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Hanover County Board of Supervisors Meeting - Special Budget Meeting, Wednesday, February 26, 2025

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- Official agenda (CivicClerk): [https://hanovercova.api.civicclerk.com/v1/Meetings/GetMeetingFileStream\(fileId=3508,plainText=false\)](https://hanovercova.api.civicclerk.com/v1/Meetings/GetMeetingFileStream(fileId=3508,plainText=false))
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[00:01:28] hello hello it is 1202 and we will now call the february 26th hanover county board of supervisors meeting to order as is customary we will begin with an invocation led by supervisor dibble and the pledge of allegiance led by mr hudson ms dibble thank you mr chairman if you could please um

[00:01:56] we'll wait for this group to get seated all right thank you very much if you would please bow with me. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to come together as a

[00:02:31] community, come together as business partners, come together as colleagues, as neighbors, and friends. And we ask that you will bless this time that we have with each other. We also ask that you would give your wisdom and guidance to the Board of Supervisors here today as we venture into making good and wise decisions on behalf of the community that we serve. And Heavenly Father, we thank you for our fabulous first responders. We ask that you will keep them safe and keep them protected. And we

[00:03:08] especially ask for prayers and blessings on the Virginia Beach police force that suffered a tragic loss this past week. We also pray for our governing bodies, for this board, for the Commonwealth, and for the United States of America.

[00:03:28] Please be with them in all that they do and that we will remember that it is a giving that we receive and that we are here to serve. In all this we ask in your precious name. Amen. Amen.

[00:03:43] Please stand for the pledge if you're able. 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.

[00:04:02] Thank you, Ms. Dibble. Thank you, Mr. Hudson. Next on the agenda, consideration of amendments to the agenda. Mr. Davis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that we amend the agenda first for item 6B and C to reverse the order of the presentation.

[00:04:23] In my motion, I move to reverse the order of the budget presentations as published on the agenda as agenda item 6B, presentation by Dr. Lisa Pennycuff, interim superintendent of schools, miss terry stone assistant superintendent of business operations in item 6c presentation by colonel david r heinz sheriff hanover county there is a motion to amend the agenda to reverse two items second there is a second all in favor please indicate by saying aye aye any opposed the agenda

[00:04:55] has been amended mr davis mr chairman i move to amend the agenda to add a closed session to the agenda to be held during the regularly scheduled recess from 5 to 6 pm under the following authority the virginia code subsection 2.2 3711 a7 consultation with legal counsel and staff members pertaining actual litigation enforcement action involving gpin 7880-21-0762 second there is a motion and a second all in favor please indicate by saying aye aye any opposed we have

[00:05:34] added a closed session to the agenda mr. Davis mr. chairman I move that we defer our easy two zero two four zero zero zero one nine referred to as Mount Sinai for 28 days until the next regularly scheduled board meeting to hear public hearings second all in favor please indicate by saying aye aye any opposed the Mount Sinai application has been deferred for one month miss dibble yes thank you mr. chair i'd like to move that we amend the consent agenda to add item b

[00:06:13] for wayne waldrop as a south anna representative on the economic development committee for the existing term ending 12 31 27. there is a motion is there a second second all in favor of amending the consent agenda please indicate by saying aye aye any opposed consent agenda has been amended Any other amendments to the agenda? Seeing none we will move on to agenda item three.

[00:06:46] Chairman and board member comments have recognized supervisor Faye Pritchard. Thank you Mr. Chair. Last Friday Mr. Herzberg very kindly went along with me to a meeting of the leadership at the Wegmans warehouse. It was the most positive meeting that we've had with them thus far that I'm aware of and as most people know we've had ongoing concerns about the noise in that neighborhood yesterday mr hersberg and i received this letter from the folks at wegmans

[00:07:22] um you'll bear with me i won't read the whole thing i will read the pertinent part as you know the county recently commissioned an official study regarding noise around the wegmans distribution center we were pleased that the findings were very positive and demonstrated that wegmans distribution center is within all existing requirements governing noise and while that's great news. We believe our role as neighbor and good citizens to those in the surrounding counties, surrounding communities, and Hanover County generally does not simply end with that study. That's why today we are officially letting you know of our intention to go above and beyond

[00:08:02] legal compliance and move forward with the electrification of our reefer fleet, that is the refrigerated trailers at the Wegmans Distribution Center. By way of brief background, reefers normally run on diesel fuel. Based on our research into a quieter option, we learned that there is an opportunity to add an electric motor, which can be used when the trailer is docked at the warehouse. The electric motor is much quieter than the diesel engine.

[00:08:36] To achieve this conversion, we need to add special electrical outlets to each dock of the warehouse and begin updating our fleet of trailers to this new dual option diesel and electric reefer unit we are in the process of achieving both significant project projects as quickly as possible we anticipate that by the end of May the electric outlets will be installed by then we also should have enough reefer units converted to dual motor to enable refrigerated trailers being loaded by to be operated by the electric motor connected to the quieter shore power,

[00:09:14] which is electricity coming from our facility. Wegmans is investing \$500,000 to do this for the community, and they let Mr. Herzberg and I know that it is also their long-term intention to move their trucks from being diesel trucks to natural gas trucks, which will, in fact, lower the noise even more.

[00:09:37] I cannot say how grateful I am for the support of Mr. Herzberg, the support of the community, and I am very grateful to Wegmans for continuing to work with us. Thank you. Well, thank you very much, Supervisor Pritchard, for your kind words.

[00:09:55] I know you worked hard on the issue. I know it's been tough, and I say to you congratulations. I do believe this is a win-win-win for Wegmans, for Hanover County, and for the neighbors. I would like to also take this time to thank Wegmans again for their generous donation of the pallets of bottled water that they very generously donated to our community during the water outage.

[00:10:27] There were a lot of people that needed water, there were a lot of people that went and picked up the water, and just a great thing that Wegmans did. And they are continuing to work to be a strong community asset to Hanover County and to work well with our citizens.

[00:10:44] The next comment I'd like to make is on behalf of a lot of our citizens. There's a lot of questions. You know, what's going on with all the people working out in the old church on the side of the road and Cold Harbor Road? And there continues to be a lot of work in Hanover County across the entire county on the implementation of the expansion of high speed internet. And this doesn't just go up on the poles or in the ground by itself. And so contractors are diligently working across the county. And sometimes that does involve some lane closures. They do have to get

[00:11:23] some VDOT permits. They do have to put bucket trucks up on the Dominion Energy poles and the Rappahannock electric poles. And, you know, sometimes they have to close a two lane road and just leave one open, and I know it's sometimes inconvenient for people, but we do ask for patience and understanding because those workers have to be kept safe. The work is coming on behalf of our citizens. It's been a board initiative for at least three years. It's a board initiative this year to continue to work and to support these efforts to bring the expansion of high-speed internet,

[00:12:00] Whether it is making high-speed Internet available to unserved rural areas, or it could also be adding a choice or two choices for additional providers that will benefit our citizens.

[00:12:19] And in some cases, it's an upgrade. Some people still have some of the old copper wiring. This is high-speed fiber Internet, which will be an approval of service for many of our citizens. so this is all

being done on behalf of you all so thank you for your patience any other board members have comments yes sir mr chair if that's all right just just some comments mr hudson thank you sir uh mr chair specifically i just wanted to speak to the numerous uh emails uh and calls that i've gotten in regard to the uh homes that have just been torn down

[00:12:54] uh at the bell creek road uh route 360 uh intersection before they were torn down it was can you get them torn down? And then now that they've been torn down, it's what's going there and everybody wait for it. It's gonna be a car wash. And I can't find anybody that's happy about it, but it's nothing that we can do about it now.

[00:13:15] But something that has been universal among my constituents is that it is the perception, and I'm here to say that the perception is not the reality, and the perception is that the 301 corridor It's more strategic planning than the 360 side.

[00:13:33] And I don't mean to speak for my colleagues, but I do want to ensure my constituents that it is a part of the conversation to continue to work on our zoning ordinances and things of that nature to tighten them up so that they do have to come before the board and that sort of thing.

[00:13:54] Because I do hear you that it's car washes and vape shops and storage units and that sort of thing. And currently, if it's zoned business, there's about 70 or so items that can go there quite easily. So I hear you. I don't like it either. I see and hear about some of the crime that's occurring around some of these things and all of that.

[00:14:15] So I do want you to know that it is top of mind, and I do appreciate the engagement. And I want you to – I would ask that you continue to hold me to it, and let's stay engaged and work together. So thank you, Mr. Chair. Any other board members with comments? seeing none mr badesky thank you mr chair members of the board i just have a few announcements today some of our residents may be aware that dominion power has been sharing with us for over a year that they had planned to replace and upgrade some of their transmission lines uh the project that they are about to commence will connect the almont substation at the chickahominy sub to the chickahominy

[00:14:53] substation in charles city they will be notifying residents along that route in the next days weeks and months to come as they move that project forward but we were just notified i believe just yesterday that this project is now commencing so we wanted to remind our residents of that project that has been shared in the past as well two items i wanted to call attention to while they're on your consent agenda today there are no less important from the actions we are taking so i wanted to spend just a moment on addressing them one of the items that has come from your public

[00:15:29] safety committee is a recommendation to change what is currently monikered as animal control to animal protection we have focused our efforts clearly on protecting the animals in our care raising the bar on our adoptions and making the animals in our community a priority and changing this name will align much better with the actions we're actually taking on behalf of the animals in our care and that recommendation is coming to you from your public safety committee another item on

[00:16:05] your consent agenda today is a request for king william county to remove themselves from the pamunkey regional library system this request has come from the king william board of supervisors they requested this to be effective at the end of the current fiscal year uh june at the end of june and so that'll be for the board's consideration just so our community is clear we are continuing to work and maintain a

regional library system with goochland county and are working in that fashion so we do not we're not looking to any direct changes here in hanover county we will still maintain a regional partnership with goochland county even with king williams

[00:16:45] board of supervisors choosing to withdraw mr chair that's all i have thank you mr bedesky moving on agenda item four citizens time mr chair may i have one more second please you may supervisor in my comments before i neglected to thank staff who has put in a great deal of time to work on this wegmans project and i did not wish to be ungracious about that i'm just excited well thank you for your additional comments and you should be excited

[00:17:19] and i'm happy for you that's great news okay agenda item four citizens time we have two registered speaker uh so far mr della ripa and mr nelson is there anyone else who wishes to speak during citizens time please raise your hand so we have two registered speakers citizens time is an opportunity for you and other citizens to address the board on any matter under the board's authority that is not on today's agenda for a public hearing you will each have five minutes the time will be

[00:17:57] kept by mr. Davis speakers are asked to address their comments to the board and not the audience. The board does not permit the use of slideshows. The board requests the audience refrain from interrupting speakers. We do have these cards in the back for citizens that you can fill out, but it's not necessary. If someone changes your mind and you would still like to speak, you can. I will now call Mr. Bob Nelson of the Ashland Magisterial District. Mr.

[00:18:32] Nelson, you have five minutes. Please state your name and your district, sir. Good afternoon, chairman herzberg and board supervisors my name is bob nelson i reside in the ashland district my citizen comments concern planning and fiscal issues related to cool spring elementary school redistricting a consultant is proposed for scenarios under all of them between 214 and 237 students would be removed from cool spring over 25 percent of cool springs current enrollment would

[00:19:04] be sent elsewhere. Who benefits from redistricting? Developers. Here's why. Using Minton's 7.5 acre rezoning as a floor and eliminating a number of parcels entirely, 386 acres zoned A1 will remain within the proposed Cool Spring District under all scenarios. Assuming half of that acreage is developed, a density of two homes per acre, and 0.5 students per home,

[00:19:39] conservative assumptions. 195 students will attend the three-school complex on Atlee Station Road and 90 students will attend Cool Spring. Redistricting transfers the right to attend Cool Spring from families who have purchased homes in the school district to those who purchase new homes in the future. Redistricting also eliminates school capacity and proffer issues in future rezoning cases. But that's not all. Benton and Charleston Ridge 2 are approved unconstructed

[00:20:15] developments. They are exempt from redistricting. Because areas removed from Cool Spring under all scenarios have no development potential, it is impossible to do more to support future residential development than what the school board is considering. Families and students who live along Atlee Station Road today are denied access to their elementary school. Families and students in future residential developments take their place. At a recent board meeting, it was

[00:20:52] noted that the Board of Supervisors had approved the rezonings which created the problem. It is ironic that the school board is now considering redistricting options which give residential developments everything they could possibly want. There are other inconvenient truths. The school

division knew that Cool Spring was at 94% of its capacity in September 2021 and its prior projections were flat out wrong. It failed to address a growing problem for two more years. Elementary

[00:21:29] school replacements have been approved for Ashland, Beaver Dam, and Battlefield Park. Enrollment at these schools is a fraction of Cool Spring. In fact, less than 50% for two of them. Over 200 students should not be turned away from Cool Spring. What's needed is an eight classroom addition to Cool Spring at a fraction of the \$40 to \$50 million cost of a replacement school.

[00:22:02] In addition to Cool Spring is essential to reduce the number of students denied access to their school, approve that decision, and fund it in this year's budget. Thank you. I have 10 copies of my citizens' comments and related support. Thank you, Mr. Nelson. Next is Mr. Della Rippa of the Henry District. Please come forward, sir. Please state your name, your magisterial district, and you'll

[00:22:38] have five minutes. Good afternoon. My name is Mike Della Rippa. I've been a resident of Cherrydale subdivision for 37 years. I am here mainly because of what happened in Virginia Beach on February 22nd, the tragedy. I think that, you know, if anything, through this tragedy, let it serve as a wake-up call that the world is continually becoming more and more dangerous. I would like to, since I've only got five minutes, I'm going to go quick over some points. I just want to commend

[00:23:14] the Sheriff's Department for having vests for all the police dogs you use. I was surprised when I read the Mechanicsville Local about a year ago, some kid from King's Charter raised 800 bucks so a dog could have a protective vest. So I'm very happy that you all are going to protect our dogs.

[00:23:33] Okay, second point. Although I haven't even seen the Sheriff's budget, I know from my own experience and work that i would like to request that the training budget for the sheriff's department their deputies i don't know what he has in there but whatever we spent last year it should be doubled we can't just think that we're lucky that some tragedy has not happened in this county and i still remember reading in mechanics for local a few years ago like some deputies went on a call and some citizens started shooting at them unfortunately they were not hit

[00:24:08] um i always find that my own experience and work that more training continual training and have training modernized and learn from all the uh tragedies that unfortunately happened to law enforcement we can learn from them and see that they do not happen to our deputies i do want to also make a suggestion that if it's necessary to have more police dogs on our uh with the deputies especially for night duty. Those dogs are very intimidating and to me could be crime prevention

[00:24:42] that you all would give the funds for the sheriff's department. Okay, point four that I wanted to talk about is schools. School safety is that I see that I read an article called Dads on Duty. It was in the Reader's Digest about how retired dads will just walk around the school. It was started in Cleveland and you know they reduced the crime in the schools significantly I think it's really a stretch to think that one deputy could control all of a campus say as big as Hanover High School or the middle schools I just think we

[00:25:21] need more eyes on the facility of schools so and last thing I would like to see at it is that not only the reserve deputies but also any first responder you know on the ambulances the fire department they get some kind of compensation rather than just being a volunteer these people are going out there at really great risk to do what they do and I'd hate to see us lose you know people because they're not getting

paid and especially for I think the deputies we have here the reserve deputies have a tremendous amount of

[00:25:57] experience they can share with with new deputies so I just want to say that and Thank you for your consideration. I hope I'm five minutes. Okay. Well, thank you very much. Thank you for your comments, sir Is there anyone else who would like to speak in citizens time seeing no one else citizens time is now closed Next on the agenda item five consent agenda. Mr. Davis Mr. Chairman I move for approval of the amended consent agenda with the addition of item B for second

[00:26:36] There is a motion and a second all in favor. Please indicate by saying I consent agenda is approved next we will go into the presentation phase of today's agenda agenda item 6 letter a presentation of the county administrator's proposed budget by mr john a bedesky county administrator thank you sir thank you mr chair members of the board uh everybody here in the boardroom and those that are watching uh via streaming first i want to thank you for the opportunity to present the proposed fiscal year 2026 budget i also would like to thank

[00:27:13] everybody in the room for coming to see my presentation today even though I really know they're here to see the sheriff this process has come together with a lot of work and I often end with thank you's but I really need to thank the departments that have come together the constitutional offices the leadership that we've had in our finance department dr. Brown Lauren all Shelley Wright mark and the entire budget team and analyst team for helping us get here today. Today I will be sharing with you the proposed budget. And as we move into

[00:27:51] today's presentation, we always start with the focus on our people. And for us, our people here in Hanover is our community, whether that be the community of employees, our community of our residents, our business community. That is always our focus each day here in Hanover. And as we really make these focuses, we also learn from our residents. We spend a lot of time throughout a fiscal year listening our listening part of the work we do is the most important part of the work that we do so we can strategically develop a budget each year that aligns with the recommendations from what we're hearing from our residents and you as their representatives here on the board

[00:28:31] of supervisors this past year in particular we have spent tremendous amount of time listening learning evaluating to get to these recommendations here as you can see between town hall meetings our Citizens Academy the comp plan process that we we completed other ways that we're engaging our community more than ever and that process really allows us to align priorities and bring this budget to you the budget document I always say is one of the most important documents that we produce each year because what is funded is what our priorities are each year in our

[00:29:06] community and so we can't execute the services that we provide on behalf of our residents each day without making sure that we're delivering what our residents are looking for this process even though we're showing you October to April this is really an ongoing annual process we listen and learn each day every year we learn what our citizens concerns are what they would like to have as far as it relates to additional services and put those into context with our available revenues this process for us formally really begins in October we

[00:29:41] start working with all of the departments and constitutional officers we engage our school partners in the the process and by the time we're getting here to you in what's called the county administrator's budget recommendation the school board has also met received the superintendent's

budget recommendation and has brought bringing that forth to you to hear today you will hear from a number of individuals that will augment the information that i'm giving you so after myself today you'll hear from our sheriff our superintendent will be here our fire chief public utilities and human resources will also be available to provide additional context to some of the

[00:30:21] information that i am sharing with you here today when we start looking at our general fund budget it's very clear what our priorities are and so i'm going to spend a fair amount of time talking to you about where the funds that we are allocating in this budget are going and what are we looking to accomplish and first i want to start with public safety when we think about our community we can't really deliver any other service we provide as a local government if our community doesn't feel safe if our community doesn't feel well protected the largest investment that most

[00:30:56] people have is their homes want to make sure that they're living in a safe community that the value that home is maintained and people are proud to be from here and public safety is a core foundation of this community we have you see a number of the men and women behind me here today but these are also the folks that are working 24 7. they're the folks that are working in the middle of the nights while everyone's resting to keep our our community safe and we're really proud you're going to hear from your sheriff here uh some of the statistics and and the work that they are doing uh that we should be very proud of and so we're making additional investments

[00:31:32] in public safety in the recommended recommended budget to you here today public safety does make up 27 of our general fund budget there is additional moving into capital this year's budget increases public safety by six million dollars so let's talk about where some of these investments are going in personnel there's a five million dollar increase in personnel and i will talk about specific positions as part of this budget we've made additional investments in benefits and such and this budget does recommend the three percent merit increase you are going to

[00:32:10] hear in the days and weeks to come about regional merits and those kinds of things i want to be very clear as i start this presentation our people have always been a priority for hanover county and this administration we will continue to do the very best and this board has over the years the past years since i've been here invested highly in our workforce and so we'll continue to do that but we also do that in the context of available revenues and a balanced budget and so today's recommendation you're going to hear a three percent merit as it relates to personnel but when we're looking at crafting a budget we have to look at multiple sectors it's not just

[00:32:47] the those that work for us and the benefits it's making sure that they have the equipment to do their job safely it's making sure that we have the facilities to serve the employees in our public in a safe manner and just like you at home we have cost increases that go up for fuel electric and all other kinds of operations that we have to consider as a county this board invested highly last year in additional fire ems personnel and if you recall we actually brought on nine additional positions that were to start july 1 of 2025 earlier in the year and so this budget does continue while you're seeing 16 nine of those were positions that we funded mid

[00:33:27] year that don't show up per se in this budget because they're ongoing funding now but it's actually nine new as positions in fire and EMS that we've moved up some of that funding into fiscal year 25 you're also seeing additional Commonwealth's attorney assistant Commonwealth's attorney being recommended at the request of our Commonwealth's attorney based on their workload and demands an

additional court bailiff and you'll hear from the sheriff the need for that and a kennel attendant that's consistent with some of our efforts that we have been making at the shelter and certainly raising the bar on our adoption processes public safety building we're going to talk

[00:34:04] about that project today as well that project as with most construction and capital projects that in the demand and costs for those projects have gone up this was in our plan in the past at 52 million dollars that project now with revised estimates and recommended in this budget is 60 million dollars we continue to invest in our fleets with our equipment and those kinds of things there's increases there and one of the things that I think some folks take for granted and while it's not a 7.5 million increase it's a major cost center for us in public safety is our partnership with the Pamunkey Regional Jail and

[00:34:40] continuing to fund that obligation public safety building when we think about the current one on this particular campus we think about the Vaughn Bradley building. Vaughn Bradley building houses our sheriff's office. This particular building as you may be aware was built about 30 years ago now. It doesn't feel that long ago but it was. Under that time we've had two sheriffs under Sheriff Cook's leadership and now Sheriff Hines. That office has grown 100% since the time that facility was constructed and I will tell you they have found the most creative safe ways to renovate that facility that they possibly have been able to

[00:35:20] over the years. However, the time has come that that facility is no longer meeting the day-to-day operational needs of the Hanover Sheriff's Office and with increased training needs and requirements and expectations for both the Sheriff's Office and the Fire and EMS Department, we have recommended moving into a new public safety facility. Part of that building would also house our Fire and EMS administration. Under one roof, we would have the Sheriff's Office and Administration and Fire and EMS administration with a combined training facility. As you may know, just up the street

[00:35:54] at Station 5, we currently house the Fire and EMS administrative offices. This has been since in 1999. You may know that the building was constructed, but we also shortly thereafter had a merger of the EMS and fire divisions. They occupy that building. It's at full capacity, but we do anticipate and need and future demand to put Station 5 back into operation and part of our system allowing fire and ems and their training needs to also be combined in the public safety facility will allow us to free up that space for those operations now i want to talk

[00:36:31] about our second biggest priority which is education so if we have a safe community we want to make sure that we're providing a high quality public education to our residents and as you can see the top two priorities in our budget are consistent with where our funding goes public education makes up about 35 percent of our budget many of us in this room either have current students in the school system or have gone through our school system we're extremely proud of the achievements of the students of the hanover county public school system that system like everywhere

[00:37:06] else in the region is continuing to see demands on services there's also been an interesting dynamic as you know in the code of virginia right now the commonwealth of virginia is supposed to lead public education and investment however beginning in fiscal year 21 that actually flipped here in hanover county you can start to see that the locality has had to pick up a larger share of the investment in public education and this budget continues to do so as you can see we're just shy of a 13 million dollar increased investment year over year going into fiscal year 26. but what

[00:37:42] that means is the state's allocation drops and the localities requirements to fund more goes up That does take away from our ability to fund other priorities in our community, and that's the same with all costs that are passed on to locality. When we're looking at the school funding, you can see the school's operating budget year over year.

[00:38:04] There's a \$9.8 million increase of local funding being recommended for fiscal year 2026. The overall school operating fund is up \$15.7 million year over year. But I should also call your attention to the column on the right.

[00:38:21] Because when we look at the percentages of what we fund on operating, one of the things that gets left out is our overall investment on capital costs and investments. And so you can see there about \$29 million between debt service and cash-funded capital projects are also being invested in the schools in this recommendation.

[00:38:43] The priorities the schools have raised and adopted in the budget that has come to this board is consistent with other county employees of a three percent merit increase both in the county side and on the school side. We tried to maintain the lower cost of health insurance to the extent by raising the county's investment and covering those costs and also investing in our teacher pay scale to make sure that our teachers are also more competitively paid within the region. I'm proud to share that this budget does introduce some additional school capital investments. In fiscal

[00:39:19] year 26 we're recommending 8.5 million dollars to expand the hanover center for trades and technology this will allow us to current to meet the current demands and waiting lists of the existing programs there are larger needs long term to consider additions that would allow additional programming but this project that's being recommended for funding will also allow for those demands to be met on the short term the image you see here is washington henry's conceptual but i brought this into the to the picture this was shared at our jc meeting

[00:39:55] specifically because i want to share with you the next slide um our five-year plan uh continues investments in our public schools as you know we've we've opened ashland this year we're very proud of that new facility currently funded um is beaverdam elementary battlefield park and washington henry this budget um in in prior years we used to call uh the last one which was in fiscal year 2028 an unnamed campus school in this year's budget the school board has determined that mechanicsville elementary is that school that they are recommending to come into the plan

[00:40:32] and in our new year five we are also recommending an additional elementary school and as you can see out in 2033 if if adopted this budget would we would be replacing seven elementary schools within 10 years in hanover county that is a substantial investment in public education facilities throughout our county i do want to and i know that there was some conversation and concern about cool spring and that's part of the discussions our school board are having at this time the majority basically all of these and cool springs is not amongst the current recommendations

[00:41:08] for expansion are based on the current operational ages and functionality of the facilities it's not because of capacity related issues some of the schools that we will occupy in the years to come will have served this community for over 85 years by the time we open a new school just for context the the use useful life for an elementary school is usually 50 years we've gotten some very good use out of the facilities that have been built in hanover county over the years our schools have been good stewards of those

buildings as well but it has been time for investment i want to talk about some of the remaining investments that we make outside of

[00:41:47] those top two priority areas introducing a new initiative for our community this year proposing the addition of a tourism department this particular department will start with just two employees we're going to focus specifically on those assets that we have here in hanover county between agritourism kinds of opportunities our historical venues and properties king's dominion all of the opportunities that we have in hanover county many of our own residents

[00:42:21] in the region don't know the abundance of amazing opportunities there are right here in our backyard and while we're extremely proud of our partnership with richmond region tourism to promote the region it is time that we make investments and support our local tourism opportunities now as you know we're always cost constrained so why introduce something new when you have other expenses amongst the picture this is being proposed to be funded with lodging tax return revenue not general fund revenue and so what's that mean so when someone checks into a hotel right now they

[00:42:55] pay eight percent uh tax on that hanover county is a as a member partner of the richmond convention center we have an obligation that goes to that once those two percent of the remaining amount goes to richmond region tourism and then every year there is a return that comes back and has gone into our fund balance we are recommending this program to be used with that return and we have confidence based on historical return that we can make those investments it's consistent with making sure as you know there are hotels increased by additional two cents to go into what was called a tourism improvement district that allows us to do more marketing and outreach

[00:43:33] to get more folks in our hotels doing sports tourism and those kinds of things this will augment and complement this nicely but this is really for our own folks we're also introducing a community-based calendar that would be a software system that we would be investing in to be a sort of a one-stop for all activities throughout Hanover County that folks can come in so if you own a business and you're looking to open that business on Saturday from 8:00 to 2:00 and sell your goods or do tours you can go to this website put that in there in the community calendar will populate and you can find out everything that someone has gone into and put in there every weekend or every weekday in Hanover County that's an opportunity

[00:44:13] for you and your families to go to see. Amongst that it also allows us to to make sure that we have an inventory of all of the available assets and this is anything from more passive kinds of things like trails and all those and cataloging those kinds of things to historic homes. Much of the properties in Hanover County that are historic in nature are not open to the public on a day-to-day basis but working with those providers when they do have those events will be able to promote and share them this certainly will have a sports tourism aspect hanover county has been a leader in regional and nationwide actually cross-country and we're going to continue to make those efforts

[00:44:51] and make sure that we are a destination for that those investments allow us to do even more for our own residents as we are able to recoup some of that income from our guests and tourists i'm excited to be able to share and introduce this initiative to you another economic development initiative is actually a continuation of what we began this year this board and your workshop determined that it was critical as we move forward to strategically plan certain corridors in our community that will be investment corridors as you know right now we have the mountain road 33 gateway small area plan underway there are another a number of additional key areas in our

[00:45:31] community that we've identified and and this year's budget includes 180 000 to really continue to move those initiatives forward we have the route one corridor route 30 corridor and the mechanicsville village corridor that are plans that will be coming up uh once we complete the gateway 33 gateway plan that will allow us to really look at those areas to find the character what we want to and these are done with our residents um they're we're hearing from our residents the things they want the things they don't want what kind of character what kinds of architectural features those kinds of things we want to see certainly transportation becomes a part of it but it also allows us to target where we're looking for certain types of economic

[00:46:10] development what kinds and and this will complement the work that we have done in our comprehensive land use plan envision handover that we completed last year i can't tell you as county administrator how proud i am of the employees that serve our residents each and every day from the day that i've had an opportunity to work with this board and your commitment to our employees has been unparalleled we've continued to make our investments in our team and we will continue to do so even in a changing economic climate that seems to change almost daily we used to have some some

[00:46:46] stability in the compensation markets in local government regions and that has continued to change year after year in addition i had shared the positions earlier but most of our positions are where our priorities are and public safety is sees the largest investment of positions in the recommended budget there is a few additional positions including a human resource analyst a csb clinical supervisor assistant director of community resources and increased hours for solid waste operators at our convenience centers so most of the positions that you see recommended in this

[00:47:24] budget remain with our public safety entities. When we look at employee compensation, I mentioned the 3% earlier that we will continue to do our best to take care of our employees. It's not just in salaries. It's work environment. It's climate. It's making sure that this is a place that folks feel valued in, and I hope our employees do, because they are our biggest asset to serve our residents each day. But making sure that we have competitive benefits. You heard me mention our investment in the health benefits, we want to make sure that we are competitive with our peers, not only in compensation, but the packages we offer our employees. And we continue to look at

[00:48:02] those programs and offerings as it relates to benefits. You heard one of our citizens talk today about needs for professional development and training. We continue to invest in our employees to make sure that they, certainly as an organization that values continuous improvement, they're a better employee next year than they were last year. And how do we do that?

[00:48:21] we do that through opportunities for training tuition reimbursement helping folks grow mentoring but other programs that we offer for training and increased trainings in department budgets that allow folks to become parts of professional organizations and the trainings that those entities offer as well sharing with you a couple of the projects on the screen as it relates to our capital infrastructure as i said earlier we're proud that we were able to open the doors on ashland elementary and the montpelier rec and in the weeks to come we'll be opening fire station 17.

[00:48:55] these projects have been in the plans for a number of years we're proud to deliver those for our community but there are a number of other major capital projects that this budget also includes investment in in the five-year budget we have just shy of 160 million dollars of road projects that are being introduced for our community these are large-scale projects many of these you've heard about before

because road projects take multiple years to move through different parts of process so whether it's the design the acquisition phases and or construction that time takes a number of years and this budget fully funds the at least station widening project the

[00:49:32] pole green widening project the 361 at grove intersection this is one of our high accident intersections route 33 widening sliding hills peaks roundabout and there's an additional 17 projects making up 73 plus million dollars of roadway improvements consistent with the projects that our roads our transportation committee has recommended i should point out that it's as you're looking at this funding sources over there cvta the central virginia transportation authority and the benefits that that program has brought to our jurisdiction are immeasurable many of these

[00:50:11] projects would not be moving forward without our participation in that initiative and it has allowed us to leverage state and federal monies more than we've ever been able to before and so we're moving forward with these projects they're all in different phases talked about laurel meadow about to open in the weeks to come but we also have additional stations moving their way through the process station four in doswell is the next that we'll be moving along and shortly behind will be montpelier station eight this budget continues our investment in fire stations and and funds chickahominy 10. i will tell you that but we're still evaluating station 10's

[00:50:51] opportunities but there may be a need for land acquisition as that station is very tight if you're familiar with that station there in the air park it's a tight parcel today to construct on it and operate out of it would be extremely difficult parks and recreation these have been our quality of life investment and this board over the past few years have made substantial investments in increasing the quality of our existing parks and rec facilities and allowing us to add additional amenities for our residents so on top of everything that we already have

[00:51:26] funded including a number of pickleball courts light projects fencing improvements those kinds of things we continue our investments and parking improvements and this has been parking expansion and or paving projects our maintenance facilities have reached the end of their useful life these have been working their way through our plans for years trails are a key area of our efforts as we have land and identify opportunities we're looking for major opportunities to expand our trails here in hanover county to increase that quality of life for our residents

[00:51:59] athletic fields this is a continuing improvement of our existing fields anything from the actual grass fields to our infields continuing to raise the bar on the fields that we have restrooms have been one of the large requests that we've had and there's improvements being recommended to park restrooms and and a number of out fiscal years and playground equipment improvement a couple projects that i didn't spend much time on under the categorical areas are two the remaining facilities on this campus that have yet to be renovated is the balance of the

[00:52:37] wickham building and where wickham most folks know where the registrar's office is and it is located there we have renovated the it side the remainder of that facility has not been renovated and what we call the annex which is at the end of the breezeway has not been renovated this project has moved its way through the budget and its planning phases over the years we're moving recommending to move forward with the remaining renovations that will for with the existing buildings that will complete the renovations on this campus as you know we have investments at convenience centers going on now mechanicsville convenience center will have additional investments

[00:53:16] for surety of walls and projects at the convenience center you'll hear more about that and future projects i do want to share two others that have been of extreme discussion between our community and this board first you heard me mention the animal shelter earlier for those that haven't been to the animal shelter recently we are currently moving forward with processes to upgrade the kennels we have moved some administrative staff out of that building and we're creating a much improved customer experience for the adoption process in the front end of that building so in the next few months anyone coming to adopt from our shelter

[00:53:55] will have an opportunity to really have a completely different experience as you have today there's not much room to socialize with with the pets in the current facility other than quite honestly going out or going being in the lobby of that facility we're looking to change that that's all currently funded currently planned and ongoing as we speak but that facility will be reaching the end of its useful life in the next few years and so the budget also includes in the operational side 250 000 to start exploring opportunities for future replacement of our animal shelter that's being introduced with this budget as well this year be remiss if i didn't spend a

[00:54:32] few minutes talking about water and sewer infrastructure obviously water has been increased concern for our residents after the failure in richmond on january 6th one of the things that i'm not sure folks realized in our current fiscal year we had already begun looking at utility master planning and long-term water source planning before the january 6 event we had already funded those initiatives and begun those processes while the budget specifically doesn't say we're investing 20 million to do this we are going through those processes once we identify the project we have

[00:55:11] debt capacity and cash that we can apply towards improvements to our system to either find ways to work with our partners in henrico expand capacity here we have those capacities built into our budget already we don't have a specific project identified as of yet so we didn't identify funds but once we identify a project we have the opportunity to come back to this board appropriate and take on projects in the utilities you're going to hear from mr longshore and before the end of today and he will talk a little bit more about this but once we have defined projects that make a difference for our community those will come to you but that is not something

[00:55:49] that's forgotten in this budget process let me assure you but we will bring those to you once those projects are identified designed and cost let me shift into how does this all get paid for the budget that we're introducing you with here today is 781 million dollars as want to spend a little bit of time because you're hearing terms like all funds budget versus general fund budget and so we wanted to make sure you appreciate what goes into the all funds budget versus the general

[00:56:22] fund and you can see the different revenues that go in to make up our general fund budget and as As you can see, our priorities in the all funds budget is very consistent with what I went over earlier percentage wise in the recommended expenditure side of the budget.

[00:56:44] So as we look at this, schools and public safety are our highest investments. As we look at other services in our overall operating budget, many folks don't realize it, but human services is generally our third highest cost investment sector.

[00:57:00] the past few years we've been making continued investments in capital and that's why you've seen capital grow over the past few years some years when we don't have a project you'll see our capital number go down but in the year we're borrowing or building a particular project you will see that capital

number go up so that's why you may see some fluctuations when you look at budgets year over year so let me shift to the general fund budget because that's the one that most of our residents think about every day because that's that's the budget that that we all as residents contribute to as you can see in this particular chart that

[00:57:38] the budget change year over year is just about 6.9 percent um so moving from a 386.4 to 413 million dollar general fund component of our overall operating budget and i want to point out especially the chart on the right so when we think about meeting our expenditures we need to to make sure that we look at the revenues that we have to meet that you know just about 85% of our revenues are dependent on our local taxes and I'm going to share a little bit more about that here

[00:58:11] with you next so this gives you a perspective of that chart that I just showed you most of our revenue that we rely to meet the service demands that our residents have come from real property taxes and personal property tax sales tax is third sales tax has a little more volatility to it as a revenue source but everything else pales in comparison to real property taxes and personal property taxes and so as we look at how do we fund the programs and expenditures we really

[00:58:46] look at those particular revenue sources as this board and our residents are very aware reassessments especially in before this year had seen some major increases you can see a high there at 11.6 percent last year was 6.8 and that that created a lot of issues within our community our region but as the reassessment values changed it also did give us revenues to make investments in other areas investments in our employees investments in our capital we are now back to a 3.3 percent

[00:59:26] reassessment so as we're starting to think about that your flexibility year over year becomes substantially less than you did have in a year that was at 11.6 so as we have competing demands and priorities we look at you know and I showed you earlier the top the top revenue source that you have to invest in your services is based on property this year we're starting to see more of a normalization year over year 3.3 percent is about what we have historically planned year to year we should not and don't anticipate to see the kinds of years like we did in the past two

[01:00:03] year in particular. So as you look at real property growth year over year, you can see really where we're at with the reassessment 3.3% and total real property 4.6%. We do not have the revenue that we did in prior years, so competing demands for services and requests are always part of a budget consideration. I do want to spend a little bit of time with you today talking about equalized tax rate this is something that every year by law we're required to post

[01:00:38] equalized tax rate and has been in a question and concern from some of our residents in the past so I really want to make sure that we understand what the law is and says and what we do and and what we have to do by the law which we do each and every year so the law allows for two options a locality can lower the rate or disclose what the tax rate would be if we lowered it by law we're required to do that. In fact, you have an ad that you approve that will also share this information and we do that every year. The law does not require locality to lower the tax rate. However,

[01:01:15] if you're going to maintain a tax rate or increase the tax rate, you do have to advertise that. And we do that each year. Just to give you a little bit of perspective, a penny on the real property tax rate to us means about \$2.3 million. This year's tax rate with the increases and reassessments would have suggested that we needed to equalize by reducing our rate by two cents or 4.6 million dollars. One of the things that

we need to keep in mind as we think about regional competitiveness is what are the revenue sources we have because we're competing for the same

[01:01:51] employees that Chesterfield and Henrico and the region in general are competing for. We have to think about what are the revenue sources that they have versus what we have to work with and they are very different. We are all very different communities. And so just to give you some perspective, 1% merit for school employees and county employees is \$3.2 million. If we would equalize, we would not be able to fund well over the recommended, we would be just over 2% of a recommendation to you compared to the 3% we're recommending. That puts us at a competitive

[01:02:31] disadvantage and we have to think about that as an employer and as a business our employees are valuable assets to conducting the people's business this budget recommends maintaining hanover county's rate at 81 cents you heard me say we're that does not recommend equalization by the way neither do the other jurisdictions we compete with for employees they don't equalize their rate the difference is hanover for 18 years now has kept the lowest rate in the richmond region for our taxpayers that meant for the past 18 years and you can see by this chart even at 81 cents

[01:03:09] we have historically been the lowest rate in the region our taxpayers are paying less than all the other jurisdictions in the region and while i i love my friends in henrico and chesterfield and they have wonderful communities i look out for hanover our job is to look out for the hanover county residents and that's trying to bring you a budget that balances services and also takes into account the impact of what taxes mean to our residents each and every day you're hearing some counties are reducing tax rates or giving rebates back to residents if my tax rate was 91

[01:03:46] cents we could do that too instead we keep our tax rate extremely low and as low as possible to reduce the burden on our residents and so while but that does mean that that competitive environment while we're maintaining a rate some of the folks you know one of the things that everyone in hanover always says is you know don't turn us into x right don't we don't want to be that county we want to be hanover we want to be the best hanover we can be and that's a balance because we're not seeing the the rampant growth that some of our regional partners are and that's fine that's what their communities have found acceptable and what they want for their communities but it does come at a

[01:04:25] cost as we protect our lands and maintain hanover as hanover we do not see the increase in revenues that some of the other jurisdictions do however that does put us at a competitive disadvantage when we're trying to fund things and take care of all of the needs for the county what else does hanover do different than the rest of the region we do a lot different first of all it's great that folks can reduce their b poll tax we don't have one so we don't have that revenue to pay for the expenditures here in hanover oh by the way we don't have a meals tax in hanover county either

[01:04:58] that offsets our expenditures and because we want to protect lands in our county we have deferred almost seven million dollars of tax collection to do so we tax exempt almost 16 and a half million dollars worth of property in hanover county our elderly and disabled and other tax relief programs all adds up to about 27.6 million dollars that we believe in making sure our residents don't pay in the first place and but when you have that much less revenue no meals tax to rely on or a business

[01:05:34] license it does require you to go back to your revenue sources which are your real property and your personal property tax and that's what we've tried to do we've tried to maintain the most attractive rates in the region for our residents we've also wanted to maintain the service levels that our residents

have come to expect and we're trying to take care of our most valuable asset our employees given the revenues that we have to work with board i'm proud of the budget that we're introducing we we always need to do more and we always need to do our very best to take care of the employees that serve hanover county and we will with this budget as we have 26

[01:06:08] million dollars to really invest of year over year new money you can see right here where every dollar of that money is going and in the presentations that will follow myself today and in the weeks to come you will get full detail by the way the board you all have a budget book at your dais it's when we put out our budget book you get to see every line of your budgets our public this all goes online today as well every citizen can look at our budget in full detail per department and that is all going to be available on hanover county's website so there is nothing

[01:06:43] to hide in our budget we clearly identify our priorities you can see as it aligns in these particular charts and i went over many of these projects earlier but we are investing in schools we are investing in public safety the rest of our government with the the non-public safety employees we are investing in additional positions when we consider tax relief you do have to consider that year over year even the tax relief that we've increased for our residents that does mean as the demand and interest in those programs go up that's less revenue year over year that we have to deal with and that's okay because we've deemed that we wanted to try

[01:07:18] to take care of those residents better uh in in recent past by increasing thresholds in those programs but that is something that we have to account for um and then as you can see the other programs and then finally we have major investments going into our capital infrastructure we deferred a lot of capital when the bottom fell out sort of back during the housing boom we did not raise the taxes on our residents when values of homes went down however when the values are up we reinvest to make sure that we have the infrastructure that our residents need our employees need to

[01:07:57] serve our residents safely and and meet the demands of our students in our schools this budget that we're introducing to you meets those demands we are going to have competing interests and changes you're going to hear from other folks that will tell you you know we need to invest more here and less there that's what this process is designed to do as i wrap up my process this is what is called the county administrators recommended budget for a reason it's just a recommendation while we believe it's based in sound financial review and recommendation and priorities please

[01:08:32] keep in mind we are required to balance a federal budget or a state budget both the state and the county budget each year when we balance that that does mean that there's very difficult choices that we have to make when we're balancing the budget we had needs from from circuit court that they wanted to supplement and salaries that we weren't able to recommend to you there was a number of positions that we are not able to recommend to you there's other projects and initiatives we're not able to recommend to you but we've brought you what we believe to be the priorities in a balanced budget just like at home when you're making decisions on i got x numbers of dollars to to

[01:09:08] fix something in my home while the county's budget is now almost 800 million dollars it's just on a larger scale we're making choices and what we believe we brought to you here today is a balanced budget that prioritizes those choices after myself today you will hear from your sheriff our school superintendent our fire chief public utilities director and our hr director and then we will after today we

will meet again on march 12th to go over our capital improvement plans in more detail and some other deep dives in the the rest of finances should the board need an additional

[01:09:48] work session on the 26th we have that time blocked off the public hearing which is the legal public requirement for for us to advertise and host our residents we don't wait until the budget public hearing we hear from folks every day what what they want in their budget and while that's the the public process i encourage our residents to continue daily let us know what you like what you dislike this budget by the time the board's asked to consider adoption on april 9th will likely go through different iterations and considerations and that's what the process is for in april this will become the board's adopted budget that will begin serving our community

[01:10:26] july 1 of 2025. mr chairman with that i complete my presentation thank you for your time and attention i'm glad to answer any questions thank you very much for your presentation mr badesky any questions from board members mr chairman mr davis thank you mr chairman uh mr badesky thank you for your presentation I didn't want to just look at a couple of things I think we are wise and we had spoken about this earlier and I thank you for incorporating it into your budget presentation that revenue project projections which are our tax dollars coming in I should be projected somewhere

[01:11:04] between three and three point five percent and I don't know if that sweet spot is going to be three point two three point four but but we're very very prudent to do that because that's the only way that we can plan for whatever fiscal impacts we're going to see.

[01:11:21] And I believe there are going to be some. I think inflation is going to continue to remain high for a little bit of time. As it relates to some of the tax structures here in Hanover County, you're right, we don't have a BPOL tax. And by the way, the BPOL tax was put in place to fund the War of 1812.

[01:11:40] So there's something to be said that once a tax gets there, it doesn't go away, and people will find all kinds of wonderful things to talk about that those tax dollars could fund. But once they're in place, and I think Hanoverians have been very clear on the county side that they don't want that. They don't want a meals tax.

[01:11:56] Those things have found themselves on referendums in the past. We do get some questions about the real estate assessments, and that is the largest portion of revenue that we have on the taxing side, the ad valorem system that we have with real estate taxes.

[01:12:12] And you put in your budget presentation about the revisionary measures that the state has as it relates to equalization. So let me ask you this. The state, this is something that was put in by the state, and some residents do have confusion thinking that the rate has to come back down.

[01:12:33] How much of the real estate assessment revenue that we have in our ad valorem system goes to the state? The real estate stays local. Right, so that would be zero, correct. Um, how much, what's a revisionary measure that the state has used on the state sales tax?

[01:12:54] So if a price of a candy bar goes up or a television goes up or cost of groceries go up, what do they reduce the state sales tax to every year? I believe the answer is the same, sir. They, you mean they don't, they don't have a revisionary measure for their income streams.

[01:13:11] Okay. So last question, then I have a comment. If someone's income increases in the Commonwealth of Virginia, do they pay a higher tax rate? Does Virginia have a progressive income tax? So

the more they make, the more they would have to pay.

[01:13:28] So the state has revisionary measures for localities for money that stays in the locality that they would never receive, but they don't have revisionary measures in their state budget. Is that correct? So do you think it would be fair to say that maybe trying to reduce taxes that are solely borne by local residents that pay solely for local services should stay in the locality and the revisionary measures that you place on somebody else that you don't place on yourself could be used for purposes other than fiscal, like political.

[01:14:06] You're free to give an opinion on that. As you know, sir, I stay out of politics. I think my comments have landed by the comments in the room. I think you're exactly right. When the state comes in and does what I call press release legislation, Look at all the great things that I have done to someone else that don't impact me fall along the same lines of look at how charitable I am with your money, taxpayers, funding things that may ultimately make me look good.

[01:14:35] But these proposed tax cuts affect the sheriff's office, fire and EMS, and schools, and we have to find some way constantly with insurance going up. We have fixed costs, but they're not always fixed expenses to make this work, and we balance.

[01:14:53] And I just want to add one last point. There's a lot of capital improvements in this budget that folks have asked for for years that have been pushed out year after year after year, but there are a lot of capital improvements that are not in that budget that folks still want to see. So that balance is something that the board is going to have to consider with public input as we go forward in the budget process.

[01:15:14] Thank you, Mr. Badeski. I appreciate your time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Davis. Any other comments from board members or questions? Seeing none, I'll go next. Thank you very much for your very detailed and professional presentation, Mr. Badeski.

[01:15:30] I really appreciated the breakdown on the equalization of the tax rate. That's very good to get on the public record. I clearly see a very high priority in this budget on public safety and education.

[01:15:47] And I've always said those two go together because it's tough to have good schools if we don't have good public safety and i've said before you know that can begin with 9-1-1 call center uh and that's a very important service to have um question for you does hanover county continue to maintain its triple triple a bond rating and how many localities in the country have that answer is yes sir we've maintained our triple a bond rating for a number of years now we are one of the two regions in the nation uh next to raleigh dorm that has been able to main

[01:16:26] multiple jurisdiction triple a's and and that's done because we have prudent financial policies that make sure that we do not exceed any imposed caps make sure we have the proper reserves that we need to do there's a number of categories that we look at to make sure our investments are done right those kinds of things to to make and it's been a priority of this board to maintain that triple a bond rating and that that sign of excellence in financial management and of the numbers in the nation sir i i believe it's a very small number and maybe my finance can correct me

[01:17:04] i think less than five percent of the nation it's a very small number less than 50 counties nationwide i believe it's in the low 50s localities nationwide maintain a triple triple a bond rating how does that help our citizens it helped them tremendously sir for instance in one borrowing that we did last year based on having a triple a bond rating and and the outlooks that we have we've been able to save millions of dollars of interest payments for our residents on individual

[01:17:39] projects and and that's real money that we get to invest in other places and i think it's important to point out that one of the things i hear a lot from our citizens maybe they don't say these words exactly but i can summarize a lot of what i hear with the phrase premier community and i believe you mentioned that phrase uh in the past at your budget presentation and it does take a certain amount of funding to be able to maintain and to provide a premier living community for our hanover citizens and i and i speak on behalf of the board here that that's something that's important to all

[01:18:17] board members that if there is an emergency that they want a 911 call center that answers the phone and is responsive so i'd also like to thank dr j brown i know you worked hard on this budget all that's a lot of numbers it's a lot of pages there's 200 pages in this book and that doesn't just happen in a day or two as mr bed bedesky mentioned earlier this isn't an ongoing process that even after it's completed we'll be starting again what over the summer so thank you

[01:18:52] for all your diligent work and to all the staff that worked so very very hard on this thank you you very much, Mr. Padesky. Thank you, sir. Okay. It is now 1.19 p.m. We will take a six-minute recess, so we can come back with sharp minds to get our next presentation. We will reconvene at

[01:19:14] 1.25. Six. How do you do that on the side? More minutes. Okay, everyone. It's 1.28. The board is

[01:28:11] back in session next on the agenda is another presentation agenda item 6b presentation by colonel david r heinz sheriff hanover county welcome sheriff heinz well for the record my name is david r heinz sheriff of hanover county and mr chairman and members of the board thank you for

[01:28:50] allowing me the opportunity to be here to speak with you and the citizens of hanover county i want to thank Mr. Bedetsky for all the hard work he's put in on this. I also want to thank Shelly Wright and all the people in finance. They've been wonderful to work with. You know that. I try to tell you that every year. And I want to thank some people that are with me today, and that's my staff.

[01:29:12] And I'd also like to thank Lieutenant David Parrish and Sergeant Steve Wills. They pretty much put this presentation together for us. And I have to tell you, Mr. Walter, thank you again, and Ms. Hahn for all the work that y'all do with us.

[01:29:32] You know, I'm excited to be here today. Nobody's more excited than Lieutenant Colonel Woody because I've been under the weather and he thought he was going to have to give this presentation. So I know he's excited to see me up here today. But I am excited, and I know that follows on Ms. Pritchard, who was also excited earlier.

[01:29:53] But I am excited to present the Sheriff's Office FY26 budget to you. You know, it's an honor to be the Sheriff of Hanover County. It truly is. But our Sheriff's Office does not belong to me. It doesn't belong to you.

[01:30:09] You know, it belongs to every citizen of our county, and I know you know that. And at the Sheriff's Office, we do our best to practice fiscal responsibility. And I believe this budget highlights the stewardship that we owe to our citizens while continuing to able your Sheriff's Office to protect our community.

[01:30:30] You know, the deputy on patrol is the visual representation of the sheriff's office. But the office is so much more complex than that. The sheriff's office was composed of four divisions. And within those

divisions, there are many functional units, such as youth services, which is in the patrol division, and street crimes in the investigative division.

[01:30:55] You know, our administrative division has units such as intel and training, and our judicial administration division has units such as civil process and courtroom security. Finally, there are many special teams like SWAT, search and rescue, crisis negotiations, and they're all comprised of deputies from throughout the department.

[01:31:17] We wear many hats. You know, I encourage, and I know several are here, but I encourage any Hanover citizen who's interested in learning more about how their sheriff's office operates to connect with us and explore our citizen police academies.

[01:31:35] You know, we have options, whether it be our adult CPA, our senior CPA, or even our youth CPA, and it'll provide a behind-the-scenes look at their sheriff's office. We offer these academy to give the community a better understanding, not only of our mission, our structure, and our capabilities, but also to see how this budget is used to support our community.

[01:32:01] As I stand here and present this budget request, I recognize that I'm asking the citizens of Hanover County to invest their tax dollars in their sheriff's office. And I'll always do everything in my power to provide a return on that investment.

[01:32:20] Now, to provide that return, the men and women of the sheriff's office, well, they come to work every day, and they're seated here, and they come to work every day, and they're striving towards achieving two primary goals, provide the highest degree of protection for our citizens, and to strengthen our community through partnerships and problem solving.

[01:32:45] In 2024, our effort to protect our citizens, it included responding to over 36,000 calls for service with an average priority one response time of eight minutes.

[01:33:02] You know, in responding to those, we also responded to 1,442 motor vehicle crashes. Additionally, our deputy spent nearly 3,000 hours on temporary detention orders.

[01:33:18] our investigators made 52 arrests for child exploitation, and our court deputies conducted 1,467 prisoner transports. In 2024, the Sheriff's Office continued to strengthen our community through our broad range of partnerships and organizations, such as Special Olympics of Virginia, and our participation in events like Targets, Heroes, and Helpers, Night to Shine, and global youth service day. Our deputies continue to value the connection they enjoy

[01:33:55] with our citizens who are part of our adopt a senior program. And one of our favorite community events every year, National Night Out, was once again a success as our community ranked number one in the state and number four in the nation. Now the other three, the other three that were ahead of us in the nation, they're all from Texas and most of the board is housed in Texas. We're going a conversation with Texas next year you know the sheriff's office we work with the community and

[01:34:31] mutual problem solving in 2024 and we met regularly with our neighborhood watch business watch worship watch groups as well as others in the Hanover housing coalition the Hanover Ashland Triad and Hanover County public schools these partnerships allow us to have open conversations with our community about crime trends, community-related issues, and provide educational programs as well as security assessments to handle with businesses, schools, and houses of worship. You know, a safe

[01:35:04] community is a return on our citizens' investment in our budget, and in 2024, the county saw a reduction in five of the eight index crimes with decreases in arson, burglary, forcible rape, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. There was an increase in one occurrence each of homicide and robbery in 2024 as compared to 2023. And the largest increase you see before you is an aggravated assault with an increase of 53 incidents. Now, as a point of clarity, crime statistics are compiled

[01:35:43] nationally with a methodology that considers the number of victims of a crime. And the spike in aggravated assaults in 2024 was primarily caused by one DUI offense, which endangered 44 children.

[01:36:01] You know, when expanding from the eight index crimes to an accounting of all incidents, there were a total of 3,246 criminal offenses reported in Hanover County in 2024. Our crime rate per 1,000 citizens was 9.2, and simple assault was the top reported incident as compared to 2023. This was a slight reduction in criminal offenses and an improvement in our clearance rate.

[01:36:30] You know, to ensure we're able to carry this momentum forward, we need to constantly plan ahead. And that includes in the area of budgeting. The budget requests you see today is a result of a year-round process that started almost as soon as we finished presenting our FY25 request last year. In March of 2024, we began by distributing budget workbooks to the leaders of our functional units and special teams who provided information on their budgetary needs. From that original information, the workbooks were reviewed by our budget lieutenant to ensure the request matched

[01:37:08] our expected equipment replacement as well as our existing maintenance and software agreements. The executive staff and I then reviewed the proposed budget to make sure it was in alignment with both the goals we have for our agency and the goals we have towards stewardship. Finally, the budget request was submitted to the county, and we began dialogue with county administration.

[01:37:35] And I met with Mr. Podetsky no later than this morning. We constantly have communication. You know, our top budgeting priority is to be fiscally responsible. We're constantly looking for opportunities to keep costs down by leveraging available grants as well as asset forfeiture proceeds. So, so far this fiscal year, we have utilized grant funding to purchase police equipment such as ballistic shields, to send investigators to auto theft investigation courses, and provide overtime funding for our traffic safety and underage alcohol sale enforcement efforts.

[01:38:14] And these are just a few examples. Additionally, in 2020, we started utilizing asset forfeiture proceeds for leadership education and have used over \$130,000 seized from criminals to train our current and future leaders. So where does that land us in our request for FY26? Well, I'd like to start with our judicial division request and begin by displaying the five-year personnel plan as we presented it last year. As you're aware, the Virginia Department of Forensic Science is moving

[01:38:50] its headquarters from the city of Richmond to Hanover County in 2026. And after analyzing the volume of civil process related to that entity, we're changing this request to reflect the need for one court deputy in FY26 to meet this upcoming demand.

[01:39:08] Despite the addition of the one court deputy, the FY26 judicial division request you see before you reflects an overall decrease of 2.1% in personnel costs. And this is due to the actual cost from the FY25's public safety enhancement coming in below expectation.

[01:39:31] The judicial division operating category reflects an increase of approximately \$12,000, which was recommended by county finance, based on expected cost increases in utilities, insurance, and vehicle

maintenance. No increases were submitted by my office for discretionary items, such as police supplies, uniforms, or computer equipment. And finally, I'm making no request for an increase to the Judicial Division's capital expense budget. Overall, the judicial division budget request is a reduction of 1.6% from the

[01:40:08] FY25 budget. Now, shifting our attention to the law enforcement budget, I'd like to start with some perspective of what we've experienced in our staffing levels over the last five years. You know, in the summer of 2020, we were fully staffed, but the landscape changed quickly as we experienced an increase in retirements due to, excuse me, those hired through the COPS grants reaching their retirement eligibility. And then an increase in separation due to local law

[01:40:43] enforcement pay competition and the appealing private sector wages, as well as a toxic national narrative towards law enforcement. You know, all this worked together. But working with county administration and you, our board of supervisors, we were able to adjust our compensation plan and regain our competitive edge. Thank you. We adopted new solutions like our part-time deputy program. However, we haven't felt like we've made up much ground until recently. We expect this gap

[01:41:17] to continue to narrow as we are currently evaluating vendors to help us with recruiting campaign. On the screen before you is our law enforcement personnel request that was presented last year. I was hopeful then that I would be standing here today on the edge of a full staff.

[01:41:39] But with the vacancy levels we still experience, I've re-evaluated this request and have determined that the best value for the citizens of Hanover would not be the addition of nine new positions over the next three years. Instead, in my new personnel plan, I'm not requesting any new positions over the next three years, while we focus on retaining our current workforce and refilling the vacant positions and leveraging technology and training.

[01:42:10] The evaluation of our current needs brought us to the FY26 law enforcement budget you see before you. Our plan reflects an increase of only 2% in the personnel category and a 6.2% increase in operating and no budget increase requested in capital category.

[01:42:32] This results in an overall law enforcement budget increase of just 2.4%. This is the second smallest percentage increase requested by my office in the last dozen years. Only FY21 was lower as we as a county prepared for the effects of COVID-19.

[01:42:53] The 6.2% increase in the operating category is a result of requested changes in the budget lines currently displayed on your screen. Most of these lines are at the recommendation of county finance in areas, again, such as utilities, insurance, and vehicle maintenance.

[01:43:09] My office submitted requests for increases in just two categories, software services and education training. I promise you, Mr. Della Rippa and I did not have a conversation before he got here.

[01:43:26] He was not a plant. These two requests account for the majority of the total operating increase for FY26. And I'd like to elaborate on why these areas are so important to the success of your sheriff's office. You know, the law enforcement profession is constantly evolving, and one of the most significant changes that I've seen during my 40 years of service is the way that software has enhanced our delivery of law enforcement services.

[01:43:55] Software has transformed how our deputies collect, analyze, and use information, and has also made our investigations more efficient. However, these software costs have consistently, and I mean consistently, outpaced inflation as many providers have transitioned to subscription-based models with ongoing costs for licensing and cloud storage.

[01:44:20] As crime becomes more digital and complex, the role of software in law enforcement has become essential in ensuring officers can respond effectively, protect our communities, and uphold justice. and I am asking for your support with funding that allows Hanover County to stay on the cutting edge of efficiency. I'm also asking for your support in expanding our training budget so that our deputies can remain well prepared to protect and serve our community. One of my top priorities is to provide proper training so that our deputies are ready and able to respond effectively to

[01:44:57] emergencies and complex crimes. You know, investigation and training, I'm sorry, investing, investing in training leads to more professional, skilled, and accountable policing. Accountable policing. And that's what everyone talks about. While national headlines like terrorist event in New Orleans don't always feel close to home, the citizens of Hanover County deserve to have

[01:45:33] sheriff's office that is reasonably prepared to handle these types of events in capital improvements the sheriff's office has two requests previously in the plan these include the public safety building in fy 26 and security improvements to the sheriff's office range facility in fy 27.

[01:45:54] today we're requesting funding for one additional project which is a command vehicle for our unmanned aerial systems team. This team, which probably better known as a drone team, was formed in 2019 and has rapidly grown since its inception as we have found great success with using these devices to locate both missing and wanted subjects, document crash scenes, but probably most importantly to provide situational awareness for our other special teams during incidents. Currently this

[01:46:31] team is using a 20-year-old Ford Econoline as a makeshift command vehicle, and I believe now is the time to invest in a true command vehicle built for their mission in mind. As we conclude this presentation, I want to emphasize the theme that has guided every aspect of our FY26 budget request, stewardship. Stewardship is about more than just managing resources. It's about maximizing the value of every dollar entrusted to us to ensure the safety and well-being of the citizens of Hanover County, from leveraging asset forfeiture funds for leadership training

[01:47:10] to carefully evaluating our staffing and operational needs. Every decision we make is driven by our commitment to accountability and long-term impact. This budget reflects not only the needs of today, but also the foresight required to meet challenges of tomorrow. Ensuring our agency remains a model of efficiency and effectiveness.

[01:47:36] You know, our success as your sheriff's office is rooted in the strong partnerships that we have cultivated with you and the community we serve. These partnerships, whether through neighborhood watch programs, school collaborations, or events like National Night Out, well, they represent the heart of our mission. We recognize that public safety is not the sole responsibility of law enforcement. It's a shared commitment with the residents, businesses, and organizations of Hanover County and you. The investments outlined in this budget will strengthen those partnerships,

[01:48:13] ensuring that we not only protect our community, but also engage with it in meaningful ways. You know, together with you, we're working to maintain the safety and trust that make Hanover County

such a special place to live. You know, looking ahead, this budget lays the foundation for a future where innovation, preparation, and community collaboration are at the forefront, whether through investing in advanced software to stay ahead of evolving crime trends or enhancing training to prepare for the unexpected. We're ensuring that Hanover County Sheriff's Office

[01:48:51] remains equipped to meet the demands of modern law enforcement. You know, as technology advances, as our community grows and as the world around us changes we remain steadfast in our mission to protect and connect protect and connect this budget is not just a financial plan it's a road map to a safer stronger hanover county i'd like to thank you for allowing me to come and present

[01:49:24] this budget and i'll be glad to answer any questions that you may have mr chairman would Would you just give me just a moment to speak a little bit off the cuff? I want to thank Mr. Bedetsky. Mr. Bedetsky and I have the same concern, and we spoke this morning.

[01:49:45] Our concern is for our employees, and I know it's your concern. And I want to thank you for everything you have done for public safety over the last few years. I want to thank you. I hope you recognize that over the last few years as you're trying to help the employees, That we, too, in the Sheriff's Office have been doing the best we can to submit to you budgets that come well within plan because we're partners.

[01:50:17] I don't know what you can do to help the employee more this year, but I would ask you to have conversations with Mr. Podetsky, have conversations with us. We will help any way we can. We've cut our budget, and one of the reasons we've cut our budget is for that very reason.

[01:50:36] Because we know, as you know, our employees are the most important asset we have in Hanover County. And it's not just the men and women of the sheriff's office, but that's who I represent. And I know they are. I know they are the finest men and women in law enforcement.

[01:50:53] And I want to thank you for what you've done for them. And I want to thank you for your concern. And I just want to thank you for considering whatever you can do again this year. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Sheriff Hines.

[01:51:09] And thank you for your kind words. now take questions from board members questions or comments Supervisor Pritchard I don't have a question Sheriff Hines but I do want to say in the past nine years I have not needed somebody from the sheriff's office sheriff's office one time when they haven't been there when they haven't been there within five minutes I represent along with mr. stone in the brown grove community they've had some traffic trouble of late they've had a few cars in their church parking lot that weren't supposed to be there um and the way in which you meet those

[01:51:47] people where they are and answer to their concerns um continues to be something that i and they are grateful for every day oh ms pritchett thank you and uh you you've heard me say this before i'm very grateful for your support supervisor davis thank you mr sheriff uh mr chairman sheriff thank you uh for for the presentation i just want to echo some of the comments that mr pritchard feels and i believe corporately we we all have similar experiences uh but not only this past year but in the years uh preceding that there are a lot of things that

[01:52:26] we deal with as board members that integrate with the sheriff's office particularly communicating with our citizens uh responding to to different needs that they may have in the community sometimes is just providing information and with your Citizens Police Academy with your

civilian response to active shooter the incorporation of that information dissemination system with shield has been more than helpful as a matter of fact I joked one time I kind of quipped when we were talking about doing a citizens Academy here in Hanover and we started one I said well let's go ahead I'll give

[01:53:03] a great model to look at and you can look over at the sheriff's office and that that is how we modeled our citizens academy here for local government it is not uncommon multiple times a month for me to have to get information that involves your command staff your captains and your lieutenants come together responding to emails or having meetings you and i meet on a regular basis as it relates to public safety and that information that i need is is immediately taken back to the citizens and it provides them with the sense of comfort

[01:53:38] with the sense of responsiveness and I believe that that builds a really really strong foundation in Hanover County and we see it and I believe that's why you enjoy the support from the citizenry so much you're very forward-facing agency and and it just it means a great deal the slide that you had and I think it's it's really interesting I just want to touch on it briefly so we did see what happened in 2020, and I don't know if you're able to get back to it, sir. But the culminating

[01:54:11] events that took place in 2020 really had their effect later on. And some of the studies that I've looked at was what took place with the degradation of many communities as it related to law enforcement caused people there from July to January of 2021 to really consider whether this is the profession they wanted to be in nationwide. And then I believe from January 21 to 22,

[01:54:46] most of those folks were looking for jobs and they left. And it's a highly competitive market out there for law enforcement for a number of reasons. And so I just wanted to touch on that briefly. I believe it was Richard Branson, CEO of Virgin Airlines, that someone asked, do you have a problem? Do you have a concern with training your people? And then they leave.

[01:55:09] And I believe he has a lot of business experience. He understands how to operate a business at a high level. We have an elite agency here. And so there are going to be folks who continually come to Hanover County to want to recruit out of our ranks because of the standards that we have. But his response was, I would rather train people and have them leave than not train people and have them stay.

[01:55:30] And I think that that's extremely, extremely important. So being part of an elite organization means something. Folks have that standard. They look forward to being in an agency that has a high standard, and they look forward to performing at a high standard for those whom they serve.

[01:55:50] And then the last thing I want to talk about is the familial aspect of the sheriff's office. Over this last year, there were some ups, certainly, and then there were some downs. And families came together around those who were hurting in the loss of Michaela.

[01:56:08] That was tough. That was tough. And Charlie, our heart goes out to you and your wife. That was very tough. Jim McLaughlin, you know, great asset to Hanover County. But when you see the sheriff's office come around and support folks like that, it means a lot.

[01:56:24] And what I have said often is the bar is so high at the Hanover County Sheriff's Office and with the citizens of Hanover County that what has become a very high standard is a non-negotiable standard amongst the citizens. They believe that every community operates like we operate.

[01:56:43] They believe every community has a low crime rate and a high clearance rate, and sometimes they're shocked when they hear presentations from other communities. So I believe that that's a credit, and I appreciate it. And then my final comment is how we have folks who grow up in this community and then want to come and stay in the community and serve.

[01:57:04] And I know that a major portion of your budget this year was just making sure that Deputy Trey Rudd would continue to be paid and he'd stay on the force. And we want to, I'll convey that to his mother. But you look at a lot of our deputies and folks who serve here in Hannover County, they grew up here.

[01:57:20] They wanted to stay in their community and then they turned into a career, essentially a passion for service. And I think that that means a lot. I believe that that weaves a lot of strong, strong fibers in the cloth that's Hannover County. So thank you for your leadership, Colonel. No, and thank you all.

[01:57:37] And I truly mean it when I tell you it's a partnership that we share. I appreciate it. I know the men and women appreciate it. I think the citizens of Hanover County appreciate it. You were right about something, Mr. Davis, and that was we did see that drop in staffing.

[01:57:54] And we saw it for the reasons that I stated earlier. One of the things that I didn't state was that national narrative, it didn't come from our citizens. It didn't come from the citizens of Hanover County. It came from some citizens that we had to deal with that were visiting hanover it came from national media every time you turned on television law enforcement across this nation got painted with a brush because of one incident hanover county played no party to the men and women of

[01:58:30] this agency are the finest men and women i know in law enforcement they're held accountable and they know that their standards are high they embrace that and i don't know what more we can ask of them and that's why it's always so important for me to to recognize them and what they do every day to keep us safe in our homes you know we talked about the drone team it was just last night i think y'all probably got a text i think mr podetsky sent a text down we were looking for a

[01:59:06] female out in the woods with a child well we had our canine out there we had our drone team out there and we had officers out there and we located those are success stories but without appropriate funding which y'all provide us but without that appropriate funding we can't do those things and i i appreciate the fact that you fund us and then trust us to use that funding in the most appropriate

[01:59:35] manner and for that i really do thank you any other board members ms dibble thank you mr uh chairman sheriff huns throughout your presentation i heard some words that really resonate with me stewardship, partnership, fiscal responsibility, and all reflective of the goals and objectives that we all share and that our citizens are concerned with. And then finally, you wrapped up

[02:00:09] with a shared commitment. And it truly, truly is a shared commitment. Our partnership with you and your partnership with our citizens, all working together for the good of our citizens. And we know that we have the best of the best, and we know that your people lead with their heart.

[02:00:28] And we sincerely appreciate that, and I appreciate the fact that you are here, obviously, to serve. And it starts at the top. You wanting to serve is reflective of every individual out on the street in that uniform.

[02:00:44] So we thank you for your leadership. Well, thank you, and I have great people. Well, thank you very much for your presentation, sir. and thank you for all your years of service to hanover county and its citizens i do have a couple questions for you i ask this question i think every year you probably already know what's coming um armed deputies at schools i was getting ready to say can may i may i interrupt you and tell you that every one of our schools is covered with a deputy well there you go sir well thank you very much and well you're all a part of that we couldn't have done it without you you made it a

[02:01:23] board priority. We made it a priority, and we all worked together with Mr. Podetsky's office and made it happen. Well, that's great to hear, sir. Thank you very much, and I want to be clear that it's always been important to me, but it's never been my plan. It was your plan, and I think it's great leadership, and one of the points you made several years ago was, you know, when school was in session, that is our highest concentration of citizens at that time. It is. And they deserve

[02:01:58] protection and they do me speaking as a person i'd rather pay more in taxes and know that that deputy vehicles in front of those schools it's it's worth to me to pay more in taxes to know that the deputy vehicles and the deputies are at the schools whether i had a child in school or not i took that position before i had a child in the school and the reason for that is to prevent bad

[02:02:32] things from happening at least a deterrent and i think it does bring value to our public education system because as mr podesky spoke to earlier there's market challenges and competitiveness on salary and different things across the region across the state we understand that one thing i always like to point out is our schools have trained and armed deputies that's an asset i believe it is too sir and thank you for uh your commitment on that the other thing i want to ask about is the drug awareness and resistance education program i think it's great to have

[02:03:12] those deputies in the schools implementing some of that teaching um how are we doing on that we still maintaining that maintaining all the 14 elementaries all of our elementary schools well i think it's great so i'll continue to support that but the kids enjoy it the parents enjoy it uh it's it's a great program yep and uh helps them to say no to things that can harm them like drugs and it's about making good decisions and we have to teach our children to make good decisions amen to that sir and we do that when they're young right we do so i just think it's

[02:03:50] another great thing about having your leadership and our partnership with hanover county sheriff's office and schools to help have a premier community it really goes to it and while we have so many law enforcement personnel here, staff and investigators, and I think Major Epling is here and Major Dandridge and others. I'll take this time to just thank you all for everything that you do. And I know your job's not always easy. It can be tough sometimes. You never know what you'll run into every day, right? But I assure you, we appreciate each and every one of

[02:04:28] you. And as I've said before, I would choose to pay more in taxes to make sure that we have the finest. Thank you very much, sir. Thank you, sir. Okay. Next on the agenda, item 6C, Hanover County Public Schools presentation by Dr. Lisa Pennycuff, interim superintendent of schools, and also Ms.

[02:05:05] terry stone assistant superintendent of business and operations and while you're approaching and the room's kind of clearing a little bit i'd just like to take this time to uh thank you all for being here thank you for everyone from the school division for being here and here comes the chair of the hanover county school board mr bob may mr may thank you mr chairman and while they're leaving and i don't

know where sheriff hines got to he's still in the back but i want you to know that my notes were written before y'all got into your diatribe with the three of y'all but

[02:05:44] one of my first comments was to thank our sheriff for his dedication to our schools to include uh in this past year while we've had an interim superintendent i've been a lot more involved in the day-to-day operation of schools than i normally would be and to get phone calls from from sheriff cook i'm sorry sheriff hines in the morning and say hey because of so and so we're to have an extra deputy there or because of this we're going to do that it has been wonderful to have that partnership and our school system and our school board sincerely appreciates the professionalism and every time i get to go to a day of graduation i enjoy every minute of it i go

[02:06:23] to all of them i get invited to and it's a wonderful and we are blessed in hanover county because it is one of the things that i think makes hanover stand out is that we are a team we're a partnership and having the presence of those deputies in our schools and having that car out front is a significant um advantage for our county and so i i did want to say that and if if the sheriff has left already then okay so i want that i promise you that was in my notes dave that was in my notes before y'all y'all went y'all's way so good afternoon board members for the record i am bob may i'm chairman of the hanover county school board and it is my pleasure to be with you

[02:07:01] this afternoon thank you for this opportunity for me to introduce dr penny cuff who along with miss terry stone will present to you the school board's approved budget for fiscal year 2026 i'm very honored today to have with me uh five other members of our school board uh mr steve eikenberry the vice chair miss karen lynn i think miss welsh whitney welsh was here and she had to go she had a meeting at rural point so she had to leave so i apologize for that mr greg coleman is here and and Mr. Ryan Martner here, and so if board members would stand so I could recognize you,

[02:07:36] I'd appreciate it. Thank you. That's Ryan in the back. We're all so honored. I've learned this from my time as two years of being chairman of the school board is every time you try to recognize people, you end up missing somebody. So I'm going to cheat and just say we have a very large presence of our principals in the room with us, so I would like to ask all of our principals and assistant principals to please stand. And finally, last but not least, is the members of our staff

[02:08:14] from central office. We asked them all to stand. We don't carry guns and we're not quite as plentiful as the sheriff's department is, but we did come out anyway. So this board is extremely fortunate to have found Dr. Penny Cuff at the time that we did to be able to get her hired as our interim superintendent. It is my honor today to introduce Dr. Penny Cuff, who began as our interim superintendent in August, and since that time, she has worked collaboratively with the

[02:08:48] school board in support of the best of our students, staff, and the school community. We are grateful for her leadership, including during this budget process. While Dr. Pennycuff will soon share the details of the budget, which we as a school board unanimously approved last week, I would like to take this opportunity to underscore the main focus of this budget, supporting those who support our students. To steal from Coach Eikenberry, it's about the KIDS. It's about our kids, and we wanted

[02:09:26] to put our money where the kids are supported. We know that the work of our faculty and staff matters deeply in the development of our county's youth, and we believe our approved budget reflects this. As we have in prior years, we have worked to ensure our employees' salaries remain competitive.

[02:09:46] In addition to a salary increase for all employees, our focus on job family adjustments this year was our teachers and elevating our teacher salary scales. As you know, our teachers faithfully work every day in classrooms to educate, inspire, and support students.

[02:10:07] Their dedication shapes the future by fostering a love of learning, building essential skills, and nurturing the potential within each of our students. We are grateful for their unwavering commitment to making a lasting impact on the lives of our students.

[02:10:29] We are honored to support them in this budget process. There is magic that takes place inside of our schools, and with your support, we've invested in the future of our school buildings, which are beacons in this community.

[02:10:45] From the opening of Ashland Elementary School this past summer, if you hadn't slid down the slide, you really ought to make that a priority to go do that. To the upcoming construction of Battlefield Park and, yes, Beaverdam Elementary Schools, to the design of Washington Henry Elementary, your support is visible across our county.

[02:11:08] As you'll hear in a few minutes, our approved capital improvement plan continues this investment. While I hate to spoil part of the presentation, I would be remiss if I did not personally thank you, each and every one of you for your support of the school board for your commitment to expanding the Hanover Center for Trades and Technology in the first year of this CIP. This is a truly historic investment that will grow the number of qualified trade professionals for our community.

[02:11:42] My supervisor, Ms. Dibble, has emphasized the importance of Team Hanover and your support at the Hanover Center expansion and beyond demonstrates the team first mentality that helps our community thrive. Our team is strong and is crafting this financial plan and in the successful operation of our schools is not possible without the strong relationship between our two boards and the collaboration exhibited between our respective administrations. On behalf of the

[02:12:17] school board, thank you for your strong and continued partnership. Now to walk you through the details of our budget is another proud member of team hanover dr pennycuff thank you mr may and good afternoon chairman hertzberg vice chairman davis board members mr badesky mr walter and miss mcgee it is my pleasure to be here with you this afternoon to present the school board's approved

[02:12:52] fiscal year 26 budget i have learned since my appointment in july that the tradition of excellence is not just a saying here in Hanover County. It is a mission and one that I have seen in action every day. From classroom instruction to transportation service to the cleaning of our schools, we have a dedicated team of faculty and staff who are committed every day to providing the highest quality education and supports for our students. Each year the budget is an opportunity

[02:13:26] to invest in this important work we are confident that this budget places the highest priority on doing just that supporting our students and those who faithfully serve them each and every day this afternoon we will discuss the following the budget development process some of our tremendous accomplishments as a school division over this past year and the school board's approved fiscal year 2026 operating budget mrs terry stone will then share with you an overview of our budget the school nutrition fund and the school board's approved five-year capital improvement plan

[02:14:05] before outlining the next steps in this important process first let's discuss the steps that we've taken to get here this process is an extension of our philosophy of involving our school board members,

our faculty and staff, our families, our county funding partners, and many other important stakeholders. From the dedicated public hearings that were held this fall for the general public, to the engaging meetings with our school administrators to learn more about the needs in their schools, to our budget exercises at the November work session in which our school board

[02:14:41] members shared their priorities, this has been a meaningful development process. We are deeply grateful for the internal and external stakeholders, for the employees, administrators, parents, advisory committees, the school board members, and you, the Hanover County Board of Supervisors, Hanover County Government Administration and Staff, and many others who have been engaged in this process with us from the beginning. As Team Hanover County Public Schools, we work alongside one another to work in the best interest of our students, our staff, and our community.

[02:15:20] Before we dive into the budget, it's important to look back at the past year and celebrate some of the great moments and accomplishments that our school community has experienced. We do not do this life-changing work for the awards or for the recognition. Our passion for serving our community's most precious resource extends far beyond receiving an accolade. There is a beauty, however when the work of a teacher inside a classroom or the efforts of a team or the dedication of an individual are acknowledged and celebrated it

[02:15:55] reminds us of the impact we have on shaping children's lives over the past year our school community has come together in some remarkable ways demonstrating resilience creativity and a commitment to excellence these moments of triumph whether big or small are a testament to the collective effort of our educators, our staff, our students, and families. It is only fitting that we begin with one of our teachers, Mr. Travis Dodds, a science teacher at Attlee High School. He was the first Milken Educator Award recipient from Hanover County in history. He received this esteemed Oscar

[02:16:33] of Teaching Award at a school-wide assembly in March. The event, which several of you were able to attend, brought Governor Glenn Youngkin and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Lisa Coons to Attlee to honor Mr. Dodds with one of the premier awards for educators in the United States.

[02:16:52] Along with a \$25,000 check, the recognition also came with additional professional learning and networking opportunities for Mr. Dodds as he joins a group of the best of the best across the country. This summer, Hanover County Public Schools earned the status as a top employer for military veterans in Virginia.

[02:17:14] We receive certification from the Virginia Values Veterans Program, and as part of the program, we work with the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and other strategic partners to support Virginia's veterans. This is something we have a long history of doing, especially through the meaningful Veterans Day performances and celebrations that our schools host each year.

[02:17:37] At those Veterans Day performances, our students' musical abilities are on full display. As I'm sure you have experienced during your time serving on the Board of Supervisors, we have many talented students and music instructors in our schools, from our elementary schools all the way through to high school.

[02:17:56] It is no wonder that for the 12th consecutive year, Hanover County Public Schools was named a Best Community for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants. This is a coveted status, and we are one of only 25 school divisions in Virginia to achieve it.

[02:18:16] On my 10th day as the Interim Superintendent of Schools, I had the great pleasure of joining you, our school board, and other distinguished guests, along with hundreds of members of the Ashland and Greater Hanover community, to officially cut the ribbon on the first new school in our county since 2009, Ashland Elementary School.

[02:18:36] Since that momentous day in August, Ashland Elementary has quickly become a place of joy and learning, while fostering a strong sense of community among students, staff, and families. The vibrant halls are filled with curiosity and collaboration as educators inspire the young minds and students embrace new opportunities to grow.

[02:18:59] From its state-of-the-art facilities to the dedicated team of professionals who make it all happen. Ashland Elementary stands as a testament to our shared commitment to excellence in education. As we will discuss shortly, we are excited to continue to invest in the future of our school facilities, and the wonder of Ashland Elementary School inspires this work. Hanover County Public Schools has another unique claim this year. We are home to the top teacher in the Commonwealth of Virginia, Mrs. Avanti Yamamoto. She's a math teacher at Attlee High School, and

[02:19:35] she was named the 2025 Virginia Teacher of the Year in May at a special ceremony hosted by the governor on Capitol Square. For those of you who have had the opportunity to meet or listen to Mrs. Yamamoto, you will know that she radiates positivity and passion for both math and her students. She is determined to show all her students and the world that high-level math is not scary, and that they can achieve great things.

[02:20:03] We are proud to have Mrs. Yamamoto among our faculty as she inspires her students, colleagues, and those across the Commonwealth. Mrs. Yamamoto remains in the running for the National Teacher of the Year, and we wish her all of the best in her efforts to become the fourth Virginia teacher to receive this country's top teaching honor.

[02:20:26] Over the course of this year, Mrs. Yamamoto is serving as an ambassador for Public Education and Hanover County Public Schools alike, and what a story she has to tell. The story of Hanover County Public Schools is a team that prioritizes what matters most, our students, and empowering them to succeed long beyond their time in our schools.

[02:20:49] They are our why, and our team of roughly 2,500 faculty and staff work tirelessly to make that happen. As you know, our convocation theme this year was the Olympics and a celebration of all of the members of this team who work together to serve our students. This team is vast and united.

[02:21:10] Our team of faculty and staff is a group whose work I've seen firsthand as impacting the lives of our students for the better. It truly takes every person from our bus drivers to the nurses to counselors, to our teachers, to the administrators, to front office staff, and every position in between to accomplish our goal of empowering confident, productive, and lifelong learners.

[02:21:35] While we are home to these top educators, to new learning environments, to the highest quality music education and more, what distinguishes Hanover County Public Schools is our dedicated and talented people. And it is my honor to stand here with you this afternoon to both thank them for their work, and to propose ways to further support them.

[02:21:58] While we have shared this data with you in the past, I believe it's a good reminder that with your support and through the budget and otherwise, Hanover County Schools remains leaders in the

region and across the Commonwealth. We have the highest percentage of fully accredited schools in the region.

[02:22:15] Our on-time graduation rate is one of the highest in the state and is above 95% for the 12th year in a row. And our students outperform state SOL averages including with the highest pass rate in math among Virginia's largest school divisions.

[02:22:33] While this data does not tell the full story of the magic that Colonel May described that takes place each day in our schools, it does offer a snapshot and reassurance that this work is making a difference. The development and adoption of the budget serves as a landmark opportunity each year to invest in this work, and like everything we do, our comprehensive plan guides us, crafting proposing and adopting the budget specifically as it relates to the budget our comprehensive plan states that we will prioritize and allocate

[02:23:08] operational and fiscal resources to meet the unique and complex needs of our students employees families and schools while much work will be done between now and the adoption of the budget this spring we trust that you will see that this budget accomplishes that goal one of the key determinants of the budget each year is the state budget. The governor's proposed budget informs the development of our budget, and as you are aware, there will likely be changes to the state budget as the General Assembly concludes their work. Our team is closely monitoring for any potential fiscal

[02:23:46] impacts that we may need to consider once the final state budget is determined. For now, the state budget facts that we have used to craft our budget follow. This is the second year of the biannual budget, meaning that the governor's proposals came in the form of amendments to the budget adopted by the General Assembly last year. The governor's proposed budget amendments, which were released in mid-December, included technical updates that were based on enrollment, increased sales tax, and Virginia Lottery Proceed entitlements based on updated projections, and it continued the planned 3% pay increase for the Standards of Quality

[02:24:24] funded positions. The Governor's proposed budget also directs funding to community colleges for additional dual enrollment opportunities and we continue to develop plans to expand these opportunities for our students. As a result of these changes we are expecting approximately 2.5 million dollars in additional funding from the Commonwealth as compared with the amended fiscal year 2025 Hanover County Public Schools budget. With all of this being said it's now time to share the details of the school board's final approved fiscal year 2026 budget and how it places the

[02:25:00] highest priority on supporting our students and those who faithfully serve them each and every day. First, we are proud to include a 3% salary increase for all eligible employees in fiscal year 2026 beginning July 1st. This salary increase reflects our profound appreciation for their contributions and the impact they make on our students lives and is a symbol of our enduring gratitude for our employees. In addition to the three percent salary increase, the school board's approved budget includes approximately 1.4 million dollars in funding to significantly offset the

[02:25:40] increasing health care costs that our employees would otherwise have encountered this calendar year. Essentially, our employees saw their health care premiums rise only slightly and even fall in some cases depending on their selections beginning January 1st of this year. This budget captures the balance of the true cost of health care based on our actual claims history. I shared earlier how the

Olympics theme of convocation paid tribute to the remarkable team that we have here in Hanover County. For those of you who were able to attend you may recall that toward the end of my remarks

[02:26:16] I asked the attendees to stand based on their years of service. From our newest teachers just entering our classrooms to the veterans who have more than 30 years. Group by group, they proudly stood in recognition of their decades of service and to our community. This visible demonstration shows how blessed we are in Hanover County to have a group of educators who are extremely committed for many years to their craft. As one of our school board members, Mr. Coleman, recently stated, So simply and succinctly last month, they are the backbone of Hanover County Public Schools.

[02:26:54] To that end, a significant investment in our teacher salary scale is needed as part of our ongoing efforts to demonstrate to our educators that we recognize their value, whether they are in year one or year 30, to help combat the national and state teaching shortage.

[02:27:14] Specifically, we are excited to include \$4.5 million in the budget to lift the teacher salary scale and recognize the deep value that our teachers bring to our school community. This investment would result in an average increase for teachers of 3.8% in addition to the 3% salary increase for a total average of 6.8% for teachers.

[02:27:39] It would also begin to create more consistency in the percentage of increase between the steps on the scale and the school board's approved budget streamlines the number of scales that we use. Why are we focused on this? For our enthusiastic new educators who bring fresh energy into our classrooms, many are burdened by student loans and seek financial stability, meaning they're drawn to school divisions that offer higher pay. For our mid-career educators, our seasoned professionals who bring valuable experience and mentorship to our newer staff,

[02:28:14] Many face increasing financial responsibilities, such as supporting a family or buying a home. Finally, our veteran teachers, whose expertise is invaluable, have dedicated decades to their craft, and we must invest in them to help ensure that our salary scale is not the reason that we lose their expertise and institutional knowledge.

[02:28:37] Unfortunately, there is not a flood of candidates coming out of schools today. National data from this fall showed that the two most common challenges schools said they faced in hiring were a lack of qualified candidates and too few applicants. What does this mean for us?

[02:28:54] It means that we must do all that we can to retain our talented faculty and staff. We recognize that this is not a quick fix, but rather a substantial step in the right direction and one that communicates to our teachers that you are seen, you are valued, and you are needed here in Hanover County.

[02:29:15] Across the board, an investment in our educators is extremely important and benefits not only their well-being, but the education our students will receive by continuing to recruit and retain top talent. In addition to elevating our teacher salary scale, the school board's approved budget includes funding for the continuation of a successful incentive program launched during the pandemic for substitutes.

[02:29:42] Initiated using ESSER funding, the program offers \$500 for each substitute who works 50 or more days per semester, \$250 for each substitute who works 25 to 49 days per semester, and \$150 for every substitute who works 15 to 24 days per semester.

[02:30:04] This is paid to these substitutes at the end of each semester. The budget also continues this incentive program as part of our operational budget. This builds on our investment of the assigned substitutes and recent budgets that continue in this budget. We continue to recognize that our students are in need of additional supports.

[02:30:25] This is crucial to fostering their holistic development, ensuring their long-term success. Addressing students' emotional and physical well-being creates nurturing environments to help ensure that every student thrives and achieves with their fullest potential. The school board's approved budget includes funding for two school psychologist interns. Not only would the addition of these interns provide our students with additional access to qualified school psychologists, it would allow us to develop our own pipeline for school psychologists, which is a critical shortage area in Virginia that has impacted our hiring efforts. We also

[02:31:03] work to support our students physical needs and provide them with access to extracurricular activities to help further improve their overall well-being as we have discussed this fall with our school board we are beginning to expand our middle school athletic offerings starting with track and field this was the top sport of interest in the student survey that our team conducted accordingly the school board's approved budget includes funding for four assistant track coach stipends at the middle school level. The school board's approved budget expands opportunities for our students with the funding for

[02:31:40] the following: six spots at Code RVA that were initially funded with one-time funds in fiscal year 25. We have allocated funds in our operating budget to ensure that we continue to have these spots available for students. Tuition increases at Code RVA, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School, and St. Joseph's Villa.

[02:32:01] And additionally, the implementation of a better way athletics through a third-party vendor that will provide professional learning for our coaches, for our directors of student activities, and for our school administrators to help make our athletic programs a positive environment for all.

[02:32:19] This spending plan has a clear vision in mind, supporting our students, those who care for them, and the learning environments in which they will learn and grow. It has been an honor to share with you how this budget accomplishes the first of these two priorities. To share more details about the operating budget and provide an overview of the School Nutrition Fund and discuss how we're planning to invest in the future of our school buildings, I would like to invite Mrs. Terry Stone to the podium.

[02:32:50] Thank you, Dr. Pennykopf, and good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Vice Chairman, Board Members, and Mr. Badeski. it's great to be here with you today and I get to share all the numbers with you the more boring things but I'm happy to do that so what we have here is our operating fund it demonstrates the different funding sources of the operating you see the local funding is the first line with that nine point eight million dollar increase or eight percent that certainly that represents the

[02:33:27] county funding we have the state funding with an increase of five point five million or four point nine percent and then there's a increase within the federal funding of seven point five percent and other there's a slight decrease we're right sizing some flow through numbers there for dual enrollment which demonstrates a slight decrease three point nine percent and overall our operating budget which is equivalent to your general fund is going up six point 3% mr. Badesky had presented that the general fund was 6.9% so we seem to be

[02:34:02] pretty much in sync there this pie chart represents the funding sources for the operating fund you can see that the local funding makes up 49.8% of all of our general fund funding and that is increasing as Mr. Badesky touched on we're seeing a decrease and where the state funding is not keeping pace with the local funding so if we had looked at this pie chart last year or in the current year budget it would be 49% where now it's 49.8% for local funding

[02:34:38] and as approved it would be 44.8% for our state funding and in the current year that's 45.4% so we're continuing to see that shift of pushing a little more of the funding for the general fund towards local funding when we look at our expenditures by type, you can see that 88.7% of our total general fund expenditures or operating fund is personnel.

[02:35:07] That makes sense. We're a service industry. What you see there are salaries and then also benefit costs operating, which are your repair and maintenance, fuel, utilities, instructional supplies. That makes up about 10.6% of our budget.

[02:35:26] by functions instruction is 79.7 percent of the entire approved budget you can see the other categories there which include technology operations and maintenance pupil transportation and administration attendance and health there is an expectation that this number exceeds 70 percent and you can see that we're well above that and we have been for years next is our school nutrition fund overall this fund is increasing by 1.1 million for a total of

[02:36:00] 10.3 million that increases is associated with increased state funding our USDA donated commodities we have increased food and supply cost and then it also includes that three percent salary increase for all eligible employees that Dr. Penny Cuff touched on next we have our capital improvements plan our development process for this is similar to the operating process we begin with school board planning meetings we look back at some of those safety audits that they are prepared by the

[02:36:37] Sheriff's department we have meetings with our administration county administration we always want to look back to that technology funding plan to ensure that we're staying on track and I'm going to touch on that in a little bit and any of our facility studies and then the 10-year debt model that is prepared by the county so we want to ensure that we're remaining in sync to the greatest extent possible with all of those studies and plans this is as you can see a few of the picture pictures in regards to the one on the

[02:37:12] top to the left is the Battlefield Park elevation on the bottom you can on the right is the Beaver Dam Elementary and then to the right on the top we have a design in regards to Washington Henry Elementary School. Mr. Badesky shared the most recent elevation with you, but this does demonstrate how that new school would fit on that property. In terms of our highlights for the CIP, we've already touched on this. You've heard it from Mr. Badesky, you also heard it from Mr. May, but I think the most exciting point today is the expansion of the

[02:37:51] Hanover Center for Trades and Technology. That is included in year one of the capital improvement plan at 8.5 million dollars it's highly unusual to get a project in year one and so we are very appreciative of that from you all in terms of making that funding available we also have formally identified the mechanics for elementary school is the next replacement school and that design is in would be in fiscal year 2028 that's when the funding is with a targeted opening of the 2030-31 school year. We've also included in that five-year plan is

[02:38:29] another campus-style elementary school in fiscal year 2030, which is year five of the plan. And then as we know, when we look at that 10-year plan, the third campus-style replacement school is slated for fiscal year 2033. We've already talked about the Hanover Center for Trades and technology expansion and I think you've seen this rendering before but it does demonstrate where we could add four additional instructional spaces that decision what they will be has not been made but this it just let demonstrates

[02:39:07] that we could include auto electricity cosmetology and then still have a classroom space I talked some about our school bus and technology funding when we looked as we were beginning to prepare this budget at our school bus replacement plan we knew that we were a little behind the eight ball in regards to where we would want to be when we looked over the five years we identified that a need of additional 5.9 million we've as you can see we've added additional funding in several of those years and 2.4 million in fiscal year 2030

[02:39:45] so this is an addition of 3.3 million of that 5.9 we haven't made up all of the difference that we need but we've certainly making a good effort to make progress there similar to the technology plan when we started with the budget development when we compared to need we were short about 9.5 million you can see that we were able to add additional funding in fiscal year 2027 through 2029 and then the addition of 2 million in fiscal year 2030 that gets us 4.8 million uh movement in

[02:40:22] in working our way to the 9.5 excuse me so we're making progress here but this is something that when we start next year's budget development we will have to again look at our school bus and technology replacement plan and just ensure that we stay on target there this represents our funding sources for the five-year cip the first line is the county transfer and then below that is the county transfer assignment all of these funding is currently uh booked it's included on the county

[02:40:56] books or planned in regards to that annual return from the school operating budget you can see the county transfer cash fund at the 8.5 million in fiscal year 2026 that is for the expansion of the trade school and then looking out we see the debt funded projects moving forward that totals 139.8 million and then these are the uses and we delivered last week a school budget binder or book for everyone and so there is a tab you can go to within that book where you'll

[02:41:34] find all of the details because i know it's very small here but section five of that book list this summary page but then you can also see all the projects by project type and by school and so that can be helpful when you're answering questions in regards to constituents finally this is our summary of all funds the top one is the operating fund that we started with with that 6.3 increase we then have the school nutrition fund going up the 1.1 million dollars or 12.1 percent

[02:42:09] and then the capital improvement plan as we know in the current year we had funding for beaverdam elementary and washington henry elementary that totaled 72.8 million so it is not unusual to see that significant decrease that just reflects the pattern of the projects that are funded overall when we look at all funds it's a decrease of 55.8 million or 16.1 these are our next steps forward which actually are your next steps forward so uh in april 2nd as you know is a public hearing

[02:42:47] on the 2026 of budget the county administrators proposed budget april 9th is the slated date for adoption and then may 13th is when we would go back to our school board with the adopted county budget also any changes that we may be aware of but at that time in the state budget and then we We would look for a final adoption from the school board on May 13th.

[02:43:14] And Dr. Penica. Thank you. Members of the Board of Supervisors, we would like to thank you for your profound support of our schools and for your strong financial support throughout the budget process.

[02:43:30] We greatly look forward to continuing to work together on the budget and to balance fiscal responsibility with the resources needed to provide exceptional opportunities for our students, staff, and the community. We thank you for your partnership, and I would also like to specifically say thank you to Mr. Badeski, who has been a wonderful partner for us throughout this process, and also to Sheriff Hines and what he has meant to the schools and our ability to call on him and to receive a fast and wonderful response.

[02:44:03] So we have been thankful to be part of Team Hanover and thankful for our partnerships all around. We are happy now to answer any questions that you may have. Well, thank you, Dr. Pinnacuff, and also thank you, Ms. Stone, for both of your presentations.

[02:44:18] We'll now take questions and comments from board members, Mr. Stoneman, and then Mr. Hudson. Mr. Stoneman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Dr. Pinnacuff and Ms. Stone, for your very detailed explanation of things, and it's nice to have it delivered on a level that we can easily absorb.

[02:44:39] But I just had one question. I know that you mentioned the two positions for psychologists, interns, And I was just wondering if you could give me a little bit better appreciation for how that process works, the frequency of use in their schools, and how it relates to parental guidance in this area as well.

[02:45:00] I mean, are they reaching out to the parents, you know, when students reach out to them? I'd be happy to answer that. Thank you. In our school division, we have 12 full-time equivalent school psychologists. we have nine currently on staff and we have two part-time and one that is two prep members and then two part-time that make up one of those positions so what they do is they when students are going through the child study teacher assistance team process they're struggling students and they need to be tested to determine if they qualify for special education services the school

[02:45:36] psychologists are the one who do the cognitive evaluations on the students to understand how they're processing how they're learning so they don't they don't provide services directly to the children they are the people who evaluate well they they do provide services of evaluating the students but as far as counseling type students that is not the majority of their work so they are working to do the assessments to serve on IEP teams a student has to be fully evaluated to receive services and then if they every three years they

[02:46:11] have to be evaluated again so about I want to say 15% of our students in the school division qualify for that service and it is largely for determining who is a student with special needs and then who may be able to no longer receive those services thank you that that's very helpful as you know I've got a something my youngest son has not Asperger's but dysgraphia and you know we we homeschooled and we were able to diagnose that pretty quickly and I think it would have presented a lot of challenges had you not had you know somebody specifically looking at those types of needs so that's very

[02:46:47] encouraging thank you well thank you if I could add one more part of the interns are like student teachers for school psychologists so what we'd like to do is we'd like to work with the colleges and universities to get them as students for them to do their one year of training as an intern here with us and we hope that that will cause them to want to stay with us and then we'll be able to fill those positions.

Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Hudson. Thank you Mr. Chair. Thank you Dr. Pennycuff, Ms. Stone. I just wanted to echo some of Mr. Stoneman's thoughts in that it the

[02:47:23] budget presentation was succinct and easy to understand and we certainly appreciate that but the thing that I love most about it is that I can point back to conversations that I've had with folks, whether it be principals or school board members or school board administration. And I have really enjoyed the respect and reciprocity and to Ms. Dibble's touting of that, we all really are team Hanover and on the same page. And it has been quite refreshing. I will commend our school board as a whole every one of them for working and stepping up to make sure that what is needed

[02:48:01] not only in their district but across the county and getting the information to us as a board because we simply cannot be everywhere all the time and that's why we have all of those appointees those little tentacles out there to to help to make sure that the information gets to us and i would say that i am very proud to be a parent of three children in hanover county public school so and i would not be sitting here today if it was not for teachers and counselors and school administrators that cared so thank you all thank you mr davis thank you mr chairman dr

[02:48:40] pentacuff thank you uh for being with us today chairman may miss stone um i wanted to just cover a few things and thank you for putting it in your presentation when the commonwealth funds soq positions merit increases and those types of things they are consistent that they always fund soq however they do have sole discretion in moving uh positions and items in and out of soq and we have maintained that there is uh no differentiation between uh someone who is

[02:49:14] directly supporting someone who is direct instructional personnel and those who are support instructional personnel and that when the money comes down from the state that those those teacher raises as they refer to them when we when when we have a teacher raise that comes in we also increase the the the money for those who are not covered by soq and we also use our support staff whether that's folks who are in the janitorial services the folks who are uh in in food service uh our bus drivers so on and so forth and so i think it's important that folks know

[02:49:53] numbers that you put up we just paid a lot of money for this technology so with that I think it's I think it's extremely important that folks realize here in Hanover that their tax dollars go to support their schools as a matter of fact if you add the state and the fed together it's still not the same it's far below the local money that's pulled out of the taxpayers while it's here in Hanover County I think that's extremely important so thank you for making that distinction two other

[02:50:29] points the Career and Technical Education Center is is long overdue but that's not a disparagement that's just a matter of us trying to catch up and recognizing that the support of that center with some of the the needs that we have in the community are really not only important but we have certainly prioritized as I see Justin Roark here Miss Roark great to see you fantastic leader over there and I just want you to know that a lot of our business community members know that that this substantial investment is being made in CTE and have communicated to me and I think other board members how pleased they are that this vital program is

[02:51:08] going to receive that investment. The last thing I want to bring up is I was going through this and thank you for providing this in advance. I did go to tab five and I was looking at something and I'd like to draw folks attention to it that when you look at FY26 there are a couple of things that you need to know when it comes into CIP and I think the citizens need to know and I found it interesting um thank you that

we have school buses in there uh we have a technology plan we have painting and those types of things but when you go to technology plan 3.561 million and 250 dollars we're not just throwing numbers out there these are these numbers are scrutinized before they're

[02:51:45] they're placed in this budget and when people say well i'd like to see something else funded we clearly show what we're funding how we're funding it and why it's a priority if you go down and look there's no HVAC bathrooms or school grounds in FY 26 that's not because you don't care it's not because we don't care that's because we've prioritized certain things just like a family budget we have to pay for them when we have the ability to pay for them and so we've moved some of those things to FY 27 and then you can pick up and look where that money is going to be expended but when you have a budget this size and you budget down to two hundred and fifty dollars on a technology plan I hope it provides some

[02:52:25] confidence to the citizenry that every dollar is being scrutinized to make sure that we get the biggest return on investments for our students parents teachers and principals in the schools as we're trying to make our students the most competitive that they can be before they they walk across a graduation stage so thank you for your leadership ma'am thank you thank you for your comments, Mr. Davis. Thanks again for your presentation. I just, I do have a few things for you. I think the expansion of the Career Technical and Education Center is just a great

[02:52:57] thing to do. I think that's just excellent. And I've done a lot of HVAC through the years myself. And there are just a lot of students, I'm sure you know this, that may not be fit for a four or eight-year college, but they can be plumbers, electricians, HVAC contractors, and those types of things. I think it's just great that we're looking to do this. The next thing I want to mention is buses. Sometimes they're a little late, but before I mention this, I want you to know my

[02:53:37] favorite part of the day, my second favorite part of the day, my regular weekdays, my second favorite time of the day is 7.50 a.m. when I drop Jameson off at school. My favorite time of the day is when the bus comes around the corner to drop him off. And I make that my number one priority. This is a priority in a general sense. I'm here today and Grandma should be getting him off the bus right

[02:54:13] about now. But my number one priority is dropping him off at school and getting him off a bus. And I do that 98% of the days. And the reason I bring this up is because I've had a great experience uh with the staff at cold harbor elementary from the principal to the assistant principal to the teachers that i've interacted with and other members of the staff i don't think i would feel so positive about the experience if i didn't feel so positive i don't let me rephrase that i don't

[02:54:48] think that my favorite and second favorite part of the day would be the drop-off line in the school bus if i didn't have such a positive experience with the school and the staff it's been a great experience thank you for me and my child so I would like to know just I know it's a tough issue please don't take it as an attack when the bus comes 20 minutes late yeah I'm standing there 20 minutes but I am still thankful that bus comes around that corner so where do we stand on school bus drivers I will ask members of the team to let me know I don't know if school bus drivers how

[02:55:28] many openings we may have and I will let you know that we're working on a pilot now with all elementary schools that tracks the bus so that our families will know where it's at so I'll ask if you're able yeah I believe that we have five vacancies but we also have an equivalent number in training or in the class right now so we were hopeful now you never know what may happen and how that can change but as dr.

penny cuff mentioned we are piloting a bus app right now at pearson's corner elementary that we hope to roll out to other schools that once

[02:56:07] the bus gets within a very small vicinity of the bus stop that you have registered for and you can the average individual cannot track a bus but you have registered for then you will get an alert so that you know your bus is within a very close vicinity of that stop so in some cases we think that may be helpful often if there is a delay we've had an illness we've had an unexpected driver that cannot drive and so that we have to deal with that with double backs or substitutes and a substitute could have a bit a bit of a

[02:56:44] delay so okay well it sounds like you're on top of it the main thing was just trying to address the drivers i will add that the notifications for a late bus they go out by 12 30 in the afternoon so that's plenty of time and i i really appreciate that so there's no problem there uh the other thing i want to address is i this is really common it's not a question is the boundary adjustment and this this is this is controversial so i know it's controversial and i'm not going to

[02:57:22] to get into the controversy. I'm not going to do that here. But it is controversial. And I want to say that, you know, I really feel for the school board. You know, we have seven members of the school board. I believe six of them here. One is at Royal Point Elementary. They're all working today. Yes, they are. And they are having to deal with a very tough issue. And no matter what they do, no matter what they choose, somebody's going to be upset. And in a general sense, in a very general sense it's not the fault of these seven people on the school board it's not they are

[02:58:01] working through the process as diligently as i believe it can be worked through and when you're dealing with people's children in their elementary schools that is sensitive it's very sensitive so i appreciate their work your work all the staff i know it's tough and i may not agree with everything that they choose to do or decide or implement but i'll never speak negative about them guarantee you that thank you i do want to point out why i have mr eikenberry here and i say this

[02:58:37] as a board member not as a dad on this one because my child is not going to be redistricted with any of the plans that doesn't affect us but one thing that i'm aware of is that in a general sense this all started at cool spring elementary it's in that area that's just the facts most of of the parents in the area where I live, in the Cold Harbor District, most of the parents I don't think have been following the process because they probably didn't think that it would affect

[02:59:14] them because it's way over there. And they hear Cool Spring and they hear Attlee and they hear all the terms over there. I don't know them all. Craney Island and King's Charter, 301 and Rutland and all that stuff. They're not hearing about Creighton Road. They're not hearing about Cold Harbor Elementary. They're not hearing about Battlefield Park and the General Suns. Now some of us are going to the mapping tool we can go in there and click on the map and we can see certain things but most parents in our area are not following this very closely because i don't think they thought that it would affect them and their children and their families well now i find out

[02:59:53] that it does you know i've looked at some of the stats and some of the changes are good no matter what they do i see some real positives hey that could be really beneficial here that that makes sense um so i would like to have a time with mr eikenberry just to just on behalf of the citizens and the parents at some point not right now steve while you're here yeah i'm getting it on the record yes so that we can look at some of these areas because mr nelson had a very good concern a good point i should say a valid concern that i share and that is that some of the plans show

[03:00:33] some of the students being moved out of an elementary school where we have development that's not even built yet staying in the attendance zone and that concerns me so mr chair if i could just i'll i'll interdict one thing uh we had a meeting yesterday with the committee that's working on this six out of your seven board members there's only three that are required to be a part of the committee but six out of your seven of y'all's board members that you appointed were present for that meeting to work on this that's how serious your school board is taking this issue. One of the things that came out from the public comment section was, you don't think

[03:01:09] about, I didn't think about it, and I'm affected by it. Granddaughter, grandchildren that goes to Pearson's Corner, that's a split school. Part of those kids leave to go to Chickahominy, and part of them went to Oak Knoll. And one of the things that a lot of the parents said was, gosh, wouldn't it be great if we could just keep our fifth grade friends when we get, it's already hard enough going to middle school, wouldn't it be great if we could do that when we go to middle school, that we could all stay fifth grade friends and become sixth grade friends. So one of the things that MGT did for us is to try to figure out how we could possibly make that happen. So we are, our first priority was solving Cool Spring. And we think we have put a plan, we're going to put a plan forward.

[03:01:49] I don't know until our board meets and votes. I have no idea to tell you. I'm sure you sitting there as chair, you probably have the same feeling sometimes. You really don't know what the vote's going to be until a motion is made. But we're having, bringing some stuff forward at our meeting in in march and we're trying to work through all of those processes and i know this is not an update for you on that but i wanted to just tell you that we are diligently working to try to come up with solutions to solve the cool spring problem but to also hear what the other what the family members have all said about wouldn't it be great if all the kids it's not a bunch it's it's 50 so if you take 50 students out of a school that's a student school of 500 that's 450 of them go to a different

[03:02:28] middle school so we're trying to figure fix those things that's why some of the other peripherals neighborhoods are now being involved but none of those decisions have been made we've been trying to decide on a plan how we implement it will come up after we get the plan resolved does that make sense it does make sense very very much thank you very much i just i think the important thing is that your your board all of y'all the seven of you should be extremely proud because you're all of your board members are diligently working on this hours on end every day right now and i thank

[03:03:01] you for that and i i appreciate it i know i see i read i hear things i i've been been receiving emails and and one thing i picked up was all the emails are coming from that area and that's understandable they have a right to write us if they want i just read them notice i haven't gotten any from cold harbor yet and that's how i figured out you know that they don't know so i would like to just have a conversation with our school board member at the appropriate time okay and finally while we do have all our school board here thank you to each and every one of you uh and the staff

[03:03:40] everyone jennifer greif i see you here i know you've been working on it and i know it's tough i know it's time consuming and your efforts in the end no matter what decision you make i will support those decisions and i will respect that decision even if i don't agree with every little line or every decision. So I just want you to know that. Thank you very much, ma'am. Thank you.

[03:04:06] Okay, it is now 3.04. We're going to have a 10-minute recess. 10 minutes. Please, board members,

[03:04:14] be back in 10 minutes so we can start no later than 3.15. Thank you. Okay, it is now 3.15.

[03:15:26] Next on the agenda, item 6D, presentation by Fire Chief Chris Anderson. Welcome, sir. Mr. Badesky, Mr. Walter, thank you all for being here, especially in endurance, such a long day going through the budgets.

[03:15:45] I appreciate the trust, truly, that you all have instilled in me over the past year, or almost year, appointing me as the fire chief in April of 2024. And to serve as the fire chief and represent the women and men of your fire MS department, as you all continue to represent the collective body of our community.

[03:16:07] My name is Chris Anderson. I am pleased to propose the fire EMS budget for FY26. And again, I'd like to thank you, not only as your fire chief, but as a longtime member of the Henry District, sir, resident, and then a member here for a number of years, starting in 1996. It truly has been a blessing to serve and an honor to be in this position today.

[03:16:36] As your fire chief, I'm committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. This budget request reflects our dedication to maintaining the highest quality emergency services while remaining fiscally responsible.

[03:16:54] The FY26 budget is designed to meet the evolving needs of our community by enhancing operational efficiency, improving emergency response capabilities, and prioritizing the safety of both our personnel and our citizens. The proposal aligns with our strategic goals and our mission to provide elite service with compassion for a safer community. As you've heard several times today, our greatest asset are the women and men who make up your Fire EMS department. We operate 17 Fire EMS stations across the county

[03:17:28] with 250 career members, 84% of whom are assigned to operations. The operations personnel are spread across spread across three 24-hour rotating shifts and staff a combination of resources in 13 of our 17 stations. When staffed, the remaining four stations, Eastern Hanover, West Hanover, and Ashland Volunteer Rescue Squads, along with the Courthouse Volunteer Fire Company are staffed with volunteers. The remaining 16% of our members support our operations staff through our training

[03:18:04] academy including our high school program the fire marshal's office emergency management logistics section information technology public information and affairs as well as our administrative staff to continue to augment our staffing needs we do have part-time employees we have 29 part-time employees 10 of which serve in administrative roles in the fire marshal's office our training division and logistics and the remaining 19 positions are assigned to our peak volume ambulance and operations Despite the national trend in decline in volunteerism, our department saw a slight

[03:18:44] increase in volunteer recruitment and participation in 2024. Volunteers contributed nearly 48,000 operational hours, equivalent to 23 full-time employees. Operational hours remains a priority for our volunteers and are defined truly as the time spent staffing an engine or an ambulance.

[03:19:04] We track our volunteer membership in two key roles: firefighter and EMS provider. We've talked about some of the decline in volunteerism and what does that look like truly here in hanover county we have 65 active firefighters actively trained firefighters of whom 53 meet the same qualifications as career firefighters that number has drastically decreased over the the past 20 years we still hold a a little bit stronger number on our ems side where we have 104 ems providers that are spread out on the four rescue squad stations. And some of them have started to integrate in at our fire

[03:19:44] stations as well. Like the rest of local government, Fire EMS is experiencing a steady increase in service demand. We saw a 2.9% increase from the previous year. Of our four years increase last year, it was about 16% increase over the past five years. We have seen a slight reduction in that.

[03:20:05] and now our four-year average is a 11.5 percent. We are not including 2020 just because of the anomalies with the decline in calls for service because of the COVID crisis. Fires and motor vehicle collisions, we saw an increase in 2024, while actually our EMS calls decreased slightly by five percent. Our technical or high-risk incidents, such as the fires and motor vehicle collisions, do require more people to handle those. So although we saw a decrease in some of ems calls the technical aspect of the fires and motor vehicle collisions have required us to send

[03:20:41] more people to those on on a day-to-day basis we categorize incidents by risk level to determine the personnel and tasks that are required for an effective response low risk incidents as i mentioned require fewer personnel while higher risk incidents demand more resources to balance workload and ensure firefighter safety for example a small residential fire requires at least 21 people to handle that incident whereas the commercial structure fire we had in the hanover industrial air park last week required us to have 54 responders to bring that under control

[03:21:17] currently our minimum daily staffing is 51 personnel on a day-to-day basis to accomplish the number of personnel needed for the commercial work and fire we essentially doubled the task that we had so outlined in the middle boxes we essentially activated a second alarm to fill that response to bring that fire under control i'm happy to report that the women and men of your fire ems department saved more than 75 of that structure allowing the occupants and the businesses in the front half of that to remain operational the very next day that's a significant

[03:21:54] impact when you think about the ripple effect that economics has on businesses if they are not able to continue to operate in our community to augment the additional personnel needed we did have some of our administrative staff respond out to assist and then to backfill some of our fire stations we relied on our regional partnerships as we talk about time and time again with henrico and new kit coming in and filling in some of our fire stations on average we handle almost 50 incidents a day of which 29 account for daily transports with an average transport taking approximately

[03:22:34] one hour and 30 minutes we have seen an improvement in that from last year's presentation where our transport times were over two hours. That is in part by the leadership of our staff and our EMS captain working with our hospital staff and trying to find ways that we can get patients in and out much faster so our turnaround time is decreased significantly in our hospitals. We're not seeing the consistent hour plus wait times that we used to see. Our call volume does align with our population density as you can see on the slide approximately 78 percent of our workload falls

[03:23:14] within the suburban services area as outlined in the comprehensive plan this budget proposal is strategic as you've heard throughout the presentations it is necessary to meet the growing needs of our community with your support we did add 25 firefighter medic positions to enhance service delivery and reduce coverage gaps funding through a combination of fy25 funding as Mr. Badeschi outlined earlier today and including the FY26 resources is what made this possible. The new members started this past October and with a graduation and field training

[03:23:53] completion we expected for them to be out in the field and operational by July of 2025. This budget increase also provides increased funding for our part-time ambulance. That program has been

successful in the east end of the county augmenting some of our call volume during peak volume time frames we're trying to expand that opportunity to not only account for our peak volume time frame but also account for times in mechanicsville and in ashland when our volunteers are not able to mark up an ambulance the staffing improvements with the 25 new firefighter medic positions are

[03:24:30] shown here 15 15 were funded in the fy25 budget six of those were allocated as relief positions to improve mental resiliency and reduce reliance on overtime nine of those positions were funded through the FY26 budget that we're going through now and which ultimately allows us to increase our minimum daily staffing from 51 to 55. Our East Hanover Station 3 and Farrington Station 11 will transition to independently staffed engines and ambulances where we're no longer relying on the

[03:25:05] cross-staff resources increasing the strain on some of our outlying stations. This will improve the ability for Beaver Dam, Black Creek, and Rockville to remain in their districts longer as units are staffed full-time in those respective districts. The next few slides are really a representation of what that looks like. Since we don't have the staffing out there now, we wanted to highlight through our predictive modeling software, what does it look like? So what does

[03:25:41] it mean when we add that staffing from a cross-staffed station to now independently-staffed resources. So looking at the highlighted box, this is East Hanover Station 3. This is what the current system looks like today. The darker greens obviously are the lesser response times, which is what's ideal. And then as you get into the reds or even the whites of the graph, it shows where our response times are actually extended out. So by putting the staff at Station 3 and having independent engine and ambulance, you can see significantly in that district that the response

[03:26:18] area is going to be improved once july comes and those folks are actually operational now similarly at station 11 in farrington you'll see along the route 3 route 33 corridor that it also has a similar improvement where now that area has improved significantly the predictive modeling is not built out fully yet i was hoping that by today we would have a demonstration of that ripple effect that I've been discussing to show the true impacts of Beaver Dam, Rockville, and then Black Creek of how that's going to push those units back in there. I'm hopeful to have that in the next

[03:26:57] several weeks, and I'm happy to share that with you when that is available. From a capital improvement stand, it's relatively expensive to operate a fire EMS budget. Our key investments over the next several years are outlined here with the replacement of our apparatus. It is important to note that none of the apparatus here is new, meaning that it's not going to be an addition to our fleet. This is actually replacements for our cycle that's been built out with the assistance of finance, helping us develop that plan. Unfortunately, delivery time has not

[03:27:34] improved since last year. We are on track to receive the apparatus that we purchased about three years ago. So from the time that we purchase an apparatus, it takes us on average to receive it within three to four years depending on the type of apparatus. Our logistics folks have listened and are working closely with our vendors, and they have identified opportunities where we have not only been able to reduce some of our costs, but they are also looking at stock units that come available.

[03:28:03] That does improve our response and delivery time of those apparatus, and it reduces the cost overall for our apparatus as well. The operations and service level plan do align, as I mentioned before with our strategic goals of officer development, adequate resources, technology enhancements, and health and safety.

[03:28:27] The feedback this year, one of the things that we've mentioned through our staff meetings, through our local representation, and Mr. Davis, I believe you and I had a conversation on it this past year, was physical agility testing and how can we continue to enhance physical agility testing.

[03:28:44] I'm happy to report that in this proposed budget, it does fund that opportunity to not only reintroduce the physical agility testing, but it also reintroduces a validated and standardized agility test, ensuring members are physically prepared for the job, reducing injury risks and improving training outcomes, and ultimately enhancing our operational efficiencies.

[03:29:07] A consistent testing process does promote fairness and strengthens legal compliance. The initiative reinforces confidence within the department, as mentioned, as we've collaborated with our folks, and it demonstrates our commitment to maintaining the highest safety and service standards.

[03:29:26] Additionally funded through this budget is the firefighter protective equipment, replacement technology and mobile data computers, and funding, more importantly, as you've heard, a consistent theme in investing in our folks with officer and employee development programs.

[03:29:45] The new fire station, Laurel Meadows Station 17, is expected to open in April. It has had several delays, but we've been working closely general services and administration along with the uh the contractors so we're hoping for a uh a april time frame on the opening for that we uh it will serve as a representation of future stations so it is a model station from the design we also have several replacements as mr badeski talked about earlier the doswell station replacement is scheduled to break ground

[03:30:18] in FY26. The Montpelier and Chickahominy replacement stations are in the five-year CIP. We ask ourselves, why do we need that replacement? A little bit of background in history. The Rockville and Doswell station were sister stations. They were built in 1981 for just over \$400,000 a piece. Keep that in mind in a later slide when we talk about the budget for a fire station is exceeding 14 million now. That was just for the shell. The volunteers in 1981 were

[03:30:55] responsible for designing the interior to meet their needs at that specific time frame. So you've heard me talk about that the current stations that we have were not designed for 24-7 coverage. As career staff has been added, we've had to retrofit the bathrooms and living spaces. We've converted the old storage areas to actual bedroom facilities now.

[03:31:20] New replacement stations ensure a better fit for the modern fire service needs. It will include individual bedrooms to accommodate a more diverse workforce that we're seeing today. And it will, by improving the outdated kind of open forum bunk rooms to now the individual size so that the group setting is no longer there.

[03:31:46] So the budget breakdown, where some of the funding is going. Our funding continues to focus on the salaries and benefits for our personnel. Fire EMS is unique where it has limited opportunities for external funding. As you can see in a future slide, our intergovernmental revenue as well as our local revenue does not nearly compare to the tax dollars from the general fund.

[03:32:12] But consistently we focus on our personnel. So this year, we're proposing a 12.4% increase in our salaries and benefits line. That does account for the market adjustment that Mr. Badeski talked about earlier today, as well as additional overtime and some of the funding for our part-time positions that we've asked for.

[03:32:33] Our operating line, we're trying to keep that as flat as possible and working within our means. So that is just a slight increase of 5%. And our capital outlay, although that's a 24% decrease, it's just a 24% decrease from the previous year, and that's mainly from one-time CIP projects in FY25.

[03:32:52] The total increase in our proposed budget is a 9.8% increase overall. That is slightly higher than what you've seen in the other presentations today. However, there is some more personnel that's been added to these positions over the past two years to help fund and offset some of the decline in volunteerism.

[03:33:14] As I mentioned, from the general fund is where we generally most of our revenue for the department. So our local revenue, as I mentioned, is flat. You heard me talk about the local revenue from our transports.

[03:33:30] Our transports were down, so we're not predicting an increase in our local revenue for our fee-for-service. Similar with the fire marshal's office and the increase in fires, they've not been able to get out to our businesses as much as they have been in the past. So we're still not predicting an increase in our fees associated with fire permits.

[03:33:50] And intergovernmental revenue, we're simply just not seeing the funding from the state or through grants nearly as much as we've been able to take account for in previous years. So additionally, with the funding from overall, this is kind of a slide presentation of showing what some of the funding goes towards.

[03:34:14] But at the end of the day, 82% of our budget is associated to salaries and benefits. 17% is for operational expenses, and 1% of the FIRE EMS budget is dedicated to capital outlay.

[03:34:29] Now, I will add that the 1% that's in there does seem a little deceiving because we pull from a number of the other county budgets, such as general services, when it comes to the fire station replacements that we've talked about before. As we look ahead through future budget requests, it is necessary to strategically address opportunities, such as service demand and our community's risks.

[03:34:56] We continue to have staffing needs that are beyond this budget request. We continue to have staffing needs for a full-time ambulance in the town of Ashland, staffing for courthouse station 5, specialty resources such as a ladder truck or a rescue, and continuing to address our staffing needs in our rural stations remain a priority for us.

[03:35:20] Fleet availability remains a challenge for Fire EMS. However, we've been working with General Services, and I'm happy to say that we anticipate seeing a decrease in some of our challenges with our fleet availability by adding a position in general services. They recently were able to advertise for one, and we're excited to support them with that endeavor. To close out the presentation today, I would like to highlight some of the accomplishments from 2024. We were

[03:35:53] able to graduate 19 recruits from Academy 68. We did hire 25 new firefighter positions in October to continually address some of the staffing gaps that collectively the board, Mr. Badesky, Finance, and myself have been working on over the past year. We enhanced technology by implementing the Zoll cardiac monitors and AEDs. We were able to add a replacement fire truck last year that was out of plan to replace an aging fire truck, continuing to invest in the overall well-being of our folks we have two engines and two ambulances that were ordered this past year we graduated nine

[03:36:31] paramedics from our second annual academy six of whom were hanover fire ems members and i'm happy to say that all six of them had a hundred percent success rate at their first attempt at the national registry and we continue to evaluate opportunities to enhance membership benefits and engagement as we've moved into the first part of 2025 we have started a long-term strategic planning process continuing to evaluate long-term needs and seeking input from our members.

[03:37:03] We're also introducing an advanced EMT program that will increase availability for educational opportunities for our folks and ultimately enhance some of the services that we're able to provide to our citizens. With that presentation, I would like to thank the women and men of Hanover Fire EMS.

[03:37:25] Truly thank you that are here in the room today, that are watching online, for your unwavering dedication, your selfless service to our community, and your resiliency and commitment to the mission to the mission is truly a testament to the professionalism of our of really our fire ems department as a community that is what drives the success of our day-to-day operations i would also like to thank mr badeski for your trust in me to serve as your fire chief mr chelman fellow board members thank you for your support your

[03:38:00] guidance over this past year your accessibility and for your engaging conversations i respectfully request for your support for the proposed budget enabling us to continue through our mission of providing elite service with compassion for a safer community i can spend a little bit more time on the budget but i know our time is valuable this afternoon so i'm happy to answer any questions today or devote some time in the near future well thank you very much chief anderson for your presentation we'll now open it up for questions or comments from board members supervisor pritchard

[03:38:36] Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Chief. Honestly, thank you, Chief, and all of you for all that you do. We are never disappointed. I just wanted to point out, as you said earlier, you got another fire truck out of cycle. But I want to point out that as a member of the finance committee, that was a cost-saving measure. The price of that was only going to go up.

[03:39:03] And so, I mean, unfortunately for fire, almost everything you do costs a lot of money. And so I'm happy that you got it, but I want to make sure that everyone understands that's how we saved money in that case. Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

[03:39:19] Thank you, ma'am. Any other board members? Mr. Vice Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chief, thank you for being with us today. Thank you for the comprehensive budget presentation. I just want to address a couple of things.

[03:39:35] You're right. When it comes to capital improvements, design standards change, safety standards change, material costs go up. \$400,000 in, was it 1980? 1981. 1981. So that's probably going to be about, my calculations real quick, about \$1.3, \$1.4 million now to build that same structure.

[03:39:56] And they're functionally obsolete at this point. They wouldn't work. So working with your team on Fire Station 17, bringing in those design standards, the safety standards, the response standards that are important, mean a lot and that's a long-term building I was having a conversation with someone outside the county about that particular building this week and I think they're going to attend the the ribbon cutting for that you know I've always said fire and EMS is an ambassadorship for the county folks are out there sometimes on their worst day and you don't just respond to people and I've said this

[03:40:36] before we serve a joint constituency we have different roles but we serve the same people and you don't just respond to Hanover citizens anybody that comes into Hanover County that has an emergency situation is going to be responded to by firing EMS and so we're grateful for that I did want to give you some feedback uh fire marshal's office had a lot of great feedback with individuals on the help and assistance that they've gotten particularly business owners from the fire marshal's office it's been comprehensive it's been informative for folks and some of them were maybe out of compliance they had some educational opportunities that they

[03:41:13] were able to to access through your staff and the leadership there in fire fire marshal's office and that's extremely important uh you've had a lot of challenges when you came in you came into a challenging time it's just the facts and everybody knows it so look you know we had to respond to the citizenry that it's challenging times uh and so that is the roughest place to enter is when there's a challenging time it's it's always difficult um it's also difficult the most challenging leadership position to have is when you have to work within your promotion environment and you go somewhere else and they bring in as chief you know yeah there's a little

[03:41:49] bit of riff but all they know is is chief you know a lot of folks out there in the audience now that that know you as chief but they knew you as chris you know a year ago two years ago 10 15 years ago And so I know that challenge, and I commend you for that.

[03:42:05] There's been a lot of positive reinforcement of the things that the fire department has done that are good, and then you've weeded out some of the things that weren't so good. And I know that down the ranks it's definitely showing that they have trust in their leadership.

[03:42:24] And when you have that foundation, it's extremely important because during some of the challenging times, I think you remember the phone calls that I made to you coming from the Public Safety Committee. I said, Chief, are we good, and are we still able to respond to the needs that come in while we've got all the drama over here?

[03:42:43] Are you able to go out and make sure that you're doing chest compressions and putting fires out? And you said, yeah, we can do that. And so that's resonated throughout the community, and that's not an indictment on anything in the past. I'm just saying when you came in, you had leadership challenges you had to deal with, and you've done well with that.

[03:43:00] and that has manifest itself into us making sure that we're on those calls and i say we because it is a you know a joint effort to making sure uh that we uh as hanover leadership and you're included in that are responding and doing the things that need to be done on a daily basis and you've achieved that and i'm very grateful for that and it was obviously uh evident in your budget presentation and it's not lost on us some of the needs that you have in those areas it's not not lost on us recognize that and thank you for bringing that up uh it's known and and there are plans to try to work on that and uh we'll need the input from your division to make sure that

[03:43:38] we address that in the appropriate way so thank you chief thank you mr chairman thank you mr davis any other board members mr hudson mr chair if i if i could just for a moment please um i appreciate your comments and uh and i would love to sit here and take credit for that but it's truly the leadership from Mr. Badesky and more importantly the leadership from the women and men in Hanover Fire UMS that continue to work and provide that that advice and suggestions and education on what needs

to be addressed how can we continue to move forward and the partnerships that we've developed with the Hanover Professional Firefighters Association as well and I know Vice

[03:44:14] President Grimes is here in the audience today supporting the the budget presentation and continuing that collaboration from that standpoint as well. So their leadership collectively is what's continuing to drive the success, and I appreciate your comments. I thought you were going to say it's the outstanding leadership of the Public Safety Committee is what I... Mr. Hudson, Mr. Herzberg, and I thought you were going to say.

[03:44:36] That's coming next. Thanks, Chief. Mr. Hudson? Thank you, Mr. Chair. Chief, thank you for your presentation. Thank you to the men and women in the back. We know that you all make him look good, and I'm sure that I know that he is grateful to you for it. First, as I have said before, thank you for your communication, but also I want to give an example. We had a home fire in the Mechanicsville District, and as I like to do, I reach out to my constituents and see

[03:45:11] if there's some way that I can help, and it was just a resounding, grateful heart from that family um maureen years i don't want to say her name i probably messed it all up but anyway such a sweet lady uh actually a former county employee um and she just could not say enough about the the kindness and understanding that um your folks um offered in a very difficult situation it was sub freezing temperatures teens single digits um and and to your credit you didn't let them

[03:45:48] suffer alone uh you went out you showed up which uh you know we say that most of everything in politics or half everything in politics is just showing up so um you showed up and and we're present um for that so um i just am grateful for the communication i'm grateful for the transparency of you saying this is where our needs still are and to mr davis's point we know it and yeah we We hate it.

[03:46:16] I mean, we'd like to find some more money somewhere, and wouldn't we all? So just keep doing what you're doing. Thank you all. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Hudson. Anyone else? Well, thanks again for your presentation, Chief.

[03:46:35] And, you know, we've come a long way with reducing the dependency on cross-staffing. That was one thing that I've heard over the last few years, and it really caused me to do a lot of thinking, and I think the addition of the new staff is going to be very beneficial.

[03:46:51] to Hanover County and its citizens. You know, I watched a video, I think it was Eddie Buchanan put it up on Facebook one day. It was about three or four years ago. It was a structure fire up in Connecticut somewhere, or maybe Rhode Island, somewhere up there.

[03:47:08] And there was a TV crew that was invited to film this live performance with this rock band in this building. And so they went in there with the camera, and so this was recorded on video.

[03:47:25] And somebody had put some acoustical substance on the walls and the ceiling, but they didn't know that it was flammable. And the rock band came in with this showering display on the stage. And while they were playing, this substance caught on fire.

[03:47:43] And there were some people that didn't even really know what was going on because of the showering that these firework things did. They just thought it was part of the presentation, but eventually they figured out that it was a structure fire. you know, a lot of the people got out, but not all of them did. The camera personnel got out, which was a darn good thing, right? And some bodies got trapped at the

exit, which was really sad. And the camera was outside recording. The building was smoking really, really bad. And the

[03:48:21] one, it was really a tragedy. It was very sad. It actually made my eyes well up. I remember it. I had to go back and watch it twice. Changed my life forever. Don't mind telling you. But the one good thing i remember from that video was when the camera crew outside you could hear the fire engine coming the siren in the distance and the only thing on everybody's mind in that moment was how fast can that engine get there nobody cared about anything else they didn't care about the tax rate

[03:48:56] they didn't care who it was on the truck i'm sure they wanted somebody competent but the most important thing in that moment was how fast could that fire truck get there and i share that story because it really caused me to reflect a lot on what you all, your team, your group, your staff, what you all do, and how important this public safety is.

[03:49:20] Most people, and maybe I was this way for years until that video, but most people don't think a lot about the investment that we make in these engines and these ladder trucks. But when that structure fire occurs, it is the number one priority. And I said this earlier, when the sheriff was here to the law enforcement, I'm speaking for myself with this comment right here.

[03:49:43] I would rather pay more in taxes and know that I have a world-class fire department that's there and ready and trained and equipped to get those fires put out and to save the lives with the paramedics and everything else that y'all do.

[03:50:01] So, you know, I say these comments just to let you know that I respect you all, what you do, supporters. I got Earl Boswell living next to me. I've got to be a fired EMS supporter, right? So his whole family, they're wearing Hanover Fire, EMS, Henry VI shirts and T-shirts and jackets.

[03:50:22] It's great to be next to them. So we really value what your team does, and you're always appreciated. So I don't even think I have a question. Well, thank you so much. Again, I appreciate the opportunity and the trust that you all have instilled in me and the opportunity to present this this afternoon.

[03:50:40] Although there are needs, it is important to celebrate the successes that we've had. And it's a unique balance to make sure that our successes do not overshadow our needs, nor do our needs overshadow our successes.

[03:50:55] And in the past year, we've had some significant successes in Fire EMS that we were able to gain some significant ground on with your support, mr podesky support finance team support uh especially uh mark uh working with us on a daily basis um we truly appreciate that so it is a balance and uh and i think we all respect that and appreciate that and more importantly i appreciate you all allowing us to to ask those questions and and and that open communication of hey what are your needs where are your struggles where can we continue to look for opportunities across the entire county not just fire ems but

[03:51:34] globally as uh as a unit moving forward so thank you thanks again sir okay next on the agenda item 6e is a presentation miss katie dickensheets director of human resources thank you ma'am welcome so good afternoon mr chairperson members of the board mr budeski mr walter for the record my name is katie dickensheets i'm director of human resources and a member of the south anna

[03:52:11] district so today you have been presented with the proposed fy26 budget for Hanover County and you've heard detailed presentations from the fire, sheriff and schools for the next several minutes. I would like to review the recommended workforce investments that are for 2026 as well as share a few highlights from fy25 so proposed for fy26 for the workforce impacts, talk about the recommended three percent merit increase, compensation adjustments, new positions and

[03:52:43] the continued investment in our employees. So first the compensation piece as you heard Mr. Podesky's presentation, we are recommending a three percent merit increase for all employees. This is to ensure that we remain competitive with other localities as well as within the local market. Now other surrounding localities are currently in the process of announcing their budget proposals and while we do not know exactly what each of those are going to be, we feel that three percent is going to be competitive. I'm sure you all are aware effective January 1 of 2025, the Virginia

[03:53:18] state minimum wage increased by 3.4%. That was rising from \$12 an hour to \$12.41 per hour. Now realizing the competitive nature of the marketplace, Hanover County actually increased our minimum wage for employees to \$15 an hour several years ago to remain competitive and to attract top candidates. And in order to remain an employer of choice, we must stay competitive in the compensation market. So in addition to the 3% of recommended merit increase, we are also including money for a continued targeted market-based salary adjustments. And this will be throughout

[03:53:54] the year as needed. Again, as Mr. Badesky shared earlier, we are requesting six new positions and increased hours for one additional position. These positions were reviewed and prioritized from the numerous requests that were received from department heads. And as Mr. Badesky stated, unfortunately, we could not fund all of those positions. Not all of those positions that were submitted could be recognized, including the request that we received from the circuit court requesting a supplemental pay for their circuit court clerks.

[03:54:27] Three of these positions will support public safety, as have been mentioned, the kennel attendant, the assistant commonwealth attorney, and the court bailiff. The remaining three positions will support county-wide efforts, the assistant director of community resources, the CSB clinical supervisor, and the human resource analyst.

[03:54:44] Mr. Badesky also spoke about the tourism initiative and the request for the two full-time positions to staff that office, so I won't go into detail on that. The area I'd like to spend most of the time on my presentation today is only continued investment in our greatest county asset which is our employees. That's been a theme throughout all the presentations you have heard today is how truly grateful we are for our employees and how valuable they are. So for employee engagement in FY25 we continue to provide opportunities for our employees to engage with each other, our community and leadership now

[03:55:21] new in 2025 we offer community service leave. This provides full-time employees with up to eight hours of leave per calendar year to volunteer their time within the Hanover County community. As of February 1st 2025 we have had 10 employees use 68 and a half hours of community service leave. I know that doesn't seem like a lot but it's a brand new program we're still promoting it so I expect to see that number increase greatly. We also held our second 9/11 day of service which is now a federally recognized day of service that has transformed September 11th into the largest day

[03:55:57] of service in America. In 2024 we had 19 volunteer projects and we had 200 employees and community members that participated in those events. I believe some of you were out there and saw what

an amazing day we had and debbie preston and our community resource and her team are already working on 2025 to make it bigger and better for this year i believe you all have heard me speak about our this topic prior to today our employee engagement survey in january 2024 we sent out a

[03:56:30] survey to our 1 284 employees 694 those employees responded to about a 54 response rate and based on the feedback that was received from the survey we received the richmond times dispatch top workplaces award for 2024. now it's not all about just getting the award that was not the goal of this when the intention was to receive for the administration and human resources to receive feedback from our employees what are we doing well where are areas that we need to have improvement it's just a very high level what we heard from employees is that they feel included and appreciated at work and they feel that hand up your county operates by strong values we also had areas that

[03:57:08] were noted for opportunity or encouraging new ideas meetings maybe not being the best use of time and county benefits package so in 2024 we took this information we partnered with our department heads and their employees to obtain specific feedback and their ideas to generate how can we improve and what can we do better we recently concluded our 2025 engagement survey we expect to have those results in the april may time frame so i'll be reporting out from that now along those same lines in order to gain additional insight into why candidates choose hanover county our new learning and development manager has started asking new hires to share their reasons for

[03:57:46] selecting hanover county when they come to new hire orientation as you can see up here we have three comments that have been recently provided from anything from hanover county offers more than just a job it's a comprehensive benefits that support health financial security and work-life balance choosing to work for hanover county means giving back to the community that helped shape me and wanted to make a difference in public safety and i was looking for a job to develop my skills and advance my career make a lasting impact so we're gathering this information from our new hires and hope to use that when we do additional marketing and advertising campaigns

[03:58:19] for recruitments going forward so turning to employee development currently we offer tuition reimbursement it's up to one thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars per year per employee to assist with the expense for job related courses towards a college degree or a college accredited certification now this is up from fifteen hundred dollars in years prior so you can see the numbers on the screen here we this year for fiscal year 25 through february 1st we have had 36 requests a little over 64 000 worth we've been able to pay 38 000 which is about 60

[03:58:56] of our budget and with that we have been able to assist 29 employees with an average reimbursement of almost 1300 i wanted to borrow a quote that sheriff hines had in his presentation before i talk a little bit about training he had a quote up there that said training is not an expense but it's an investment in human capital and that is completely true i've been at a lot of places a lot of companies private sector and people look at budgets and they have to cut a line on them first thing to go is training and it sets you back there's a lot of things that training involves people are excited about it and they learn and they grow so in calendar year 2024 we offer 22

[03:59:35] training sessions in support of our management certificate program there are 10 required courses an employee must complete to earn this management certificate including courses on performance management ethics and fraud and supervisory skills happy to say in calendar year 2024 we had 23 employees complete that management certificate program so it's very exciting we also held leader

development trainings this includes things such as interviewing skills and crucial conversations we also offered courses on resources for life trainings you're probably wondering what in the world is that it's things like stress management or smart home buying guidance so it's different

[04:00:10] things outside of just the work related things and then new in 2024 we had seven hanover county employees complete the inaugural hanover county safety champion series training the training is designed to provide basic information on several common safety and risk related topics to help supervise and ensure employees provide a safe working environment for one another and our citizens the course is six months long they take one class per month through june through november once they complete the course they receive a certificate as well as a commemorative challenge coin to show that they have finished that and completed that session we will be offering this

[04:00:46] course again in 2025 beginning in june then finally we have our hr team had seven ukg ready boot camp payroll preparer trainings what that is i'm sure you all are aware that we are implementing a new hr system which is through ukg ready i replacing chronos um so we had the trainings to help new payroll preparers how do they use the system how can they answer questions when we go live with this enable for our employees then career ladders you aren't familiar with career ladders

[04:01:22] the goal of the career development program itself is to for employee recruitment and retention by providing employee the opportunity to advance professionally without leaving their current job the intent of the program is to provide for the employees personal growth and development as well as financial incentives for the employee and to develop more productive and satisfied employee criteria for the advancement is established by the department based on knowledge skills ability as well as attributes and once attained that they benefit the employee personally as well as professionally it also benefits the county itself gene seal and screen we had in fy24 we

[04:01:59] had 111 people advanced on their career ladders and we are on target to in fy25 have that many or more so very excited about that people growing in their in their fields so switching to employee recognition in 2024 we altered our service awards program based on feedback we had received from employees we changed from the gift type program to a monetary award and this is when people reach a significant milestone it's a five-year increment so you're five years here 10 years 15 etc etc in 2024 we had 181 employees reach a significant milestone and i believe most of you were here that

[04:02:38] it in may of last year when we recognized 72 of those employees and we currently have looked up was interested to see we currently have three employees that have over 40 years of service and one of those being sheriff hines i don't know if he's still in the room with us as well as we have one employee that has over 50 years of service with hanover county so that is incredible now hr and the communications and community engagement team are also actively working together to look for additional avenues for employee recognition so i look forward to sharing those initiatives and where we stand with those at a future time next we have employee health

[04:03:17] and wellness which we talked about a little bit from mr podesky's presentation in calendar year 2025 while the cost of health care continued to increase we were able to limit the increases that employees contribute out of their paycheck to no more than 24 per check and in some cases we actually decreased those amounts that people were paying we were also able to lower deductibles in our standard plan and finance and hr continue to work with our vendors on offering services while being financially responsible also in january of 2024 our new employee health clinic marathon

[04:03:54] opened its hanover location on route one at the wigwam crossing center they have also opened in 2024 two additional sites one in the city of richmond and one in chesterfield that our employees can also utilize now having a clinic dedicated to our employees enables us to offer cost-effective quality care while keeping county health care expenses at a reasonable rate marathon offers in-person virtual telephonic appointments and i know several of you have utilized those services and any of our employees or anyone that is covered under one of our health care plans can utilize any of these clinics or any of their services so the statistics up here that marathon

[04:04:32] shared with us for their first year with us they had a total of 3 724 visits 54 of those were preventative 34 were acute ie sick visits and 12 were lab what that equates to is in 2024 we had 1651 members or 20 of our eligible members go to they have a unique visit so we have over 20 point 20 percent of our employees utilize that clinic for the first year and continuing with wellness our wellness coordinator who start with us in december of 2023 she's also been very busy

[04:05:10] enhancing all of our health and wellness offerings in 2024 she coordinated everything from our regular biometric screenings and on-site flu clinic shots to more interesting things like walking challenges as well as a friendly kickball tournament this is a picture here with other localities in 2025 she is working with etna to enhance the financial incentive plan she's partnering with marathon to offer some friendly competitive health challenges and coordinating with local vendors to offer on-site information sessions and i can say that the kickball tournament will happen again this year in richmond county won last year so they will be hosting so we're going to have some challenges

[04:05:49] and we're going to do some probably some practicing before we go because everybody really wanted to to beat in right go last year so looking forward hr is continuously looking for ways to invest in our employees and enhance their working experience so fy26 areas of focus for human resources are overhauling our performance evaluation process we're looking at developing out our intern program now while we increase the number of interns we had last year we don't have a county-wide program in place that we we can coordinate efforts through so that's what we're

[04:06:25] looking at building out this year again we are launching our new hr system which is uk ready and as i said it's been a two plus year process so we're very excited to get that launched and we'll be continuing to enhance our recruitment efforts including anything from military and veteran organizations working with local colleges community events targeting social media and working with national organizations so i want to thank you very much for the time this afternoon i'm happy to answer any questions you have thank you for your presentation ma'am any board members have

[04:06:58] questions or concerns i do have two questions for you ma'am sure uh the first is if someone was looking for a job yes well what would be the best way for them to see what's available here in hanover county and where could they apply all of our positions are posted on our website but they're also posted on job boards such as indeed is the big one right now that everybody utilizes but that will take you back to our website where they can apply right online you can submit their application and it will come directly for the position that was posted okay very good and then

[04:07:36] the marathon health clinics is there a limited number of those how many are there roughly where are they at we only have three in the greater richmond area right now the one in hanover the one in downtown richmond and the one in chesterfield they are looking to expand obviously they're looking for additional markets that they're working with to bring more business here but the good thing about

marathon is if you go to disneyland or you go out to the indianapolis 500 and you have a you're sick your child has you know sore throat or something you can go to any marathon clinic in the united states and get service well that's good to know especially for

[04:08:11] people who travel a lot and the the location in hanover what road is that on some route one the wigwam crossing okay right there well that's that's good to know well that's all the questions i have thank you you know um hanover county government services are only as good as the people exactly who are employed here and that pro that process begins with you and your team and so we appreciate all the good work that you do great thank you thank you you're welcome okay

[04:08:43] next on the agenda item 6f presentation by mr matt longshore director department of public utilities welcome sir thank you thank you sir all right good afternoon mr chair members of the board i'm matt longshore director of public utilities and to stay consistent with the theme of of gratitude today i just wanted to give a big thanks to our public utility staff our controller our

[04:09:17] deputy directors accountants as superintendents for the many many long hours of tediously going through every line item in our budgets to make sure we're presenting something great today so to jump into things uh the the the mission of our department is to provide uh clean sustainable and environmentally responsible uh public water and sewer services to almost 26 000 utility customers We do this by operating and maintaining public water and wastewater systems and that includes

[04:09:54] a water treatment plant, four wastewater plants, eight water booster stations, seven water storage tanks, 36 wastewater pump stations, and over 900 miles of pipeline. Our department's business model is that we operate as a standalone business unit. We're funded by utility rate payers not by the county's general fund our department has multiple revenue streams including water sewer rates being our largest revenue stream as well as capacity fees there's

[04:10:29] a one-time fees paid for new system are paid for new system connections as well as set to disposal fees construction permit fees all of our revenues except for capacity fees support our operations capacity fees only support uh cip projects so to jump into our operating budget you'll see modest incremental increases with personnel costs contract water and sewer purchases so those are the purchases to the city of richmond for water services and to henrico county for wastewater

[04:11:05] treatment services also a modest increase to the cost allocation and service charge what that is is the cost in the amount of funds that the enterprise fund pays into the county's general fund for services so that services from our finance department our attorney's office services like that so also a modest increase with our operating fund with our service level plan so the slp is is how we replace a little bit larger maintenance items maintenance equipment things like that we

[04:11:43] actually have a decrease this year so our decrease proposed for next year this year we're doing a lot of replacements next year we're going to be doing less one thing you'll see with the debt service is we actually have one bond that will be paid in full this year so that's good news that's why you see the the significant decrease in debt service for next year and no change for collections write-offs so overall with our operating budget you see a very modest increase of 2.6 percent but anytime i talk about an operating budget i always want to give folks and give the public

[04:12:22] a bit of an idea of what this pays for and so i just wanted to put a few slides in there to go over overall water operations waste water operations and whatnot so we'll start out with the doswell water

treatment plants this is a four million gallon per day treatment plant and here's just a couple photos that show the pipe galleries sedimentation basins you can see the chemical storage room and that's our our plant superintendent in the lab right there making sure all the water that leaves that plant is in full state and federal compliance so once it leaves the plant it goes out into the water distribution system you can see a couple photos of our lockwood

[04:13:00] water pump station that's the that's the booster station that draws water from the city of richmond system that's been talked about here recently but also our airport east water booster storage tank that's one of our newest water booster stations another peek at the dazwell water treatment plants one of our operators looking at the controls of the plant and going over the the SCADA system and another operator taking samples from the sedimentation tanks so wastewater operations we run for wastewater treatment plants and here's just some high level

[04:13:36] views of two of those our totipotomy wastewater treatment plant that's a 7 mgd treatment plant so a couple couple neat shots of that as well as our ashland wastewater treatment plant that's a two million gallon per day plant and one of the cool photos with that you can see the photo on the left of the ashland wastewater treatment plant a little bit of the murkiness of the water but if you look at the right photo on there you can see how clean that effluent is and that's what our department's about it's you know not just providing clean reliable drinking water but also providing clean wastewater services for our local environment and our local waterways

[04:14:17] with that and with the operating budget our support operations we have a maintenance group that does does excellent work they are always working on pumps and equipment and electrical panels and and things like that we have a construction crew that are always making system repairs that are always working out the elements and they do a fantastic job we have a systems engineering staff that oversees automation and controls of our system as well as instrumentation and anything that's connected to communications nowadays we have to take cyber security into into

[04:14:56] accounts we have staff that oversee easement maintenance backflow certifications our safety program we have state certified laboratories that run bacteriological sampling and wastewater compliance sampling and we provide environmental services doing wastewater collections and pre-treatment sampling so getting back to the operating budget again you'll notice incremental budget adjustments and what those are that they match recent spending trends but they also address

[04:15:27] priorities of ours like replacing fleet vehicles um tank maintenance an increased count in va 811 and you know something about that is is a lot of folks know call before you dig call via 811 and but a lot of folks also believe it's 811 that comes out to do ticket locates but it's not it's the utility owner and again we're seeing a very a very increased amount of 811 ticket call-ins and a lot of that's due to the broadband initiative in the county so we have to budget for that

[04:16:06] also renewal of support services contract that includes our SCADA services contract and easement clearing we are asking for two and a half new positions in our department this year one of those is a distribution technician position another is a division manager of wastewater operations as we're migrating our operations division to a division manager model the last position the the point five is taking a current part-time position and making it a full-time

[04:16:40] position and that's for one of our utility field agents and to to help out with meter reading as well as uh field customer service work orders so getting into the capital improvement plan for capacity

expansion and upgrade projects we're proposing three water system projects totaling just over five million dollars that's a new water line along ash cake road as well as the hickory hill water line project and improvement project and a capacity upgrade to the lightwood pump

[04:17:16] station or at least for next year getting the the funding to get that project in design for the wastewater side of things we're proposing one project that's the hickory hill wastewater improvements project budgeted just over 6.6 million dollars so again the the largest two projects there are the hickory hill water and wastewater improvement projects and getting to the fy26 rehab and replacement part of the cip i won't go through every single project

[04:17:54] but we're looking at close to 10.6 million dollars for water projects 3.8 million for sewer projects and just over 1.4 for miscellaneous projects rnr projects that's a big part of what we do right we maintain water and wastewater systems and just like every other agency that's deliver presentations today what we do is not inexpensive and we have to maintain these systems into perpetuity rnr projects again rehab and replacement projects in our industry are typically

[04:18:33] funded with water sewer user rates and they require significant investment and just as an example the photos you see towards the top of the slide are photos from our doswell wastewater treatment plant whip three project i know that's a that's a big acronym there what that stands for is uh the the phase three of the watershed implementation plan and that's deq's watershed implementation plan that was a 19 million dollar project that's nearing completion and we're getting ready to tie

[04:19:07] those new uh what those are denitrification filters online soon so again that that project was done to maintain compliance with emerging standards in our industry. The largest water expense you'll see on the R&R side is from the Richmond Joint Capital expenses. And I know this is nothing new to you guys. This is an ongoing expense. The biggest part of that is due to the Bird Park Reservoir roof replacement. That's about a \$90 million project. And Hanover's cost share

[04:19:46] as part of that project is 25 million dollars over the next few years so that's where that comes from when talking about the capital improvement plan i think it's important to know how these projects come about right so we don't just sit around and dream up projects it's a very thoughtful process for how we come up with these projects and that's typically identified through the utility master planning process and so the last time hanover's utility master plan was updated was in

[04:20:20] 2020 so i'm happy to report we've already initiated the next five-year update for that plan in addition to the the traditional things you update with the master plan water and wastewater models things like that water supply planning is going to be a key feature in this in the overall utility master plan update coming up this year. So we're going to look at water supply planning, those are things we already look at anyways. That is going to be a highlight of the plan and once we identify different options to build more resilience in our water system,

[04:21:00] we're going to look at considering some debt capacity that we have as well as some cash to get those projects funded. So on the other side of what we do, we've talked about expenses, well we have to talk about revenues because it goes to the general idea of the enterprise fund we operate in so uh this is a snapshot of our revenues you can see a bulk of our revenues come from water and sewer user rate fees so that's the the big blue and green pieces of the pie chart but recently another bulk of our revenues come from prior year earnings right so we've been

[04:21:39] tackling some very large projects within our department and we're continuing to do so and because of those projects we have to use some prior year earnings we have to pull from some reserves so that's what our proposed revenues for next year look like to bring that in with expenditures in a balance sheet format we're proposing a full balanced budget of just under 58 million dollars for fy26 that includes all capital projects all operating

[04:22:16] expenses as well as prior year earnings coming in on the revenue side another way we track our budgets through the years i know there's a lot of colors here but the overall gist of it is you see the revenues on the top side and expenses on the bottom side the dash line represents a free cash flow and you can see in fy 23 is when we start really pulling from reserves to start tackling some big projects what you won't see on this chart here is a lot of debt which is a good

[04:22:53] thing that means we have a lot of debt capacity going forward to tackle big initiatives coming from water supply planning coming from master plan updates uh things like that so again these are due to some big projects that we've we've recently completed but also that we're continuing to work on so of course we have to talk about rate adjustments right so every year our staff and our finance folks analyze our operating expenses they analyze our project expenses

[04:23:28] as well as rates and fees we have to look at expenses and revenues and make sure we're on a financially sustainable trajectory and so for fy26 our recommendations are five percent increases to water and sewer user rate fees as well as five percent increases to capacity fees and a one dollar per truckload increase for disposal of sludge and septic tank waste and what that comes from was an agreement amendment we went through with the property owner of our septage receiving station

[04:24:02] that went through the facility committee a few months ago and that dollar increase is just to make that amendment again cost neutral to the county so one important thing to note looking at rates and rate recommendations something we take very seriously additionally to just us looking at our rates our revenues expenses what we're projecting for next year for future years out We've already contracted with a financial consultant to complete a much larger comprehensive rate study.

[04:24:41] And so that's a third party coming in, looking at not only where we are now, where we're looking to go and helping to provide those financial models in that roadmap for the future. The recommendations for that study are not ready yet.

[04:24:56] So we're just not quite far enough along to be able to include that with FY26. They will be ready for FY27. The preliminary models that we have built already have confirmed the need for rate adjustments in FY26. What those rate adjustments look like to the average customer that would purchase 9,000 gallons of sewer service and 10,000 gallons of wastewater service would look like just under \$8 of an adjustment or an increase to the bimonthly bill are \$47.04 annually.

[04:25:38] So for the capacity fee adjustments, here's a snapshot of what those will look like. It's important to remember capacity fees are typically paid for by contractors, home builders, developers. They're usually factored into development costs. They're paid for new system connections.

[04:25:56] And so in summary, to wrap this thing up, Our proposed FY26 budget continues to sustainably fund our operations, provide appropriations for capacity expansion projects, but also rehab and replacement projects, and allow for the replacement of critical maintenance equipment, the updates to one of our main software systems in our department.

[04:26:27] and it aligns with industry standard practices of small incremental rate increases that also account for inflation and operational needs so with that i'll be happy to take any questions thank you sir for your presentation any questions or comments from board members mr stoneman thank you mr chair thank you mr longshore for your presentation um i just had a couple of questions because i know that i'd sent you an email sometime back about flat rates and And you were going to look into that.

[04:26:59] I mean, it could go up or it could go down, but I know you were going to investigate that. Yes, sir. Did you come up with any conclusion there? I have not yet. I have spoken with the resident that contacted you. That's going to be one thing we're looking at with the rate study versus just looking at what the actual rate is.

[04:27:21] One thing we're looking at is the methodology with which flat rate sewer customers get billed. And so I think that's the more important thing to address. I spoke with that property owner about that before assigning a real dollar value to it. Just, again, looking at the methodology and making sure it's fair and equitable across the board for all those rate payers.

[04:27:43] So we are looking at that with the rate study. That will be part of it. And then I have one additional. It kind of goes in line with that. I was at a community meeting the other night, and we were talking about a landfill where they have to pump the water into the septic system.

[04:28:00] How do you build that as compared to a customer? I mean, is it a different rate? Have to pump water from the landfill to the septic system? Yeah, so when the rain goes down and then they've got pipes pumping in there? Yeah, so for leachate, a lot of times you run those through a gravity meter or a flume meter.

[04:28:18] So a lot of landfills will have those meters. it is a meter flow okay we'll make it to to the uh the wastewater system you know sometimes the landfills there's other things we have to look at as far as the constituents of the wastewater that may impact their bill but but generally if the landfill is designed and you know they're going to need to send leachate to a municipal wastewater system those will be designed with meters and make sure we're able to quantify how much that leach aid is okay thank you mr davis thank you mr chairman

[04:28:51] director longshore thank you for for being here um said this you have the least dynamic presentation and probably one of the most important uh because the average citizen turns around and when they think of their public water and sewer system they either think of pushing a handle or just pulling a handle and it just happens behind the scenes you know and they're not really concerned with it uh until obviously there's an interruption like we had earlier and that's not what i'm here to talk about uh so while your your presentation is not dynamic and i don't know how you would would make one dynamic um you are unique in that you have an enterprise fund and you know if there

[04:29:28] was some way to have every county entity on enterprise fund that would be great unlike the private sector you're absent a profit motive and so i do recognize with the rate increases one of the things that i have learned over the years um while i don't personally uh necessarily ascribe to this type of thinking folks don't want rate shock so they they would rather pay more for an upcoming rate increase that is not at an effective rate in order to level out and equalize

[04:30:02] the rate which again goes against time value of money and cash flow but folks would rather have Five cent increase a year, then wait five years and have a 25 cent increase. That's right. That's what

they want. So that does help you with cash flow because you can collect with those constituent desires and have a balance of time, value, money on our side that helps us out.

[04:30:27] But as we're looking at business revenue and those who have less impact on our services, Schools, fire, EMS, public safety, the sheriff's office, you know, those folks do carry a large load in the community.

[04:30:45] And it's disproportionate because they don't have a drain on services or often the need for some of the services that, you know, civilian constituents do in those residential areas. So that said, you know, I do think we really need to be mindful of capacity fees, particularly with the price that we're looking at for business operations.

[04:31:12] I mean, sometimes they are just absolutely astronomical. And I don't think the general public knows. And it was interesting, you were talking about who pays for it. At the end of the day, the end user pays for it. But when it comes to large office buildings, when it comes to restaurants, when it comes to those commercial facilities, those hookup fees are just unbelievable.

[04:31:36] I will say this, in the Ashland District, it's not always just new development. There are some folks that are on well and septic where they have public utilities available. They're just not hooked up. And oftentimes what we'll see is a residential consumer say, well, my septic system has now failed, and instead of replacing that, I'll hook up.

[04:31:57] And they're just not prepared for that price that it costs to hook up to particularly water. Water is extremely expensive. So I just think we need to be mindful. I'm looking forward to those results that come out as it relates to our commercial partners as to what it will take for someone who is in a business setting to hook up to public water and sewer.

[04:32:24] Because the more we can balance the business side, the less impact it takes off the residential side as it relates to tax base. So I just think we need to be very, very mindful of that. The board has been mindful over the years and sometimes have taken action not to go with the recommendations of the director of public works to increase some of those fees on businesses.

[04:32:46] So it's just something to think about. So I'm looking forward to that study and would like to sit down with you when you get those in and maybe grab lunch and look at those. actual numbers that come in absolutely as soon as we get the preliminary results of the study back those will be shared with the board we'll be setting up workshops that will be a public process because we want folks to know what our expenses are and how we intend to pay for those expenses and that's a big part of the rate study but we're always going to be seeking board input when it comes to how the final product of that rate study shapes up so thank you i appreciate those

[04:33:24] comments. Thank you, Ms. Chair. Supervisor Pritchard. Thanks, Matt. Mr. Davis is right. I was one of those people in Ashland when I bought my house. I had septic, and we had town water. It was town water back then, but we did not have county sewer or town sewer at the time, and when we hooked up to it eventually, which cost us a road cut, among other things, it was, and this has been 15 or more

[04:33:58] years ago it was well over ten thousand dollars at the time and there are a lot of folks who can't even come i don't know what the cost would be today i don't even want to guess but there are a lot of folks who cannot make that kind of outlay at one time and in particular i think people who have it available and still haven't done it it's the the reasons are probably financial sure and i would love to see us have some

information on our website that's kind of a how do I how do I plan for this sure if if I'm if I want to do this and it's available in my area how much is it going to

[04:34:37] cost and how do I plan for that over time um because it's it's not easy for people who don't have it you're right it is it is quite a chunk of chunk of money it's not inexpensive at all and we certainly don't disagree with that.

[04:34:53] What we do, and I can just tell you philosophically, industry-wide, what we do is we try to tie a lot of our project expenses when it comes to capacity expansion to those capacity fees, and that's what it's going to pay for.

[04:35:09] And just industry-wide over the past four or five years, and you'll hear this from every agency that delivers a presentation. When it comes to construction costs, what we've seen, And the cost of our projects compared to what they were five years ago, it's just astronomical.

[04:35:25] It's just dealing with inflation, dealing with labor shortages, with contractors, cost of materials. And it's how that impacts things is not only user rates, but also capacity fees. But all great comments. We would certainly be looking at those during the rate study and taking all that into account.

[04:35:44] Mr. Chairman, as I went, we're just going to try to toughen you up before you get in front of, you know, the EDA and they start beating you up. we'll give you a little we'll give you a little sparring practice before you get to those folks there you go i appreciate it any other comments or questions sir thank you i don't have any questions i just uh have a brief comment i'm sure you're aware but just so on behalf of the citizens you know we know the water supply is more thought about now than it probably has ever been before

[04:36:20] in Ann Arbor County we appreciate the water supply that we do have and we would just ask that you continue to watch be watching and be observant as much as you can to make sure that these facilities are maintained and kept up to par and sure we believe you'll do that thank you very much sir sir okay next on the agenda is closed session next on the agenda is closed session mr. Davis thank thank you mr. chairman mr. chairman I'm moved that we take this meeting of the

[04:36:58] Board of Supervisors into closed session pursuant to Virginia code section 2.2 3711 a 7 to have consultation with legal counsel and staff members pertaining to actual litigation enforcement actions involving GPIN 78 80 21 07 62 there is a motion is there a second there's a motion and second all in favor of entering into closed session please indicate by saying aye aye any

[04:37:26] opposed hearing no we are now in closed session it is 5:10 p.m mr. Davis mr.

[04:39:05] chairman I move that the Board of Supervisors certified that during the closed session only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion to close session were discussed second all in favor please indicate by saying aye aye any opposed okay the board is now back in open session we will now adjourn until 6:00

[04:39:30] p.m. the board is adjourned six o'clock it is six o'clock and the board is back

[04:55:10] in session first on our six o'clock agenda for this evening is citizens time is there anyone here who wishes to address your board at citizens time please show raise your hand seeing none we will now

close citizens time agenda item nine planning public hearings mr. andrew pompey deputy director of the planning department

[04:55:41] verdam district and this is a request to resume 7.39 acres from a1 to ar6 to accommodate a family division the property is located along blanton road about one and a quarter mile south of state route 54 and it's at the intersection of blanton road with angus ridge drive this is outside of our suburban service area in an area designated rural and agricultural the subject property and many surrounding properties are zoned a1 agricultural and again this particular request

[04:56:16] is to rezone the 7.39 acres highlighted in red to ar6 with conditions this is a view of the property from the intersection of angus ridge drive and blanton road and this is the proper conceptual plan that the applicant has submitted it shows the property being divided into two lots to create one new lot for a family member both the lots are roughly 3.7 acres and per the proffer conditions and conceptual plan they would access angus ridge drive which is a private road that serves some

[04:56:48] other family division lots farther off of blanton road the applicant has proffered eight conditions and these conditions align with many of the conditions the board has accepted with other ar6 family division cases including adherence to the conceptual plan tree preservation right-of-way reservation brick and stone foundations for any new homes a road buffer of 100 feet along blanton road wetlands delineation perennially study at the time of subdivision and then this will be a family division that must be held by a family member for at least five years the planning commission reviewed this request at its case in january no members of the public spoke during the

[04:57:26] public hearing and the planning commission ultimately recommended approval of this particular request that concludes staff's presentation the applicant is here tonight but they do not have a formal presentation plans i'd be happy to answer any questions the board may have thank you mr pompey any questions for mr pompey from board members mr stoneman thank you mr chair uh just one question it looks like there only is only going to be one planned house at this time and the other lot's going to remain vacant that's what the conceptual plan indicates they can build yeah

[04:58:01] i got that yeah that's correct okay that's that's all i have thank you anyone else okay seeing none we will now open the public hearing i understand that the applicant is here do you wish to address the board okay next we will go to citizens who wish to speak in support anyone here who wishes to speak in support of this application seeing none anyone here who wishes to speak in opposition

[04:58:36] to this application seeing none we will now close the public hearing this application is located in the beaver dam district mr stoneman thank you mr chair is this project is uh it's a really nice project i see that mr stone is uh has uh gotten some good help on this and designing the buffers and uh and the overall property and how it's going to look i'm going to recommend that we move for

[04:59:08] approval for rez 2024-00021 second right there is a motion and a second any comments from board members seeing none we'll call for the vote all in favor please indicate by saying aye aye any opposed that application is approved unanimous mr pompeg the next public hearing item is a request in the south and the district this is a request for a special exception to allow a home occupation in an accessory structure within stony run estates a subdivision in the elmont area

[04:59:47] this property is located within the suburban service area which is the county's designated growth area it's designated suburban neighborhood residential recommending single family residential

development the property in the stony run estate subdivision is currently zoned a1 agricultural this is a photo of the subject property from brook hollow drive you can see there's an existing single family residence where the applicant lives the applicant currently runs a food truck business and they would like to extend their home occupation into an existing detached garage in that detached garage they would install a commercial kitchen for raw food preparation

[05:00:27] the raw food will be packaged and placed on on the on-site truck that we parked there and then cooked off-site once the food truck gets to its destination where it's serving customers there are four employees all are family members and on a typical day the food truck will leave the site in the morning and return at night why is the special exception needed home occupations in the main dwelling are permitted by right in the a1 zoning district and residents are permitted by right to park one commercial vehicle on the property the special exception is required because they want to move the home occupation from the structure where the main house is into the

[05:01:02] accessory structure which is that existing garage any home occupation and accessory structure requires a special exception and this is overview the property and aerial image as well as the conceptual plan that was submitted the garage structure is behind the existing house it's brick which is similar to the main house and has a similar design as the main house and again the commercial kitchen would be in that structure the orange square and the aerial map and on the sketch plan is where the applicant would park the food truck per the conditions that would be screened with the privacy fence so again the structure exists behind the main home and the parking for the food truck

[05:01:40] would be next to it stony run estates is a subdivision zoned a one with lots that range from roughly two to four acres because of the conditions and where the particular use will be located should be compatible with the surrounding area no cooking will occur in the commercial kitchen again it's only food prep and the cooking will occur off site and then the food truck will be screened at the end of the driveway near the existing structure and existing trees on the property will also help screen in addition to that fence that is required for the proposed conditions the applicant did hold a community meeting with neighbors to get their feedback on the proposed use some of the questions issues concerns brought up by participants involved the visibility of the

[05:02:19] food truck commercial truck traffic food sales on the property trash and the storage of different supplies as well as other home businesses in the area based on the feedback right at the community meeting the staff report includes 11 recommended conditions it would limit the use to the accessory structure and food prep only with cooking occurring off-site trash should be stored inside the garage until it's taken off-site one commercial vehicle the food truck will be permitted and it must be screened the seven foot privacy fence as shown on the sketch plan the planning department will inspect the use prior to commencement to ensure these conditions and features are required by the

[05:02:58] conditions are in place no food sales will occur on the site no on-site commercial food deliveries a maximum of four employees the se is tied in this case to the particular owner and would expire once the owner no longer lives on the property the state permits would be required for that commercial kitchen as well as the standard condition with all special exceptions compliance with development related regulations that concludes staff's presentation the applicant is here they don't have a formal presentation plan to be happy to answer any questions the board may

[05:03:30] have thank you mr pompey any questions for mr pompey thank you sir okay this is on the agenda for a public hearing we will now open the public hearing i understand the applicant is here no presentation do you wish to address the board no okay anyone here who wishes to speak in favor of the application anyone here who wishes to speak in opposition of the application seeing none we will

[05:04:09] now close the public hearing this is in the south anna district supervisor dibble thank you mr chairman i just want to thank the applicant and their family for their willingness to meet with your neighbors we did have approximately 12 neighbors that met at the at the site together and they had some legitimate concerns and that night we worked together to draft these proffers that address all of those concerns which is why no one's here tonight so um again thank you for

[05:04:46] your willingness to work with your community to be a good neighbor and i do look forward to eating more of that hibachi food that you make because we love it and with that being said i move approval of se 2024 to ask zero zero zero 25 second okay there is a motion and a second any comments for board from board members seeing none we will call for the vote all in favor please indicate by saying aye aye any opposed hearing none the application is approved unanimously thank you

[05:05:23] very much that concludes our planning public hearings for this evening next on the agenda his announcements any announcements from board members supervisor Pritchard thank you mr. chair I should have said this earlier last week Bruce Haynes who was a member of the Ashland Town Council for 16 years was mayor vice mayor a council member was a member of special forces during Vietnam passed away unexpectedly He had been ill but we are all

[05:06:04] Mourning him and his presence at the Ashland farmers market. They are red dog farms And if you have a chance to go by and tell his wife How much we all appreciate it? I know they will appreciate it themselves Thank you Supervisor Pritchard any other announcements from board members. I have a brief one You know, we got a lot done today. We made up the rescheduled meeting from last week We had six budget presentations. We had closed session. We've taken care of our planning public hearings for the month

[05:06:40] Even though the schedule was like we still got it done and I'd like to thank the County Administrative for all the diligent work You did on getting those presentations rescheduled getting them lined up in a very efficient manner I think it worked out very well. So thank you, sir Okay, next is agenda item 11 Adjournment to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, March the 12th for a regular board meeting to be held right here in the Hanover County Board Room Administration Building, 7516 County Complex Road.

[05:07:14] We are adjourned.

