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Hanover County Board of Supervisors - Budget Public Hearing, Wednesday, April 1, 2026

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[00:04:25] We'll now call the April 1st Hanover County Board of Supervisors meeting to order.

[00:05:48] As is customary, we'll open with an invocation led by Mr. Herzberg and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Ms. Floyd. Mr. Herzberg. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we take this time to say thank you for all who are here, for the opportunity that we have to meet together, and to thank you for our beloved Hanover County. We ask you to be with us. We pray for wisdom and discernment.

[00:06:21] Help us to hear. Help us to do that which is good. We're also thankful for the example that you sent us 2,000 years ago. Help us to follow the ways that were demonstrated for us. Help us to be peaceful we pray for gentleness kindness and patience in jesus name amen amen please rise

[00:06:51] for the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the united states of america and to the republic for which it stands one nation under god indivisible with liberty and justice for all thank you mr herzberg thank you miss floyd any board members have any amendments to be considered for the board for the

agenda seeing none we'll move forward next item on the agenda is comment time any board members have comments starting on this side seeing none starting on this side very well

[00:07:28] mr county administrator thank you mr chair as we're here for the primary focus of the budget public hearing this evening i'm going to keep my comments brief but invite everyone again to our meeting next week april 8th as the budget will be further considered also next week we're extremely excited we will be launching Hanover County's tourism initiatives and so everyone that has an interest in tourism throughout Hanover County we will be releasing a number of different tools to help our residents and guests navigate opportunities events activities throughout Hanover County and launching

[00:08:05] that all next Wednesday so while the budget is a big milestone for us this is the first time we have released this these efforts and so we're excited to share that with the public. That will be at our meeting on April 8th. I did want to share that just starting this Friday at Polgrain Park at 5:30 p.m. there's what will be our first-ever Sounds at Sunset concert series which brings live music food and family fun to our park system. This is a great way to enjoy the evening, connect with neighbors, experience our parks. We hope to kick off this new

[00:08:40] tradition here and expand as interest in our community. Our Spirit of Volunteerism Awards are next Thursday evening. We have a number of folks in our community that go above and beyond. It's an amazing event. Folks are welcome to join and see the amount of commitment and passion that our residents have. It's always a wonderful evening to hear the stories of our residents that go above and beyond for our community and i did want to share an update folks that are impacted by the

[00:09:13] mount herman road and campbell's creek area that road was going to have a detour posted from april 13th to august 6th however that's being expanded till august 13th they need an additional week for that work all of this information is on our website and we'll continue to update as more is provided mr chairman that's all i have this evening thank you mr county administrator do you do want to recognize Sheriff of Hanover County, Sheriff Gregory Six is with us this evening. Thank you for being with the Sheriff. Next item on the agenda is citizens time. How many individuals here tonight would like to speak at citizens time? Not those who wish to speak on the budget. We have

[00:09:49] public hearings for that, but speak here to speak on the budget or citizens time. Okay. If it's not the budget, because there is a time for that, how many wish to speak at citizens time? Can we have a show of hands? I have two and I have one that's registered, which may be one of y'all. Okay. So So we will open Citizens' Time.

[00:10:07] Citizens' Time is a time where anyone who wishes to address the board on any matter within the board's authority is welcome to come forward. We ask that you state your name in the district that you live. While you're not required to pre-register, nor are you required to fill out a card, it does help us with follow-up or getting information to a citizen or a board member in that specific district.

[00:10:25] While we do not allow presentations or audiovisual presentations, you are free to bring handouts. Dr. Brown is down here, and if you do have a handout, any information that you provide will be added to the public record. We certainly see the signs here. You're more than welcome to have a sign.

[00:10:40] Just please don't hold the sign in a manner that would block someone else's view. And if you have any comments that you agree with or you don't agree with, the speaker is always the one who

maintains the right to be able to be heard, so we ask that there be no public interaction with those who are speaking at that time.

[00:10:57] If you wish to speak at citizen's time, please come forward, state your name in the district that you live. The first person I have is Ms. Ashley Covington. Ms. Covington, are you present? Thank you for being with us, ma'am. You'll have up to five minutes per speaker. Well, I'm Ashley Covington, and I'm in Cold Harbor District.

[00:11:14] Thank you for replying to my email, too. I appreciate that. So, good evening, Chairman and members of the board. I grew up here. That's something I didn't talk about the last time. I spent a lot of years away, and then I came home. only child duties, and also because I missed Hanover. I love the winding roads. I love the stars at night. And the land, the beautiful land that truly makes Hanover special and why so many of us choose to live here. And I know you serve because you love this place too. You care about

[00:11:54] your families. You care about your neighbors. You care about your community. And that's why I trust that you are already paying attention. You've heard about the Amazon data centers where residents have reported clusters of rare cancers and miscarriages and where wastewater containing nitrates is sprayed onto farmlands.

[00:12:17] I'm sure you've heard about XAI's facility near Memphis where 35 unpermitted methane gas turbines made it one of the largest emitters of smog-forming nitrogen oxides in the area. Residents there are saying, I can't breathe at home.

[00:12:36] It smells like gas outside. And you've seen the George Mason study confirming that data centers pose health risks through air pollution, water contamination, noise, and rising energy costs.

[00:12:52] Now, I don't need to convince you. You're already the kind of leaders who pay attention. So instead of repeating what you already know, let me tell you what developers want. The technology inside these buildings will be obsolete before the concrete dries.

[00:13:14] A hedge fund manager thought these facilities lasted 10 years. Experts told him 3 to 10 at the very most. Because new chips come out every year or two, and they make the old ones obsolete. Cooling systems change.

[00:13:30] Power requirements change. The buildings can't keep up. Mountain Road will take years to build. By the time the last building goes up, the first building's guts are outdated. That's not a tax base.

[00:13:45] That's a stranded asset. And while a data center takes 18 to 24 months to build, the power infrastructure takes five to 10 years. Transformers are backordered for four years. The grid can't keep up.

[00:14:01] So what happens when the technology moves on before the power even arrives? You have a chance to do what the Planning Commission already did. In January, they looked at Hunting Hawk. They heard the residents. They voted no, Hanover is not for sale.

[00:14:20] So now it's gonna be your turn soon. Virginia gives up 1.6 billion a year in tax breaks to this industry. Families in Loudoun pay over \$100 more each year to subsidize grid upgrades.

[00:14:37] Dominion projects rates could triple by 2035. And I know you believe in fiscal responsibility. I know you believe in protecting your people. So I'm asking you to do what leaders do. Look beyond the glossy brochures.

[00:14:55] When Mountain Road comes in May, vote no. The Planning Commission showed courage with Hunting Hawk. Now it's your turn. And consider something bolder. Senator Bernie Sanders, and no matter your politics, You have to respect someone who fights for working families.

[00:15:15] Just called for a national moratorium. 11 states have introduced moratorium legislation this year. Virginia is the data center capital of the world. We can afford to pause.

[00:15:31] And what's more, we can afford to lead. So protect the people that live here. Protect their wallets. Protect their water. Protect the land that makes Hanover feel like nowhere else, like what was said earlier, that is beautiful Hanover.

[00:15:50] So please, be the heroes of Hanover. Vote no. Protect us. Thank you very much. Thank you, ma'am. Next speaker, please. Please come forward, state your name, the district that you live, or the entity that you represent.

[00:16:07] Thank you for being with us. Hi, Shannon Todd, Mechanicsville District. Good evening, supervisors, and thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. I'm asking you to oppose, or at least pause, approval of any hyperscale data center until we have firm protections for Hanover's taxpayers, our electric grid, and our water.

[00:16:27] This vote is not about being pro-business versus anti-business. It is about being pro-Hanover and pro-responsible planning. These trillion-dollar corporations are abusing permits, demanding more energy and water, and shifting enormous risks onto local communities.

[00:16:46] We see this clearly in many communities around the country. Across the country, we are seeing a clear pattern. Once these hyperscale AI data centers are built, the companies come back demanding more power, water, turbines, and generators, far beyond what was initially sold to local leaders.

[00:17:04] Example number one, Elon Musk with XAI in South Memphis, Tennessee. He installed and operated dozens of methane turbines before receiving any permits from the Clean Air Act. After obtaining a permit to run 15 turbines, thermal imagery shows he is running at least 35.

[00:17:23] There has been an increase in asthma-related ambulance calls in this area since then. Example number two, Metta's Hyperion AI Data Center in Louisiana. Regulators originally approved three gas plants for a 2,200-acre campus.

[00:17:39] Metta quietly bought 1,400 more acres of land, set up a joint venture with Blue Owl Capital to fund it, and is now increasing its needs to 10 gas plants. This is a classic bait-and-switch to communities and meta-knows-how-to-play this game.

[00:17:56] Example number three, Amazon Data Center is right here in Northern Virginia. We have seen an expansion far beyond what was originally projected. In 2019, it was estimated they will need 1,700 megawatts of power, but newer estimates show 2,700.

[00:18:12] Dominion forecasts it will jump to 9,000 within the decade. Corporate can be greedy. A billion dollars is never enough for them. They do not have our residents' best interests at heart, and they never will because they don't live here. We're just numbers to them. But we are more than just numbers to you.

[00:18:31] We are your neighbors, our children go to your schools, we go to church with you, and we run into you at the grocery store. And we have put our trust in you as our elected leaders. You are taking a gamble on your residents' health and well-being if you allow these data centers into our county.

[00:18:49] If you lose, Hanover residents will pay the price. As of right now, you can prevent these same tragedies from happening in our own backyard. You made the choice when you took your oath of office to work for the people of Hanover County, and they are telling you no. Nobody in Hanover supports these data centers, and only you have the power to stop this before it's too late.

[00:19:10] I urge you to vote no on any hyperscale data center proposals here in Hanover. I also ask you to consider putting a data center ordinance in place that will stop developers at the door instead of putting yourself and Hanover residents through this process over and over again i will be emailing you the links for the citations that i've just mentioned thank you for your time very well anyone else we will now close citizens time the next item on the agenda is public hearing that'll be introduced by uh mr highfield this is on our fiscal year 2027

[00:19:46] proposed budget five-year capital improvement program five-year general fund financial plan proposed 2026 tax rates and related ordinance changes mr highfield good evening mr chairman members of the board. As he said, my name is Mark Highfield. I'm the Budget Division Director for

[00:20:03] Hanover County. And before beginning the public hearings, I want to give a brief review. Sorry

[00:21:08] for the delay there. All right, now I have a brief review before we go into the public hearings. So tonight the board will be holding two public hearings. The detailed information for each of these hearings has been published online and in the newspaper. The first hearing will be on the the items listed including the budget tax rates and ordinances. Citizens may speak about any of these items during the first hearing and as required by law there is a separate public hearing specifically on the proposed 2026 real

[00:21:43] property tax rate. The next few slides are regarding items in the first public hearing. There are no changes proposed to property tax rates. The fee for residential lots in the recycling service district is proposed to increase to \$56. The fee for the Atlee Manor Sewer Service District is proposed to decrease from \$780 to \$350. The total all funds budget was advertised at \$797.4 million and is currently expected to be

[00:22:22] \$797.5 million with the proposed amendment to add a grant-funded school-based clinician as presented at last week's board meeting. The proposed amended all funds budget is 1.9% higher than the FY26 adopted all funds budget and the proposed general fund budget is 3.4% higher than the fiscal year 26 adopted general fund budget. Other amendments aren't known at this time but

[00:22:57] may be identified prior to presenting the board with final amendments next week. This slide That summarizes the capital improvements program that covers fiscal years 27 to 31. There's \$149 million budgeted in fiscal year 27 and another \$537 million planned for the remaining four years.

[00:23:21] We've discussed this in more detail in prior presentations. As a reminder, the highlights include \$181 million of roadway improvements under the County Improvements Fund, as well as funding towards park enhancements and toward replacement of two fire stations. The School Improvements Fund includes replacement of two elementary schools.

[00:23:41] The largest public utilities project is an expansion of the Tatapotomy Wastewater Treatment Plant with design funded in 27 and construction planned for 30. And the Airport CIP Fund includes several projects to prepare for and construct additional T-hangers, as well as a project to extend Taxiway B.

[00:24:04] this concludes my prepared presentation when it is the board's pleasure the first public hearing can begin on the topics shown on the screen then we'll go into the second hearing thank you any questions for mr highfield thank you mr highfield oh nope sorry mr hersberg i didn't hear you my apologies mr hersberg thank you mr chairman thank you for your presentation sir yes um i'd like you to discuss the following not everything in the county budget is government spending some of it is

[00:24:42] Public works public. I'm sorry public utilities. It's we see you know The overall budget going up and some citizens have said oh the budget's going up like 65% or whatever the percentage is But some of it's like VDOT money that comes in that we see on The the budget sheet, but it's not actually the county spending additional spending Can you talk about like the like the grant for the mental health counselor?

[00:25:15] Yeah, so that makes the budget go up But there's money coming in and there's money going out. Can you address that? And go, oops, well, can you take me backwards to the to the page that shows the different funds one more?

[00:25:32] There we go. So the all-funds budget as Mr. Hertzberg said includes a variety of different funding sources. The one that citizens are most interested in is the general fund. That is where the taxes that we discussed tonight first go, the taxes that citizens in Hanover County pay.

[00:25:51] Others on here are paid by other resources. The airport fund is primarily funded by user fees generated by the airport and federal and state funding. The public utilities funds are funded by the users, by the participants in that program.

[00:26:11] there are there are also grant funds in all of these place in many of these places as you said if you look at the proposed budget where we provided more detail online or look at previous years adopted budgets you can get a sense of the relative share between each of those does that help it does can you also comment on the school budget so there's 45 or whatever the number is from state

[00:26:45] This is this that's right. The school budget is similar much of the money comes from the state much of the money comes from the citizens of Hanover County Distributed through the general fund and transferred to the school funds So the share of those the state's share of that has decreased gradually over the years I know we've spoken to that in previous presentations. Okay. Well, thank you very much. All right. Anything further. Thank you, Mr.

[00:27:15] 5th we'll ask you back up when the time comes yeah can we go back one on that one more there we go uh before i open the public hearing i did speak to our fire chief earlier i didn't realize he had stayed with us i'd like to recognize on the room this evening chief of hanover county fire and ems chief chris anderson and his assistant chief chief joe powers thank y'all both for being here it's great to have a public safety team here this evening thank you for your participation and being here. With that, if you look up here, we will now open for public comment. This is a public

[00:27:52] hearing. We will open up the public hearing on matters related to the 2026 property tax rates and fees, FY27 proposed budget, FY27 through 31 five-year capital improvement program, the FY27 through FY31 five-year general fund financial plan, as well as ordinances to increase erosion and sediment control fees and ordinance to increase water and sewer fees. In the room this evening we have Chairman Mike Morris from the Superintendent's Business Council. I asked Chairman Morris to come forward. We also have Chair Eggleston from the Hanover County CSB and she will be the

[00:28:29] second speaker. Is Chairman Morris available? Thank you for being with us Mr. Chairman. Good evening Chairman Davis and members of the board. First I'd like to say that I do not envy the position that you were in is I produce budget and are held to budgets every year myself and so I pray for you guys that God gives you the wisdom and the strength to do what's best for the group not for the individual as I know you guys have done year over year in the best county in the state of Virginia.

[00:28:59] My name is Michael Morris and I'm a resident of the Beaver Dam District. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you tonight in strong support of the Hanover County Public Schools budget. I come to you with a unique three-part perspective. First is a parent. I'm the parent of two Hanover County public school graduates who benefited tremendously from the education and life skills they gained in our schools. They are thriving professionally because of the instruction, opportunity, and relationships they built with teachers, staff, and peers. Their success is a direct reflection of the strength of this school system. Secondly, as a coach, since 2022, I've had the privilege of leading the Attlee High School baseball program. Over the past five years, we've

[00:29:36] celebrated many highs, including the school's first ever regional and state championships. But the true character that our school system has been molding was revealed in our lows. During my tenure three players lost parents, two coaches as well as myself also experienced personal loss. Each time I watched our young men rally around one another with compassion, maturity, and resilience. Those qualities were not accidental. They were molded from them daily by principals, counselors, teachers, and staff throughout their time at HCPS. Also in my role as a coach I've seen firsthand the collaboration between the school board office, school administration, and staff. Every decision

[00:30:14] I've witnessed is centered around what's best for the students and for the community. The team Hanover mentality is shown not just in public schools, but across every department I've experienced in this great county. It is in our DNA as Hanoverians to play for team Hanover. Number three is a business leader. Since 2019, my office in Richmond has hired 16 Hanover County public school alumni.

[00:30:37] 11 of them have joined us as their very first job. Every single one of them is still with us. They are high performers and continually demonstrate complex problem solving, collaboration, and leadership. It has almost become an interview question, where did you go to high school? The job that HCPS Workforce Readiness Team does, as well as the Principal Rorick's tremendous CTE programs, have students ready to hit the ground running, and that is a huge benefit to business.

[00:31:02] The strength of any company lies in its people, and Hanover County consistently produces top-tier talent ready to meet the challenges of the modern workforce. I often say that the greatest manufacturing in the world is the public school system. It shapes our future more than any product that is ever created by man.

[00:31:20] No matter the product, it started with a belief that it can be done, usually inspired by a teacher. The education to deliver on that idea, usually taught by a teacher. and the support to persevere through the failures to obtain that goal, support traits they usually received from a teacher. Like any successful organization or business, I believe it relies on three essential tiers to produce high quality results. Number one is leadership. Dr. Penny Cuff and her exceptional senior leadership team provide the vision and lead with passion. Two, organizers and producers. From department leaders to school administrators, support staff, and classroom

[00:32:00] teachers, these are the people who bring the vision to life every day. Whether it's a bus driver offering a warm good morning, a teacher or coach noticing a student who needs support, or the cafeteria maintenance and custodial teams keeping our schools running, these are the individuals that are the backbone of this system. The product, our students. From kindergarten through graduation, Hanover County public school staff shape who they become and how prepared they are for the real world. Our product is second to none in the country. Just like in business, you have the opportunity to invest in this organization. The world is changing rapidly and our school system

[00:32:37] must remain competitive, attracting talent, staying innovative, and continuing to produce exceptional graduates for years to come. My ask tonight is simple. Continue investing in Hanover County Public Schools if you have so generously done in the past. The return on that investment for our students, our community, and our future will pay dividends for generations. As I stand here before you tonight, I'm an example of this type of investment. See, I was raised by my grandmother. During my time in high school, when I could have made many left turns, I had a history teacher who was also my baseball coach, who didn't let me make excuses for my situation. He taught me

[00:33:15] accountability and taught me to put team over self. I thought he was teaching me history in baseball, but what I found out later, that those were disguises for teaching me about life. He is the reason I'm so passionate about supporting public schools and the reason that I coach, in hopes that can give back a little of what was so generously given to me thank you for your time and consideration thank you mr chairman i'm going to invite chairwoman mary butler eggleson of the hanover county community service board madam chairman good evening thank you mr davis chairman members of the board staff my name is mary butler eggleson and i'm a resident of the south

[00:33:53] annan magisterial district and i'm the current chair of the hanover county community services board before offering comments on behalf of the cfp board however i'd like to acknowledge our members, who many are not here tonight, but Amanda Bishop, our Vice Chair for Mechanicsville, Jonna Jones, our Secretary from Cold Harbor, Ed Gooding from Beaverdam, Tawna Hampton from Henry, Marshall Shelton from Chickahominy, Woody Sprinkle in Ashland, and our at-large members, of which I am one, Sue Randolph, Carol McDade, and Nathan Globing. Our Interim Executive Director, Dr. Gabriella Caldwell-Miller, is also with us tonight. Thank you for joining us.

[00:34:24] And I'd also like to acknowledge Ryan Hudson, even in his absence, as our Board of Supervisors representative to the CSB, and Mrs. Sue Dibble, who is our alternate board member, and as well as Brett Shardine and Elena Hernandez. The consistent support and engagement that we receive from the county, elected admin, and from our attorney's office has been truly remarkable. I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge our staff, who work tirelessly to coordinate services for those in need within our community. I'm consistently inspired and humbled by those working for the CSB.

[00:34:56] It is truly a pleasure and an honor to serve on a board aligned with such a passionate, dedicated group of individuals. And I extend my gratitude to you, the board of supervisors, for allowing me this opportunity. And finally, I would be remiss to not mention our retiring executive director, Ivy Sager. I'm especially grateful for her leadership for these many years, and I wish her all the best on her new chapter.

[00:35:16] And now on behalf of the Hanover County Community Services Board, I want to voice our support for the proposed budget presented by our county administrator. Reflecting on my second year's

chair, one thing is exceptionally clear. this work is essential and it's increasingly complex. In fiscal year 25, Hanover CSB served over 2,200 individuals in our core programming, including nearly 500 who relied on 24-7 crisis services. This year, the CSB expanded its impact through several key initiatives. We launched the Naloxone by Mail program and have distributed 1,059 boxes to Hanover County households since January of 2025. With the Regional Opioid Abatement Authority grant, we partnered with

[00:35:55] their neighboring jurisdictions of Richmond, Henrico, and Chesterfield, and were able to hire hospital liaisons to connect pregnant and parenting women of substance-exposed infants to critical CSP services. We also partnered with 28 local employers, including Hanover County Human Resources, to create more jobs for individuals with disabilities. Concurrently, we're continuing to strengthen our core services that many in our community rely on daily. For the first time since COVID, the CSP secured two full-time prescribers to serve individuals across both behavioral health and developmental disability services. We also implemented the Marcus Alert program nine months ahead of schedule and did so in close partnership where there are excellent public safety and

[00:36:33] emergency communications here in the county, improving response to behavioral health crisis in real time. This work saves lives. And it must be noted that these efforts are happening within the broader context of changes in society that are impossible to ignore. The demand for services continuously grows. Our community's needs are constantly evolving, becoming more complex every day. Our residents, while fortunate to live in Hanover and Myriad Ways, are not immune to the pressures found elsewhere in the world and are likewise experiencing increasing mental health challenges, ongoing barriers to housing, limited access to private providers for developmental

[00:37:07] disability services, and the pain of far too many lives lost to suicide and overdose. Continual review of metrics and reports is necessary and the budget is a critical part of the county and our agency's process. My comments tonight and my approach always keep in mind what is most important, people. Our agency's greatest asset, our staff, and our mission to serve our community. I remind you that behind all the data presented to you tonight are families and individuals in need and a passionate team doing their best in an ever more challenging field. Your CSB board has heartfelt gratitude for the county administrator's continued commitment to investing in human

[00:37:45] services and we recognize that this proposed budget reflects an understanding of both the scope of need and the importance of sustaining a strong public safety net system i look forward to our continued relationship as we all work together in championing the mission of the csb and i thank you again for the opportunity to serve the county in this capacity so on behalf of the hanover csb board thank you for your continued support and partnership and maintaining these critical services for our hanover county residents thank you madam chair

[00:38:14] uh derrick kildew mr kildew sir thank you for being with us good afternoon good afternoon Chief and the Board of Supervisors. My name is Derek Kildew. I'm currently living in the Mechanical District. I lived in Cold Harbor, Henry, and Ashland as well. I have three kids that graduated Adley High School and they're doing very well. I want to discuss the concerns about the budget that's been going the last five years. In 2021, our budget was \$478 million. Now it's

[00:38:54] what, \$787 million? That's correct? No? Okay. So that's an average of 9.25% increase every year. The county has enjoyed the extra benefits since our budget...

[00:39:09] I'm sorry, I lost track of my space. I just want to bring this to your attention because the average increase in wages is only 2% to 3% for people who work like me.

[00:39:27] We're not counting the citizens that draw to Social Security because they're on a fixed income. We're a period of huge strain on our retired citizens to come off this extra cost each year. People have paid off their houses or live on a fixed income, but each year they have to come up with more money due to tax increases that we can't see to control our spending.

[00:39:45] I know we have the lowest tax rate around the town, but Chesterfield and Herodica are lowered theirs to 67%. So I think we should be able to lower ours at least \$0.06 or \$0.07, but currently we're at \$0.81. I don't see why we can't do that to help homeowners out to get some relief.

[00:40:05] How can citizens voice our concerns where the Board of Supervisors will listen? Do we have to get a petition with no signatures to bring us our attention before we act on our concerns? I realize your job can be difficult, especially when it comes to bringing visitors to Hanover County. The public does a great job of telling what we don't want and do a lousy job of what we do want.

[00:40:30] I'm very concerned with the spending because we're spending way out of pocket, I think, in my eyes. There will come a time when the housing market will crash like it did in 2021 and will not be able to fund the current budget. There are two things I think the Board of Supervisors should work on immediately.

[00:40:48] One, provide a real estate relief program for citizens who qualify to be exempt or some kind of deduction if they're on fixed Social Security income. Two, lower our tax rates from 81 cents to 75 cents. I know this sounds like pennies to everyone, but it means dollars to Hanover County citizens.

[00:41:06] Thank you for listening and take your time. Hope you've done some kind of arrangements to help our citizens out. Thank you very much. Thank you, sir. Mr. Mike Della Rippa. Mr. Della Rippa, thank you for being with us. Good evening.

[00:41:27] Good evening. I understand I have five minutes. Is that correct? That's correct, Mr. Della Rippa. Okay. Let me just, give me a second to get my stopwatch on here. I'm not too good about time. Okay. Thank you. I came here well first of all I'm a resident of Henry District my wife and I always say we're newcomers we've only been here 39 years raised four kids and love where we're at I did want to talk about a couple of things again I'm a big proponent of safety I think that is the biggest challenge not only in Hanover County but it seems like the rest of the country right now

[00:42:04] First of all I was here and I would like to say I'm here on behalf of people that also have no voice maybe in this county and that's the dogs that work for the Sheriff's Department last year if you recall and the Mechanicsville local somebody from a young kid from King's Charter a 12 year old raised 800 bucks for a vest for a dog and I didn't even know about it but I think I just happen to love animals and I was glad speaking with Sheriff Six earlier in the year earlier in the week, excuse me, that all our dogs now have protective vests, and I hope that

[00:42:39] never changes. There's places you can cut in the budget, but don't change the dog's safety. Secondly, okay, also I've been an accountant most of my career, CPA, and I've been CFO of two companies, but I think it's wise that we consider all the volunteers for the Sheriff's Department and the fire and EMS that they start getting paid or compensated somehow for what they do.

[00:43:04] I've spoken to Chief Anderson and Sheriff Six, and I hear stories about, yeah, you know, we train volunteers, and then they end up leaving. All that time, an investment walks out the door. When I should start saying that we have volunteers, and we give them some type of training, and then give them an incentive to stay here and possibly become an employee, an asset of Hanover County, working for the Sheriff's Department, working for the Fire Department.

[00:43:33] But we've got to be realistic. I mean, it costs money to live in Hanover County now, and we've got to pay, I think we should pay the volunteers something equivalent at least to start off at \$15 an hour, give them a tax credit, give them something so that, you know, they're not working for nothing.

[00:43:51] The other thing I did want to say is that, you know, I carry a, have on the back windshield of my car, that little oval that says I support the sheriff's department. But I support the Sheriff's Department, and what can I do as a CPA? I'm not going to go out there and chase bad guys, but one thing I want to do, I'm a very big proponent, and I sent you all the letter last year, about continued training equals continued safety.

[00:44:16] And probably the most important job I think the seven of you have up there is ensure not only our schools are safe, but the rest of our county is safe. And if we have a good trained training for our deputies, training for our fire department, we're going to get that.

[00:44:34] But the training has to be continual. But I also want the training to emphasize one thing. Teach them how to come home safely every night. You know, that was a quote from the movie Top Gun Maverick. You probably heard that before, and I heard it. But I really want to encourage you, Seven, that I think the biggest, you know, responsibility you have is the safety of everybody in this county, including especially the schools, everything. So I heard from the sheriff that he's got \$300,000 and I hear from the chief Robertson, he's got at least 200,000 and please don't cut that. And both

[00:45:10] of them, by the way, are very complimentary of you seven for the support you give them in their job. They got a tough job to do. The other thing I want to emphasize is I happen to hear the woman from the community service board. I think that's a department that should not be overlooked how safe, you know, how important it is in today's world for whatever reason. And she talks about the number of people, drug overdoses, suicide. Each one of those is a tragedy and my heart just

[00:45:43] goes out. You know, I just hope that we can continually funding the community services board as much as you possibly can in supporting them because a lot of the things they do, they're helping troubled people uh especially before they uh make a life choice that they're really going to regret the rest of their life so oh we've got four and a half minutes here so i do want to talk about again uh just thank you for uh your support of the uh sheriff's department and the fire department it's good to hear there's cooperation it's good to hear how highly they

[00:46:19] speak of you seven and that's true so that being said i am also a volunteer uh for five years at the uh memorial hospital i've been an assistant chaplain there and also now i've had heart surgery i see heart patients so i do want to encourage all five or all seven of you excuse me get your heart checked every year if you're not doing it already uh it really is important it's a lifesaver that being said i'm six seconds over thank you for your time both of you and have a blessed day thank you mr del ripper thank you for being with us is there anyone else yes ma'am please come

[00:46:57] forward state your name the district that you live or the entity that you represent thank you for being with us my name is Bertel Bunyard and I live in Chickahominy district I just wanted to point out a

couple of things I know we all talk about nobody likes the vehicle tax rate we've all talked about mr. Davis I know you've talked about that before how everyone wants to get rid of it and that's a state issue but Hanover currently and I know this is not your assessment tool but the Commissioner of Revenue values our vehicles at a higher

[00:47:35] rate so our tax rate is three dollars and fifty seven cents a per hundred dollars but our it's we're valued at a clean trade-in level versus like a clean loan level that our neighboring counties do that makes it more expensive for each vehicle in our County that we own our home assessments are currently done on blanket assessments I just got a HELOC loan for my house and my house was assessed at a hundred thousand dollars less than the county says that it's

[00:48:14] worse that I'm text taxed on so we are being taxed on the um to make this budget you know make budget make the revenue you guys need for budget we are being taxed on the high end even if we're at a lower 81 cents than our counties the other things i just want to point out i don't know if this i guess it kind of goes on budget but um over when you guys are approving projects can you please look at missed opportunities for collaboration

[00:48:52] because it costs our county money for example washington henry the new build the extension office really should have been involved a couple years ago when that building was approved to deal with the bamboo that's along the property line instead of dealing with it now when they're breaking ground. Parks and Rec should really be consulted on playgrounds at schools.

[00:49:16] All schools should have accessible playgrounds, but definitely our new school should. Ashland was just built four playground structures there and only one accessible activity listed on that property. I have pictures. Washington and Henry is getting ready to be built. Battlefield is getting ready to be built them there's no reason why all the playgrounds should be expect accessible it is an extension of our parks and rec space on the evenings and the weekends we're having a robust homeschool community they use those spaces there's absolutely no reason that they're not accessible our substitute teachers are getting older it's a lot quicker for a substitute that's older to

[00:49:53] get to someone a kid that fell on a top structure if there's a ramp to get up there just all in all it's they should be accessible and and between parks and rec our director and our new director of tourism they have pretty substantial parks and rec certifications we have our school superintendent is a special education background we really should have some possible accessible playgrounds for the parks and rec budget I think I heard a couple of meetings ago when I watched online that 1.5 million dollars roughly is being for

[00:50:31] Parks and Rec and there's more talk of pickleball. Mr. Budeski you had mentioned that you and your son had gone up to the courts and they welcomed you and blah blah blah but why are we investing more money here in pickleball courts we just did so I have nothing against pickleball I have two sets of paddles myself both of my kids play on tennis teams but we don't have any archery courses. There's very limited mountain bike trails. Yes, Poor Farm has mountain bike trails, but it is not good for beginners. They're heavily used. They're very eroded. Water access for fishing,

[00:51:07] kayaking, stuff that's more representative of Hanover rural community. And we also lighted athletic fields, especially in districts like the Chickahominy, where we really are kind of like in park green space deserts we don't have a lot of parks um washington and henry used to have the lighted soccer field

well from my understanding it's not going to be lighted when it's rebuilt um i was involved with a soccer club that we use that for you have 30 seconds numerous years we

[00:51:41] would have 30 players out there 30 players plus an adult plus a parent that's 60 hanover taxpayers being impacted by that field in the course of an hour to an hour and a half multiple times a week I think the money is better well spent we have football clubs in our program I forget blue somebody uses our school those we really need to invest in lighted fields especially in the park deserts areas that's it thanks thank you for being with us ma'am anyone else on this public hearing very well I'll close this public hearing the board will take a

[00:52:21] a three-minute recess this board is back in session asked mr. highfield budget division

[00:55:36] director to come forward with the presentation for proposed 2026 real property tax rate again proposed 2026 real property tax rate and after the presentation we will have a public hearing mr. highfield yes there we go all right this as he as you said this is this second hearing is specific to maintaining the 2026 real property rate at 81 cents per 100 dollars of assessed value given the growth and assessments a tax rate of 76 dollars would generate the same amount of revenue

[00:56:13] as the current year the five cent difference between the proposed rate and the lowered rate will be used to fund growth in the county's obligations please note that seven percent is the average reassessment rate some individuals saw greater lesser or even no increase in their individual assessments and now we're ready for if no one has questions are there any questions for mr highfield seeing none thank you mr highfield i will now open the public hearing we do recognize

[00:56:52] sometimes folks uh kind of combine their comments and they're they're all welcome uh and received but this is a public hearing so i'll open the public hearing on the proposed 2026 real property tax rate is there anyone who wishes to speak on this and just so you know if you spoke before one you can come back up and speak again if you have more things you wish to say but if you spoke about the tax rate and some of your comments at the first public hearing uh those were also received as well so uh that's not a formality or any parliamentary uh procedure that you must follow

[00:57:27] is there anyone who wishes to speak at the second public hearing which is for the proposed 2026 property tax rate anyone we will close that public hearing are there any announcements from board members mr county administrator nothing additional sir mr county attorney hearing none we will adjourn until 2 p.m on wednesday april 8 2026 for a regularly scheduled board of supervisors meeting to be held in the hanover county boardroom we are adjourned



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