize and sign corporate social impact with county goals, and expand investment in housing, food, and early childhood, foster sustained partnerships to sustain community resilience, leverage the talent, generosity that already exists within the Fairfax County to build innovative long-term solutions.

[06:13:15] In closing, the budget you pass shape the lives of thousand families 68,000 people live in poverty in our county based on the state of the poor data and that's a few few years old that does not include the asset limited constraint families which is 22.8% of the residents across the county it's not just a spreadsheet it's a statement of our values and our shared humanity on behalf of the cab I respectfully urge you to reject harmful reductions uphold equity as your guardian principal ensure this budget serves as a beacon of hope for those who need it most thank you for your leadership your partnership

[06:13:52] and your commitment to fairfax county that leaves no one behind thank you michelle speaker number speaker number seven is renee ruggles is renee ruggles here to be followed by ashley bogner Ashley Bogner, Renee Ruggles, Ashley Bogner. Ashley is here. Okay.

[06:14:18] Renee Ruggles, not present. Okay. So Ashley is speaker number eight. She will be followed by Sarah Frank, Rod Dyke, and Amy Payne. So be ready when I call your name. Welcome.

[06:14:37] Okay. Good afternoon, Board of Supervisors. I'm speaking today as an employee and parent to urge you to reconsider the proposal to transition the ECCC to a private provider. This is more than just a child care center. It's a vital support system for working families.

[06:14:55] The quality of care is exceptional, with 80% of staff holding degrees in early childhood education or a related field. These teachers are not just skilled. They're passionate public servants who understand the needs of county employees because they are county employees.

[06:15:11] That makes a huge difference in the consistency, trust, and care they provide. The center has a national quality rating, and staff are compensated according to county standards, exemplifying how early childhood educators should be treated. I could go on and on about quality.

[06:15:30] Articles from the 80s state the center was meant to be a model for the community. It still is. Before I joined the county, I spoke with center staff, and the center was a reason I accepted my job. I toured many other centers, and none came close in quality.

[06:15:46] The center is a powerful recruitment and retention tool. and I would encourage you to market it as such from an HR perspective. The center has existed for 37 years, surviving economic downturns. Parents or staff were not given a chance to help address current budget issues.

[06:16:05] I pay over \$1,900 a month. I'd be willing to pay more. Parents have offered cost-saving ideas like increasing full-time enrollment, increasing tuition, and opening enrollment to others. These ideas haven't been explored. Privatization is not the only option.

[06:16:22] Before a model program is eliminated, a full review by experts should be done. The center can be more cost neutral, which seems easier than transitioning 40 staff members, doing an RFP, maintaining a contract, and hoping parents transition to a new provider.

[06:16:40] Choosing child care is so, so tough, and I cannot imagine a child care provider being chosen for me. The transition would be disruptive. Teachers will begin looking elsewhere, creating staffing gaps that affect care and ratios. These children are very young. They form bonds with their teachers and a sudden change in caregivers would be distressing and destabilizing.

[06:17:01] The county cannot guarantee that a private provider would retain staff or maintain current care standards. And if that can't be guaranteed, promises of no disruption ring hollow. Equity is at stake. Most center employees are women and minorities. This change disproportionately affects them, along with the working parents who rely on this resource to do their jobs.

[06:17:23] There are many benefits not everyone chooses to take advantage of. This center serves 100 families at a time and has supported four or four more over the decades it has been open. It's very hard to be a working mom, but this center allows me to come to work each day confident that my child is safe, loved, and learning.

[06:17:44] This directly impacts how well I serve this community. Please don't privatize. Use common sense ideas to increase revenue and reduce costs. Preserve this extraordinary program. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Speaker number nine is Sarah Frank. Welcome.

[06:18:05] Good afternoon. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak today. My name is Sarah Frank, and I'm a head teacher at the Fairfax County Employees Child Care Center, and I'm here to express my strong opposition to the elimination of the center as a county-operated program. I have a unique perspective because I actually started at ACCC as a student in 1991 when I was eight months old.

[06:18:25] Because of my quality early childhood education, I excelled in our public school system, then went on to get two bachelor's degrees from Virginia Tech. I started my career after college at the center and received my master's in early childhood education from George Mason while working full-time. Last year, I was lucky enough to add a third perspective to ECCC, this time as a parent when my son Miles started at the center.

[06:18:45] I know firsthand the immeasurable value ECCC provides to the children and families, to educators, and to Fairfax County as a whole. For 37 years, Fairfax County has set an example of what quality early childhood programming looks like through the ECCC and has shown its dedication to county families and early education of our youngest learners.

[06:19:03] The county has shown it values our teachers by allowing us to work as educators in our dedicated field while still making a living wage as county employees. In 2023, our center, along with NCS, participated in the pay compression review, which resulted in many teachers' salaries being adjusted upward based on their relevant work experience.

[06:19:20] Unfortunately, now that our teachers are being fairly compensated based on years of dedication and expertise, it's proposed that we'll be displaced into other positions in the county that don't align as well with our specialized skills and our center may be dismantled. To do this would be a negative mark on the county's commitment to the importance of quality early childhood education, which has existed for several decades.

[06:19:39] Our center and its staff and families were totally blindsided by this proposed budget cut. We were told this proposal was made with an equity lens, but that answer makes no sense. This proposed reduction in force, if implemented, would displace our early childhood educators, all of whom are women, and 87% are women of color. Our positions, Teacher 1, S15, and Teacher 2, S18, are still relatively low on the county pay scale.

[06:19:59] This goes against Fairfax County's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In addition to serving county employees so they can better serve the community, ECC directly serves Fairfax County community and beyond by being a model center year after year in our field. For example, our center was a pilot program for the Virginia Quality Rating System that was implemented throughout the Commonwealth in just one of two centers in the area with the highest five-star rating.

[06:20:21] In addition, the center works with employment programs for the community members to build career skills and partners with Job Discovery to provide employment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities. And we serve Fairfax County by allowing our parents stable, dedicated, and experienced child care so that they can provide vital services needed by our citizens.

[06:20:39] While I understand there are many budgetary concerns facing the county each year, eliminating this long-established quality employee program cannot be the solution. ECCC parents and advocates came together and came up with a plan to make feasible and sustainable changes that would

substantially reduce the cost of ECCC to the county budget in fiscal year 26 alone, when the current proposal has no cost savings in fiscal year 26.

[06:21:00] I ask that instead of using this next year to dismantle our center and displace our children's teachers, that this board allows the center to work with county management to implement these cost savings and make a multi-large plan to reduce the deficit to zero. This will allow us to stay the high-quality, county-operated program that has diligently served more than 3,500 families and allowed those employees to serve this county.

[06:21:19] Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you very much. Speaker number 10 is Rod Dyke, to be followed by Amy Payne, Misha Chernov, and Leslie Clark. Welcome.

[06:21:36] Thank you. Mr. Chairman, members of the board, I'm Rod Dyke, and I address you on behalf of the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance. Next year's proposed tax increase continues the 25-year trend of raising real estate taxes three times faster than inflation and household income, and the same 25-year trend of increasing inflation-adjusted school spending three times faster than the rate of student enrollment.

[06:22:08] The supervisors are proposing the largest real estate tax increase in a decade, which would boost bills by an average 7.5%, raising the average bill to \$9,312.

[06:22:25] The mounting tax burden on county taxpayers is the result of overspending, not from legitimate educational costs or rising property values. A primary driver of these spending increases are steep raises for the over 50,000 county and school employees.

[06:22:47] Although inflation was at 2.5%, supervisors demand new revenue to fund salary increases averaging over 4%. The county also offers generous and costly pensions and medical benefits.

[06:23:04] What do these soaring taxes get us? Following educational outcomes, SAT scores have continued to drop each year, even after the pandemic ended, dropping a total of 40 points between 2018 and 2024, even as school spending increased by \$600 million.

[06:23:25] Since 2019, Fairfax County experienced a significant exodus of taxpayers, while the county's population numbers were increased by an influx of international migrants. The primary reasons cited by those leaving were rising costs, including property taxes.

[06:23:45] Almost half of the Fairfax County Public School enrollment now consists of low-income and English as second-language students, as the county's tax base is fleeing the county. The supervisors often tout programs for affordable housing, all the while making housing increasingly unaffordable because of mounting real estate bills.

[06:24:09] In a possible effort to show how difficult it is to cut spending, the supervisors have proposed cuts to public safety by limiting 70 vacant positions in overtime, both essential to maintaining safety, across the Fairfax County Police Department, the Sheriff's Office, and the Fire and Rescue Department.

[06:24:31] In 2021, the Board of Supervisors instituted a so-called trust policy that prohibits cooperation with administrative ICE detainers for those released from the county jail. By refusing to cooperate on more than 1,100 detainer requests over the past two and a half years, Fairfax County ranks third in the nation for detainer requests ignored.

[06:24:57] This policy obviously has the effect of encouraging crime within Fairfax County. And because the trust policy also restricts data on immigration status, associated costs for public services, such as for health care, education, and social services, are hidden.

[06:25:15] There is a conflict of interest by supervisors who accept employee union campaign contributions while simultaneously approving excessive raises and benefits for union employees. The budget chair for the Fairfax County School Board is being sued by Blue Label Aviation.

[06:25:35] where he served as treasurer, for allegedly embezzling \$175,000 to fund his school board campaign, vacations, and strip clubs. This alarming news should be a wake-up call for the county to finally conduct a comprehensive and independent audit of its spending, with a proposed budget of \$5.6 billion with \$2.93 billion going to the Fairfax County public schools.

[06:26:05] Fairfax County should cut the property rate so property taxes will not increase faster than household incomes. Run a quality school system with emphasis on objective educational outcomes, cut costs, and attract new businesses by lowering taxes and lessening regulations.

[06:26:23] Conduct a comprehensive and independent audit of its spending, including school programs and administrative staffing. Audit pension management. Why are pensions only 68% funding after tax rates and soaring stock market? Time's up.

[06:26:40] Thank you. Thank you very much. Speaker number 11 is Amy Payne. Amy Payne to be followed by Misha Chernov. Welcome. My name is Amy Payne. I have worked at the Fairfax County Employees Child Care Center for 18 years.

[06:26:59] I work with an amazing group of diverse, professional women. Many of my coworkers, including myself, have degrees and extensive experience in the early childhood education field. These women have made it their life's work to care for the youngest citizens of Fairfax County. We love the career path we have chosen.

[06:27:16] We love making a difference in the early lives of children, and we love supporting families in our community. Our program has run for 37 years, providing the highest quality of care to the children of Fairfax County employees. I started working at the center right after college as an assistant teacher.

[06:27:34] I was promoted to a teacher, and then two years ago, I became a head teacher. Both of my children attended the center, and I felt completely at ease knowing they were in loving and qualified hands. High-quality child care is crucial because it significantly impacts a child's early development, laying the foundation for future success in school and life by fostering cognitive, social, and emotional skills.

[06:27:57] This is particularly true during the critical first few years when most brain development occurs. Children in high-quality programs tend to have better academic outcomes, improve social skills, and increase potential for higher earning power as adults, making it a valuable investment for both families, Fairfax County, and society as a whole.

[06:28:16] Despite the need for budget constraints, I don't believe the significance of our program can be quantified in monetary terms. During the pandemic, the Employees Child Care Center remained open, allowing first responders with small children to perform their duties. The center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

[06:28:35] The center also participates in the Virginia Equality Birth Through Five Initiative, with the goal being to help prepare children for kindergarten. I cannot tell you enough how much I love my job, my colleagues, the children I care for, and their families. Unfortunately, it has been proposed that the Fairfax County Employee's Child Care Center will be closed and contracted out to a private provider.

[06:28:56] This news was shocking and unexpected. The families we served have rallied around us to show their support. Past families have also reached out to give their encouragement. This is more than a job. This is a family. Having this program offered as a benefit to employees is a huge advantage of working for the supportive, family-focused community that I know Fairfax County strives to promote.

[06:29:18] I don't believe this type of service could be replicated by offering a privately funded child care. I am so incredibly proud of the service we have built for this community. I know the value we bring and hope to continue to bring to the county for years to come. I urge you to please vote to save Fairfax County Employees Child Care Center.

[06:29:36] Thank you. Thank you so much for your time. Thank you. We are now on speaker number 12. Speaker number 12 is Misha Chernov. Welcome. Good evening, Chairman McKay and supervisors.

[06:29:57] My name is Misha Chernov. I am a county resident in Reston and an FCPS educator serving the students and families for over 29 years. I am here to support fully funding the transfer request to Fairfax County public schools, and I want to urge the Board to implement a food and beverage tax in Fairfax County with a distribution of the revenue to be used for school funding.

[06:30:21] This is a historic moment, standing before you, advocating to fund the first ratified collective bargaining agreement for FCPS employees in nearly 50 years. As public education employees, we are keenly aware of the challenges we face in FCPS, especially as it pertains to recruitment and retention of highly qualified educators and support staff.

[06:30:45] The negotiated 7% salary increase in the first year of the contract addresses these concerns. Members of your board have recognized that the point of collective bargaining is to get the public sector employees at the table to hear from us.

[06:31:02] Right now, with this contract, you have heard from 28,297 of us. I hope you will listen with the same amount of respect that was given to the Fairfax County Police Department employees and the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department employees when you funded their contracts.

[06:31:22] I also want to acknowledge that our budget problems start every single year because Richmond is not doing its part to fund public education. The JLARC study highlights how the Commonwealth of Virginia has been underfunding public education for decades, and here in Fairfax County, it has reached a breaking point.

[06:31:42] In a serious emergency, you direct someone to call 911. I would like to see the Board of Supervisors make that call and lead this effort by using your resources and connections as elected officials to address the chronic underfunding of FCPS and the burden it places on county taxpayers.

[06:32:03] You stepped into action recently with the federal workforce layoffs, and the students of Fairfax County need you to act with the same urgency. As an educator and taxpayer of Fairfax County, I will stand with you as you use your positions of power to help increase school funding at the state level.

[06:32:22] Thank you for your time. Thank you. Our next speaker is Leslie Clark, to be followed by Catherine Torgerson and then Maria Posey. Is Leslie here? Okay, Katherine Torgerson, and then it will be Maria Posey and then Elena Sheva.

[06:32:46] If you can come down, if I called your name, that's helpful. Thank you. My name is Katie Torgerson. I am a Braddock District resident and 14-year county employee. I have three kids who attended the Employee Child Care Center, or ECCC, and one at the center now.

[06:33:06] My three daughters were at the center during the COVID-19 pandemic, And despite those uncertain and scary times, the center provided a safe, nurturing, and happy home away from home. ECCC was a lifeline. Without it, my husband, a federal worker, and I would not have been able to keep our jobs.

[06:33:25] Anyone who has spent eight hours with a bunch of two-year-olds knows that early childhood education is a calling and a gift. ECC staff are experts in their field. They don't just babysit children. They helped them develop independence, encourage social and emotional growth, grounded in kindness and empathy, and established the academic foundations to help kids thrive in school.

[06:33:50] The teachers have also helped me grow as a parent. When my three-year-old daughter began acting out, her teachers helped me see that she was anxious about a new sibling, but couldn't communicate her feelings. Through their guidance, I learned how to better understand my children and their needs.

[06:34:05] The county strategic plan states, there is a tremendous need for quality early childhood education, which supports school readiness and is an essential component of success later in life. I'm proud to be part of a center that values their teachers by paying them a fair wage with benefits.

[06:34:24] But how can you talk about the value of early childhood education and eliminate 40 positions in the field? The center staff has specialized in professional skills. Will you move them somewhere where they can use those skills? There appears to be no plan in place to implement the budget proposal to transition the center to a private provider in FY2027, which is in one year, without any operational break in service.

[06:34:52] The invisibility of the budget proposal makes me concerned about the impact that this will have on my one-year-old. The center is an exemplary child care facility, a model that the county should expand on and help others emulate. Part of the reason I love my job and have stayed in it is that I know my kids are safe and happy there.

[06:35:12] The budget proposal blindsided staff and families. Please consider exploring alternatives to privatizing the center. We consider the center a second home and are more than willing to work with the county to identify cost-cutting measures.

[06:35:28] Thank you. Thank you. The next speaker is Maria Posey. Is Maria here? And then just Elena Shevach and then Robert Young. So if people come down closer, that helps us.

[06:35:44] I probably can't make a motion, but I'd like to petition that speakers who are here with children under five should be moved up the list. We definitely want to hear from those. As a mother of two children under five, I know the sacrifice it takes to be at places like this, and we should honor that.

[06:36:09] So I am a mom, and that is the role that I'm playing here today in support of early childhood, but also in support of care later in our children's development, in particular, middle school.

[06:36:26] So I have three future middle schoolers, the 20-plus other neighbor moms that have joined me in this hearing today, including Courtney Deemers in Annandale, Caroline Stewart in Springfield, Simone Vitsolo in Burke, Emily Sachtov in Clifton.

[06:36:48] We are all moms of current or future middle schoolers, and we are really concerned about the proposed cuts to middle school programming. And let's be clear. Why were these programs created to begin with?

[06:37:04] It was because of crime. In the early 2000s, Fairfax was seeing a dangerous rise in gang recruitment among middle schoolers. And a 2005 report from Expanded Ed Schools noted that after repeated community forums, the number one gang prevention recommendation in Fairfax County was simple.

[06:37:27] Keep middle schoolers engaged after school. So the board, you all listened to the community and stepped up and invested millions, not a lot, you know, three, four millions today, to create county-wide after-school programming in all of our middle schools.

[06:37:48] And the program's benefits have become apparent as it grew to become one of the most widely used and referenced protective factors known to promote development and well-being in youth. Upwards of 80% of the county's middle schoolers are enrolled in one of these programs.

[06:38:08] That's 23,000 of our students. 23,800 participated in these programs. And they themselves say that it works. 84% of students say that it helps them do better in school.

[06:38:25] 88% say that it helps them to get along better with their peers. And 87% say that they become better at working in teams. The Department of Justice and our own county youth survey note that engagement and after school activity promotes safety, it promotes well-being, and it promotes academic success.

[06:38:50] Now, I've heard some of you say that we should charge a sliding scale fee to keep the program running. As someone whose values of social justice and fairness run deep, I have three words for you. Please don't do it.

[06:39:07] The moment you add a fee, however small, some families won't be able to afford it, and their kids will be the ones who need this program the most. So I ask you, on behalf of myself and the other moms, fully restore funding for the middle school after school program.

[06:39:28] No cuts, no fees, no patchwork solution. Let's invest in our kids like we mean it. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 16 is Elena Shavak. Speaker number 16, Elena Shavak. Here? Here.

[06:39:46] Speaker number 16, Elena Shavak. Last call. Okay. We are going to move on to speaker number 17, Robert Young. Moving to phone number 68. 68. All right. Good evening, Chairman McKay,

[06:40:21] members of the board, U.S. Aircraft Exec Hill. My name is Robert Young, and I proudly serve is the president of the IFF Local 2068 Firefighters Union, representing our members that serve in the Fire and Rescue Department DPSC here in Fairfax County. Today we come before you to express our concerns about the items contained in the fiscal year 2026 budget that impact our ability to deliver the highest quality service to the constituents and visitors in your district. In our private lives, when things increase in value, we increase the amount of insurance that we have

[06:40:59] on it. We do this to protect our investment from unforeseen harm that is a result of unpredictable occurrences. As the population of Fairfax County grows, so does the demand for the emergency services. The call volume for the Fire and Rescue Department has increased by 26% since 2017, and there is no sign of it slowing down. The Fire and Rescue Department anticipates an increase in call volume averaging about 4% in each of the next four years. This is asking you to not take any frontline units from the Fire and Rescue Department.

[06:41:38] To be clear, to reduce the number of units available to answer the call would be to increase the time it would take to get to the scene of the emergency, to render aid, prevent additional damage, and get the injured on the way to the hospital in the same way that we provide these services today.

[06:42:00] On the list of units that would be eliminated from the Fire and Rescue Department are the medical transport units serving Gunston, Clifton, Crosspoint, and Northpoint. Also slated for elimination by the rescue squads serving Lorton and Fair Oaks. The previously mentioned transport units are uniquely important to the overall delivery of our service to your communities due to them being the only type of vehicle that transport the injured and ill to the needed definitive care found only at hospitals. Unlike in the movies, we're not permitted to toss a person

[06:42:39] who may be critically injured in the back of any vehicle that happens to be on the scene, tap twice on the roof, and have them race off to the hospital, leading to a storybook ending. Should you elect to eliminate any transport units, the unfortunate reality is this person would have to await the arrival of a transport unit from further away, delaying transport and arrival at the appropriate medical facility.

[06:43:02] I am sure you have asked for and have received data relative to the call volume for each of the units slated for elimination. But I insist that you do not allow numbers to diminish how critical it is to have fully staffed units positioned and prepared to provide the same service regardless of your physical location within Fairfax County.

[06:43:26] People who call for help expect and deserve the same service whether they're in remote areas or the most populated areas in this great county. If you're enjoying the day at Pohick Park in Gunston, Fountainhead Park in Crosspoint, Hemlock Overlook in Clifton or Seneca Park in North Point, you should not be concerned that help could be delayed if you need to call. While the volume of calls is less in the areas that the eliminations are proposed, the calls in these areas are for people suffering from true life

[06:44:01] and death medical situations. They're not using the 911 system to supplement normal and regular needs that are more appropriate for a primary care physician at a doctor's office. Moving on to another area of concern, Fairfax County has many miles of open highways that are utilized daily by both local and interstate traffic. Interstates 95 and 66 in Fairfax County require our units to respond to accidents multiple times each day. Rescue squads 19 and 21 are strategically positioned

[06:44:36] for quick access to these highways, the tools, equipment, and personnel needed to mitigate these emergencies are assigned to these units. In situations where seconds matter, we should not be reducing the number of units we have available to resolve these often complex issues. Rescue squads are designated as special service units, given the complexities of the training needed to maintain proficiency in the associated specialty disciplines of each unit. Every member assigned to a rescue squad dedicates countless hours to maintain the hazardous materials and

[06:45:14] technical rescue skills needed to operate in the most demanding situations. The members of special service teams are expected to be experts that operate with little supervision on the incident scene. They extricate people from mangled cars, search structures on the fire scene for the location of the fire and utility shutoffs. They also help victims that can't otherwise extricate themselves from the situation. Public safety must remain the highest priority as you consider adoption

[06:45:49] of this budget. With that, we are not here to say no, stop, or even don't, because we understand you must. Local 2068 has historically come to you each budget year with solutions, and not only to express our frustrations. This year is no different. We have carefully evaluated the list submitted by the Fire and Rescue Department and watched this list develop until time it was delivered to the County Executive for consideration. Each item was evaluated for functional and fiscal feasibility.

[06:46:23] Once the budget was proposed and we knew which items had been selected, we went to work to find alternative measures for your consideration. That would prevent any changes to our service delivery model. Overtime was an often repeated item of concern in the proposed budget. The alternatives offered by the union will help reduce the dependence on overtime, and they are not one-time solutions. We have taken note of past years and evaluated each option to ensure that they absolutely give you options that you now have at your disposal to consider in lieu of

[06:47:03] removing our capacity to provide service that Fairfax County is known for worldwide. Thank you all for the opportunity to express our concerns here today and in the meetings that we had with you over the past months, where we evaluated the concerns and discussed alternatives.

[06:47:22] We appreciate your commitment to working with Local 2068 to find solutions to the issues. The issues we come to you with today are not about the MRA, pay scale adjustments, or even benefits. So with that, I must continue to praise the collective bargaining agreement that you have approved and funded.

[06:47:41] The members of Local 2068 send me here today to arm, I'm sorry, the members of Local 2068 send me here today to ask you to arm them with the necessary resources to continue to be the fire and rescue department that others look to as an example of what we all can be with continued collaboration as we resolve issues.

[06:48:04] Finally, I must thank the members that came out today to support our efforts. When I say members, I have to further clarify that I mean the members of Local 2068 who showed up in greater numbers today to say no to reductions in service more so than they have to say yes to personal gain, members of neighboring fire unions for standing in solidarity with us, members of other labor groups who demonstrated support in numerous ways, but most importantly, members of the Fairfax County community.

[06:48:33] It is amazing how each of these groups mentioned rallied around our cause and supported our efforts. Again, thank you to each of those groups. Thank you, Mr. Hill, Chairman McKay, and the entire board for your willingness to listen and address our concerns by considering our alternatives.

[06:48:51] Until next year, thank you. Thank you very much.

[06:49:03] Thank you. Thank you very much, Bobby, and thank you all for coming out to support him. We see you. So thank you for being here. And I should have mentioned, Bobby was also speaking for Speaker No. 18 and Speaker 19, who yielded their time to him to be able to make that happen.

[06:49:21] And so we are on Speaker No. 20, which is Kyle Stone, Chairman of the Fairfax County Park Authority. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Board.

[06:49:38] My name is Kyle Stone, and I serve as Chairman of the Fairfax County Park Authority Board. I recognize the difficult choices you all have to make in the coming weeks and appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the fiscal year 2026 budget. Last year, despite a similarly tight budget, you made park maintenance a priority, supporting investments that showed your commitment to our system.

[06:49:58] However, the county executive's proposed budget has us moving backwards. A year ago, \$120,000 was added to our park mowing budget. This year, \$130,000 is coming out. A year ago, \$200,000 was added to support increased rehabilitation of our athletic courts.

[06:50:15] But this year, \$250,000 is to be removed. A year ago, \$150,000 was added for repairs of our more than 300 miles of trails, but this year \$250,000 will be cut. My board colleagues and I often hear from the community and from each of you about the need for higher standards in park maintenance, and you're all right.

[06:50:36] You'll get no argument here. But this is not a matter of effort or intention. The park authority's staff is exceptional, consistently finding new efficiencies and creative solutions. In fact, doing more with less has been the standard for so long and has taken for granted. nor is it an issue of priority.

[06:50:53] For years, I've made the case for increased funding to address our park maintenance needs, yet here I am again, making the same request for the same critical resources. Parks are essential to the health and enjoyment of our community, and I urge you to restore these proposed funding cuts to ensure we can move closer to caring for our trails, courts, and open spaces in a way that the community expects and deserves.

[06:51:15] While the implementation of these proposed cuts will, of course, cause acute difficulties in the coming year, More significantly, they highlight a deeper long-term challenge, and that's the struggle to maintain an expanding system. With 422 parks, playgrounds, water parks, picnic shelters, and pools that all require regular inspection and upkeep, maintenance needs are extensive.

[06:51:38] And as we add more acreage and open new parks and new facilities, system-wide demands only increase. Not infrequently, these expansions are driven by requests external to the park authority itself. And when this happens, the necessary funding to maintain these new assets is very rarely provided.

[06:51:54] Over time, this has worsened our deferred maintenance challenges, which now total \$200 million and growing. Currently, our staff is collaborating with DMB to create a more realistic process for bringing new parks and facilities into this system, and I hope to share the results of that work with you here soon.

[06:52:11] While addressing these immediate challenges is critical, we must also look for long-term funding solutions that both diversify county revenue and ensure the sustainability of our park system. I know the Board has considered implementing a Meals Tax, and I would encourage you all to do so.

[06:52:28] A 4% Meals Tax would generate significant revenue, easing the burden on property owners, while also allowing for an opportunity to reinvest in our park system and other priorities. The proposed 2% increase to the Transit Occupancy Tax could be another valuable funding source for parks and recreation if we expand our thinking beyond visit Fairfax.

[06:52:47] Our sites are already a destination for many. Attractions like Watermine, Waterpark draw visitors from as far as Delaware. The new Patriot Park North is set to become a hub for baseball and softball tourism. And this summer, the renovated Mount Vernon Rec Center will reopen with two NHL-sized ice rinks and conserve the same function for the hockey community.

[06:53:06] Yet we currently receive no monetary credit for these tourism-based contributions. Last year, Supervisor Bierman raised a formal question regarding the B-Pol tax. I believe this is an issue the board should seriously consider. According to county staff estimates, a modest one-cent increase in B-Pol rates could generate another 10 million or so in revenue that could provide valuable funds to support park maintenance or other priorities. Fairfax County Parks contribute to the well-being of our residents and maintaining them requires sustained investment. I urge the board to consider proposals I've outlined to ensure the long-term sustainability of our park system. Restoring the funding cuts I mentioned

[06:53:45] and diversifying revenue will help secure the resources needed to keep our parks accessible and well-maintained for generations to come. Appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to working together to ensure Fairfax County's parks continue to be a vibrant and part of our community. Thank you. Thank you, Kyle. Speaker number 21 is Natalie Owen. Speaker number 21 is here to be followed by Alex Van Veen and William McCabe. If I called your name,

[06:54:18] please be ready to testify. Welcome. Good evening. My name is Natalie Owen. I've been a full-time county employee for five years, and my husband has as well. I'm here on both our behalf to ask you to consider keeping the Employees Child Care Center open as a county-operated program.

[06:54:37] Our two children have attended ECCC. The younger is about to graduate to start kindergarten this summer. We have immensely benefited from this resource since 2020. Our family had used two other daycares in the past and visited a handful of others, and none compared with ECCC. This place is a rare gem. During our time with the county, my husband and I have been able to go about our workdays with certainty that our kids were safe, loved, cared for, and given a wide variety of indoor and outdoor learning experiences. And what stands out above all to us is how they were

[06:55:15] nurtured by their teachers in a way that prioritized their emotional development. One of our children had a very difficult time expressing his feelings and advocating for himself. His teachers have worked consistently to help him grow in this area, and he has made tremendous progress. I'm sure you all know how important quality child care is to the future of Fairfax County, and that finding quality child care is difficult. While it is possible that a private daycare replacing ECCC might be of good quality, we already have something of great quality. Why gamble and shut down an

[06:55:52] incredibly successful county program that helps employees do their best work? ECCC is the gold standard and is just not something to cut or privatize. If anything, this program should be expanded. The ECCC was a major factor in our decision to move here and work for the county, and I can only imagine that if properly promoted, this would continue to be a high-value recruitment tool for workers with small children. Lastly, with the One Fairfax policy in mind, I would like to point out an equity issue with this proposed cut. The ECCC staff, as others have mentioned earlier,

[06:56:31] have dedicated their careers to caring for our children and are almost all women, and a majority of them are women of color. Despite their high degree of skill and professionalism, their salaries are relatively low on the pay scale and their positions would not be easy to transfer to other county

openings. ECCC parents have found ways to meaningfully cut costs to the county to keep this unique program in operation. I urge you to please review this cost proposal and engage with us and

[06:57:00] with staff to find a solution and not let this award-winning program slip away. Thank you. We are on speaker number 22, Alex Van Veen. Is Alex here? Yes. Ah, actually, you were on the phone. Alex, can you hear us okay? Yes, sir. Welcome. The floor is yours. Thank you. Good evening, Chairman McKay and honorable board members. I am Alex Van Veen from Franconia District, a resident of Fairfax

[06:57:37] County since 1980. I am speaking to deceased board members to save our Fairfax County Community emergency response team. My companion, Marsha Robinson, was scheduled to speak next on your agenda in support of Saving Cert. However, she has been hospitalized for over a week and is under sedation now, and I am actually in her hospital room. That's the beeping you hear.

[06:58:06] Our nurse is about to come in and give her further sedation. I am sitting here comforting her in the hospital room. However, the cause of saving CERT is so important to Marsha and I and benefits our county so greatly to such a degree, I am taking time from caring for her to give this testimony. I did submit testimony in writing, but I'll make it brief, Chairman McKay.

[06:58:40] CERT is a FEMA-developed volunteer organization that teaches the public to prepare for, respond to, and recover from everyday emergencies up to large-scale disasters. CERT provides service to the public and first responder communities, fostering a safer and more resilient county.

[06:59:04] CERT delivers a ready reserve of members that are vetted, trained, and equipped to help respond to emergencies, disasters of all sizes. CERT responded to the tragic plane helicopter accident at Washington National Airport with our canteen.

[06:59:26] We have two of what will be only three canteens left in the entire county. We provided the first responders, the divers, with warm food, warm drinks, and comfort. So CERT provides free emergency preparedness training through classes at several locations throughout our county, from Fort Belvoir to high schools to senior centers.

[06:59:56] This is where most of the CERT budget is spent. The budget is small. It's \$34,000 a year, and we save the county through our volunteer efforts, which are calculated at about \$55 an hour, which I fear was a bargain, over \$1 million last year.

[07:00:17] That outweighs the cost of the program by a factor of 29 to 1. Through CERT training, we enable county residents such as myself and 5,000 other residents who have been trained in over 20 years.

[07:00:35] Our Fairfax County CERT program has been in existence. To be more resilient in an emergency, allowing our first responders, our vital police and fire EMT services to concentrate on more vulnerable populations.

[07:00:54] Now, this is where I want to give us a little institutional memory, Chairman. I know that you are our lead district supervisor, and I know how you volunteered as a first responder, Chairman McKay. when you served as a reserve deputy sheriff while you were chief of staff to Dana Coughlin.

[07:01:14] And that was commendable. And that's all we're asking. We just asked for a small amount of the county resources. I know they're limited, but you get so much more bang for a buck if you support us or don't defund us.

[07:01:31] And I'm not going to belabor you. Everything else I want to say has been presented by the clerk and the board packet. And if you have any questions, I'll be glad to answer them. Thank you again, Chairman McCabe and the other board members.

[07:01:47] Thank you. And you have a great evening. Thank you for your comments, and we'll keep Marsha in our prayers. Thank you. Our next speaker is William McCabe, followed by Norman Hall and Lanny Steffens. And if the speakers could come down.

[07:02:05] I rise tonight to speak as a resident of Fairfax County, as a parent of two children who attended and graduated from FCPS schools and as a teacher.

[07:02:22] who is now working his 28th year in the Fairfax County public school system. I'm here to urge the board in the strongest possible way to honor the collectively bargained contract between FEU and the FCPS school board and to fully fund the school board's proposed budget. Your failure to do so will have terrible and long-lasting adverse effects for student learning and safety, for invaluable extracurricular and arts programs, and for the top-notch special education programs that are the envy of the country.

[07:02:50] Programs will be slashed, teacher morale will implode, class sizes already too high will rise again, kids will be hurt. On the other hand, the decision by this board to approve in full the school board's budget will send a message to the community that you care about the education, health, and well-being of our students.

[07:03:11] It will send a message to teachers and to school staff that you do, in fact, value our professionalism and our deep commitment to educating children. That you recognize the years of sacrifice teachers have made, especially since COVID in terms of frozen and eliminated step increases and year after year without pay increases.

[07:03:31] Furthermore, fully funding the school budget and honoring the collective bargaining agreement will be an investment in property values in Fairfax County. For nothing so affects home prices as the kind of schools children go to and the commitment of the community via its board of supervisors to keeping those schools top-notch.

[07:03:48] Doing this, making this admittedly hard vote, is more important today than it has ever been. People are afraid of the chaos and uncertainty the federal government has wrought. They need stability. They need to see that this board is committed to the improvement of our schools, to the success and academic growth of their kids, to honoring and supporting the professionals you have entrusted those kids to.

[07:04:10] A failure of this board to fully fund our schools will be, for many, the last straw. It is very hard for me to say this, but it is the truth. Teachers with years of expertise will leave the profession, taking with them the ability to mentor new generations of educators. Our teacher shortage problem, already bad, will be exacerbated, especially when surrounding jurisdictions pay more, and in some cases, significantly so.

[07:04:33] Families will lose faith in their local leaders to stand up and fix local issues, to honor local commitments, and in time, Fairfax County will lose its luster as a special place to live and raise children. Even those with no children in the school system will watch their property values plummet as those in Loudoun, Arlington, and Prince William are on the rise.

[07:04:52] I implore you, not merely as an educator with skin in the game, but as a future retired teacher who still loves very much this great county where I live, to keep faith with your constituents, to keep faith with the great school faculties across this county, and mainly to keep faith with the families and particularly the children who live here and who rightly expect the very best schools in the entire nation. Yes, all of that is on the line today. Please fully fund the FCPS school budget and honor the collectively bargained agreement it contains. County residents are watching you. We have faith in you. We expect that you will do the right thing. We look forward

[07:05:28] to reaching out and congratulating you for having done it. Thank you. Thank you. And Maria Solley, if the speakers could come down. Norm? Thank you. Thank you. Good evening, Vice Chair Smith, members of the Board of Supervisors. I'm Norm Hall. I'm the chair of the Fairfax County Employees Advisory Council. The Employee Advisory Council was established in 1957 and since then has served to make sure that high standards of service by 16,000 Fairfax County employees in the county

[07:06:03] merit system are present in the working relationships we have with each other, our supervisors, and the community at large. This year, EAC has focused our attention on collective bargaining and the budget based on employees' concerns expressed over the past year. Fairfax County government and school employees are watching to see how paycheck gains are linked to collective bargaining. This budget provides pay boosts for general county employees that are based on notions of equity from Fairfax County leadership. I appreciate this, but there is no doubt that staff would much prefer that

[07:06:40] compensation provisions be negotiated based on explicit employee input instead. As it is, FCPS compensation for teachers and operational support staff doesn't match the negotiated result of their collective bargaining. Everyone who is paid depends on annual budget decisions made by the Board of Supervisors shares the common hope that our voices are heard and our needs considered throughout the budget cycle, not just once near the end when tax rates and other revenue stream decisions are made. This is the essence of collective bargaining. As EAC chair,

[07:07:16] I face a dilemma brought on by an election time frame that falls outside the 55-day clause in our collective bargaining ordinance. Three statements are true. One, the number one issue for employees during budget conversations is collective bargaining. Two, to represent all county employees, EAC should reflect county employee views in a representative manner. And three, during a collective bargaining election, the EAC should be impartial. To this last statement I add, parenthetically, if at all possible. Not sure it is. On the FY2026 budget, from the outset,

[07:07:56] you knew how hard it would be to sell decisions that were made in putting it together. I've been with you since last year regarding the awful state-level dismissal of the JLARC recommendations to alleviate the inequities of the local composite index. To fund the school superintendent's budget requires a greater county funds transfer at a time when we already have fiscal stress. At my invitation, County Chief Financial Officer Jackson and Budget Director Hagan met with the EAC the day after the county executive presented this budget. It was easy to

[07:08:32] have questions, helpful to have discussions, and so difficult to offer specific suggestions about alternatives to this budget. I have positives. The county employees appreciate, one, that there's not a hiring freeze, two, that police and fire rescue pay provisions are funded along with the cost of living increases and pay boosts based on performance and longevity bonuses. And three, that there will still be job class

reviews as warranted. Less positive but still important is to say that we are grateful for the efforts to find positions for employees affected by the

[07:09:09] announced separations and grateful that there are no further reductions to take place until the start of the next fiscal year. What we call for is an ongoing relationship to make sure that employees will be informed well in advance before budget decisions affect their jobs.

[07:09:24] We call for clarity in the consideration of options for further reductions, staffing realignments, and reorganizations that may be coming. As an ongoing body meeting throughout the year, the EAC plans to collaborate with management to ensure fair treatment of employees who occupy positions facing transitions.

[07:09:45] Of the proposed reductions, the plan to outsource the Employee Child Care Center stands out. This program is housed in NCS. I am a former child care worker myself. NCS is among the departments I serve as Group 5 representative, and for years I've heard the experiences shared by many colleagues whose families and county careers were supported. Even throughout the pandemic, children were in exceptionally good hands in the first level of the Panino building.

[07:10:13] More high-quality employee child care has been my advocacy, as many of you know from prior meetings in my current position i know that good results can come from service contracting but at the same time i have years of experience dealing with the procurement implementation and management and private service providers doing it well takes considerable planning and resources for implementation proceed with caution please listen to those who propose alternatives in closing i offer you best wishes as you search for acceptable budget solutions that work for all. And thank you

[07:10:51] for the opportunity to speak. Thank you, Norm. Okay, is Lani Stephens here, followed by Wariah Salhi and Holly Doherty? If people that are speaking could come down, that would help us keep moving. Thank you. Hi. Hi. My name is Lani Stephens. Thank you for allowing me to speak today on behalf of the Employees Child Care Center, or the ECCC. My husband and I both work for the Fairfax County Health Department, and as such, we are considered emergency responders. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, our older son was an infant in a private daycare. It closed,

[07:11:31] and I was forced to use the pandemic leave that was available for staff when my husband was working 100-hour weeks. When my leave was coming to an end, I struggled to find a daycare that was open until I called the ECCC. They stayed open every single day of the pandemic, supporting county government staff like our family. Let me be very clear. If it hadn't been for them, I probably would have had to leave my job. Instead, I was privileged to spend the next two years deployed to the emergency response and to serve my community. Because ECC is

[07:12:09] focused on supporting county government staff, I know that I can always rely on them no matter what. If there is inclement weather but the county is still open, I know that they will be too. No scrambling for child care or having to juggle working with watching my child. I don't need to burn through my limited annual leave because of a mismatch in holiday calendars. I know that they will always be there for our family. But what makes the ECCC so profoundly special is the genuinely loving and nurturing environment that the teachers and staff have cultivated.

[07:12:42] I have learned so much from them, especially when I was a first-time mother dealing with potty training or big emotions. They have helped me be a better mother and it makes sense. 80% of the

teachers have a degree and they use an evidence-based whole child approach to support not just our children's academics but also their social skills, emotional intelligence, and their physical development. My children have thrived in their care and developed deep relationships with their teachers every year. I understand that this is a challenging year for the budget.

[07:13:19] We parents have come together and identified several ways in which the cost of the center to the county can be reduced dramatically. I hope that you will consider them. And finally, about a year ago, the Fairfax Commission for Women helped present a study that was funded by the Department of Family Services with a report titled, Gains, Gaps, and Goals, the Status of Women and Girls in Fairfax County. This report gives the following policy recommendation, and I quote, fund child care at the state and county levels to reduce family costs and enhance child care providers' wages. Steps are needed to improve quality, lower costs, and boost wages for child

[07:13:58] care workers. Early childhood education participation correlates with better adult outcomes, reducing gender disparities, and fostering economic growth. The ECCC is living proof that this works. And so I ask you, please preserve ECCC as a county-operated program.

[07:14:15] Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is Varaya Sali on the phone. Okay. Thank you. Can you hear us? Yes. Can you hear me? Yes. You may start. Hello. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and members of the board. My name is Varaya Sali.

[07:14:36] Also known as WITI. I have lived in Fairfax County for over 25 years. I am a homeowner, a business, small business owner, and most importantly, I am a father of three children, all born and raised here in this beautiful community.

[07:14:52] When my family chose Fair Tax, we chose it because it was safe, affordable, and full of opportunity. It was a place where working families could build a future. But today, the future slipping away each year, I feel.

[07:15:09] Since 2020, I think property taxes have gone up over 200%. Grocery cost going up more. The utility costs are going up, and yet most families' income have not kept pace.

[07:15:26] At the same time, crime is rising, schools are declining, and small businesses like mine are struggling to survive and stay in business. Now you are proposing even more of property tax hike and new meal tax.

[07:15:43] Fairfax County already collects over \$5 billion in taxes, I think, and fees. I feel this is not a revenue problem. It is a spending problem, I think. You asked for our votes to elect you, and we did. You promised to serve these people and us.

[07:16:01] Today, we are asking you to keep that promise. Look around this room. Listen to the voices. Residents, business owners, parents, and seniors are all pleading and begging you, please, we do not need more taxes. Families are hurting, and many are barely staying afloat.

[07:16:20] Do not make it worse during these tough times. We ask you again, please, do not raise property tax rates, and please do not add new food tax during these tough times. Thank you. Thank you. The next speaker is Holly Doherty. Is Holly here?

[07:16:38] Followed by Josias Zalalem. Is Josias here? Okay. And a reminder, when people come down, we can get going, so we're not here until midnight.

[07:16:54] the next speaker is Tom Goodwin is Tom here come on down closer so you're going to be ready to go so Holly Doherty is not here okay Josias is you know what we're going to have Tom since he's right there and then we'll go back to Josias thank you Tom well I'm not going to keep you here till

[07:17:30] midnight thank you very much good evening everybody my name is Tom Goodwin I'm a member of the Human Services Council, resident of Drainsville District, and I would like to say hello to my ferociously omnipresent supervisor who is fearless in advocacy for our residents and the issues that we face in Drainsville.

[07:17:48] And I'd also like to thank Supervisor Palczyk for her forbearance in allowing me to continue my work as a member of the Human Services Council, even after I had moved away. Thank you for that, because it kept me going. And when the chairman comes back, I will thank him for the opportunity that he has given me to serve at large on this council because it gives me now the opportunity to talk to you about what I wanted to talk to you about tonight, which is a much broader perspective of that little tiny investment that you all make called the Innovation Fund, an offshoot of the Innovation Challenge under the Health and Human Services system.

[07:18:23] For several years, the Innovation Challenge has been searching for new and different ways to deliver programs and services differently. It started with an idea that came from this board. Can we find a way to deliver services and pay for them differently?

[07:18:38] Can we find a way that the taxpayers do not share the full burden of it, but that we can bring in NGOs and nonprofits and others to help contribute and provide services and have them not be 100% taxpayer funded? And first and foremost, can we deliver these services in new and different ways, whether they're old programs that we have a new solution for or whether they're relatively new ideas.

[07:19:01] that idea, that original idea, the Human Services Council created the Innovation Challenge, which brought together experts to talk about this and ultimately resulted in the Board of Supervisors agreeing to pay a small amount, to contribute a small amount of money in the budget every year as an investment in the concept. As we speak today, there are eight pilot projects being operated under the aegis of the Innovation Fund, an offshoot of the Innovation Challenge. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to represent and to do this job countywide because it has given me a much broader perspective. Thank you very much. The most notable and the most highly

[07:19:40] visible of the seven projects is, of course, the Economic Mobility Initiative. This one is one that everybody's waiting for. We do not know whether or not it will be, how we will even define success. I suspect that you all will define whether or not the project will be successful. Each one of you will probably have your own definition. But I do know this, that each and every one of you will be paying attention to it. And this project would not have been possible without the innovation challenge and the seed money from the innovation fund. We couldn't do it. It would not have been possible. One thing that we do know for sure is that the economic mobility pilot initiative will

[07:20:19] produce reams and reams of really important hard data that we have never had before about a crucial audience in Fairfax County, a crucial population known collectively as Alice. And going forward, that will be very helpful in helping decide priorities that we're going to have.

[07:20:36] So what I'd like to say in conclusion is that we have new opportunities coming. The Food Council would like to stimulate viability among small micro-businesses that would like to increase food

availability to those in need.

[07:20:53] We have one in four residents who have experienced some food insecurity. It's an ideal project for the Innovation Fund. In conclusion, I hope that you will think of the Innovation Fund as an investment. I think rapidly it has become a very small amount of money that is paying off in a big way for the citizens who most need it, for the citizen residents who most need it in our health and human services community.

[07:21:15] It is truly a creative solution for very challenging times. If you can't fund it now, please put it in carryover, but fund it now. Thank you very much for your time. Thank you, Tom. Thank you, Tom.

[07:21:31] I'm going to go back to speaker number 29, Yosias Zelalim. Are you here? You are. Welcome. Welcome. The floor is yours. Good afternoon, Board of Supervisors.

[07:21:48] Happy Earth Day. I am Yosias Zelalim, and I'm a member of the Community Action Advisory Board, also known as CAB. Thank you for giving us this time to talk about our priorities at the CAB and to hear about our concerns as they relate to Fairfax County residents experiencing poverty. We are facing a housing crisis. Low-income individuals in our community, including long-term residents, are being priced out of Fairfax County. Our neighbors who are the most affected are those

[07:22:22] living at or below the federal poverty line. The federal poverty line in 2025 is \$31,200 for a family of four. In Fairfax County, the medium income for a family of four is more than \$140,000. The cab has noticed that each year, more and more studio and one bedrooms are designated as low-income units, but families are often unable to access these units. In Fairfax County, there are about 23,000 children living in poverty.

[07:23:02] With that said, we support the additional quarter of a penny for affordable housing. We also support an increase of \$239,541 for the Pathway Homes Community Support Specialists to help individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities find and retain housing.

[07:23:24] We support the Victims of Crime Act Victims Services Program as previously approved by the Board of Supervisors as part of the financial year 2024 carryover review.

[07:23:40] The increase of \$120,000 would continue services to victims of crimes. This will provide two three-bedroom emergency shelter apartments and the management of 11 additional backup beds for domestic and sexual assault victims.

[07:23:56] We oppose the reduction of the case management services provided to adults in emergency shelters. This reduction decreases funding for contracted case management services to adults in emergency shelters.

[07:24:14] It also increases caseloads and may impact how quickly adults are able to access a permanent housing solution. The CAB also opposes the elimination of the Bridge to Kindergarten program administered by Fairfax County Public Schools.

[07:24:30] The program supports children who will be entering kindergarten and have not attended pre-K program. This program gives children the opportunity to become familiar with the kindergarten environment, routines, and expectations. In summer 2023, 1,600 children participated in the program.

[07:24:50] We also oppose the elimination of the middle school after school program. We ask that you help identify resources for FCPS to continue these programs that can help childhood development. Lastly,

the CAB supports diversifying revenue to support Fairfax County residents.

[07:25:08] In line with the One Fairfax policy, I believe we can agree that every Fairfax County resident, regardless of income, deserves a safe place to call home. Thank you for your time. Thank you very much.

[07:25:24] Thank you for your testimony. Our next speaker is Leslie Houston, speaker number 31, to be followed by Frank Woodruff and Nicole Miller. If you all can be ready when it's your turn, that would save us a lot of time.

[07:25:42] This is speaker number 31. Good evening, Chair McKay and members of the board.

[07:26:02] I am Leslie Houston, the president of Fairfax Education Association and co-president of Fairfax Education Union. I'm here on behalf of more than 27,500 Fairfax County public school employees, educators, support professionals, and operational staff who dedicate themselves each day to serving over 180,000 students across this county. \$268.3 million. That is the amount fcps has requested to sustain operations and fund these agreements this is not just a number

[07:26:42] on a spreadsheet it reflects our values it determines whether we retain our educators stabilize our classrooms and provide the high quality education our students deserve and yet we've seen urgent and robust investments made in other sectors for instance the county moved quickly to offer \$15,000 hiring bonuses to federal employees joining the Fairfax County Police Department. While we absolutely support the need for strong public safety, we ask with

[07:27:19] compassion and urgency, where is that same level of commitment for public education? In the past six years, FCPS employees have had salary and step increases frozen three times. Meanwhile, since fiscal year 2023, Fairfax County police have received over 39% in salary increases. In fiscal year 2025, public safety departments saw significant raises. Police received a 10.69%

[07:27:51] raise, fire and rescue 7.83%, 911 callers 8.73%, and even the non-bargaining sheriff's office received 7.83 percent. Meanwhile, our superintendent had the audacity to ask for a 6 percent raise for staff, but the county only funded 4 percent, creating a gap that is deeply felt across our schools. Looking ahead to fiscal year 2026, those same public safety departments are slated to

[07:28:25] receive increases again. Our contract calls for a 7 percent increase, and we are simply asking you to support us. In recent years, FCPS received an average of 52.7% of the county's budget. But in the last two years, that number has dropped to 51.6% and 51.4% resulting in \$130.9 million in lost funding for our schools. During this same period, Fairfax County was able to fund 86.72 million dollars in its own collective bargaining agreements with county employees.

[07:29:04] Those funds came in part from reductions to FCPS's share. This shift has real consequences for our classrooms and our ability to retain staff and yet when residents are frustrated by tax increases teachers and schools are blamed. So let me clarify one fact. The county's budget has grown by four point one percent over the past two years while the school division's budget has grown by just three point eight percent we're not asking for more than our fair share we are asking for the

[07:29:42] funding necessary to uphold the contract that was negotiated we are asking for the ability to pay our employees fairly so they can live to so they can afford to live in the communities where they work and continue making a difference in students lives if you support education and after speaking to most of

you, I know that you do. The only choice, the right choice is to fully fund FCPS. This is the moment to show it. I think of Fairfax County and Fairfax County Public

[07:30:18] Schools as siblings. Every family faces its challenges. Disagreements between brothers and sisters are part of being close. But one thing remains true. We protect each other from the outside. Right now, public education is under attack at the federal level. And Instead of turning inward, we should be standing shoulder to shoulder to defend what we know is right.

[07:30:42] Our energy should be focused on lifting each other up and ensuring that those entrusted with funding our schools help us to rise to the level our students and educators deserve. Let us remember, we are one Fairfax. Thank you.

[07:30:59] Our next speaker is number 32, speaker number 32, Frank Woodruff, to be followed by Nicole Willer, David Walrod, and Shannon Campbell.

[07:31:15] Frank, welcome. Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to the board. I live in the Fair Lakes area of Springfield District. I'm here tonight as a dad who has two sons, four and six, that have spent their early years in the Fairfax County Employee Child Care Center, ECCC.

[07:31:33] My wife is a county employee. I am not. There are many reasons not to privatize the center, but tonight I want to focus on three. The first is when the county runs ECCC, the board and the agencies have control. You have control. During COVID, that control mattered.

[07:31:50] My wife was in the office nearly every day, and I lead a national nonprofit that helps families stay in their homes. We couldn't do our jobs without child care, but unlike many private centers, ECCC stayed open. And you, as the board, ensured that the teachers had PPE, they had supplies and support, and because of your leadership and their action, kept COVID rates lower than almost every other provider in the region.

[07:32:15] And that happened because you had a say in how the center operated. Second, ECCC is a tool that the county can shape over time as needs change. This year's challenge is the budget, so let's fix the budget. But future years will bring different pressures and different opportunities. Keeping ECCC county run lets you adjust not just now but over the long term this tool to meet shifting needs for the county's workforce and for those outside the county's workforce like myself.

[07:32:42] Eliminate it and you lose that flexibility. Third, ECCC brings people into county service who might not otherwise get the chance. Food service staff, maintenance workers, teachers, they start at ECCC, get promoted, transferred, and grow. That benefits the county's government, deepens your connection to the communities you might otherwise miss.

[07:33:01] My family has paid about \$100,000 in county fees for child care for two children for part-time care over the last six years. That's not a small amount of money, but it's been worth every penny because the care is reliable, high quality, and reflects our values. Let me close with the moment that I'll never forget. In early 2022, January and February, COVID rolled through our house. First my wife, then one of my sons, then me, then the other one, and every time a two-week clock started over for when we could access child care again.

[07:33:33] I was at my wits end. We were two parents, two toddlers, and two jobs literally helping people survive the pandemic. And I remember calling my son's teacher, Ms. Maria, to ask how to juggle the work.

What is Josh like? And she spent a lot of time with me and was much more patient with me than I may have been with her.

[07:33:54] And in that moment, I realized that these teachers had to become public health experts overnight, sanitation workers on a daily basis for their classrooms, And in that moment, my psychologist. They carried my family through. And as a board, you carried them through. And I'm asking that you don't walk away from that legacy.

[07:34:11] Preserve it, strengthen it, and keep ECZ County run. If I'm you, this is not a decision about one center. It's about the kind of employer you want to be, the kind of government you want to run, and the kind of county you want to lead. Keep Fairfax County exceptional. Thank you. Thank you.

[07:34:28] Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Speaker number 33 is Nicole Miller. Nicole. To be followed by David Walrod, Shannon Campbell, Sean Stokes. Please be ready to provide testimony. Welcome. Thank you. So most of you know who I am. I'm not new here, but this time I'm representing a group called Springfield Underground. It's a small community group who wanted to have a bigger voice. I'm not here to talk to you about how mad we are that you raised our assessments again. We recognize that in 2024 homes sold in our community for within a few days for maximum over asking, but it's easy to afford that when 10 to 20 adults are paying for it.

[07:35:09] Crazy prices, right? But we also recognize that on January 20th, those trends have pretty much ended for our community. In the once thriving community of Springfield, homes are now being reduced. They're sitting on the market for much longer. And the fear is, is that with the changes to the federal workforce and immigration changes, that we won't have any buyers to buy our homes if we want to escape this county. But that's not why I'm here either. I'm here to tell you about a less obvious reason why many are leaving the county essentially the diminished quality of our community and the lack of services so at the franconia open house i actually heard jaron mckay

[07:35:44] say that a constituent told him once that covid wasn't real and i jeff said to the constituent i don't know my second bout of covid was pretty rough well i'm still dealing with some side effects he said well i've had covid more times than i think than a handful of times but what i'm here to tell you is that the debilitating aftermath that is now my life is much real to me. I now have an incurable neurological disorder that plagues me with debilitating exhaustion to the point that I've reduced most activities in life that I enjoy. It prohibits me from commuting to work. This is the first time I've driven in three months, I think, as driving a car most days is

[07:36:22] dangerous when you have long COVID. I'm part of a larger community of vaccine injury people and long COVID sufferers that have no doctors to treat us in Fairfax County. We all look normal on the outside, but we're not on the inside. There are no medical studies in Virginia. There's no specialists, and those that claim to be specialists prioritize profit over the care and charge upwards of 700 to 1,000 a visit that insurance doesn't cover. I took the vaccine to ensure that I didn't die, and now I spend my days wondering if that would have been the better option. The idea that you would erect a COVID memorial that would represent an illness or a

[07:37:00] vaccine that's literally crippled hundreds of thousands with taxpayer dollars is really sad and despicable. And I think the amount of us that are suffering long COVID and other illnesses that come from that don't want to be reminded of the horrors that our life has become. And companies like Inova are prioritizing profit over research and care. They do zero long COVID care. Fairfax County is always short on

funds. We all know that, but it's not short on illegal businesses that pay no taxes in Springfield. Verified undocumented immigrants from Maryland and Virginia come to our flea markets to sell things like power tools, diapers, laundry soap, and sometimes the stuff they

[07:37:39] steal from our homes, many of which dump their unsold goods in the woods at Hechinger Drive that taxpayers have to spend money paying Operation Stream Shield to clean up. Throughout the county, countless coconut vendors with no health permits, no business license, squatting on private and public property, selling their coconuts.

[07:37:59] These people make thousands weekly and report nothing. There are hundreds of thousands of unlicensed contractors doing people's bathrooms and kitchens for cash. None of these people are reporting that income. The same people send their kids to our schools and get free lunch, extra language services.

[07:38:15] They get county services for low incomes, all while bragging to their neighbors that they don't pay any taxes, but they drive \$80,000 to \$100,000 trucks, they live in fairly large homes, and they have tons of money. Other opinions are wasteful spending lies in the lackluster county policies.

[07:38:33] Bad actors in our neighborhood know that as long as they don't open the door, they don't have to answer to code enforcement. If you're a resident in the community, you know that it's like a full-time job getting accountability. We report things like human trafficking, sex offenders living in homes with daycares, and it's become like a full-time job for our community to just clean that up.

[07:38:54] You end up becoming best friends with code enforcement, an organization you really don't want to be best friends with, but you seem to know everybody by name because you've talked to them all in your multiple complaints that have gone nowhere. But imagine if you pick a daycare from the county registration list, and you later find out that the homeowner has two foreign child rapists living in the home that went unreported, and you had no idea, would it make you mad to find out that neighbors reported that to multiple county offices and it was ignored?

[07:39:22] That the only accountability came when DHS arrested both of them? This is the reality of the homes that are in the community, the cul-de-sac behind my house. Other reason people are leaving is they're exhausted seeing the people walking our streets at night stealing from us. Some of them, we even know their names.

[07:39:40] They walk by us, they steal a generator, a table saw, they push it in a shopping cart, and they just wave to us on our security cameras like it's normal. Some days we come home from wherever we are and there's people sleeping in our streets, high on drugs, just coming from the local drug houses. But I really wanted to come here tonight because I don't think everybody seems to know this, that I want everybody to hear me say my appreciation for Chairman McKay.

[07:40:04] Very few here know that the selfless sacrifice that you and your family made this year for federal employees. And when our elected officials come to their fork in the road where they have to choose between one way or the other, between their family's needs and the community needs, I want it to be recognized that you chose the community first.

[07:40:23] A decision that I'm sure wasn't easy and that not any of us had probably made. And I'm humbled to know that you're standing courageously for us when the governor refuses to. And we

appreciate you more than you'll ever know. Thank you. Thank you very much. And thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you very much, Nicole.

[07:40:39] Appreciate your testimony. Speaker number 34, David Walrod, is next to be followed by Shannon Campbell. Shannon, supervisors, thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak today.

[07:41:06] My name is David Walrod. I'm a special education teacher at Lake Reddick Secondary School, the president of the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers. and I serve as co-president, along with Leslie Houston, of the Fairfax Education Unions, the collective bargaining agent for 27,500 teachers, bus drivers, food service workers, instructional assistants, mental health team members, and other instructional and educational support staff.

[07:41:31] This board has repeatedly indicated their support for collective bargaining. Upon passage of the law allowing collective bargaining for public employees, this board served as a model for Virginia localities. Within six months of House Bill 582 taking effect, this board passed an ordinance allowing its employees to engage in the collective bargaining process.

[07:41:52] This board negotiated and enacted collective bargaining agreements with unions of the Fairfax County Police and Fire Departments. This board has consistently shown their support for their unionized workers and has made funding the collective bargaining agreements a top priority. As the president of a public sector union, I am grateful for the support of collective bargaining that this board has consistently shown.

[07:42:15] Once our resolution was passed by the school board, FEU, a partnership between the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers and the Fairfax Education Association, began the work of gathering support from the employees of the certified instructional unit and the operational unit. In the largest public sector election this century, our public school teachers and operational staff said yes to collective bargaining.

[07:42:36] Last October, at 2 a.m. on Halloween morning, FEU and FCPS reached a historic tentative agreement, which was then overwhelmingly ratified by FCPS workers and unanimously by the school board. This agreement has the potential to be transformative for Fairfax County educators and support staff.

[07:42:54] This agreement guarantees teachers access to planning time, ensures that special education teachers will be able to prioritize their case management responsibilities. This agreement ensures that staff will be able to use their sick leave when they need to. This agreement gives staff a real voice in matters of workplace safety, understanding that our staff workplaces are our students' learning places.

[07:43:14] More significantly, this agreement works to catch FCPS employees up to the compensation of other localities and aids in recruitment and retention of valuable FCPS workers. Every year, FCPS loses teachers and support staff to neighboring localities, either because they can't afford to live in Fairfax County or because they can't afford to continue commuting from outside the county.

[07:43:37] Using myself as an example, a teacher in my 16th year of teaching, I would make close to \$12,000 more if I worked in Alexandria City, about \$9,000 more in Arlington County. I myself am happy to stay with FCPS and hope to spend my whole career here, but we lose good employees every year to our neighbors.

[07:43:56] FCFT is not asking for anything this board has not already committed to. On multiple occasions, the Board of Supervisors expressed commitment to funding CBAs. This board, in underfunding Superintendent Reed's FY265 budget, specifically cited the CBAs they had already negotiated with their own staff as a reason why.

[07:44:17] I stand here today, along with other educators, support staff, and supporters of the public education system, to ask you to provide SCPS with the funding to implement our collective bargaining agreement as written. We understand the oft-repeated point that the state does not provide enough funding.

[07:44:35] As Chairman McKay has pointed out many times, the 2024 JLARC study shows that if Virginia supported public schools at an appropriate level, Fairfax County public schools would receive an additional \$568 million from Richmond. We will continue our state lobbying to get appropriate funding of Virginia schools, but today, the question is whether or not the Board of Supervisors will fund public schools.

[07:45:00] As you've done consistently over the past four years, I'm asking you directly, demonstrate your support of collective bargaining. Demonstrate your support for public education. Demonstrate that you truly believe FCPS should be a world-class education system.

[07:45:22] You can do this by fully funding our contract. Thank you. Hey, folks.

[07:45:51] I appreciate that enthusiasm, but I'm going to say the same thing I said earlier. We have 90 speakers to go, and they want to get home tonight, too, and have a chance to testify. So if we could just think about that, that would be appreciated. Speaker number 35 is Shannon Campbell, to be followed by Sean Stokes and John Gutsmead.

[07:46:09] Welcome. Good evening, board. Thank you. Thank you for having me, allowing me the time to speak tonight. My name is Shannon Campbell, and I am here to advocate for the middle school after school program. I began my career as a Fairfax County special education teacher and then moved into the role of after-school program specialist for the last 16 years, working at two different middle schools.

[07:46:32] I have been fortunate enough to work with thousands of students and hundreds of staff members over my career. Every year, minus the year that we offered virtual programming during COVID, at least 90% of my student population has participated in our program.

[07:46:49] So far this school year, over 800 of our 900 students have participated. Last year across Fairfax County, over 23,000 middle schoolers attended these programs, and we are on track for the same, if not more, this year.

[07:47:06] What other program has such far-reaching impacts? This program has been running for almost 20 years and running effectively with more data than you could ever wish for, measurable outcomes, and has had huge academic and social and emotional impacts.

[07:47:23] This program at the start was designed as a gang prevention program. While the after-school program most certainly plays a role in supervising students after the dismissal bell, it is so much more than that. It's a place for kids to feel safe and welcome, to build relationships with their peers and staff, to engage in enrichment opportunities like Science Olympiad and the Technology Student Association, Model UN, a variety of math competitions, just to name a handful of the offerings.

[07:47:54] Intra and intermural sports, extra help from their teachers, student interest clubs like Dungeons and Dragons, art, strategic games, and origami, extra theater opportunities, leadership groups, the list can go on and on. If the funding is cut, those will not exist.

[07:48:11] Plus, there is the VIP summer program, which is the best deal in town and a jewel for our families. keeping over 1,500 students engaged every summer, safe and out of trouble, participating in a myriad of activities ranging from STEM to art and cooking and sports and field trips and everything in between for the cost of \$100 per student for five weeks, with scholarships offered for families who need them.

[07:48:38] Chairman McKay, you mentioned in a previous meeting how we need to maximize every dollar, and I completely agree. If you look back at the historical funding data for this program, our budget request has been almost stable for the last 20 years.

[07:48:54] While the price of everything else has risen, budgets, benefits, hourly wages, salaries, refreshments, supplies, transportation, we are still operating our program with essentially the same amount of money that we had asked for 20 years ago, making every single dollar count.

[07:49:16] The after-school program has been around for 20 years, and it's a critical aspect of middle school life. We also employ over 850 Fairfax County staff and hourly employees who rely on this program to supplement their income. Removing this program will have far-reaching impacts for our students, family, staff, and the broader Fairfax County community.

[07:49:35] In a recent meeting, a member of the board was discussing public health and stated that if it's going well, no one talks about it. This is the same as the after-school program. For 20 years, we have been a constant structure for families, reliable, safe, engaging.

[07:49:51] Many residents do not even know that this program is on the chopping block because why would it be when it has been so incredibly successful? Shannon, thank you. You're way over time, so I just want to be respectful to everyone here. This is the National After School Professionals Week. I work alongside 25 others who are dedicated, rock stars, and it's imperative that the funding is reinstated so our programs can continue to thrive.

[07:50:14] Thank you very much. Speaker number 36 is Sean Stokes, to be followed by John Gutzmeedle, Judith Harbeck, and Mark Emery.

[07:50:30] Welcome. Good evening, Chairman McKay and members of the Board of Supervisors. I am Sean Stokes, Chief of the Dunloring Volunteer Fire Department and Chairman of the Volunteer Fire Commission. Today I'm here with John Gutzmeedle, President of the Fairfax County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association, representing the over 700 members of your volunteer fire service.

[07:50:50] President Guzmido has yielded his time to me, and I don't expect to take the whole 10 minutes, so we'll give you some time back. Before I share our budget concerns with you, we would like to provide a summary of the value of what the volunteer partners bring to you in the fire service here in Fairfax County to our residents and to visitors.

[07:51:07] Overall, we provide \$62 million in capital and \$15 million in annual benefits to the county. In the area of capital, we provide 73 pieces of fire and EMS apparatus, with a total replacement cost of \$34.3 million. Additionally, we own seven of the county's 39 fire stations and partner in eight more.

[07:51:26] The total assessed value of those owned stations is \$27.9 million. Across all 15 stations, annually we spend over \$4 million on annual operating costs supporting our facilities, our companies, and the system. In 2024, we provided 192,000 hours of service, representing \$9.6 million in value.

[07:51:48] In 2024, we placed in service over 1,200 medic and ambulance shifts that transported over 1,700 patients, representing \$1.4 million in transport fees. Additionally, of the 32 VFD-owned EMS transport units, 16 are staffed by career staff 24-7, and they generate around nine and a half million dollars in billing without the capital cost of having to purchase the units. We are a key partner in outreach through direct connections to our firehouses, open houses, community advocates, and fire and life safety programs like the recent

[07:52:22] smoke detector program along the Route 1 corridor that I got to take part in. All of this on an estimated cost to the county of two million a year to support the volunteer system, a significant net gain to the county yet with that positive roi for the county we are there are direct cuts to items in this proposed budget that will impact our ability to recruit and retain new members and support the system like we traditionally have the first is proposed ten thousand dollar cut in the future apparatus stipend payment reducing the apparatus stipend from 35 000 to 25 000 would

[07:53:00] detrimentally affect the volunteer fire service and our partnership with the county potentially causing VFDs to reevaluate or postpone future apparatus purchases some VFDs have already decided to put apparatus purchase plans on hold until we see where this plays out Dunloring is one of them and I can assure you this is not we want to take our toys and go home this is a matter of these are expensive vehicles and if we're not going to have the support that we've had we need to look at our financial situation to see if we can continue to to purchase the apparatus as we have briefed the board annually apparatus costs are increasing several times over the overall

[07:53:35] inflation rate prior to the current economic projections we were working with frd and dmb to revamp the apparatus partnership in response to those escalating costs the stipend was set at 25 000 in 2000 and was taken to 35 000 in 2022 this did not keep up with inflation if it had the stipend would be approximately 80 000 today under the current circumstances we understand that the stipend cannot be increased, but reducing it by \$10,000 would be devastating.

[07:54:06] The stipend is an investment allowing the county to share a fraction of the cost of these apparatus. Today's short-term savings may substantially increase long-term costs because if we can't continue to buy them, then the cost of the vehicles will be totally sent to the county.

[07:54:21] The second harmful proposed budgetary cut is the elimination of LOSAP funding. LOSAP is a defined benefit program used to recruit, retain, and reward volunteer firefighters and EMTs. Our program is structured where the Fire and Rescue Association covers the program's management costs and the county partnership contributes annual capital funding to the program.

[07:54:42] LOSAP provides an incentive for ongoing volunteer service and is one of the only few tangible benefits for FRD volunteers. It promotes longevity, boosts morale, and increases the service returned to the community from the investment, recruiting, training, and outfitting those volunteers.

[07:54:59] All of the surrounding jurisdictions have implemented similar programs, and many are providing benefits at superior levels. We are in a competitive market, just as you're well aware with hiring

firefighters. We are in volunteers. There's a lot of volunteer opportunities out there, and we need to remain as competitive as possible.

[07:55:15] As volunteers continue to serve and accrue eligibility for future LOSAP benefits, it is crucial that we continue to make capital contributions to ensure the fund's growth over time. And lastly, one short item, and that is about the proposed elimination of CERT.

[07:55:34] Certainly CERT is a key partner with us. They are a member of the Fire and Rescue Association. And they not only provide excellent community outreach, but they are also a key partner in community risk reduction and in canteen services and a recruitment tool.

[07:55:50] We've had many, many members come to the, if you will, the blue shirts from the green insurance, and we certainly would not be helpful for us if the CERT program was turned off. In closing, we thank you for the opportunity to be here today and to testify.

[07:56:09] We ask that you seriously consider the overall value of our partnership and the damage that will be caused by these cuts. At the end of the day, they pose considerable hindrances to one of your largest community assets for nothing more than truly inconsequential savings. don't save a penny to cost the taxpayer a dollar because the change thank you thank you Sean thank you John figure figure number 38 is Judith Harbeck is Judith Harbeck here okay Judith is to be followed by Mark Emery Mark Emery is here okay to be followed by Debbie Kilpatrick if you all are ready to

[07:56:48] testify please be ready when I call your name welcome Judith the only person who calls me Judith was is my late lamented mother I'm in good company that right good afternoon everybody I'm Judy Harbeck and I can't hear me okay I've never been accused of that either but anyway I'm Judy Harbeck and I'm speaking on behalf of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations you've already gotten our resolutions with respect to the the 26 advertised budgets will only

[07:57:27] be highlighting a few items as we go through there. As I gathered my thoughts, I was reminded of the old Chinese curse, may you live in interesting times. Certainly that is where we are, and our interesting times are rocky, unpredictable, and scary, and likely to remain so for quite some time. So what do we do in such times? We do our best to preserve and to maintain what we have, whether it is our 401k, our livelihood, our homes, or our important county assets and amenities we see the FY 26 advertised budget including the

[07:58:01] modest real property tax rate increase as just such a preservation budget and as homeowners all of us we recommend adoption of the proposed rate even though we know that some homeowners will be hard-hit especially seniors and those with job insecurity but it's necessary we have recommended adoption of a food beverage tax for many years. It's truly unfortunate that it's only now under serious consideration when it could have been already in place, improving the revenue stream, stabilizing homeowner burden, and merging seamlessly into the

[07:58:38] restaurant business during less interesting times as it has in neighboring jurisdictions. But we continue to urge adoption of the tax as one of the few options we have to preserve our county assets and stabilize the spiraling cost of home ownership. It is necessary. That being said, there are also areas where the preservation budget veers a little too close to a destruction budget for us.

[07:59:05] We've often been said that FCPS is a critical asset, and it's perhaps the most important asset, especially in these times as we hope to attract new businesses and new residents. We unfortunately could

not support the full 7% raise for teachers, not because it is unnecessary, or not deserved, but simply in recognition of financial realities.

[07:59:30] However, the proposed school transfer is not adequate to give our excellent teachers anything but a token raise. This is not preservation nor maintenance, when competitors apparently value teachers more through higher compensation. And we note funds have been found to satisfy the bargaining agreements with our other county employees, but for some reason not schools.

[07:59:57] We urge you, therefore, to increase the school transfer so that we can offer at least some appropriate raises to school teachers. That is very necessary. Similarly, this is hardly a good time to cut mental health services for families and children whose needs are increasing in this period.

[08:00:15] You've heard a lot about middle school, after school activities, and we absolutely agree that that is an important thing that should be maintained. These things are all necessary. Maintaining and preserving our excellent park system is particularly important in stressful times as we know exposure to nature is beneficial to physical and mental health.

[08:00:38] Our parks provide safe, accessible, free experiences for all ages and if facilities are not properly maintained and staffed, they can deteriorate quickly and restoration is always more expensive than maintenance in the first place.

[08:00:54] We urge you to at least maintain maintenance and staffing levels as a first priority over acquisition or expanding parks. This is necessary. The budget appropriately funds our excellent fire and police departments, although we have reservations about the deletions of various service entities, which you heard just a few minutes ago discussed in more detail than I could give, And in particular, the CERT program, which you've also heard much more detail than I could give when we also support continuation of the CERT program.

[08:01:36] Eliminating this tiny amount of money for this training of local volunteers is especially short-sighted and could be tragic. This is needed. Stormwater management is a serious issue in Mount Vernon, and the county executive's 2024 memorandum pointed out many identifying serious flooding issues in Mount Vernon and elsewhere, but relatively little has been done we believe at least some of the needed projects could be funded by reallocating some stormwater revenue using carryover funding and more aggressively seeking support from other entities finally we

[08:02:13] recognize as you all know that our funding issues could be addressed if much more easily if the state lived up to its responsibilities but until that happy day we must shoulder the burden of preserving and maintaining the advantages we have here in Fairfax for ourselves and for the future. Thank you for your attention at what especially at budget time is a pretty thankless task.

[08:02:39] Thank you. Thank you, Judith. I appreciate you. Our next speaker is speaker number 39, Mark Emery, who will be followed by Debbie Kilpatrick, David Simon, and Morris Carillo. Welcome. Good evening, Mr. Chairman McCabe, members of board. I'm Mark Emery and I'm speaking tonight as a concerned citizen. The last time I spoke before this board was around 2002-2003 when I was chair of the Fairfax County After School Network as we worked on building community capacity for after school and were encouraged the school division and county government to

[08:03:18] partner and invest in the middle school after school initiative. This resulting school county partnership built an outer school time network that is one of the most impressive in the nation and has

grown exponentially to five days a week of 26 middle schools with 15,000 students attending a week, coupled with a five-week summer camp that draws over 1,000 kids a day, and a jump-start program designed to help acclimate all rising 7th graders to the middle school environment.

[08:03:44] There is publicly available information on the FCPS website that shows its outcomes, and you will be hearing much more about the outcomes in the next several days. But now, after nearly 20 years, we are talking about its demise. I want to talk about investment.

[08:04:02] So what has this investment cost the county taxpayer? In '05-'06, with this partnership began, the county investment in the afterschool program was \$3.4 million. At that time, the county's budget was \$3.3 billion. This is one-tenth of 1% of the operating budget.

[08:04:18] Last year, the county investment in afterschool was \$3.7 million, about an 8% increase after 20 years. Over that same 20-year period, the overall county operating budget rose from \$3.3 billion to \$5.18 billion or a 53% increase.

[08:04:36] Now the county's investment in afterschool is six one-hundredths of 1% of the approved budget. It can't be the money that's driving this decision. There's another financial aspect to consider and that is the youth gang issue.

[08:04:51] The initial impetus for the middle school afterschool program. When youth gang issue exploded in '02-'03, the investment in public safety was less than 12% of the county budget. Between 2005 and 2009, the public safety portion of the year budget grew by over 12% by \$116 million.

[08:05:09] The resulting Gang Prevention Unit and the Gang Task Force were key to the Gang Suppression Initiative, and it worked. During the same period, participation in the after-school program also exploded and reached 12,000 attendees a week in 2008, essentially shutting off the pipeline for youth gang recruitment.

[08:05:28] The number of gang incidences dropped precipitously by 80%, 85% by your own county gang force measurements. That critical investment in after school has been key to the gang prevention initiative. The portion of the county budget invested in public safety has remained at around 12% ever since, thus saving the county taxpayer tens of millions of dollars every year.

[08:05:51] I would be remiss by not remarking on the irony that this is after school professionals appreciation week. It's a time to recognize, appreciate, and advocate for those people who are doing this hard work.

[08:06:10] Pardon me. The 26 people, professionals, who built this program and rebuilt the BIT summer camp deserve more than this. And it's not just them.

[08:06:30] It's the hundreds of classroom teachers who participate in the after-school program after an eight-hour day. And it's the 100 adults and 100 high school kids who volunteer every school quarter because this makes a difference.

[08:06:47] Again, all of this with an investment of less than six one hundredths of one percent of your budget. Thank you, Mark. What's driving this decision? Thank you, Mark. Thank you. We are now, folks, we now got 80 more people to go.

[08:07:14] Please, please, let's be efficient here and respectful to everyone. Debbie Kilpatrick is speaker number 40. Welcome. Good evening, Chairman McKay, Vice Chair Smith, supervisors, and Mr. Hill. I'm

Debbie Kilpatrick, president of Fairfax County Council PTA.

[08:07:40] The PTA was founded in 1897, and its mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging in empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. FCC PTA is proud to represent 173 PTAs and PTSAs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels throughout Fairfax County.

[08:08:08] FCC PTA strives to be a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for the education, health, and well-being of every child. To achieve this mission, we collaborate with FCPS, Fairfax County, and various community organizations to help provide important resources and information to PTAs, schools, families, and local communities.

[08:08:39] We know that these are challenging times, but our 20,000 PTA members across the county urge the Board of Supervisors to fully fund FCPS's FY26 budget transfer request to provide the level of academic excellence that FCPS is known throughout Virginia and the nation.

[08:09:05] PTA strongly advocates funding public education, and with the recent dismantling assault on the U.S. Department of Education, supporting education excellence at the county level is needed now more than ever.

[08:09:22] Investing in our education system is necessary because it drives economic growth, including attracting working families and businesses to our county, fostering a skilled future workforce, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

[08:09:42] We know that the Commonwealth does not provide enough funding as it should, so the financial burden continues to lie with the county. We also want to briefly share the concerns our local PTAs have expressed regarding proposed cuts to the FY26 county advertised budget.

[08:10:04] A county-wide concern is the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services proposed elimination of the middle school after school program. Last year, all 26 middle schools held after school programs with almost 24,000 students participating.

[08:10:23] After-school programs offer options and opportunities to students in building character, achieving academic success, learning new skills, and improving their mental health and social skills. We strongly urge all supervisors to tour and observe these amazing middle school after-school programs in their districts to see firsthand the importance of funding this program.

[08:10:52] Another concern is the NCS budget cut to eliminate values and prevention middle school summer camps. Last summer, there were 1,630 students registered for the VIP middle school camps, which lasts five weeks with a low \$100 fee per student.

[08:11:12] Investment in these middle school programs is essential for students and their families to keep our youth and community safe. Lastly, local PTAs are concerned about the elimination of crossing guards at high schools and the police department budget. We understand that 22 high schools currently have 48 civilian crossing guards.

[08:11:31] Many of our high schools are in congested areas, and student safety is a concern for parents. FCC PTA leaders recognize the difficult budget decisions that FCPS and our county need to make because of reduced support from the Commonwealth and the federal government.

[08:11:49] Families across our county are dealing with job losses or reduced income, and they expect their children to receive a high-quality education in a safe and healthy environment. FCCPTA urges Fairfax County to fund FCPS in FY2026 so that we maintain our academic high standards, recruit and maintain dedicated teachers and support staff, including bus drivers family liaisons and food and nutrition staff and for our students to receive a well-rounded high quality education and be ready for life after high school thank you for your

[08:12:27] consideration and for your leadership and support for fairfax county working families and their students thank you we're on uh speaker folks i i will recess the meeting and and take a break and come back people downstream are canceling because we are so far behind i really need you to respect the other people in this county so they get a chance to speak today as well speaker number 41 is david simon is david here he is here and david following david will be maurice cuirlo

[08:13:08] to be followed by i'm going to call two people's names who have called to cancel i just want to to make sure they have a chance, Ava Morgan and Ayla Henderson. At this time, we are on speaker number 41, David Simon. Welcome. All right. Good evening, and thank you for the opportunity to be heard tonight regarding next year's budget. My name is David Simon, and I'm sharing comments tonight on behalf of the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board.

[08:13:48] The DSP has reviewed and discussed the relevant portions of next year's budget and felt that it was imperative that we advocate on behalf of two specific items the proposed elimination of the line item general relief general relief for disabled adults program and the proposed elimination of three positions providing transition services to Fairfax County public school seniors the general relief the general relief for disabled adults program proposed to be cut for \$263,000 is a program that provides primarily interim assistance to individuals with

[08:14:24] temporary or permanent disabilities who are awaiting adjudication of their application for assistance programs like SSI and SSDI essentially individuals who need assistance but who are not yet receiving it because of programmatic wait times the assistance they're provided is minimal \$220 per month for most recipients and \$40 a month for those in some CSP residential programs but while they're not huge dollar amounts that can be a lifeline for those who need that relief and with all the uncertainty that currently exists

[08:15:00] federally regarding Medicaid Medicaid expansion supplemental security income Social Security disability income etc this is not the time to reserve to remove our con excuse me our county's ability to provide this critical support I'd also like to voice our opposition to the planned elimination of three full time positions totaling \$422,000 providing transition services to Fairfax County Public Schools seniors. Transition services offered through the Community Services Board support students with developmental disabilities

[08:15:38] who are matriculating out of Fairfax County Public Schools and helps them achieve independence, integrate into the community, and pursue employment and other activities. We all know how often young adults with disabilities struggle to find employment after graduating high school due to challenges with interviewing as well as systemic and attitudinal barriers. And we also recognize that employment with the federal government is significantly less viable today than it has been in the past for a large number of our disabled

[08:16:12] young adults. CSP transition staff are critical for helping students and their families make the leap from school services to the adult service world, which is complicated and a wildly different adjustment. There is no period in the lifespan of these young adults that garners more questions than this change, including getting a diagnosis in the first place. We hope that these three staff positions remain funded so that students and their families can leave school with help in place instead of leaving school with a crisis brewing. And with that, I thank you for your time

[08:16:51] and attention, and I look forward to seeing your decisions. Thank you very much, David. We now are on speaker number 42, Maurice Cuarillo, to be followed by, I will call their names, Ava Morgan, Ayla Henderson, and Daniela Rosas-Diego. Welcome. Only 78 more. We got this. My name is Maurice Cuarillo, and I am both a product of FCPS and a proud educator for FCPS. Tonight I stand in strong support of collective bargaining and the afterschool program. We understand

[08:17:28] that the long-term fight is with the politicians in Richmond who refuse to take bold action to reimagine our outdated, inequitable, and borderline laughable standards of quality. Although I welcome the additional \$400 million in education funding in the General Assembly's budget, it falls far short of what is needed.

[08:17:45] If the JLARC study recommendations are fully adopted, then Fairfax County alone will receive an additional \$570 million in funding. As a social studies teacher, I typically try to stay away from math, but it doesn't take a mathematician to see that those making the decisions in Richmond do not have a clue or simply do not care about what is going on in our schools.

[08:18:05] But I know you do. These are your students as much as they are mine. Your vote can send a powerful message to those in Richmond that when it comes to our children, there is no greater investment we can make and nothing worth fighting for more than their futures. My sincere hope is that next January, the community, the school board, and the board of supervisors could present a united front and put real pressure on the General Assembly and incoming governor.

[08:18:28] Fortunately, we have made some progress. After 15 years, the support cap has been lifted and additional funds secured for our most at-risk students. We cannot stop our momentum now. This is the time to lean in, not to bail out. If you vote to slash teacher raises and eliminate critical programs for our students, then you will send the message to the state that, well, if they can do it, so can we.

[08:18:51] If you want your students to succeed, the data is clear. You need to recruit and retain talented educators, period. Every study, meta-analysis, and unhappy student will tell you that teachers make all the difference. Personally, I wear many hats in my school. Civics teacher, CLT lead, department chair, SCA sponsor, avid teacher, mentor, and even at times an armchair therapist.

[08:19:13] Last year, I was selected as the teacher of the year for our pyramid. I don't say this to brag, but the highlight that you stand to lose talented and inspiring young educators. Every day that passes, I see less and less reason to continue my career in Fairfax County. If it was not for my students and my colleagues, I would have left the second this budget was proposed.

[08:19:31] And I'm not alone. This is not to mention the countless teachers who have done far more than me and for far longer. Simply put, they deserve better. Lastly, I want to speak to my experience with the after-school program. As a debate coach, I had students who couldn't turn an essay in to save their life, but would write page upon page upon page for our upcoming tournaments.

[08:19:50] They were truly dedicated. As a basketball and football coach, I saw them lean on each other to overcome obstacles. It was a rare resilience you don't often see in teenagers. As an educator, I saw them expand their sense of wonder through get-to-green theater and robotics. And as a fellow human being, I saw them make connections with each other and just enjoy being kids.

[08:20:10] In these ways, the after-school program is truly a transformative and efficient investment. Students become more dedicated, more resilient, more curious, and more joyful. We simply do not have the space, resources, and personnel to accommodate over 23,000 kids. So where are they going to go? Fortunately, there's still time to reset this ship under a brighter course for our students.

[08:20:30] You have the power to do that. I strongly urge you to exert your power to take bold action. Nearly 2,200,000 students and their families are depending on you. Thank you guys for your time. Thank you very much. Speaker number, folks, we need to do better.

[08:20:49] I'm telling you, we need to do better. A lot of speakers have already canceled. Let's give them a chance to testify here, please. I'm begging you. Ava Morgan, Speaker number 43. Speaker number 44, Ayla Henderson. I know it dropped off because of the time. Speaker number 45, Daniela Rosas Diego. Are you here? Speaker number 45, Daniela

[08:21:19] Rosas Diego. Speaker number 46, Kira View. Is Kira here? Speaker, I'm trying to get to you fast, but this is not helping. Right, guys? Speaker number 46, Kira View. Kira View. This is what I was afraid of. Speaker number 47, Riley Marcus. Speaker number 47, Riley Marcus.

[08:21:55] Okay. Speaker number 48, Ruth Stover. Is Ruth here? To be followed by speaker number 49, Kevin Hent. Please, folks, please. We can do better. This is Fairfax County. We can do better.

[08:22:11] to be followed by Speaker No. 49, Kevin Hickerson, and Speaker No. 50, Layla. I'm not going to try to pronounce your last name, Layla. If you're Speaker 50, you can pronounce that when you come down. Welcome. The floor is yours. Good day. My name is Ruth Stover, and I'm the Center Director of the Fairfax County Employees Child Care Center, and I truly appreciate the opportunity to have my voice heard.

[08:22:37] I have proudly been in the early childhood field since 1993, and have worked at the extraordinary ECCC since 2009. First as the Assistant Director, and since 2013, the Director. Since the proposed budget and possible closure of the county-run center release, I have repeatedly shared with families and staff that I have never applied for another county position.

[08:23:03] Why? It's because I have never been in an environment so completely focused on quality, outcomes, and service to our littlest learners and their families. Our team, both past and present, is always passionately committed to serving our working community.

[08:23:19] We pride ourselves on being a group and even more a family of educated, experienced, professional, and diverse educators who built this quality together. What our team and those before us created these past 37 years doesn't just happen and can't be replicated.

[08:23:39] We dedicate our lives to serving this community and proudly ensure that the county's mission, vision, and values happen day in and day out. While there are many wonderful private child care centers, many of which I have worked, there will be a colossal void that will be felt if you eliminate this center, and it is an affront to what we've built for this county and its members.

[08:24:01] We pride ourselves on being a model center year after year, from organizations using our staff in training videos to visitors and other government agencies attempting to model what we have. We are what our ECE colleagues strive to become, and that shows that Fairfax County government does value what we do.

[08:24:22] While I can appreciate the need to address the county's deficit and budget challenges and make any difficult cuts, the impact can not only be viewed monetarily. The deficit left on the county and the community is significant. We serve the larger community by serving its workers.

[08:24:38] They can do their jobs because we do ours, and we do it very well. They had the choice for home-based care, other center-based care, but they chose us. The staff here have always had the choice to change jobs in departments, but they chose to stay here.

[08:24:53] Throughout the past week, since this completely unexpected reduction was proposed to me, my team, and the families, The weight of uncertainty is massive, yet every single day my team shows up ready to serve, ready to play, and ready to support the children's growth and development, never missing a beat to maintain our quality and care.

[08:25:15] ECC is dedicated to implementing research-based practices that help children and families, and I implore you to let this center continue. This field has worked so hard not to be considered babysitters and have finally reached the point where we do not need to justify why we don't look for a real teaching job.

[08:25:35] Disposing of what we have feels like a huge setback for this profession in this county. Even more importantly, when a difficult budget year calls for cuts, ideals, and solutions, a group of amazing past and present ECC representatives came up with just that.

[08:25:51] They researched ways in just two short months to begin saving this county money. Thank you. I need you to wrap up here. No problem. I appreciate you, and I know that you have the voice and the power to help us continue. So please, I'm begging you. Thank you.

[08:26:06] Thank you very much. Speaker number 49 is Kevin Hickerson. Welcome. Kevin Hickerson, speaking as an individual but past president of the Fairfax Education Association. And what I'm hearing a lot of tonight is what's good for me versus what's good for we.

[08:26:25] And you hear a lot from this community that we want to have the services here in Fairfax County that we have grown accustomed to. We want good child care services. We want great firefighters and safety services in our police forces.

[08:26:41] We want great libraries, great park services. We want, I heard a woman earlier talking about shutting down an institute. where addiction, why are we talking about shutting things down when we should be uplifting our community? And I haven't even gotten to the point of education. I am so glad to see our brothers and sisters here from the Fairfax Education Association, the Fairfax County Federation of Teachers. And here's why. It's like a reunion. We sat down together and threw the odds where we had people that I heard the whispers through the community. They're not going to get collective bargaining. And we showed the world that we could get collective bargaining. We worked together.

[08:27:16] We formed an FEU to get that and make that happen. And we sat at a table and we worked hard with Fairfax County Public Schools to come up with what we need. Not what we want, but what we need.

And we came up with a 7% increase in a lot of other things that are necessary to maintain and retain not just teachers, but our custodians, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers, and many other hard workers who are here in Fairfax County just trying to live an eke out and an existence and you know what we're failing them in that right now because we're discussing what we should be giving okay we should be taxing ourselves and

[08:27:56] giving ourselves everything everything that we desire and dream of in this community okay and here's why we've been here for 20 i've been here for 20 years i've been i've spoken in front of you actually uh herity for 15 years of those 20 and every time it's the same song and dance what's richmond not giving us what's happening right but at the same time we have to go and look at our community and say pull ourselves up and say what can we do for ourselves if we can't depend on richmond we have to depend on ourselves so what do we do let's let's make more affordable housing

[08:28:32] i heard a gentleman earlier speak today that we need more affordable housing guess what that does that brings us more tax revenue brings us more residents it brings in more pots of money that we can be able to use to service ourselves here look at these folks these are dedicated folks here that are asking you that are asking you to help them help them make and believe and dream in this community that and for what it should be and i just want to add one final note on the on the teacher's percentage or excuse me the fairfax county percentage uh that we get we get around 51.5 percent right now from fair uh from fairfax county that's the same percentage that we received

[08:29:12] in 2002. You can look it up. It went up and it's gone down. We're at levels of 2002 when I was in college last. That's unacceptable. Thank you. Speaker number 50, folks, I'll remind everyone we're at a public hearing, not a rally. And I want to get to everyone. Please. I've never dealt with this before. Please cut it out so we can hear from everyone. Speaker number 50, Layla I know that's probably not close, but feel free to correct us. Welcome.

[08:29:50] Good evening. My name is Layla Shokhtautinsky. I'd like to thank you all for this opportunity to testify. I am an eighth grade FCPS student and attend Liberty Middle School. I'd like to start by saying that I've witnessed the after-school program genuinely changing students' school experience for the better. Many people appreciate it for the support it provides to kids countywide.

[08:30:16] The after-school program has been there for me personally when I've needed to improve grades and also to get volunteer opportunities through SCA. These volunteer opportunities not only benefit students, but communities around us too. It also has provided ways to enrich creativity and teamwork.

[08:30:39] This support is vital and widely accessible. When this is taken away from us, families will have to spend their own money to give their kids the support the public school system can no longer provide. Cutting the funding for this program would put the future of our students at risk.

[08:30:58] It has been brought to my attention that the Board of Supervisors has decided to put over \$200,000 towards starting a COVID-19 memorial. I understand that the pandemic was a devastating event, but the education should be put first.

[08:31:15] The county budget may have other areas that can be replaced with more efficient alternatives. The money saved then could be redirected towards a brighter education system. As for teachers' pay, I

have had many experiences where teachers work so hard to care for their students because they truly want them to be successful.

[08:31:39] It's not just a belief of mine when I say that teachers have one of the hardest jobs, putting their own time and money into their students' education when they are not able to afford it. As one of the wealthiest counties in our state, as well as our country, we should give our teachers the higher pay they deserve.

[08:32:04] I speak for all FCPS students, parents, and teachers when I say, please keep the after-school program thriving and support our educators. Thank you for your time. Thank you very much. Well done. Speaker number 51 is James Parmalee, who is on the phone.

[08:32:24] James, can you hear me? Yes. Can you all hear me? Yes, the floor is yours. Sure. Great. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. Earlier today, I mentioned when I was speaking at one of the earlier hearings that we had a huge anti-tax rally. Actually, there were two separate anti-tax rallies out front.

[08:32:42] And some of the larger crowds that I've seen in a while opposing tax hikes. And I think that's in large part because people don't have any money anymore. It's been four years of tax increases federally.

[08:32:59] And, you know, basically the cupboard is bare. And so I was surprised when I came in, I was going to testify in the building. I had signed up to speak over the phone, but it turned out I was there. So I walked in to see about testifying in person, and I saw that you all had multiple hearings on raising taxes, not just the effective tax rate, but a number of others.

[08:33:23] And so it's just I knew about the meal tax, and there were some other things. And so it's just a lot, and I think people have had enough. And I can hear from the crowd in the room that, you know, they seem to think that everybody can fund everything. And unfortunately, this is a time where we're going to have to make some choices.

[08:33:41] We can't afford everything. We're going to have to decide what we need, not what we want, and wait, hopefully, for some tax cuts federally that will be coming, hopefully, later in the year to jumpstart the economy. Because right now, things are tough, and we just don't have it.

[08:34:01] If you keep raising people's property taxes, they're going to default on their houses, and they're going to have to move. This meals tax that some folks seem all excited about is going to keep people from going to McDonald's. People are making it sound like you're going to fancy dinners and all that, but this is going to put happy meals for children out of range.

[08:34:23] People really can't afford these things now. I mean, you'll go to McDonald's and the prices have gone sky high, not just to pick on them. A lot of fast food restaurants, they've gone sky high. And now we're going to stick taxes, additional taxes on top of that. Forget about it. It's just you're turning what used to be cheap food into a luxury.

[08:34:43] So people are hurting and we just can't afford all of these taxes. So I would ask the supervisors to consider that when you're doing the budget. We have to decide what we can afford, not try to pay for everything in the world that we might like.

[08:35:00] Thank you. We are now on number speaker, speaker number 52, Stephen Malone, I'm told had to cancel. I just want to verify that. Speaker 53, Jacob Ndora. Speaker number 53, Jacob Ndora. Speaker 54, Brianne Russell Morris.

[08:35:19] Yes, I'm here. Okay. Ah, you're on the phone. Welcome. The floor is yours. Thank you. Thank you for your patience. Today I am speaking as the president of the organization Parents of Autistic Children of Northern Virginia.

[08:35:39] Many of our community members have adult children or children who are on the brink of adulthood. The proposed cuts to the Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board for fiscal year 2026 would have a direct impact on the futures of autistic people in our community. Eliminating or reducing funding for autistic adults transitioning from the school system into the community is an enormous step backwards for our families and our county in general.

[08:36:02] Cuts to independent and supervised living, day programs, secondary education, and employment are short-term solutions to the budget that will have long-term financial consequences for all of us. More autistic adults will spend their days sitting at home rather than participating in the social, economic, and cultural opportunities Fairfax County has to offer.

[08:36:23] Without these supports, the most vulnerable among us will be left behind. I am including the words of two POAP NOVA community members in my testimony today. Kathleen Walsh of Alexandria, Mount Vernon District writes, My son is a sophomore in FCPS High School this year.

[08:36:38] He is on the honor roll and taking all honors classes where available. We are just coming up on meeting many of the services that they are looking to cut. My son has medium support needs, and we are hopeful that he will be able to live in the community relatively independently, go to college, and get a job with support.

[08:36:54] He currently has the DD waiver and receives community engagement and parental assistance through it. I am bedbound, and without the community engagement services, he would not be able to get out into the community regularly at all. These services are vital for our kids' futures and are peace of mind as parents who will not always be here to help them.

[08:37:15] Jingkun Meng of Annandale Braddock District writes, As a mother of a child with profound developmental disabilities, I cannot overstate the critical importance of the services provided by CSB. My son, who is soon aging out of school, requires ongoing support for daily living and safety. He has been on the Developmental Disabilities Waiver Priority 1 waitlist for six years.

[08:37:35] Families like mine are facing an urgent need for these services, especially as our children transition from school-based care to adulthood. Without the support that CSB provides, children with developmental disabilities are left with limited options. The loss of services, such as day programs, respite care, and residential treatment, leaves families with few resources to help their loved ones lead independent, meaningful lives.

[08:37:57] For my son, whose communication is nonverbal, the lack of structure and support will result in severe emotional distress, frustration, and the risk of dangerous behaviors. The mental health and well-being of children like mine are already at risk due to limited resources, and these proposed cuts would further exacerbate an already dire situation.

[08:38:17] The consequences of these cuts would be catastrophic for families in our community. CSB programs are a lifeline for families who rely on these services to ensure their children can live with dignity, safety, and purpose. I urge you to reconsider the proposed reductions and to work to protect funding for these critical services.

[08:38:35] Finally, I personally also have a high school-aged daughter in the Springfield District who will be requiring these services in the near future. She will be a long-term, if not lifetime resident of Fairfax County and deserves to have the same opportunities as anyone else to apply her education in SCPS and get a job that enables her to live with dignity and as much independence as possible.

[08:38:57] The proposed cut to the CSB should not be approved. We need more, not less funding, as our children age out of the school system and caregivers age out of the ability to care for them at home. They need the support of their county leaders, not the rugs pulled out from under them as they seek to get their footing in a world not designed for them to succeed in adulthood.

[08:39:17] Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Speaker number 55 is David Lyons, to be followed by Isabella Rodriguez-Gomez and Laura Jane Cohen. I know what you're saying.

[08:39:36] Why couldn't he drop off? No, not at all. Okay. Not at all. I am concerned about how many people are dropping off, but no. All right. Good evening. I'm glad to see you're still here. And most of the time we're here year after year, we talk about county employees' salaries, how unfairly they're paid, how they need more.

[08:39:56] And I still think that's true. But right now, given the situation we're in, we want to talk about the budget and these cuts. Not that there's so much. We knew it could have been worse. We knew it could have been more money. What follows me is the sheer inequity, these cuts.

[08:40:16] Right now, the health department came up with one cut. It was to eliminate 30 public health teacher slots. That was it for \$3.5 million and tell the school health aides to go ahead and be educated up to LPNs without financing it.

[08:40:38] Over in CSB, the critical cornerstones in New Generations residential treatment programs are proposed to be closed. These programs, as you know, provide treatment to those with addiction and serious mental illness, including pregnant women with young children suffering from these.

[08:40:57] The best case scenario is they'll have longer wait times, and that's according to your own budget package. In family services, programs for troubled youth will be gone. The elimination of positions that help seniors in need and children's behavioral outreach, gone.

[08:41:15] Foster care affected, generally for disabled adults transitioning, all of it. In housing, I think all of us know about the long waiting lists for assistance. And yet for the homeless population, we're proposing elimination of that program and according to your own budget document will result in even longer waiting lists.

[08:41:38] I deal with that community. We have employees, members that are homeless, that are working 40-hour weeks that are homeless in a county where the average one-bedroom apartment is \$2,400. That isn't sustainable.

[08:41:54] Even police crossing guards for high schools. But in a real blow to all the employees who are parents, the proposed elimination of the only child care center we have is just crazy. That needs to be preserved. But I want to point out to you the theme here, if you go through page after page of that budget.

[08:42:14] The theme is children, the disabled, seniors, women in need, right after the other. That is what you're looking at here. And that's where I have an issue. Because one thing I didn't see was the elimination of any deputy or assistant general managers, the heads of the—I didn't see any of that in there.

[08:42:37] None of it. And you know why? Because guess who makes the proposed cuts? Those people. That's who does it. And these are the programs that—that's what goes forward. And what I'm advocating tonight is a real change in how we do budgeting.

[08:42:56] Over in the Department of Procurement and Management, they found one individual to cut. It was a janitor with 47 years on the job, possibly the senior or one of the most senior people in the county. That was the only thing I could find in terms of people. It's often said a budget is, you've heard this a million times, a budget is about your values.

[08:43:18] I don't think these are your values. I don't think this is what you set out to do. And the reason it happens, I think, is you really don't partner with workers at all levels in making these cuts. I am all over the county all the time, and I never see this.

[08:43:34] I never see, everybody's like, what are they going to cut? They're looking like it's coming down from the sky. That's how we got here in terms of inequity. So believe it or not, I have some time left, and I want to make, I want to say something different that's probably going to hurt me with my own folks going forward.

[08:43:52] You know, I've been here many years, as you know, and I see what everybody does up here. You're asking for this and more, and we know, I know you can't afford it. You can't fund it this year. I think there's a million things you're going to have to do to change that. the budget process, but we're also going to, in terms of how we do it.

[08:44:12] But what bothers me is I am not, as a union anymore, whatever voice I continue to have, I can't fully justify asking for the moon when people are hungry. I can't justify, if I'm telling you to act morally, we've got to act morally.

[08:44:28] We've got to realize that we cannot put people at risk to get everything we want. And with the Workers' Coalition, we're not going to do that. I'm not going to do that. We want to be reasonable, we want to work together, and we want a budget process that works equally for all of us.

[08:44:47] Thank you. Thank you, David. Speaker number 56, Isabella Rodriguez-Gomez. Isabella Rodriguez-Gomez, I don't see. 57, Laura Jane Cohen, I know is here. Welcome.

[08:45:07] Thank you. Thank you, Chairman McKay, members of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Hill, and county staff for the opportunity to present testimony today. My name is Laura Jane Cohen, and I'm the town administrator for the town of Clifton. It's in that capacity and also on behalf of the residents, restaurants, and businesses in town that I'm speaking to you today.

[08:45:28] Clifton is a community with little turnover in residents. As a result, our population is aging at a faster rate than many other residential areas. From 2020 to 2023, there was a 24% increase in emergency incidents in the Clifton area.

[08:45:44] Of those, cardiac arrests were the most frequent. We know that quick medical intervention is a critical factor in surviving this medical emergency. Clifton's rural location places a unique demand on the travel time for our emergency vehicles, and cardiac arrest survival rates drop to less than 5% if there is no intervention within 10 minutes.

[08:46:08] In fact, 30% of all deaths are the result of sudden unexpected causes, and timely first responder intervention is critical to survival. Over the next several days, you'll be hearing from many

residents of Clifton asking you to save our ambulance. For those who weren't able to come testify, here are their stories.

[08:46:28] One resident shared, I've lived in Clifton for 20 years and have had many occasions to be grateful for the presence of a local EMT squad, including just a few weeks ago when my 87-year-old mother was home alone and suffered a stroke. I was out of town, but emergency services got an ambulance to her quickly and got her to the hospital.

[08:46:47] She's recovering and doing much better. One of our grandmas said I was working from home during a huge snowstorm, and my grandson had an allergic reaction. Face swelled, turned beet red, and he couldn't breathe. I called 911, and the ambulance from town arrived in seconds.

[08:47:05] Firefighters also came to shovel the driveway so the ambulance could get out. We made it to Fair Oaks Hospital in time, but even before getting there, my grandson was able to get the urgent treatment he needed from our paramedics. I can't imagine what would have happened if they weren't right in town.

[08:47:22] A mother shared, as a parent of a young child who underwent open-heart surgery shortly after his third birthday in 2024, there was a subconscious level of comfort that our first responders were mere minutes away should we ever, God forbid, face an emergency regarding author's heart.

[08:47:38] that assumption took on a personal note when in early January I fell getting ready for bed three broken ribs and a punctured lung meant I was unable to breathe properly which needless to say was terrifying for both my husband and me within minutes of calling 9-1-1 the Clifton crew were at our home to comfort and care for us a service I took for granted until then a very grateful wife says the seven minute response time by the Clifton ambulance and emergency response team in 2023 kept my husband within the treatment window for a widow maker stroke. We learned that successful treatment of stroke declines with the passage of time and a delayed EMT response limits those

[08:48:18] treatment options. I knew after calling 911 that my local team would be at my house within minutes. Because of the Clifton response team, my husband is still a 24-year taxpaying resident of Fairfax County. He is still employed and requires no special services from Fairfax County as a result of the stroke. He volunteers for town and community events and even coaches a year-round high school sports team. Time and distance mean the difference between life and death. And finally, another thankful mother said, almost 10 years ago when my daughter was two years old, she ate a cashew and went into anaphylactic shock. We called 911 and the Clifton Ambulance got there in four minutes.

[08:48:58] They gave her a shot of epinephrine, which saved her life and then rushed her to Fair Oaks Hospital. In these life-threatening moments, every minute counts. We are forever grateful for the Clifton Ambulance and their quick action in saving our daughter. These are the voices of our community. Our firefighters and EMTs in Clifton aren't just an important part of who we are.

[08:49:17] For many of our residents, they've become part of their family. They have helped with everything from deadly copperhead bites to widow maker heart attacks and strokes. We fear the outcomes might have been very different had we not had our ambulance and team so close by. Our community respectfully asks that you restore funding and protect our firefighter EMTs, our ambulance, and the lives of our many families who rely on them.

[08:49:41] Thank you all for all you do for all of us. We're very grateful for your service. Thank you, Laura Jane. We're now on speaker number 58. I understand has canceled. Is that right, Charles McAndrew, speaker number 58? Oh, I was told you were canceled.

[08:49:58] Okay, come on down. I have the wrong thing here. I'm glad this is why I call. Call out the numbers. Speaker number 58, Charles McAndrew, will be followed by 59, Sondra Davis. Sondra Davis here. Okay. And Tom Peterson, I know, was here. He is still here.

[08:50:19] And Emily Vanderhoff. If you all could be ready, you'll be next in order. Welcome, Mr. McAndrew. Good evening, Mr. Chairman, members of the county board, and our distinguished county executive.

[08:50:45] My name is Charles McAndrew. I'm sure you heard me speak earlier on taxes. So now I want to talk about increase in the real estate assessments. Let's see, I've got the wrong speech here.

[08:51:06] Anyway, I wanted to see if I can borrow one. Oh, anyway, the wrong speech here. I'm here to protest the county budget, which usually rises about three times the rate of inflation, year after year, decade after decade.

[08:51:27] I think it's time to make it over if you want to cut the budget, which I understand there's a deficit of \$300 million. Maybe you should think about a 10% across the board cut. Stop raising the real estate taxes two or three times the rate of inflation.

[08:51:45] The Fairfax County budget is estimated to increase from \$3.7 to \$4 billion, or a 7.9% increase. From fiscal year 29 to fiscal year 24, the FCPS operating budget increased 30% from \$2.4 billion to \$3.8 billion, my SAT scores fell 30 points.

[08:52:08] Yet, the FCPS has some overpaid executives, such as the superintendent, whose salary is \$420,000, more than what the president of the USA makes. Then there's about a dozen FCPS executives that make over \$200,000 per year, which is more than a congressman.

[08:52:33] For example, the chief equity officer makes \$250,641 annually, far more than a schoolteacher. There's also, I understand there's an auditor for the Fairfax County Public Schools.

[08:52:49] They have eight auditors and a manager where they do have an audit facility. However, the total amount of the budget for Fairfax County is \$9.9 billion. So \$4 billion is covered by the Office of the Auditor General for FCPS.

[08:53:10] What about the rest of the county budget? I think it's time to implement the Office of Inspector General. My last job in the federal government was to deal with OIG, and I found out there were excellent people to work with.

[08:53:28] Montgomery County and D.C. government both have OIGs. Why not Fairfax County? And the one final comment I want to make to you, I hope you take this seriously. It's preposterous to cut the police and fire departments. Thank you very much for listening.

[08:53:44] Thank you. We are now on number 59, Sondra Davis, to be followed by number 60, Tom Peterson. Well, I don't look good in yellow, but here I am.

[08:54:03] I am a 14-year resident of the Braddock District, and the Fairfax County School Board and their communications team are making you guys look like fools. There's a \$4 billion school budget with no

independent audit of spending in recent memory, and the FCPS Budget Committee Chair is being sued for embezzlement by a former employer and has not been asked to step down.

[08:54:30] Voters approved funding for a high school in the western part of the county, yet there's no transparency, no updates, no plans, no progress, and there's going to be another referendum in November to ask for more money. Meanwhile, the school board voted for collective bargaining without offering you a seat at the table.

[08:54:49] I was in the room watching them congratulate themselves. Worse, several members of the school board took campaign money from the same unions they were negotiating with and rubber stamped a 7% across the board raise. Who's really running this county? I actually saw him here earlier. His name's Carl Frisch. Okay, so the narrative about being underfunded in JLARC. Page 76 of the JLARC report says that Fairfax County should be paying in

[08:55:21] salary and benefits to their teachers 19% above the state average. We are paying 38% above the day average. If you don't send them back to the bargaining table, you're surrendering power to a board aligned with the unions, not the taxpayers who you were elected to represent, not to roll over to political pressure. Will you take action? Are you too concerned about getting reelected?

[08:55:51] Because we know you would get their support to do so. And how many times have voters said no to a meals, and beverage tax. And why are we all having to fuss over an ambulance, a daycare, helps for addicts, when you could just budget, audit \$4 billion and probably find huge chunks of money.

[08:56:14] And now the FCPS, they want to, you know, the middle school sports, the FCPS comms team is upsetting children, talking about getting rid of crossing guards, middle school sports. They've also made no attempt to cut their \$6 million administrative DEI budget, and like it or not, that is in violation of executive orders.

[08:56:36] And let's not forget the 17 months our kids were out of school, thanks to union influence and the school board decisions, while you stayed silent, that silence was complicity. So let's say all nine of you but one are from the same political party, all 12 school board members, the superintendent, every delegate from northern Virginia is from the same political party.

[08:56:58] and the snake is eating its own tail and unless more than one of you has the courage to stand up for the taxpayers the dysfunction will only get worse speaker number 60 tom peterson to be followed by 61 emily vanderhoff and 62 reshma patel if i called your name if you can come down here uh close there are seats right down here right next to the podium uh so that you're ready to testify. Welcome. Hello, Speaker McKay, members of the Board of Supervisors, County Executive.

[08:57:36] Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk about the removal of the ambulance at Station 416. I had a whole list of statistics and like other things that are relevant to this conversation when I decided just to speak from the heart.

[08:57:59] Our town administrator, Laura Jean, said some of the things that have happened. But when, as mayor of the town of Clifton, my number one job is the safety of our residents. And I think that's your number one job.

[08:58:16] And the removal of our ambulance, our second ambulance, the first, the Advanced Life Support Ambulance was taken away a couple years ago. Now they're going to take away the last, the

proposals to take away the last remaining ambulance.

[08:58:35] In the most rural area of Fairfax County with an aging population is a bad idea. And I hope that you would take that in consideration because we have a unique geographic location.

[08:58:54] We have the only over-the-road railroad crossing in Fairfax County. Since I've lived there, there have been three times where vehicles have been hit and that street has been taken down.

[08:59:14] And so no ambulances from up in the Centerville area can get to us. It's important to know that not only are the homes affected, but the people that come visit our great restaurants.

[08:59:33] Laura Jane spoke about copperheads. We had a friend of mine, Ken McGibbon, was bit by a copperhead. And because of the ambulance at the Clifton Station, he was able to be taken to the hospital quickly.

[08:59:51] He still spent four days in the hospital. That doesn't happen in a lot of places in the county. We had a little over a month ago, we had a woman at Tertoria Bellagio who experienced, she passed out, 80 years old.

[09:00:08] It took 18 minutes for the ambulance to get to her, and I hope the Board of Supervisors takes that into consideration. Since we became aware of this proposal to take away our ambulance, I received one email from the Board of Supervisors, and it was not even a request to talk.

[09:00:36] I think that the town council would do whatever we could to keep that ambulance in the town of Clifton. And it doesn't just serve the town of Clifton. It serves the entire Clifton community.

[09:00:53] I think the town council, we're going through our budget session right now, just as you all are, and I think that if we had a chance to meet with someone from the Board of Supervisors, we might be able to come up with a plan that we could contribute to keeping our ambulance.

[09:01:12] I hope that, I know you have a lot of issues on the table, tough budget sessions. We have a very small budget, but I hope you would consider it and someone could reach out to me that we could come to some common ground where we can keep that ambulance in the Clifton community.

[09:01:32] Thank you for your time. Thank you. Speaker number 61 is Emily Vanderhoff, to be followed by Reshma Patel and Lucia Zaragoza. Welcome. Good evening, Chairman McKay, members of the board.

[09:01:51] My name is Emily Vanderhoff. I'm a second-grade teacher in FCPS and resident of the Mount Vernon District. I'm also a proud member of my union, FCFT. I'm here today to advocate for full funding of the historic, first-ever negotiated contract for FCPS instructional and operational employees.

[09:02:07] It will take bold action by this board to implement the full advertised rate for the real estate tax and meals tax, as well as careful budgeting by the school board to ensure that the two contracts negotiated in good faith between FEU and FCPS are fulfilled. I'm disappointed in the language I've been hearing from this board about the FCPS budget and the disparity in how our contract is treated in comparison to those of the two county employee groups who have bargained before us.

[09:02:33] I've heard members of this board say many times that you're surprised and unwilling to support an FCPS budget with an across-the-board 7% raise, but i haven't heard a follow-up message committing to full funding the terms of the contracts negotiated by and for the instructional and operational unit members the only two fcps employee groups of the negotiated and ratified contract on

the table instructional and operational fcps employees are almost exclusively either working directly with students such as teachers instructional assistants bus drivers food service workers and counselors and those maintaining the essential operations of our school system such as the custodians i.t workers and those working in

[09:03:09] the trades to maintain our buildings and infrastructure. The operational unit in particular includes the lowest paid employees in the system. Food service workers make only \$10,000 a year, and instructional assistants, the people who work most closely with our highest-need students, start at under \$30,000 a year. And so it's disappointing and surprising when I see this board is so unwilling to support full funding for the contracts negotiated for these employees, especially when full funding of county employee contracts was never in question, And a \$15,000 signing bonus, over half the annual salary for a full-time instructional assistant, is being offered to recruit in the police department.

[09:03:47] There are some employee groups that will actually see their pay decrease over the next year through the steep rise in health insurance, if not balanced out with this negotiated 7% MSA. The contract we have negotiated must be fulfilled. 27,500 employees are watching to see that they can finally trust that now that we have a negotiated contract, it will be honored.

[09:04:08] Union members across the region are also watching to see that this board truly stands with labor and will honor negotiated contracts. We are counting on this board to do your part to raise the revenue necessary to retain the quality staff that make FCPS a great school system. I ask you to implement the full advertised rate for both the meals tax and the real estate tax to make that possible.

[09:04:27] Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 62 is Reshma Patel. Welcome. Good evening, members of the county board.

[09:04:43] My name is Reshma Patel, and I am a parent of two children in the county system, a middle schooler at Jackson and a third grader who will be a middle schooler currently at Louise Archer Elementary. I am here tonight to express my profound concern regarding the proposed budget cuts to the middle school after school program.

[09:05:01] You do not see a room full of middle schoolers sitting here in front of you. As they're home, I was going to say doing homework, but hopefully sleeping at this point since they wake up at 6 a.m., most of them 5.30 to take buses. If you haven't already, I urge you to walk the hallways and ask our middle schoolers, what do these programs mean to you?

[09:05:19] What would it mean if I took them away from you? The middle school after school program, as you've heard, is not simply an extension of the school day. It is a vital component of the middle school experience. For my child and 23,000 others, it has provided invaluable opportunities.

[09:05:38] Learning new skills, exploring diverse interests, representing schools at states and national competitions, and most importantly, fostering a sense of being and bonds with their peers. This program is critical for the well-being and development of our most vulnerable youth.

[09:05:58] Consider this context for a second. This cohort of students endured the disruptive and isolating effects of the COVID pandemic during their formative elementary years. They are growing up in a world saturated with dangerous technology, facing unprecedented access to substances like opioids.

[09:06:16] We have signs at every school in summer warning us about opioid addiction. It's for this cohort. And they are also navigating complex social changes. Can our communities realistically handle the supervision of these unsupervised 12- to 14-year-olds on the streets for more than over two hours a day?

[09:06:40] The answer is a resounding no. We know we cannot. Eliminating this program is not only irresponsible, but it's also very inequitable. Many families, including my own, rely on these programs to provide a safe and enriching activities for their children after school.

[09:06:57] Working parents cannot simply leave their jobs at 2.15 to pick up their children. I cannot. I will lose my job. The claim that alternative options exist is blatantly incorrect as stated in the budget cuts. The consistent message upon asking the supervisor and everybody at FCPS is that all after-school programming will be cut with this proposal.

[09:07:19] There is no viable FCPS solution to this. So please, can we stop lobbing the ball across when that is not going to happen? As elected officials, it is your responsibility to not lob the ball between Richmond and FCPS.

[09:07:35] This is not a solution. We have to solve for this. Finally, I want to share a quote from my son, who unfortunately is not here. After school is the best part of school. I have tried new clubs, and I stay back some days to just shoot hoops.

[09:07:52] Yesterday, I played with a student who doesn't have anywhere to play because his family cannot buy a ball. We should be allowed to be kids and have access to play. His words encapsulate what we are fighting for. Please figure out a way to save these programs.

[09:08:10] Thank you. Thank you. We're on speaker number 63. We weren't able to contact her. We're not able to contact her. Speaker number 64, Lucia Zaragoza, to be followed by Mark Welch and Ann Goldstein-Rugel.

[09:08:26] If I called your name, please come down here so you're ready to testify. Welcome. Hello, everyone. I'm Lucia Zaragoza from Liberty Middle School. I take part in Get to Green and Art after-school programs. I'm here to voice my objections about the potential cutting of the after-school programs.

[09:08:44] After school has affected me in the most positive ways. I've learned tips and tricks to doing art, which is my passion. In after school, I've made close connections to students that I feel like I wouldn't have made without these programs. I'm sure many students feel the same. Students come together to do sports, create art, care for chickens, and make friends.

[09:09:05] After school is a time where students can practice the portrait of graduate skills, the skills that FCPS encourages us as students to learn. Students create and collaborate in engineering. We are creative and critical thinkers in art. And even as you try to cut these programs, we are resilient, making a petition, getting as many people as we can to sign it, and mustering up courage for speaking out as I'm doing.

[09:09:31] FCPS prides themselves on equity, but it wouldn't be fair nor equitable to cut the after-school programs. Those who have the resources to enroll can do so, but families who don't have the resources can do these programs as a free opportunity to learn.

[09:09:50] I hope I have motivated you in some way. Thank you. Thank you very much. Excellent job. Excellent job. And our next speaker is Mark Welsh. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and board members.

[09:10:15] In the past several years, I've testified about the recurring, disingenuous FCPS budgets, budgets that greatly underestimate carryover into the budget year. Once again, FBS is on pace to end fiscal year 25 with over \$300 million in unspent funds, just as they have in each of the last three years.

[09:10:35] Over \$300 million, including \$385 million last year. FCPS has therefore overstated their requested FY25 appropriation by \$300 million and thus will understate their fiscal year 26 available funds and initial appropriation requests by \$300 million.

[09:10:54] Think about the implications of this. If FCPS budgeted honestly and transparently, not intentionally low-balling the carryover, it would be clear that sufficient monies exist to fund the well-deserved 7% collective bargaining increase for their employees.

[09:11:10] This additional carryover would far exceed the \$149 million reduction to their requested county transfer. Why would they budget this way to the detriment of their employees? Could it be their loath to show that their recurring budget baseline exceeds their actual expenditures by \$300 million, which would be evident at the accurately estimated carryover?

[09:11:31] Is that why their budget requests are baselined against the prior year budget rather than actual expenditures? Is that why one must waive 150 pages of their budget requests before finding actual expenditure information? You have heard and will hear a great deal of testimony on the importance of funding the 7% increase, and thus the need to increase the school transfer.

[09:11:56] That's a false choice. The answer to your constituents should be that the \$2.7 billion transfer in the county executive's budget is more than enough to fund that increase. It's up to the superintendent and the school board to decide whether to use those resources to honor the collective bargaining agreement.

[09:12:13] However, you all, as a board, are supposed to be our financial stewards and should be serving as a check to their disingenuous budget practices. Instead, you enable them by not demanding honest budgets. Your constituents deserve better, especially as we head into a likely economic recession.

[09:12:33] I thank you for your time and consideration, and even though I don't always agree with the budget decisions, I do thank you for your public service. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number six is Ann Goldstein-Rugel, to be followed by a caller and Regina Danielson and Yafu Ma.

[09:12:52] If I called your name, please be ready to testify. Welcome. Good evening, Chairman McKay and members of the board. My name is Ann Goldstein-Rugel. I've been a child care professional for 50 years, and as part of my career, it was an honor to work for the county's Office for Children and serve as the SAC director for 12 years and oversee the program operations of the Employees Child Care Center for seven years.

[09:13:19] I appreciate the opportunity to testify regarding the proposed budget action to swap the county's staffed Employees Child Care Center for an outsourced replacement. ECCC is an integral part of the county's equitable early childhood system, providing quality early care and education to Fairfax County employees and their children.

[09:13:40] I can testify with great confidence that the Employees Child Care Center is the most joyful place within the surrounding government center complex. A primary concern of the proposed full program reduction of ECCC is the elimination of 40 early childhood educator positions.

[09:14:00] These are not just positions. The ECCC educators are highly experienced, dedicated professionals who provide the essential continuity that builds secure attachments and quality relationships necessary to meet the developmental needs of the babies, toddlers, and preschool-age children in their care.

[09:14:21] Many things go into providing a high-quality learning experience for young children, but nothing is more important than these relationships and interactions. If the proposed plan to transition ECCC over the next year is approved, it will result in significant disruption and negative outcomes, including decline in new ECCC enrollments and decreased revenues, lack of employment stability for ECCC staff.

[09:14:50] When early childhood educators leave, they take with them their knowledge, expertise, and relationships, all key to quality experiences for young children and their families. Unpredictable child care arrangements create workforce participation barriers for current and future county employees, which in turn impacts the delivery of county services to the community.

[09:15:16] I urge the county not to dismantle ECCC as a county-operated program, but fully engage those most impacted, the families and staff who are prepared to help identify and implement solutions that will enable the county to recognize substantial savings in FY26 and beyond.

[09:15:38] Moving forward together to continue to meet the needs of your employees for child care that enables them to work and their children to thrive. I'd like to thank my colleagues, the ECCC team, for the important work they do so well.

[09:15:54] and the invaluable contribution they make to the children families and the Fairfax community, and I thank you for your time and consideration and patience. Thank you very much. We are on Speaker 67, who has joined us by phone. Ms. Van Holley, can you hear me? Yes, I can. Can you hear me?

[09:16:13] I can. Welcome. The floor is yours. Thank you. You have a lot of compelling testimony here tonight, but I'm here to talk about getting a rectangular rapid flashing beacon and get funding for that at the corner of Great Falls Road and Seacliff Road. It is the westernmost exit for McLean High School. Currently, it has been approved as a safe route for children to get to McLean High School. But the problem is this intersection has nothing other than a, you know, a regular sign and a crosswalk. Unfortunately, having lived in this neighborhood for eight years, I have witnessed and all of our neighbors have witnessed multiple near misses with

[09:16:53] children without children. It's a large, wide road. It's a two-lane road, but because of the left-hand turn lane, it makes it extremely wide and difficult to see pedestrians. It's not just McLean High School students, but also children and families trying to go to Lewinville Park. Our neighborhood has compiled a bunch of testimonials talking about the close calls at this intersection, and we have submitted a petition, and we've gotten a letter of support from the McLean High School PTSA president, as well as the McLean High School principal, Ellen Riley, and we're just trying, right now the Fairfax County Department of Transportation has approved this as a project,

[09:17:31] but it is an unfunded project. So we're just here to try to encourage the funding for this project so that we can basically prevent a child from getting hit. I mean, these rectangular flashing beacons usually get approved or fast-tracked once someone gets hit, and we would like to try to prevent this from happening and try to get this in line as a funded project and get it online as soon as possible. Thank you.

Thank you very much for that. And we're on speaker number 68, Regina Danielson. We were unable to contact her. Unable to contact her. Speaker number 69,

[09:18:09] Yifu Ma. Yifu Ma. Speaker number 70, Stephanie Katavoulos. Stephanie Katavoulos. Speaker 71, Zachary Ko. And Zachary is here. Speaker 72 canceled. Speaker 73 is Jim Ferguson. If you could be ready to testify, you are right there. Thank you for that. And he will be followed by James Doves. Welcome. My name is Zach Ko. I have been a math teacher at West Springfield High

[09:18:44] School for the last two years and a union member for that time as well. I have already seen my job in just one year get worse. My working conditions have decreased and my job has become more difficult. Here are some examples. Understaffing. Continual understaffing is starting to affect my job in many ways. More teachers have quit mid-year than last due to stress and uncompetitive salaries, which means that teachers like me have to step in and take on more responsibility to cover

[09:19:19] leftover work. Additionally, going to the operational side, we now have late buses once per week instead of twice per week. That sounds small, but I've literally already seen the significant impact that this has had on students who take the bus, having to decide between what classes to prioritize or deciding that it's not worth it at all. Healthcare costs, this has already been mentioned, but in January of this year, healthcare premiums increased massively along with significant plan design changes that made our healthcare coverage worse than it was already

[09:19:55] after we switched to Cigna a few years ago. And lastly, among many other things, another frozen step. This is all too common in FCPS, but this would be a level of mismanagement that would be unacceptable in most school districts. Okay, all that and more in just one year. I think there's a massive misunderstanding in the local and national perspective on the success of schools.

[09:20:21] Many people look at FCPS and see high test scores and college acceptance rates and assume, well, if the scores are still good, we must be spending enough money. But that's not how it works. You can't just purchase good test scores. What you have to do is spend money on creating an environment where students have the most opportunities to positively engage with academics and where educators feel rewarded for their effort.

[09:20:46] Every year that we don't fully fund our schools, we lose some of that environment. And that's the most important part of our schools. Without that, our students disengage and staff members go get jobs elsewhere. This entire system begins to break down from the inside out.

[09:21:05] Every year we slip closer and closer to losing that environment. And that's a dangerous road to go down. If we slip too dramatically, there's a chance our schools never truly recover. And even if we do recover, that path will be a long one with decisions far more difficult than the ones ahead of us right now.

[09:21:23] The time for change is now. Please help FCPS staff and fully fund our contract. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 73 is Jim Ferguson. Welcome. And it'll be followed by James Dubbs and Daryl Poe.

[09:21:40] Welcome. Good evening. I'm Jim Ferguson. I'm the Executive Director of Legal Services of Northern Virginia. I'm speaking to you this evening as a member of the County's Council to End Domestic Violence. I've had the honor of serving on the CEDV for 19 years.

[09:21:56] My message to you on behalf of the CEDV is simple. Please fully fund efforts to prevent and end domestic violence and to support survivors. This includes providing a sense of shelters, talk to your hotlines, legal assistance, and comprehensive mental health services.

[09:22:14] Funding for these critical efforts from federal and state sources is more uncertain than it has been in a long time. We implore the county to do everything that it can to ensure that these services remain accessible and effective. Domestic violence is shockingly widespread.

[09:22:32] Last year, LSMV attorneys and volunteers completed 1,649 cases involving domestic violence. These were cases like that of Mary, a recent LSMV client who was battling cancer. Mary has one child, a son.

[09:22:48] She reported to us that when she married her husband in 2008, he turned into a completely different person. Shortly after they were married, the violence started with him punching her in the eye. Although Mary reported criminal violations and sought protective orders, her husband always manipulated her into taking him back.

[09:23:10] In 2019, Mary attained a two-year protective order, but her husband continued to follow her, break into her home, and track her using GPS devices. He befriended the manager of her apartment complex, and the manager consequently ignored Mary's request to transfer her to a different unit.

[09:23:29] In fact, the complex attempted to evict her. Mary came to LSMV for help with the eviction, and our housing attorney identified that she also needed help extending her protective order. He successfully extended the protective order for two years and negotiated a custody agreement that gave her sole custody of her son.

[09:23:48] Her husband was ultimately convicted of stalking and spent six months in jail. Meanwhile, Ellison B.'s housing attorney assisted Mary with a valid complaint against the landlord and helped her win substantial damages, which is enabling her to move to a confidential location and to make a fresh start with her son.

[09:24:08] This is just one example of hundreds of similar cases that we see every year. Fairfax's coordinated community response to domestic violence is a best practices model that we can all be proud of.

[09:24:23] The CEDV and the DV network make Fairfax a better, more safe place to live. Let's keep it that way. Please continue to support the next survivor, like Mary, who will desperately need our help.

[09:24:39] Thank you. Thank you very much. Jim. And thank you for all your years of service. Much appreciated. Speaker number 74 is James Dubs. It's James Dubs here. James Dubs to be followed by Daryl Poe. Is Daryl Poe here? Okay.

[09:24:59] Excellent. And how about Alexia Poe? Okay. And Sarah Caudill. If I called your name, please come down here close. We're on speaker number 75, Daryl Poe. Welcome. Good evening. Taxes are increasing, impacting most those who can afford at least. Services are being cut, many of which are critical in lifesaving. On behalf of an average taxpayer in one of the wealthiest counties in America, make it make sense.

[09:25:33] My name is Daryl Poe. I've lived in Fairfax County for basically my entire life. My family goes back generations in Fairfax County in Northern Virginia. I rise this evening to call out a specific example

of reduced services, the loss of a life-saving emergency and medical transport in the town of Clifton.

[09:25:51] But the concept of rising taxes and declining public services can be seen across this entire budget proposal. And indeed, it can be felt in this very auditorium from who you've heard from tonight. I can't help but wonder if there are some folks, households, corporations, businesses in Fairfax County who could maybe afford to pay a little more, but I don't have those numbers in front of me, and it's a bigger question that I doubt we'll get an answer to this evening.

[09:26:17] That said, here are some other numbers related to emergency services that I'd like you to consider. 24%. It's the increase in emergency incidents over the last five years just in Clifton alone. 41. The number of cardiac incidents in the Clifton zone in the last five years.

[09:26:34] 10. That's the number of minutes the average person has to survive a cardiac emergency without intervention. After that 10-minute period, the odds of survival drop below 5 percent, 30 percent. It's the percentage of deaths that are considered preventable, if not for the absence of emergency services.

[09:26:53] Clifton is a stable and aging community. Its residents have paid into the system for decades. They're not asking for special treatment. They're asking for survival. They're asking that Fairfax County continue to uphold its commitment to reliable, responsive emergency services. You're all paid very well to solve these difficult challenges.

[09:27:11] Please resist the urge to balance the budget at the expense of human lives. Again, I'm forced to wonder if there aren't some households or businesses, and again, one of the wealthiest counties in America that could have perhaps afforded to help you balance this budget without needlessly putting lives at greater risk.

[09:27:29] These are the difficult decisions we elect you to make, but is it really that difficult to choose between asking more of those who can afford it or putting real human lives at risk through dangerous cuts in services? When you look back on these decisions, given the foreseeable ramifications of either path, which will you live to regret more?

[09:27:50] Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 76 is Alexia Poe. Apologies. I was a little bit of pressure about five hours ago.

[09:28:08] Welcome. I'm doing my best here. Okay, good evening, Mr. Chairman, the members of the Sogoth Board. My name is Alexia Poe. I've lived in Fairfax County since I was four years old, so the majority of my life, and with my husband in the town of Clifton for the past 20 years. I've never appeared here before, as I've been listening to those before me speak about the ever-increasing real estate taxes, which I do, too, have been upset about over the years, but just struggle to somehow meet, as well as various groups advocating for educational and quality

[09:28:48] of life improvements, which I likewise believe are important. However, none of these reasons are why I am here before this board for the first time in my life. The reason I'm here today is simple. The proposed budget cuts that will result in the removal of the singular Clifton ambulance.

[09:29:06] While I don't wish to downplay the obvious reasons many here are upset about these issues, I am here before you with regard to a matter of life and death. This is not simply hyperbole. I felt compelled to come here today to fight for my community.

[09:29:22] I don't pretend to know all the intricacies and pressures the county is facing or what meaningful savings might be gained from getting rid of this single Clifton ambulance. But I do know that having no ambulance means people in our community will die.

[09:29:38] I am aware that many of my neighbors have contacted you in various ways, as well as the heartening appearance, with collaborative, actionable plans and support of those heroes who provide these essential life-saving services. I know you have varied demands on your time and decisions, thus it may be lost in the details.

[09:29:59] Therefore, despite the significant difficulty of my being here in person, I could not, in good conscience, not be here to show you at least one of the faces affected by your proposition to deprive the Clifton community of its only ambulance.

[09:30:17] One that has historically, sorry, reported trends show a consistent annual increase of emergency service incidents for our community. One that has historically low turnover, meaning that we have an ever-increasing number of elders.

[09:30:38] Given that most emergency services incidents for our community have been cardiac arrest, time is of the essence. Clifton already faces challenges with only three one-lane roads for ingress and egress. Roads that are wooded and winding and prone to flooding.

[09:30:56] In perfect conditions, it takes 10 minutes to reach a major road. And minutes are meaningful in a crisis. Fully equipped paramedics with a dedicated emergency transport provide life-extending services, giving people in a terrifying crisis a fighting chance.

[09:31:13] I ask the town board supervisors to just take a few minutes and ask yourselves, your parents siblings aunts uncles nieces or nephews or your spouse or child had just 10 minutes to live without medical intervention wouldn't you want to do everything you could to give them a fighting chance that's all we're asking for a fighting chance to save lives in our community our chances for survival decreased precipitously without our ambulance so please consider that this isn't simply a matter of a lying item in a budget but real human lives at

[09:31:48] speak thank you thank you very much for your testimony and we are on speaker number 77 sarah caudill is sarah caudill here she is um and kelly caudill kelly caudill uh michelle peel if i called your name uh those will be our next speakers welcome all right picture this rent jumps higher than you expected so you're scrambling to find a new place to live you and your partner keep

[09:32:24] passing colds back and forth like a hot potato your dog your sweet seemingly healthy dog dies suddenly from an undetected brain tumor and your partner she's in her second trimester and you still haven't found daycare for your baby on the way it sounds tough right well that was our life in the summer of 2023 so believe me when i say touring fairfax county's employment child care

[09:33:03] center was the first full breath we took that year my first impressions ruth the warm and attentive center director greeted every child by name as we walked through the indoor play area had a swing. The swing. How cool is that? And it was just a normal weekday afternoon. There weren't any special events. It wasn't after-school area hours when nobody else was around. This place was

[09:33:40] alive, genuine, welcoming, full of joy. We could see our kid there. It was fresh air. It was a buoy. It was reassurance that our family might be okay. So here's what I'm asking. Please keep supporting this

place. Because for families like mine, navigating new parenthood, grief, illness, uncertainty, places like ECCC are more than just child care. They're lifelines. They're hope. The

[09:34:19] county's investment in this center gave us a sense of stability, that chance to breathe, a glimpse of a future where our child would be safe, cared for, and happy. That's what your support makes possible. please keep it going. Thank you for your time. Thank you very much. And our next speaker is Kelly Caudill, speaker number 78. Hi, my name is Kelly. I live in Oakton, and I'm speaking as a

[09:34:58] parent, a county employee, and an early childhood education professional to express my deep concern regarding the proposal to privatize the Employee Child Care Center. When I was pregnant and looking for child care, we toured ECCC first. We were put on the wait list, so naturally we looked at other child care centers. After these other visits, we realized that ECCC was the only place for us.

[09:35:24] We were so serious that we had conversations about me leaving my county job if we didn't get in. Fortunately, we got in, and our son has been there since he was three months old. Leaving your child for the day is an impossibly difficult decision, but Ruth, the director, put us at ease immediately in a way that no other center did. The classrooms are joyful. The teachers are loving and they're valued. The children are happy. I knew that my child would be loved at ECCC. I knew he would thrive, and he is. As an early childhood professional who visits daycares and preschools

[09:36:03] around the county daily, I can confidently say that ECCC is a leader in the field. Privatizing it would squander an incredible asset. Instead of dismantling it, the county should be learning from its success and leveraging its expertise to strengthen the child care services countywide.

[09:36:25] Competent and loving early childhood education produces citizens who value education and are committed to improving their community. Finally, while I've been told that this change would not cause a disruption to service, that is not our reality.

[09:36:43] Every single time we get in the car, my son asks for his teachers, Amy, Nana, Marish. He's working on their names. When he wakes up in the morning, it is the same, Amy, Nana, Marish, and I try not to be offended that he's not asking for me.

[09:37:00] His life and education will be disrupted. These relationships matter. You cannot replace that kind of connection without impact. I urge you to value our children, value the county's employees, and value the importance of early childhood education.

[09:37:20] Save the Employee Child Care Center. Thank you for your time and for all that you do for the county. Thank you very much. Speaker number 79 is Michelle Peel. Michelle Peel here. She is. And speaker number 80, Emily Hinscher-Kadir.

[09:37:38] And speaker number 81, Tatiana Newth. If you're here, please be down ready to testify. Welcome. Hi, thank you. Good evening. My name is Michelle Peel, and I'm a family liaison with Fairfax County Public Schools. And I have something written, and it's short.

[09:37:54] But listening to everyone here tonight, overwhelmingly, there are detrimental cuts to our most vulnerable people that live in this county, and that is our children. from early childhood to middle school programs to all of the students that all of my colleagues up here work with. For me as a family liaison, we work with many of the services and community partnerships to help our families eat, clothe their children. For students with disabilities,

[09:38:31] we contact the community service board. So without these services, our children are not going to be sitting here as the next board of supervisors. They're not going to be the police officers sitting in the back. You're digital coordinators here that are videotaping here today.

[09:38:51] So we need to fund our contract. We have operational staffs. We have instructional assistants, family liaisons like myself, food service workers, bus drivers, custodians, and that's just to name a few. That definitely does not make up all of the operational employees that support our schools, students and staff every single day but they show up every single day with one mission to serve our students in Fairfax County we transport them safely we nourish them with care and then it's true we spend a lot of money out of our own pockets to help our students we keep snacks in

[09:39:29] the drawers we keep food for our students who are hungry we have to work with our partner educate Fairfax to get snack packs to send home with our students on the weekends so they have something to eat and i know i know it costs money but then we're also in a environment where our students their parents have lost their jobs we teach them we guide them and we keep our schools clean welcoming and safe we are the backbone of fairfax county public schools we are there from the first bell to that very last bus ride home our students deserve the best when our contracts go unfunded

[09:40:07] our school goes unfunded. It just doesn't affect us. It sends a clear and painful message that the work we do and the children we serve aren't a priority. It reflects a lack of commitment to students, parents, the community, and the very people who make this school system run.

[09:40:26] If education truly equals opportunity in this county, then it's time to invest in the people who make this opportunity real. Thank you for your time. Thank you. I am going to go back to speaker number 68, who I understand has joined us by phone now.

[09:40:44] Ms. Danielson, can you hear me? Thank you, sir. Can you hear me? Yes. The floor is yours. Thank you. Good evening, Chairman McKay and members of the board. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Dr. Regina Danielson.

[09:41:01] I'm the mother of Niels Danielson. We were there earlier tonight, but he was a bit rambunctious. Nils attends the Employee Child Care Center, and I'm here to express my strong support for preserving the ECC, a resource that is not just a benefit, but a crucial, a critical factor in job selection and retention for the Fairfax County employees.

[09:41:26] Affordable, high-quality child care remains one of the greatest challenges facing working families. For many county employees, access to convenient and dependable care is often the deciding factor in whether they accept positions or remain in their roles.

[09:41:47] The Employee Child Care Center provides accessibility, enabling employees to fully commit to their responsibilities without the added burden of coordinating child care elsewhere. I've experienced this firsthand. Before I accepted my position as the school health coordinator, the role had remained vacant for over a year.

[09:42:08] When I was offered the job, I also had an opportunity just a mile away from my home, while this one required a 25-mile commute. The deciding factor was the ECC, knowing that my child could be cared for in the same building where I worked by highly qualified educators like Ms. Frank, who holds a master's in early childhood education.

[09:42:30] That level of quality, affordability, and peace of mind made all the difference. What makes the ECC truly unique is not just its location or affordability. It's that the staff are Fairfax County employees. These educators are deeply invested in the county's mission, culture, and workforce.

[09:42:52] They are not only highly qualified, but they also understand the needs of fellow county employees. A private provider might operate in the same physical space, but it would not offer the same sense of trust, collaboration, and continuity.

[09:43:09] Outsourcing the care model will change the character of the program and weaken its value as a true workforce support system. We recognize that changes will need to be made to sustain the center, including adjustments to tuition rates and enrollment practices.

[09:43:27] and we're prepared to support those changes. But those adjustments should be made with the intent to preserve and strengthen a resource that plays a vital role in supporting the Fairfax County workforce. The center is more than a child care facility.

[09:43:46] It is a symbol of Fairfax County's commitment to being an employer of choice. It helps attract top talent and retain skilled professionals by offering a benefit that few other employers can match. dependable, high-quality care delivered by trusted in-house educators who are a part of the same system they serve.

[09:44:09] I urge the Board to preserve and invest in the ECC, not only for families it serves today, but for the future of Fairfax County's workforce. Thank you. Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you, Regina. We are now on speaker number 80, Emily Hinscher-Kadir, to be followed by Tatiana Newth and Maureen Gumm and Dana Burnett.

[09:44:34] If I called your name, please be ready to testify. We're on speaker number 80. Welcome. Chairman McKay, supervisors, and county staff, thank you for having me today. My name is Emily Hinscher-Kadir, and I am the Development and Communications Manager at Langley Residential Support Services.

[09:44:54] Langley serves adults with developmental disabilities, their families, and our community by providing quality, comprehensive, residential, and community support services. We believe everyone deserves the chance to live a rich, full life and envision a community where all can thrive.

[09:45:11] I am here on behalf of my colleagues, and most importantly, the amazing individuals we support, to speak about the proposed elimination of drop-in services in the proposed FY26 budget. This is part of the \$2.2 million budget cut to eliminate or reduce contracted residential employment and day services at the Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board.

[09:45:38] Drop-in services empowers adults with developmental disabilities to live independently and contribute to the fabric of their local community. The proposed cuts to drop-in services without a clear transition plan in place will be detrimental to this vulnerable population who are at risk of isolation, neglect, and financial exploitation without professional supportive services like Langley's Community Support Program.

[09:46:08] Langley provides essential health and safety support for 12 locally funded adults with developmental disabilities through drop-in services. We are a support system. We support our participants in navigating daily living and community access tasks like managing finances, attending and interpreting

medical appointments, using public transportation, or having a familiar face in new situations like tonight's public hearing. Our goal is for those those in our program to feel safe, be healthy, and thrive. What will happen to the adults with

[09:46:43] developmental disabilities throughout Fairfax County if drop-in services are eliminated? I am deeply concerned that there is no clear path to care for those who use the drop-in services program if it ends on June 30th, 2025, a little more than two months away. This is a highly vulnerable population, and I hope that you will advocate for these individuals whose lives would be severely affected by the elimination of drop-in services or by eliminating this service without a formal transition to other programs like Medicaid waiver, which we are in support of,

[09:47:20] there must be a clear path forward to provide support for these individuals who are at risk without this program. Thank you for your time. Thank you very much. Speaker 81 is Tatiana Nuth. Welcome. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Tatiana Nuth, and I am a county resident of Mt. Vernon District, a county employee for 13 years, and a parent deeply affected by the proposed decision to privatize or eliminate the Employee Child Care Center.

[09:47:51] The ECCC is more than a center where our kids are watched while we go to work, it is a place where our kids are embraced by the dedicated team of educators and thrive intellectually, socially, and emotionally, making the quality of care and early childhood education program unmatched.

[09:48:08] The ECCC is a vital benefit and service to our county workforce, and preserving it aligns with the county's strategic plan to remove barriers, such as childcare, to economic mobility and workforce participation. Access to reliable, quality childcare directly impacts employee retention and morale, because when we know our children are safe and in a nurturing environment, we can focus on our work and contribute to the community with peace of mind.

[09:48:33] Moreover, the stability and trust this center provides for families is unparalleled. The ECCC educators are more than staff. They're partners in raising our children, and to many, they're considered family. I'm always reminded of this at morning drop-offs.

[09:48:49] The teachers currently caring for my almost two-year-old daughter also taught my now seven-year-old son from when he was her age. Together, we reminisce on my son as a baby, talk about similarities between the two, discuss my son's interests and whereabouts these days. These are the same conversations I have with my husband when our kids are asleep or with my family when they call to check in on our kids.

[09:49:11] The center is more than just a child care center. It's the village that we have entrusted our most precious beings to and is helping us to educate and nurture them into becoming who they are meant to be. It's critical to recognize that our educators will be disproportionately affected by this proposed change.

[09:49:28] Many of them are women of color who have committed their careers to fostering a creative and enriching educational environment for our kids. This decision not only jeopardizes their livelihoods, but also the diversity and unique perspectives they bring. And while the plan for our educators is to be reassigned to other roles within the county, many may not align with their skills, passions, and aspirations.

[09:49:48] This change not only impacts staff and families, but perhaps the mostly affected would be our children, who will be confused and distressed when dropped off in a new place, surrounded by unfamiliar

faces from one day to another. In closing, I urge you to reconsider this proposal and let us preserve the ECCC as a county-operated program.

[09:50:08] Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you. Speaker number 82 is Michael McCartney. Is he here? Oh, I'm sorry. He's on phone. Do we have him? Yeah. You can hear me okay? Yes.

[09:50:24] Okay, welcome. Good evening, Chamber McKay and members of the board. My name is Michael McCartney. I'm a parent and a strong supporter of the Fairfax County Employees Child Care Center. I have three children, five-year-old, three-year-old, and a five-month-old that benefit from the ECCC.

[09:50:42] The continued excellence of this program is possible because of the board's support and your clear recognition of how vital child care access is for county employees. I urge you to continue the longstanding county-operated program benefiting your employees and, in turn, the community.

[09:51:02] ECCC is more than a child care center. It is a trusted and essential part of how families can balance the demands of public service with the needs of their children. This was particularly true during COVID, when dedicated educators and staff kept ECCC open and safe, while the parents had to continue to work.

[09:51:25] For over five years, ECCC educators and staff have been there for our three children, supporting their development and giving us peace of mind. I'd also like to say the care and continuity provided by ECCC is irreplaceable. Should county privatize the service, we risk losing the connection and trust built over years, and the county risk loses the families who depend on it.

[09:51:52] I had to, we had to put our three-year-old in private care while we waited for our spot on a wait list for the ECCC. And it's night and day, the difference between the county-provided daycare and a private daycare.

[09:52:10] Please preserve ECC as a county-operated program. It is an investment in county employees and in our children. Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you. We are now on Speaker 83, which is Maureen Gumm and Dana Burnett, who are here.

[09:52:31] And they will be, following them will be Catherine Kilinowski, John Baber, and Patricia Harrison. Welcome. Hi, my name is Maureen Gom, and I am the Executive Director of Langley Residential Support Services. Unfortunately, Dana was not able to stay to be able to be here to speak tonight.

[09:52:51] So I'm going to talk for myself, and I will actually read what she was going to say this evening as well. So you met my coworker a few minutes ago, but we serve adults with developmental disabilities here in Fairfax County.

[09:53:06] I am here today to specifically talk about the proposed elimination of the drop-in services and the FY26 budget. This is part of that \$2.2 million budget cut to eliminate or reduce contract residential employment and day services at the Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board.

[09:53:28] Drop-in services empowers adults with developmental disabilities to live independently and also contribute to the fabric of their community, which is also our community. The proposed elimination of these drop-in services without a clear transition plan in place is going to be very detrimental to this very vulnerable population.

[09:53:51] They are at risk of not only isolation, but neglect, financial exploitation, without the professional supportive services like Langley's community support program. So for several decades, Langley has supported those living out in the community, whether they're living independently, still at home with their family, or maybe they're living with roommates.

[09:54:15] And we may support all of those individuals that are residing under one roof. With this proposed cut, these individuals are going to be at great risk. And unfortunately, Dana was not able to stay this evening, but this is where I would like to read what she was going to say this evening.

[09:54:38] So she actually lives in an apartment on her own. She has a counselor that comes to support her from Langley once a week, helps her to cook, helps her to make good, healthy choices in her life, and also helps her with budgeting.

[09:54:55] in her home. She has a good relationship with this counselor that comes there and who has been for many years. She says she used to do a lot of things with Langley, like going to the movies, malls, trips, picnics, potlucks, talent shows, bowling, and even King's Dominion way back in the day when Langley first started doing drop-in services. She said that she'd also like to stay with Langley because it helps her to be independent on her own. She has a good job at the Department of Commerce. She takes the subway and bus to work every day because she doesn't drive. She gets

[09:55:33] herself up for work, and she's been with Service Source for 30 years. She works in the mailroom. She does mail runs, delivering packages, and she also helps out in the customer area. She's been with Langley since 1995. It's very hard to be handicapped, she said, to do things without a counselor because some of us don't drive a car and it's very hard for us i try to be independent but i still need langley for help please keep langley around for us i like being with langley

[09:56:09] and the staff is great so i'm going to pick up where dana left off so we are uh langley provides professional services to these individuals we are their support system our direct support professionals are there when families can no longer support these individuals or when relationships are actually strained. And in some cases, we are their sole advocate. They don't have any family.

[09:56:42] They don't have a support system. We are it for them. We support individuals navigating daily living and community access tasks like managing their finances and budgets so they have food on their tables, attend doctor's appointments so they can understand and navigate what's going on with their health. We help them to advocate for themselves. We even help get them to the grocery store. The little things that we take for granted every day, they need help with. So our goal for those in our program is for them to feel safe, healthy, and to thrive in our community. So what's

[09:57:22] going to happen to these individuals when that drop in services is eliminated? There's no roadmap in place right now for them. Who's going to help them to pay their bills so they continue to have a roof over their head so they can continue to work in our society here within Fairfax County.

[09:57:42] I'm deeply concerned that there is no clear path for those in this program. If these services actually end on June 30th, that is 68 days from now, there is no plan. There's no transition in them in services for them. Yes, we are happy to transition them from the local funding to the Medicaid waiver, but that takes time. What's going to happen if they do qualify for Medicaid waiver?

[09:58:10] You heard from somebody else this evening. Someone's been on the priority one list for five years. What's going to happen in the interim for these people? Please, please reconsider eliminating this

program. Thank you. Thank you very much. Speaker number 84 is Catherine Kalinowski. Is she here?

[09:58:30] Catherine Kalinowski, I don't see. How about John Baber? John Baber, Patricia Harrison, I know is here. Come on down. I was worried for about 30 seconds that you weren't here, but I knew you would be here.

[09:58:48] Thomas Cranmer, you will be following Patricia Harrison, and Lynn Screen will be following Mr. Cranmer. Welcome, Pat. Good evening. I know it's been a long night for you all. You know, so many of the programs that people have talked about today, you know specifically, Chairman McKay, that I've had a hand in developing these, creating them, or partnering with those individuals who have created them.

[09:59:17] So I feel, I mean, my heart hurts for the decisions that you all have to make. So I appreciate everything that you all do, always. But tonight, I'm here to specifically advocate for one particular program.

[09:59:33] I'm here regarding the proposed 50% reduction in funding for supportive, therapeutic, and inclusive recreation services for older adults in Fairfax County. These programs are not merely recreational. They are critical lifelines that support physical health, mental well-being, and social inclusion for one of the county's most vulnerable populations.

[09:59:57] I have a long history with this program. Nearly 25 years ago, I worked with senior center staff, the CSB, and the health department to design a program that would provide a higher level of support for older adults that were not yet ready for adult-day health care, but also not adequately supported by the resources that were available in the senior centers.

[10:00:21] Funding the program via a contract was the most fiscally responsible method to provide these essential supports for our older adults. Currently, these services are supported by contract with ServiceSource. Not only are older adults with specialized needs supported, but county staff have relied on the support provided via the contract staff since its inception. Indeed, through ServiceSource, access to services, the quality and array of activities, and the focus on inclusion have measurably improved since we began the program nearly 25 years ago.

[10:01:01] Service source contract staff work closely with the center staff at each one of the county's senior centers. Older adults with more specialized needs require activity modifications, facilitated activity therapy, safety and risk assessments, and case management if they are to continue meaningful inclusion in the centers.

[10:01:25] Research consistently demonstrates that structured therapeutic recreation enhances mobility, prevents cognitive decline, and reduces social isolation among our older adults. Without adequate resources, many older adults, especially those with disabilities or limited financial means, will lose access to these essential services.

[10:01:47] I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider the budget reduction and restore funding for this vital contract. Investing in therapeutic and inclusive, recreation-focused activities is not just compassionate choice, it continues to uphold the county's values.

[10:02:03] Thank you, and I appreciate your consideration. Thank you very much. Speaker 87 is Thomas Cranmer, to be followed by Lynn Screen. Is Lynn Screen here? Okay, excellent. And Julie Little. Julie Little, excellent.

[10:02:20] Welcome, Mr. Cranmer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have had a long night, and so I'm going to try to be very brief. I've provided a paper for everybody, so therefore you can read it, and I won't.

[10:02:42] So one of the key things is that in a previous session, one of your supervisors said you do not do anything with the school. I can't believe this. It's half the budget. It's irresponsible to have a statement like that.

[10:03:02] So I would love to know if you really do pay attention to the school budget. I certainly do. Now, you have a number of constituencies that you've got to take care of, but half of Fairfax really is not being taken care of with these constituencies.

[10:03:28] And the neglected people are the ones with low incomes and have problems with not enough money to pay the taxes. Now, the property taxes are a real problem for a lot of owners.

[10:03:50] And they don't know what property taxes they're getting hit with because they have a mortgage that is taken care of by the bank and they pay the taxes. So people just have no idea what's going on.

[10:04:07] So many people have moved out, and I know some people from foreign areas have moved in. But the sad thing is that the schools are really a disappointment.

[10:04:22] The low SAT scores, SAT scores, dropped 40 points from 2018. That's a huge drop, and it's very important to encourage better academic work and serious effort.

[10:04:43] I think that it's very important to recognize that people and seniors, young people, can't really live here. And the problem is the assessments just keep rising, supposedly in the last year, 6.2%.

[10:05:06] The police and crime problems are so great, and I can't even find out what crimes have occurred. I get reports from the neighbors, but not from the police. Police are useless in terms of reporting what's going on.

[10:05:25] So thank you very much for listening, and I hope that ICE will remove a lot of the people here who don't belong here. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 88 is Lynn Screen, to be followed by Julie Little, Pooja Shah, and Leah Fraley.

[10:05:48] Welcome. Good evening, Chairman McKay and Board of Supervisors. My name is Lynn Screen. I'm a resident of Clifton, and I'm here tonight to speak to you about the removal of our ambulance services. I'm also on the town council in the town of Clifton, alongside with Mayor Peterson, who you heard from earlier tonight.

[10:06:08] I live on Main Street in Clifton, just around the corner from Station 16. I live with my husband and my two kids. And about two years ago this month, my nephew, Riley, was visiting us while his parents were celebrating their 20th anniversary.

[10:06:31] And Riley suffers from a peanut allergy. And the second night that he was staying with us, things started to get pretty scary pretty fast. So while I was observing his symptoms, my husband was trying to get his mom on the phone overseas.

[10:06:49] And it got to the point where we were trying to make the decision whether to give him an EpiPen. And even though I had practiced with a dummy EpiPen, you know, this was a moment where we're trying to figure out what are we doing here. And eventually we got in touch with his mother, and she said, you know, give him the EpiPen.

[10:07:10] And, you know, while he's suffering here in our care, we called 911, and ambulance 416 was there within a couple of minutes. And they were able to enter and to care for him and basically gave us the information that he was not having an allergic reaction.

[10:07:33] He was having an anxiety attack, and in those two minutes, he was able to prevent me from giving him this EpiPen, which would mean that he would need to be taken to the hospital.

[10:07:49] He would also have that injection in him, and I tell you this story because Ambulance 416 was there for us in the moment that we needed him, that we needed them to care for my nephew.

[10:08:05] But I also tell you this story because my nephew was a guest to the town of Clifton. And our town, when you're looking at your demographics, when you're looking at census data, there aren't a lot of people that necessarily live within the town and surrounding areas.

[10:08:26] But I can tell you we have a whole lot of guests. I imagine many of you might be guests to our town, whether you're visiting the winery, the town park, Peterson's ice cream, Bellagio, Tremers, any of these establishments.

[10:08:42] Our town population increases by thousands and thousands over the weekends. So I encourage you to think about not just the local population, but all those that are visiting our town. I also wanted to extend the offer that Mayor Peterson extended to talk to you, to find a solution to save this ambulance, so that all folks who live and are guests of our town can be cared for for this valuable service.

[10:09:13] So thank you. Thank you very much. Speaker number 89 is Julie Little. Well, welcome, and thank you for your patience. Thank you. I'll take it. Hi. You all must be pretty tired. I'm pretty tired, too. I'm pretty tired from preparing my thoughts for you tonight, but more importantly, I'm pretty tired from worrying about how I'm going to be able to keep living here in Fairfax County on a teacher's salary.

[10:09:37] I'm pretty tired from working 60-plus hours a week trying to be the best teacher I can. I'm pretty tired from working two other jobs while trying to earn extra money to help my family make ends meet. My family of four make ends meet. But what makes me most tired, though, is worrying every single year whether or not you guys are going to approve our contracts.

[10:09:57] Our steps have been frozen repeatedly, which costs each of us thousands, especially at retirement. Cost of living adjustments are unreliable. Many of us, perhaps as much as 50 percent of FCPS employees, can't afford to live in the county we work in, and some who do, it's because they earn so little they qualify for government assistance. Let that sink in. Our health insurance, while we're thankful to have it, covers less and costs us more year after year, so we're losing money there.

[10:10:27] You haven't approved our requested salary increases, and worst of all, our workload grows all the time with more students, more trainings, and requirements every year. You give raises to other groups and agencies, including yourselves, but not us, and by doing so, you balance your budget on the backs of FCPS faculty and staff sending the very clear message that we don't matter and that needs to stop. And at the same time, the collective you brags about the work we do. It's a little unbelievable. Wherever you look, people tout how amazing the public schools are here in Fairfax

[10:11:03] County. Oh, you should bring your business here. Bring your families to our schools are top notch. Realtors use FCPS as a major selling point in their advertisements all the time. I don't disagree with these claims, but you know what makes our schools great?

[10:11:19] The teachers. Everyone knows that this school system has a long reputation of being known for academic excellence. Listen and watch the performances by our students, whether in the orchestra pits or on the stage. It's the teachers who taught them to do what they do. Season after season, it's FCPS schools vying for state championships or entering national competitions.

[10:11:40] These students got there because they were taught by outstanding and gifted educators. The people I work with are, without exception, some of the hardest working professionals I've ever known. I actually wanted to share some anecdotes with you tonight to impress upon you what teaching in 2025 is like, but trust me when I say you have no idea how difficult our jobs are, particularly since COVID.

[10:12:05] particularly with social media, with absentee parenting, with classrooms busting at the seams, without enough qualified staff, and an endless list of struggles we face every day. And while I try to emphasize how wicked hard our jobs are, let me be abundantly clear.

[10:12:22] I love my job. I love my students, even on our worst days. I love what I do because I believe that I am making a difference in their lives. They know that they matter, that they will forever be my kids. I and all the people who work in education, we are making the leaders for tomorrow.

[10:12:39] It's kind of a big deal and one we aren't compensated for nearly enough. This is your opportunity right now with this next budget and all future budgets to right the ship and stop pushing us aside. And if you would like to see for yourself what we deal with before you decide our financial fate, I welcome you into my classroom anytime you want to come frost middle school 4101 picket road room d215 don't be late or bring a note if you are thank you thank you uh we are on speaker number

[10:13:13] 90 puja shah is puja shah here speaker number 91 leah fraley leah fraley not here uh let's see speaker number 94 92 nadia olorine nadia olorine are you here okay to be followed by uh zeynep erin zeynep erin here if you are please come on down uh and swit sifu if you're here please come

[10:13:51] on down uh close so that you're ready when it's your turn to testify uh speaker number 92 nadia Olorind. It is your turn. Welcome. I'm very glad to be here today. Thank you for listening. My name is Nadia Olorinde and I have lived in Fairfax County my whole life for eight generations in and I've never spoken before even though I've worked for the county and Langley and in the CSB for many years. This is exceptionally important for me. Thank you. Oh I saw you last Saturday

[10:14:29] at the Wish Center and you I went by your office Saturday. We met at Lorton Library a few years to go. Y'all are awesome. Thank you very much. Okay, the Sparks United Community Afterschool Program is why I'm here. It's a needle in the haystack for the 22309 community. It's an affordable, safe, academically sound afterschool program that's at risk. I understand you have a lot of tough choices to make. I'm here to speak for this community. It's the only affordable afterschool program that offers easy access from the schools for our community. I'm going to summarize and then just submit this in writing to save you some time. Studies have shown that

[10:15:08] hours between 3 and 6 p.m. offer opportunities for juvenile crime, sexual activity, and other risky behaviors such as drug and alcohol use. This program offers staff that have backgrounds in recreation, education, intellectual disability, social work, and program design. They offer specific programs for adults and children. They provide life-centered education, consistent academic training and individualized behavioral modification plan. The children engage daily with the same highly educated staff, and I understand that there's suggestion that our program could be closed

[10:15:47] and that it could be substituted with local programs, but it offers challenges for the staff and the clients. And the reason is because it's very hard for us to get to other programs. Our program is listed on Route 1, and it would take 30 to 45 minutes to get to the next closest programs.

[10:16:07] SAC programs are not affordable for most of the people in our community. Some of them don't have cars, and they're able to get to this center within walking distance, five minutes. And also, over the time that we've been there ourselves this five years, we've developed networks of people, grandparents who drive their children to programs.

[10:16:24] We check on each other. One of my neighbors has my kids today. I know you have hard choices. I don't want you to kill the after-school program. We participate in that, too. We have an older child. This program is especially important. The children are offered these programs that, for many of them, allow them to ascend to the advanced academic placement programs, which makes it easier for them later on.

[10:16:50] They'll have access to tutoring. They have access to college scholarships and things like that. We've seen this happen multiple times with the children. We're very confident in the program. The last thing I want to say is I understand you have a hard choice to make.

[10:17:06] And don't kill the after-school programs. I met that sexy guy up there in the after-school program. We've been together forever. I just can't dump them. I can't get rid of them. They're fantastic. Please, please, I know you have a tough choice, but thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. I hope you got all that on tape up there.

[10:17:27] We're going to move to speaker number 93, Zaynep Aron. Speaker number 94, Swit Sifu. Sifu. Swit Sifu. Speaker number 95, Faithya Apai.

[10:17:47] Speaker number 95, Faithya Apai. We are going to see if we have speaker number 96, Yuji Zhu on the line. Can you hear me okay? Hello?

[10:18:04] Hello, can you hear me okay? Yes, I can hear. Welcome, the floor is yours. How are you today? I can hear you. Doing well. It's your turn to testify. Welcome. Yes, I'm standing by. I mean, it's my turn right now?

[10:18:21] Yes, right now. Okay, so I also have Mr. Chen come, will be helping me to translate. That'd be okay? Yes. Because my first language is Mandarin. I try my best to protect all my kids.

[10:18:44] So she's there? I mean, we can start it? Yes, please. Go ahead. Begin. So I need to make sure with Ms. Tan. Can you help me make sure Ms. Tan, she's there? The lady? She is here. She is here. Yes.

[10:19:02] So I was talking for she will translate first or let me speak first by Mandarin. Are you okay with her speaking first? Yes, sir. Yes, please. You go ahead and speak first Mandarin.

[10:19:21] Okay, I'm first, right? I appreciate it. I'm started.

[10:19:52] We see more people in the high pressure, and more people in the middle of the world are still in a different way. We see more and more of the young people in the high pressure, and the mood is失控. Many people in the lack of support and support environment have grown up.

[10:20:12] They are not a problem, but are a long time for them. As a mother, I know that we can be able to keep living in the same way, but we can't stop for children who lost their hope in their life. We don't

need age. We just hope the society can give us the most basic support, more practical education, more accurate education, and more practical advice to help.

[10:20:36] Please give these children a chance to be seen, and give these children a commitment to our families. Please, Ms. Tan, help me translate. I appreciate it. - Good afternoon, everyone. Good evening. My name is Tam Cobbs, and I am the program director for the SPARKS program at Sacramento Neighborhood Center.

[10:20:56] Just to clarify, I do not speak Mandarin, so just know that. But we have translated this, so I have prepared this on her behalf. And this is for Mom. Dear Chair, distinguished members, thank you for this opportunity. I am a single mother.

[10:21:12] I speak today not only for myself, but for countless families like mine, families doing their best, often in silence. Children from single-parent homes face deep, lasting challenges, emotional, educational, and economic burdens.

[10:21:30] The pandemic made these burdens heavier, and too many of these children have since been overlooked. We now see the long-term effects, adults breaking under pressure, shaped by years of neglect. They are not problems.

[10:21:46] They are not symptoms of a system that have failed to support its most vulnerable. We do not ask for charity. We ask to be seen. We ask for fair access, mental health supports, and practical policies that reflect real life.

[10:22:03] Support us, and we will raise children who stand strong. As you weigh the tradeoffs in the upcoming physical budget, I urge you to consider two simple things but profound questions. How many of us as parents can still offer our children the quality, time, and emotional support that they need after a long day of work?

[10:22:27] And most importantly, when were we children ourselves in those vulnerable and formative years? How many of us truly received the presence, guidance, and understanding we so desperately needed? Right now, proposed funding cuts target after-school programs for children ages 6 to 12, the critical age when emotional regulations, values, and social behavior begins to form.

[10:22:55] What happens in these years shapes our nation's future, its workforce, social cohesion, and even crime rates. As a neglected child does not simply grow out of early emotional gaps. That child may grow into an unemployable adult, a long-term welfare recipient, or a threat to public safety.

[10:23:16] Costs the government will inevitably absorb. Each dollar cut from today risks turning into \$10 in social services or law enforcement. Education is not a cost. It is the most effective tool we have for national risk management.

[10:23:34] A child left unsupervised today could become tomorrow's burden on the justice system, but a child who is supported and guided today becomes tomorrow's taxpayer's innovator and pillar of a strong society. Please don't let short-term physical pressures blind us to our long-term national well-being.

[10:23:55] Choose wisely, choose responsibility for our children and for the future of this nation. And these are the words of Mom. Thank you all so much. Thank you very much. We're on speaker number 97. Is Mr. Johnson on the phone? One second. Can I help?

[10:24:13] Your time has expired, but we got your testimony. Thank you. Speaker number 97 is on the phone. Mr. Johnson, can you hear me okay? I can. Yes, can you hear me? We can. Welcome. The floor is yours. Thank you, sir. Good afternoon. I want to help all is well. My name is Brett Johnson.

[10:24:32] I just wanted to take a moment to speak from the heart about the importance of maintaining The Sacramento Neighborhood Center, specifically the SPARC program, it holds a vital place in our county, not only for the dedicated staff who serve there, but most importantly for the children whose lives are shaped daily by the support and structure the center provides.

[10:24:51] At the core of the Sacramento Center's mission is the social development of our youth. Social development in children is every bit essential as learning to read and write. It's through meaningful interactions that our kids learn to communicate, share, cooperate, and resolve conflicts.

[10:25:08] These experiences help build the foundation for emotional health, strong relationships, and future success. And when children are given the opportunity to engage with others through play, teamwork, and conversation, they grow in empathy, confidence, and a lasting sense of belonging.

[10:25:25] As a Fairfax County resident of 12 years and a single father, I've seen firsthand the impact this program has on my son. The SMC has offered him a nurturing environment where he can thrive, not only academically, but also socially, emotionally, and emotionally.

[10:25:43] It is a safe, welcoming place that helps children understand the value of healthy relationships, encourage academic growth, and teach the essential life skills needed to function as a future adult. I ask that as the committee considers the budget, that this program continues to receive support provided by our representatives and the importance of developing our children going forward.

[10:26:04] Thank you. Thank you very much. We are on speaker number 98, Shannon Evans. Shannon Evans here. How about Jeffrey Leach, speaker number 99? Welcome.

[10:26:22] Good evening, and kudos to all of you for your stamina. Earlier today, I spoke about some of the budget challenges, and I just want to revisit one. But before saying that, I want to just reflect on a lot of what we've heard today.

[10:26:39] We've heard a lot from people who have come up and spoken. We've heard a lot of clapping. The people that we have not heard from are the 2,000 people who left in the past year, 2,000 taxpayers, 14,000 taxpayers since 2019. And there are so many good things, and these are hard decisions, and I've worked on budgets before and I know that you have a lot of there's so many good projects you could fund that I don't envy your your job in doing this but I just want to point out that unlike in North Korea of course people can

[10:27:15] leave the county and like in a business if you encounter businesses where the price is too high people simply don't go and I'd hate to see that happen to this County. So just a few points regarding the proposal that I sent to all of you. I hope you get a chance to look at it. Let's put forward in a good faith effort to try to help the county. A lot of people had input into it. I just want to briefly talk about a few of these points and hopefully entice you to look at more of them. First one being Fairfax County public school system. I love education. I

[10:27:51] have four advanced degrees. I'm getting another one. I've been a teacher for many years in different positions. And I ask the question again, though, why is it that we are not delivering the level of

product that FCPS delivered in 1985 for one third the cost? It is not because of inflation, because I've adjusted for inflation. It's not because of the rise from 11% to 20% special education, because I ran the numbers, that's only 25 million. So there is a huge amount of money that is being

[10:28:28] spent there, and proper management of it, which would mean cutting back to track the actual population of the students, which you remember rose only 44% in the past 44 years, would alleviate so many of the problems that you heard from people tonight, right? Saying that they weren't being paid enough.

[10:28:48] There would be more money for raises on a regular basis if there were fewer teachers, administrators, not teachers, they're crucial and need to be kept as the core element. But all of these additional people who have been hired on are taking resources that could be spent for education.

[10:29:09] Some of the other issues, too, that have come up. I'm a gay, biracial man. I oppose the D.I.E. project. I know many of you do not. But if we lose that money, that's another issue. And I look at some office, like I can't believe that we're talking about six million dollars for lives, you know, for a DEI office versus lives of people in Clifton. So I just, I know my time's up. I just encourage you to look at some of these other ideas about bonding that I had, things about investments and conversion of commercial space to residential space to help increase the revenues, because I think there are a lot of good things that can

[10:29:48] still be done with this budget. So thank you for your time and have a good evening. Thank you very much speaker 100 is Casey Anderson is Casey Anderson here Casey Anderson speaker number 100 Casey Anderson okay at this point I am going to go backwards for one moment to receive testimony from speakers two speakers who I understand are here now speaker 84 Katherine Kalinowski and speaker 85 John

[10:30:23] Baber let me see are they both here I know I can see that Catherine is a John Baber here okay excellent so we're gonna go backwards and hear from speaker 84 and speaker 85 welcome thank you mr. chairman members of the board ladies and gentlemen I just want to briefly note according to my email we were 94 and 95 so anyway we are here on behalf of the town of Clifton and speaking and hoping that the board will not take our ambulance away.

[10:31:02] If any of you have come out to Clifton during rush hour, on a weekend, you will see the town is packed with visitors. Not just residents, but people literally from all over the county and surrounding counties.

[10:31:22] Every weekend and during the summer, during most days. In addition, we have a railroad that runs frequent trains, commuter trains, freight trains, right through Clifton and across Clifton Road and Main Street.

[10:31:37] There is no possible way, if there's any issue with the railroad or heavy traffic during rush hour, since it's a main commuter route for Western Fairfax, as well as from Manassas going down 645, there's no Clifton bypass.

[10:31:56] There simply is no way to get a timely ambulance from Centerville into the Clifton area. If health and safety are the board's number one prerogatives, we seriously hope the board's going to consider how to figure out to keep that one ambulance there.

[10:32:15] The last thing I want to say is as a resident of Fairfax County, which I have been for 45 years, as a business owner in Fairfax County for the past 35 years, I am heartily in favor of a meals tax.

[10:32:31] Thank you all very much. Thank you. Speaker 85 is John Baber. Welcome. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and members of the Board of Supervisors, including Supervisor Alcorn, with whom I had the privilege to serve many years ago on various things.

[10:32:52] I am the lesser half of the last speaker, so I, too, have been in Fairfax for 45 years, born and raised here. We live in the urban town of Clifton. We live right by the railroad tracks, on the right side of it, of course.

[10:33:11] The south side, the side that the ambulance is on, heaven forfend if an ambulance had to come from Centerville because of the one-mile backup in traffic every day from 4 to 6 p.m., because there's no other route in our town.

[10:33:30] In anticipation of standing before you, I took my car and I drove from the Centerville Firehouse to Clifton. You can either get there in seven minutes with no traffic, or you can get there in 16 minutes if you have to take the back road down Colchester or you have to go through Union Mill or somewhere else.

[10:33:56] Very difficult. In our home, we had the former speaker's parents living with us for 10 years. They loved Clifton, but they also were some regular users of the ambulance service.

[10:34:13] We grew to admire the people there and, frankly, relied upon them. It's real important for seniors, and you're looking at one, to have the comfort that if you have a stroke, if you have a heart attack, that you're not going to have to sit and watch precious minutes tick by.

[10:34:35] That's what we're talking about. I heard our mayor earlier tonight kind of give you a little olive branch. I'll confirm it since I'm on the finance committee of the town. Clifton's happy to pay a fair share of this cost if it has to, and that's how important this is to Clifton.

[10:34:57] The teeny, tiny, tony town of Clifton's only got 325 people in it. So we'll take the numerator of the cost, 325, divided by how many thousands are in the area served. But we're not asking for something for nothing.

[10:35:15] We are asking for something that's important to life, to our life. And frankly, will help us make a decision because we're sitting in a big old house. We've got to decide as we grow older, and oops, here I am, getting old, not my wife, but me, do we keep that big old house and continue to be Fairfax residents, or do we sell and go into something else?

[10:35:43] I don't want to sell. I love being a Fairfaxian. Thank you. Thank you very much. Speaker number 101, Lauren Hershey, I know is here to be followed by, is Regis Brett here? Regis, you will be after Mr. Hershey and Alyssa Batchelor-Cossey.

[10:36:02] You will be after Mr. Brett. Welcome, Lauren.

[10:36:21] Good evening, everyone, and I congratulate you on your endurance, and I hope to keep you engaged for a few more minutes on my time. I'm going to call this shorthand three tools to assist you with the goals of the Partnership for Healthier Fairfax.

[10:36:38] I've addressed this off and on since 2018. I give credit to former Supervisor John Faust, who told me about the onset of the plan for the partnership in the summer of 2013. But today is 2025, and we have to look forward.

[10:36:56] I made some remarks on January 4th in this same auditorium to the General Assembly members, and I'm going to reference some of that. But first, I want to start with one of the tools is the attachment to what you have in your hand.

[10:37:16] And I did not know about the American College for Sports Medicine, let alone an American Fitness Index, until earlier this year. And it actually rates 100 different cities.

[10:37:35] And Arlington, which is not a city as we know, is tops on the list, followed by a place called Washington, D.C., followed by a place called Seattle, Washington. Now, I have no doubt that Fairfax County would be in the top ten. And one of the interesting challenges I think you will have is to take the methodology that is used by this American College of Sports Medicine and see if there is a way through the health department to do an evaluation, it would be a surrogate for what they do.

[10:38:09] There are 33 elements that they look at, like how much fruit do you have every day or how many vegetables, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. So that is tool number one. Tool number two is my advocacy that the Board of Supervisors authorized the sponsorship of what I call the Governor's Run, either a 10K or a 10-mile or a 5K or a 5-mile, done maybe the same time they do the cherry blossom race.

[10:38:43] So I'm going to give a biographical fact you didn't know about. 1980, who ran in the cherry blossom race? I did. I trained at 10 miles, 10 minutes a mile. I ran it in 88.5 minutes a mile because of the camaraderie and the cheering on the sidelines.

[10:39:06] And the next year, which is the last time I ran it, was 1981. And without very much additional training, I ran it in 7.5 miles. So why don't you authorize a planning committee to put together a governor's run and recognize the role of Virginia and Patrick Henry?

[10:39:27] That's tool number two. Tool number three. What the heck was tool number three? I said three tools, right? I'll keep you guessing. Now, this is not entirely completed.

[10:39:43] And as you know, I'm now in the senior status, age 78. One of the books I want to bring to your attention so you start to think about seniors the way you have to think about them is something called The Art and Science of Aging Well, A Physician's Guide to a Healthy Body, Mind, and Spirit.

[10:40:00] So I'll leave it at that, and tool number three will be forthcoming. Thank you. Thank you very much, Lauren Hersey. We look forward to that. We are going to move to speaker number 102, Regis Brett.

[10:40:20] Good evening. Oh, geez. Sorry. Good evening. My name is Rita Sprett. I'm a proud FCFT member and a Union School bus driver. I am also an alumni of the Fairfax County Education System from elementary school at Kent Gardens to McLean High School.

[10:40:43] Tonight, I reiterate our support for prioritizing the funding of the Fairfax Educators Union's collective bargaining agreements in the Fairfax County Public Schools budget. All working people deserve to be fairly paid for their labor. All parents deserve assurance that their kids are receiving the best education possible.

[10:41:01] All students are entitled to skilled, valuable educators and support staff. Who knows that better than us, Fairfax County Public Schools union workers. In our current political climate, these values must

be codified. Our contracts support students and workers and give peace of mind to parents knowing their kids will be supported.

[10:41:20] We fought 47 years to win our rights to negotiate and to be appropriately recognized for our labor. We struggled for every inch just to legalize public sector collective bargaining down in Richmond. We organized our colleagues and filed for a monumental union certification election that successfully resulted in representation and two contracts for more than 27,000 workers.

[10:41:43] We overwhelmingly won that election by 96% in the instructional and 85% in the operational. So I go a little bit off my original script. Because of this, I ask humbly for you, the members of the board, to use every lever, pulley, and knob in your power to make sure that we, the workers, are given the compensation we not only need to survive, but to thrive.

[10:42:09] Your support and funding will send a clear message not only to us, the workers, and your constituents, but to Richmond that the rampant underfunding of public schools must end. This battle goes beyond money. It is a battle for workers' rights and recognition of our dignity and service to our communities.

[10:42:26] From the many wonderful teachers in classrooms behind us, to cafeteria workers who keep kids fed, to our drivers who get kids safely to school. Saying yes to this contract is saying yes to the value and humanity we were denied without collective bargaining.

[10:42:42] Thank you for your time and good night. our strength is our diversity. Please do not forget that. Thank you. Thank you very much. Speaker number 103 is Alyssa Batchelor-Cozzi to be followed by Duran Thompson, Robert Drummer, Valerie Inman. If I called your name and you're here, please come down and be ready to testify.

[10:43:03] Welcome. Hi, thank you so much for having me. My name is Alyssa Batchelor-Cozzi. I am the chairwoman of the Fairfax County Commission for Women. And on behalf of the Fairfax County Commission for Women, we want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the county budget, and thank you all so much for being here so late in, hanging in there. The commission is charged with advising the board on issues affecting the status of women and girls in Fairfax County.

[10:43:29] Our mission is to ensure that the voices, needs, and lived experiences of women are represented in county policy and funding decisions. We are deeply concerned that the proposed cuts in this year's budget risk reversing hard-won progress for women and girls in our community. Economic pressures and service reductions do not fall evenly. Many of the programs at risk are not only those that would help women and families survive but succeed, and their elimination or reduction would disproportionately impact women of color, single mothers, and those living at or near the poverty line. The 2024 Gains

[10:44:07] Gaps and Goals study on the status of women and girls in Fairfax County revealed that while women and girls have made great progress towards equity in the county, that we still have a ways to truly go in closing that gap to make sure that women and girls fully thrived. Rising housing costs, unaffordable child care, health care gaps, inequitable work-life balance, and a surge in gender-based violence already stretch women thin. Even seemingly small cuts to service can destabilize lives and ripple across families and communities. Now is not the time to pull back.

[10:44:42] we strongly urge the board to preserve and prioritize funding for programs that directly impact the safety and stability and upward mobility of women and girls in particular we strongly encourage you to reconsider the elimination or reduction of the following programs the foundation girls residential program the new generations and cornerstone resident residential treatment programs operating to any neighborhoods middle school vip program the spark program the the Bridge to Kindergarten program serving 1,600 children, outsourcing of the ECCC, reduction in legal services of Northern Virginia, reduction of poll workers,

[10:45:21] and the elimination of the One Fairfax Ambassador train-the-trainer workshops. We urge you to apply a gender equity lens to all budget decisions, especially in this critical moment. Broader structural inequities will continue to hit women hardest if left unaddressed, which will be detrimental to the economics of Fairfax County.

[10:45:41] Fairfax County has the opportunity to lead with vision and values. Investing in women and girls is not a luxury, but a necessity for a just, resilient, and thriving community. Thank you all so much for your time. Thank you. We are on speaker number 104, Duran Thompson, to be followed by Robert Drummer, Valerie Inman, and Brian Scrafford.

[10:46:05] If I called your name, please come on down. Welcome. Hi, I was 115. I'm excited to be here. Thank you. I thought I was going to be the last speaker. But hi, my name is Duran Thompson. I am a teacher and a member of Fairfax County Federation of Teachers. And I'm here today to lobby you, the Board of Supervisors, to fully fund our negotiated contract, a contract that was negotiated in good faith. I understand the challenges the county, state, and our country are facing at this time. I understand that the same reasons given in previous years for not funding our contract are the same today. I understand that you, the Board

[10:46:43] of Supervisors, were not at the bargaining table. I understand the budgeting process for the county is difficult, as Fairfax County has limitations on how you all are able to generate revenue. I understand how public sector employees like police and fire are important to the county.

[10:47:00] I also understand how important Fairfax schools are important to the county. But what I don't understand is that the school board, Dr. Reed, and the board of supervisors did not have any conversations about the financial asks that would be coming from Fairfax County Public Schools operational and instructional employees, especially since this is the first time in 50 years that collective bargaining has been available to public sector employees. What I also don't understand is why the meals tax is such a heavy lift, and I can't understand that it might not be used to offset the

[10:47:34] cost of our 7%, the 7% that we negotiated in good faith. Is it possible because of the lobby of the Great American Restaurant Lobby? What I don't understand is why it has taken collective bargaining for all of us, the Board of Supervisors, School Board, Fairfax County Public Schools, and Fairfax County employees to begin to have discussions on how to solve this ongoing financial problem.

[10:47:59] But what I do understand is as a classroom teacher, I'm expected to analyze data and determine who is doing well and in need of enrichment. As a classroom teacher I'm expected to analyze data and determine who is in need of support and to provide that support. As a classroom teacher I'm expected to meet the needs of all my students. The students with IEPs, the students with disabilities, the students who are second language learners, the students who have behavior challenges, and the student who is doing

everything they can to learn. It is my job and the job of so many operational and instructional employees to do the job by meeting the needs of our students with on-time

[10:48:37] buses clean buildings tasty meals and i'll have to say the meals have improved this year and engaging instruction isn't that or shouldn't that be the same for the board of supervisors to meet the needs of all the workers of the county and to not treat one or two groups above or differently than others you see what i really don't understand is how police and fire got their raises i understand And the police got about 13%.

[10:49:06] I know that they got a \$15,000 new hire bonus. We are fighting to just be as valued and appreciated as police and fire. We're asking that the meals tax be used to honor our contract, which will help stem the tide of school system employees leaving for greener pastures.

[10:49:25] Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 105, Robert Drummer. Welcome. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice Chair. Supervisor Alcorn and Supervisor Bierman and distinguished other members of the board, I am Attorney Robert Drummer.

[10:49:44] I'm a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated, the Omicron Kappa Kappa chapter that serves primarily the Herndon and Western Virginia communities. However, I'm participating tonight in my personal capacity, so my comments do not represent any public or private entity.

[10:50:01] I do serve as chairman of our chapter's Omega STEM Committee, which is one of our internationally mandated programs where we encourage our youth to pursue careers in STEM. In that capacity, for the past several years, I've volunteered as the mentor of a couple of teams that we sponsor, a VEX robotics team out of Langston Hughes Middle School, an aerial drones competition team out of the Reston Teen Center that's supported by the Fairfax County Community and Neighborhood Services.

[10:50:33] In that capacity, as a volunteer, I respectfully ask that you reject the proposed FY26 budget cuts to the middle school, after school, and out of school programs. Specifically, in the past couple years, working with not only our STEM robotics teams and aerial drones teams, Not only have I witnessed these students develop their hard technical skills, but I've also witnessed them develop those soft, intangible skills.

[10:51:04] And as the technical workforce of the future, these after-school programs are critical to their development. And candidly, as volunteers, we don't have the bandwidth to meet with them after school. So our reliance is on the teachers and other supporters within the schools to prepare them for the weekend competitions where we volunteer.

[10:51:26] So it's the teachers who stay after school with them to help them build the robots, help them train and do the coding for the autonomous operations. In addition to those programs, we also volunteer with the Army Education Outreach Programs eCyber Mission Cybersecurity Competition, which is another middle school competition.

[10:51:50] And some of those teams are out of Fairfax as well. Lastly, we also sponsor awards through the Fairfax County Regional Science and Engineering Fair. And so the middle school program, STEM program, serves as the pipeline for our science and engineering high school programs.

[10:52:08] This past year, we recognized Fairfax's own Heman Bikeli, Time Magazine, Kid of the Year, by presenting him with our OKK Young Man of the Year Award for his research and development of a soap to

cure and treat skin cancers.

[10:52:24] These after-school programs are critical, and as a volunteer and as a citizen, I strongly encourage you to invest in these programs and not consider so much about the cost for them, because the price, if we don't have them, will be much greater.

[10:52:44] Thank you very much. Speaker number 106, Valerie Inman, to be followed by Brian Scrafford and Katie Bonham. If I called your name, please be ready to testify. Welcome. Thank you. I'm Valerie Inman. I'm here to speak on behalf of the Child Care Advisory Council, and we thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the budget.

[10:53:11] Families need access to high-quality, affordable child care, and young children deserve quality early childhood experiences and school readiness supports. We believe now more than ever that it's critical that the county invest in the early childhood system so that young children have access to the supports and services that they need.

[10:53:31] We're encouraged that the budget includes investments in affordable housing and child care, which are the top expenses for families in the county. Access to affordable, high-quality early care and education is an important strategy for promoting equity, supporting our current and future workforce, and just the overall well-being in our community.

[10:53:50] We understand the constraints, but we do urge you to support and invest the early childhood system that serves our children and families we are specifically requesting support for the following items in the budget that have been identified for revenue reduction or elimination the Fairfax County Employee Child Care Center I understand you've heard a lot about that this evening we echo some of those same ideas the Child Care Advisory Council supports the ongoing operation of the the ECCC, to serve the employees of the county.

[10:54:26] We think preserving this resource helps sustain a strong public workforce and demonstrates the county's values of its employees and their families. And there are so few really good jobs with good benefits for the early childhood workforce.

[10:54:49] Streaming away just 40 of them has a huge impact on this workforce. I know from my own personal experience, many of us have to rely on the support of either other people or programs like Medicaid to be able to survive in Fairfax County.

[10:55:10] And that's across the country, but specifically here, that could be an issue. so these these jobs are really critical for our workforce and they also provide a lot of benefits for county employees another program that we would like to see funded is the bridges to kindergarten program the transition to kindergarten is a big milestone in a child's life participation in bridges decay program provides children who haven't had experience in preschool an opportunity participate in a program that gives them a smooth transition a successful start

[10:55:47] to their school experience it fosters equity and school readiness and from what I understand from teachers in the public school system this program is so important for letting them lay eyes on children before they walk in the door in order to provide services right from the get-go for those of those children we also ask for funding for the ages and stages questionnaire training that's really important because it provides providers with an opportunity to assess children in their developmental stages and get early services to children who

[10:56:24] need that we believe that investment in early childhood education and workforce development has significant long-term benefits for families children the workforce and the community and we thank you for your commitment to that Thank you very much for your testimony. And speaker number 107, Brian Scrafford. I don't see Brian.

[10:56:50] Speaker number 108, Katie Bonham. Katie Bonham here. Speaker number 109, Vanessa Hall. Vanessa Hall is here. And speaker 110, Sharda Gilkey is going to go on the last day now. Betsy Ellison, are you here? Betsy Ellison. How about Kristen Reeder? Kristen Reeder, Julianne Little. Okay,

[10:57:25] if you can come on down. Welcome, Ms. Hall. Thank you all. I know it's really late and I appreciate you taking this time with all of us. My family's been in Fairfax County for 45 years. I'm a scout leader, volunteer, alumnus, and one of my kids is also an alumnus and others at Woodson right now.

[10:57:49] So I'm not going to complain about taxes because I live in reality. Taxes go up when house values increase and tax rates go up only when absolutely necessary. I also know that when property owners signed on the dotted line to purchase their property, they made a commitment to pay mortgages, property taxes, and insurance.

[10:58:10] Property taxes are a fact of life, and yelling at you doesn't change anything. Those complaining about the FCPS budget fail to recognize the long-term consequences of an undereducated Fairfax County population, which means fewer and or less qualified doctors, nurses, medical technicians, and health aides, all of which we're going to need in this rapidly aging population in Fairfax County.

[10:58:33] Because I come from a very accident-prone family, I've met so many FCPS graduates in the ER at Inova. They're the best that they can be because they came from the best school system, and I'd hate for that to change. Fairfax County has questioned whether or not it can meet FCPS staff contracts.

[10:58:51] However, their union counterparts in Fairfax County, firefighters and police, have had their contracts honored, including bonuses for new hires. Does this seem fair? Is this one Fairfax? Since each FCPS staff person serves dozens to thousands of students and families each day, they are creating our future, and we need to pay them like they're doing that.

[10:59:14] FCPS staff give their all to our families, but many cannot afford to live here. When you look at the average salary of a Fairfax County versus FCPS employee, I can see why. In 2023, the average county salary was \$90,000, while the average FCPS salary was \$15,000 less.

[10:59:32] Are FCPS staff working less hard under less scrutiny and involved in less important work? I don't think so. Fairfax County executives also earned more than FCPS, their FCPS counterparts, 15% more. And they received higher rates of salary increases.

[10:59:48] I see how hard FCPS staff work in schools and at Gatehouse, so I know their commitment to their community. And they really do earn every penny in their line of work, particularly now in the age of culture wars. Personally, I suspect some of these 15% to 20% differences in pay are because education is often considered women's work or pink collar, thus lower pay and higher workload.

[11:00:12] And frankly, I don't think this should happen in one Fairfax. The JLARC study showed that their schools are starved for funds from Richmond. I wish we could get our governor to give back to Fairfax the way our county has always given to Richmond. Please do not balance the budget on the backs of teachers, students, and our public schools, as has been done for far too long.

[11:00:33] And one really last thing, my teenager, who graduated from Frost, asked that you fully fund the after-school programming, because it was literally a lifesaver for her and led to academic success for both of my kids. And 23,000 students have similar stories. Thank you so much.

[11:00:49] And I'm, this is late. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much for your testimony. And with that, let me check again. Mary Ellison, Kristen Reeder, and Julianne Little. Julianne Little.

[11:01:05] Link, Link. You are, I'm sorry, which speaker are you? I was supposed to be 121. 121. Oh, we're not, what is your name? Julianne Link, L-I-N-K. She's currently number 113, so she is next on our list.

[11:01:26] Ah, okay, got it. Thank you. Thank you very much. Welcome. Didn't want to cut in line. No, you're fine. All right. Thank you guys for letting me speak tonight, and thank you for staying up past my bedtime. So here I go.

[11:01:41] Gone are the days. Hello. My name is Julianne Link, and I stand here today as a member of Fairfax Federation of Teachers. I want everyone to think back from a very early age. Who are the people who have shaped you into who you are today?

[11:01:58] People who have loved you to love one another. Take some time to think about those extra special people. Deep down, you know they have helped you become a better version of yourself. They are instructional staff, operational staff, administrative staff.

[11:02:17] Many of them have shaped you and made you who you are today. As I stand here on this platform, it gives me goosebumps because of my extraordinary opportunities. I have received this year, getting the opportunity to work with Fairfax Federation of Teachers has been my life's dream.

[11:02:38] I am here to mend the split that divides us as educators. I am here pulling for the cause that brought us here tonight. We want to believe that the Board of Supervisors has our backs, that they are pulling for the exact cause that I believe in, the good in each of us that brings us here tonight.

[11:02:57] However, tonight's simple and obtainable ask cannot be done if our voices are told to be gone. Gone are the days that we sit back without expressing our freedom rights to collective bargaining, and gone are the days when we don't show up in droves demanding our collective bargaining rights are granted.

[11:03:18] We stand bold and proud together as one union for all workers, endorsing their union rights as human rights. I also would like to read something that is very deep in my heart, and it has to do with an iconic man, Fred Rogers.

[11:03:37] On May 1, 1969, Fred Rogers, the host of a longtime children's television show, Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, appeared in Washington before the Senate to express his disagreement with a proposal to underfund PBS.

[11:03:55] Mr. Rogers spoke this song he wrote, and the judge loved it so much that he got the funding on the spot. Here is the song. What do you do with the mad that you feel? What do you do with the mad that you feel when you feel so mad you could bite?

[11:04:13] When the whole wide world seems oh so wrong and nothing you do seems right? What do you do? Do you punch a bag? Do you pound some clay or some dough? Do you round up friends for a game of tag or see how fast you go?

[11:04:31] It's great to be able to stop when you planned a thing that's wrong and be able to do something else instead. And think of this song. I can stop when I want to. Can stop when I wish.

[11:04:47] I can stop, stop, stop anytime. And what is a good feeling to feel like this? And you know that feeling is really mine. You know there's something deep inside that helps us become what we can be.

[11:05:02] For a girl can someday be a woman. And a boy can someday be a man. Thank you. Thank you. We are on 114, Molly Cronin. Molly, please come on down. Mary Catherine Katie Oakley, are you here? If you are here, please come down close. Monica DeMouche, if you are here, come down close. Eddie White, if you are here, come down close so that you're ready to provide testimony. Welcome.

[11:05:38] Good evening, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the larger Fairfax County community. My name is Molly Cronin, and I'm a very problem-solution-oriented person. So, let's talk about the elephant in the room.

[11:05:54] There's a \$149.6 million difference between what the Board of Supervisors is offering compared to what the FCPS School Board requires to maintain the current programs, current resources, and high-quality education offered in the ninth-largest school system in the country.

[11:06:09] The school system, which is the third largest employer in our Commonwealth and the largest employer in our county. Yes, this budget is an increase in dollars because, yes, our costs are rising. Let's be honest. Who hasn't seen rising costs over the years for the same product?

[11:06:26] Your teachers and school staff feel the rising price of groceries and gas just as much as other Virginian and Fairfax taxpayers. So here's the problem. This is a phrase that's irked me, as I've heard it multiple times at budget town halls over the past few months. The phrase that schools remain at 51.5% of general fund disbursements in FY2026, as if this is some kind of standard in the transfer to schools.

[11:06:52] However, over the past 26 years, the schools have received an increase in dollars, but the percentage continues to decrease. At one point, we were at a high of 54% in 2010. Even in FY 2009, when our county was facing a pretty much great recession, we received 53.1% of the county budget.

[11:07:14] Again, when we look at these years, we were looking at a total budget of somewhere around \$3.3 billion. Today, in FY 2025, that disbursement increases to \$5.45 billion. So I'm not sure why the percentage continues to go down.

[11:07:29] I hope that you can justify why the county seems to no longer be prioritized as we no longer receive between 52 to 54 percent of the county budget to schools. The last time that FCPS received 51.5 percent or less of the county budget, let alone twice two years in a row, was in FY 2001 and FY 2002, which for perspective, I was in Mrs. Du Bois kindergarten class and Mrs. Goldstein first grade classroom during those two fiscal years.

[11:07:58] Today, I'm a special education teacher with two bachelor's, master's degrees, and seven certifications in special education, ESOL, and general education. I am the highly qualified teacher that you want to keep in this district. Choosing not to fully fund the budget is a choice to actively underfund public schools in Fairfax County.

[11:08:16] So here's my solution. We have \$149.6 million difference. From a recent update on April 10th, we're projected to get \$28.3 million from the Virginia General Assembly Conference reports. If we actually commit to the 4% food and beverage tax, that's another \$65 million generated.

[11:08:34] So we're down to \$56.3 million. If the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors funded FCPS at the 26-year average, which I calculated, it took about 12 hours of research, we would receive 52.4% of the county's general fund disbursement, which totals around \$64 million in FY2026.

[11:08:52] I promise this is worth it. That dollar amount would actually give us the ability to be fully funded and have a surplus of \$7.7 million. And I'm not sure if \$7.7 million means anything to you, but it does to our educators. By the grace of God, that's the exact money the county needs to fully fund the county agency reductions that directly impact FCPS.

[11:09:15] That would be the money for middle schools. That would be the money for bridge to K. That would be the money for high school crossing guards. When I brought this concern up at a budget town hall, I was told that the money's gone downhill after COVID. However, looking at the historical data that I personally researched, that information is factually incorrect.

[11:09:33] I hope you care about our kids, their education, and their futures, so we can fully fund the FCPS budget. Thank you. Thank you. Let me verify, I want to verify, some of these folks aren't here. Mary Catherine, Katie Oakley, Monica DeMouche, Eddie White is here.

[11:09:54] And as speaker number 117, welcome. My name is Eddie White, and I live in Fairfax Station, part of the county, South Front Oaks, Barrington, Frost Point.

[11:10:12] I bought a house in Fairfax County in 1987. It cost me \$195,000, Fairfax Station. Jump forward, 2010, property assessed at \$600,000.

[11:10:30] Jump forward, 2025, we're up to \$900,000. I've heard some good, you know, ideas from the other members of the county as far as funding schools, funding for after-school programs.

[11:10:48] You know, I can remember, you know, with all this gray hair years ago, you know, my daughter, when she was going to school, it was \$167 a month. You know, that's unsustainable for these young folks these days. So they need some kind of assistance with that.

[11:11:05] That's a good program, I think. you know, \$1,000 a month, the medium salary for, you know, young folks, probably \$60,000, \$70,000 a year. They can't afford that \$600,000 that I had, you know, in 2018. They can't buy that house today. So, you know, we're moving, we're moving. You've got a tough job. You know, we have to fund programs for the county or whatever, but it's not sustainable unless we find some other source of revenue besides assessments on the homeowners.

[11:11:45] I mean, that's just, you know, the young folks are being pressed because they can't afford housing. Couples that's working, you know, two couples working their job, they can't afford to pay \$1,000 or \$2,000 a month for daycare.

[11:12:00] So you're being squeezed at that level. And then the seniors are being squeezed. You know, our assessments are going up. You know, I don't mind paying taxes. You know, I could write it off, you know, write \$10,000 off. So if you raised it \$200,000, it wouldn't make a difference if we could write it off.

[11:12:23] So my only point is, at some point, we've got to look for other sources of revenue. And Chairman McKay and the rest of the supervisors in the county, I hope you take that in consideration. Yes, there's some valid programs out there that we have to fund.

[11:12:42] But at some point, you're squeezing the young folks, and we're being squeezed as seniors. I'm 74 years old. I go to the Lorton landfill down there. I can't drop off anything free. I've got to pay for it.

[11:12:59] So it's no benefit. So that's all I have to say, and I thank you very much. And I hope you take that into consideration when you look at your budget. Thank you. Thank you very much. We're at Speaker 118, Wendy Henley. Is Wendy here? Come on down.

[11:13:16] And then we're going to go to a series of video testimony that's been submitted. Wendy will be our last in-person speaker here this evening before we switch to video testimony.

[11:13:37] Good evening. I thought I was Speaker number 123. Anyway, good evening. And I'm Wendy Henley, President of the South County Federation.

[11:13:55] And on behalf of the South County Federation, I thank you, Chairman McKay, members of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Hill, for the opportunity to present our concerns regarding the proposed FY2026 budget.

[11:14:15] I will present concerns that the South County Federation identified directly from the agency reductions document that was posted online. And I'm just going to start with Agency 79, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. And I found that on page, we found that on page 49. And it's been brought up, it's been presented here tonight, is the elimination,

[11:14:51] eliminate the middle school, after school program. So So we've heard this evening that over 23,000 children would be adversely affected by the decision to actually eliminate the program.

[11:15:08] The South County Federation do not support the elimination of that program. So we ask that you carefully consider that decision whenever it comes time to finalize the budget.

[11:15:27] I'm going to move on to Agency 90. This is the police department. Now, I'm sure you all know that the South County Federation is considered, we're like the southern gateway to Fairfax County.

[11:15:45] Okay. So I just want to focus on the perceived public safety and emergency services inequities in the southeastern most part of Fairfax County. The staffing workload realignment concerning Agency 90, this reduction eliminates 47 of the 47 FTE vacant uniform positions at the police department.

[11:16:20] Now, just let me roll it back a little bit. The Lorton Police Station had its grand opening on October 28, 2023. It is not fully staffed.

[11:16:35] So approximately \$33 million of the 151 bond, \$151 million bond was spent to build that station.

[11:16:53] So why not fully staff it? State-of-the-art, beautiful equipment, everything. Fully staff that. We highly recommend that you fully staff that brand new police station. And the last point I want to make is Agency 92.

[11:17:11] We've heard a lot about it. Fire and Rescue Department reduced overtime through position reallocation. So the South County Federation stand in solidarity with the Fairfax County IAFF, a local 2068.

[11:17:28] Part of this, and I'm reading a narrative that's in the advertised plan. Part of this comprehensive review recommends the following adjustments, and this affects the South County region, eliminating Ambulance 441 Crosspoint, that's in Crosspoint, eliminating staffing on the Rescue 419 in Lorton, eliminating Ambulance 420 in Gunston.

[11:18:00] So when you don't staff the brand-new police station, you're eliminating all of the fire and rescue emergency services, what do we have for our residents in the South County region?

[11:18:16] So I ask on behalf of the South County Federation that you carefully consider your constituents in the area. You know, reality, perception is nine-tenths of the law.

[11:18:34] And the way we perceive things is we are not being serviced equitably with our safety and emergency services. I want to thank you for your time. It's late, so on behalf of the South County Federation, have a good night, and please carefully consider our concerns.

[11:18:56] Thank you. Thank you very much. We're now going to shift to what I have as Speaker 119, and I believe we have three, four, six videos that will start running continuously. Thank you. Hello, my name is Casey Danielson, and thank you for letting me submit this video.

[11:19:18] It makes things a lot easier for us. Okay, so I'm sure a lot of people have mentioned affordability, which is true. For me, I'm much more interested in the experience our son Nils is getting, which is unlike our first daycare, which was basically a babysitter with people who knew some first aid.

[11:19:50] The things that mean the most to me as an obsessive learner. Sometimes we'll be out in the yard or at the aquarium or something, and something kind of profound will come out of my son, making a connection that I've never seen him make before or that his mother or me maybe never taught him.

[11:20:19] And I'll say, how in the world does he know that? And usually he comes back with, Sarah, I see the learning process means a lot to him. I think it's the way he learns here that has made a huge difference because you prioritize a sort of natural, healthy way of learning that's geared toward the students themselves individually.

[11:20:51] I do like that we're asked to come to family events because then I feel like our son is able to say, okay, Daddy, you're the guy I see in the morning and when I come home and we hang at home and we do things. But with us actually sort of integrating that relationship into, you know, other parents and kids kind of showing, you know, that we're all part of a bigger world. Sometimes when I show up to his school and he is confused because it's out of context for him, but I think that all that stuff is good and I think encouraging families to come together like that does the same thing

[11:21:31] basically I think I could go on and on about why it's convenient why we appreciate being able to afford child care uh living in Washington DC and everything that that means financially but the thing that means the most to me is watching him become himself in a way I don't think he would have without coming to this organization uh not to sound too sappy but that's how I feel thanks

[11:22:09] hi my name is Carolyn Gamble and I'm sitting on the south porch of historic Huntley where I'm a park authority volunteer I know this is a difficult year and next year could be worse you're very difficult choices to make regarding the fiscal year 2026 budget I would like the County to fully fund the Fairfax County Park Authority. Funding natural and cultural resources

[11:22:43] is an investment in our collective health and history. I suspect that the Park Authority has been underfunded, particularly since the late 1980s, because it is an agency that has a way of generating its own revenue through user fees. The ratio of tax-based to fee-based funding has flipped since 1988. The agency was majority tax-based and is now majority fee-based, 60%.

[11:23:15] Perhaps the thinking year after year was, well, it's a tough year, so we're just going to have to let the park authority take care of itself because they can raise fees or just do more camps. There are negative consequences to this funding structure. One is inequity. Many park amenities are out of reach to less

affluent residents. Another consequence is an effective change in the mission of the park authority. The priority now is profit. Many programs cannot be provided

[11:23:50] because they don't make a profit. Programming staff are required to generate the revenue to cover their salaries and therefore can spend very little time on park duties that do not generate revenue such as maintenance and natural and cultural resource management when i visit parks i see a decrease in upkeep this cannot go on i don't know how to remedy the park authority funding structure problem but something needs to give please address this problem funding parks

[11:24:25] adequately saves money in the long run we need our trees for climate resilience invasive vines are killing them at a faster and faster rate what is the solution for better invasive plant control underfunding the park authority cannot be helping this problem putting off maintenance for cultural resources costs more in the long run too and can result in permanent loss i point out the peeling paint on this pillar which is exposing the wood which can then rot at the very least please restore

[11:25:01] park authority funding for forestry trail maintenance and the ecologist one position thank you for this opportunity to ask for more park funding i also want to express my support of the four percent meal tax thank you greetings my name is ben kleekamp and i am virtually testifying to retain the fairfax county employee child care center e triple c in the 2025-26 fiscal year budget the e triple c has been instrumental in the care and development of my

[11:25:36] family my oldest son who graduated from e triple c is now excelling at eagle view elementary thanks to the excellent education and preparation provided by the ECCC teachers and staff. My youngest son is currently thriving at ECCC, forming deep bonds with his teachers.

[11:25:52] Each morning on the drive, he tells us about what he is going to do with his friends or what he's going to share with Ms. Maria. However, during my time today, rather than focusing solely on the personal benefits my family has experienced, I want to highlight the broader importance of ECCC as a resource for Fairfax County employees with young families, particularly during crisis events. Since 2017, I have worked as an epidemiology manager in the communicable disease section for the Fairfax County Health Department. My role involves helping stop the spread of diseases, a task that can be critically important during the COVID-19 pandemic. In early

[11:26:32] 2020, the pandemic left terrible impacts to our community, leading to the closure of many businesses, including the private daycare our oldest son attended. My wife also is a Fairfax County employee and works at the health department. With no family in the area to support us, we faced the difficult decision of who would stay home to care for our child. Despite the availability of pandemic leave, both my wife and I have a service-first mentality and during the time of crisis would rather be working to serve the residents of Fairfax County. The ECCC's rapid implementation

[11:27:07] of robust infection control practices allowed us to confidently leave our one-year-old son in their care, allowing our family to fully support the county's COVID-19 response efforts. Emergency responders often emphasize the importance of caring for responders so they can effectively serve the communities being impacted. The ECCC played this crucial role for our family, allowing us to contribute to the public health response during the pandemic.

[11:27:35] Despite improvements in local public health disease control and emergency response capabilities, Recent federal actions have raised many significant concerns about our nation's readiness to

handle future crises. These detrimental actions have significantly impacted public health infrastructure at all levels. In my opinion, the ECCC is a vital resource that supports Fairfax County employees with young children, especially during emergencies. Its continued operation is essential for maintaining our local ability to respond to future crises.

[11:28:11] I urge the Board of Supervisors to continue funding the Employee Child Care Center. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair McKay and members of the Board. My name is Charles Webb and I've been a proud Fairfax County employee since 2014 and a parent at the Employee Child Care Center, ECCC, since 2018.

[11:28:33] I'm here today to urge you to preserve the ECC in its current form and reject any proposal to replace it with an outside private provider. The ECCC has been an invaluable part of my life as a working parent. When I first enrolled my child in 2018, I was immediately struck by the quality of care, professionalism of the staff, and the sense of community that exists there.

[11:28:57] These are not just child care workers. They are highly trained early childhood educators, most of whom are women, and many of whom are women of color. They have created a nurturing, enriching, and safe environment where our children can thrive. I would never consider sending my child anywhere else.

[11:29:16] The center has allowed me and many other parents to stay committed to our roles as public servants while knowing our children are being cared for by people we trust deeply. If the ECCC is outsourced to a private provider, that trust and that quality will be at risk.

[11:29:34] Private centers often struggle with high turnover, inconsistent care, and profit-driven models that don't prioritize children or staff. Replacing the ECCC would also send the wrong message about Fairfax County's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

[11:29:52] The staff of this center represents the very heart of what DEI looks like in action. Women, especially women of color, leading and excelling in early childhood education. Outsourcing the center jeopardizes not only their livelihoods, but also the stability and sense of belonging they've built for hundreds of county families.

[11:30:11] If we truly believe in supporting working families, in promoting equity, and in retaining a talented and diverse workforce, then we must keep the ECCC as it is. This is not just a budget line. This is a promise to county employees and their families.

[11:30:28] Thank you for your time. Good evening. My name is Jamie Lewis, and I work at Liberty Middle School. I'm a member of Fairfax Federation of Teachers. It was disheartening last year when the Board of Supervisors did not vote to fully fund the budget, and especially when news broke in March that the Board of Supervisors did vote to increase their own salaries for their part-time positions by 36% to 45%, with the chairman upgrading from \$100,000 annually to \$140,000 annually.

[11:30:59] That is an increase that exceeds what I have seen cumulatively in my 15 years as an educator. It is a pattern that the Board of Supervisors does not fully fund the FCPS budget request, and we are tired of the shortchange. I wonder how many children of Fairfax County benefited from the supervisors raised last year versus how many would have benefited from a fully funded budget.

[11:31:23] Blaming the state isn't going to cut it anymore. If schools become unaccredited, it impacts your housing values. If our schools become unaccredited, we don't have the funding necessary to do the work well with highly educated and specialized staff. And then you're aiding the case for getting free public education and making the education not based on choice but on an ability to pay for education.

[11:31:48] Also in February, Behrman shared that everyone is asking for more, and I do understand that. He specifically cited that the fire department is asking for better overtime in a 56-hour work week, and that is an unjust amount of overtime, and they should be compensated.

[11:32:05] However, have you asked educators how much overtime they put in for free? How much time that we are giving, and we are just asking that our salaries are comparable to our neighbors. The Board of Supervisors' consistent underfunding has frozen step increases and or market scale adjustments consistently since I joined in 2016 because the budget does not get approved, yet the Board of Supervisors gets far more significant increases than FCPS staff have in nine years.

[11:32:38] Since I began in Fairfax County, freezes on step increases and market scale adjustments have been dismal. In 2016, FCPS did pay more than LCPS, Loudoun County, but not anymore. The freezes have cost me \$6,000 just within FCPS annually, but when I compare it to Loudoun County, it's \$10,000 a year.

[11:33:01] When I compare it to where I came from in Montgomery County, I'm losing \$17,000 a year because of the budget freezes. Fairfax is losing experienced teachers to other districts and underfunding the budget impacts teachers and students whether you think it should or not.

[11:33:17] The school board has asked you to fund a fair budget. If you can afford it for yourselves, you can afford it for us. What you spend your money on reflects your values. Value education. Thank you. And I believe that's the end of our videos.

[11:33:32] We had video 122, but that was withdrawn, correct? It is my understanding that there were some technical issues and that they were going to re-record the video so that it can be shown on Thursday. Okay. Excellent. Excellent. All right.

[11:33:48] Well, thank you for that. And that brings us to the end of our speakers list for day one, budget public testimony, and the end of our board meeting. And we will continue testimony tomorrow, April 23rd, at 3 p.m. And until then, the board will be in recess.



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