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Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Business Meeting, Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Date Tuesday, February 20, 2024
Place Board Room, First Floor, Government Center, 1 Harrison Street SE, Leesburg, Virginia
Length 2h 36m (video)

- Official meeting video (county, Granicus): <https://loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7599>
- Agenda (Granicus): https://loudoun.granicus.com/AgendaViewer.php?view_id=73&clip_id=7599

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-19. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:07:23] Yeah, I got to call us in though. Well, good evening supervisors, good evening staff, and good evening Loudon. I'd like to call to order the February 20th, 2024 Loudon County Board of Supervisors business meeting.

[00:07:44] This room has a hearing loop. If you need hearing assistance, please switch your hearing aid to the telecom mode. If you need a headset, we have those available as well. Please see the clerk to request one. Pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3703-3 and the Virginia and the Board's Rules of Order, Supervisors Sylvia Glass and Karan Sainz requested to participate remotely in this meeting by electronic communication.

[00:08:11] A physical forum of the Board of Supervisors is present in the Boardroom, and the Board has made arrangements for the voices of Supervisor Glass and Sainz to be heard by all persons in the Boardroom, although I will say Supervisor Glass does not have much of a voice today. They made this request within the required time frame, and the county attorney determined that both of their requests meet the qualifications to participate remotely.

[00:08:38] The board will record in its minutes that Supervisors Glass and Sainz participated remotely from a private location in their residences due to illness. Let me first try. Supervisor Sainz, can you hear me? Mr. Sainz? Yes, I can hear you. Can you hear me?

[00:08:56] We can hear you just fine. Ms. Glass, can you squeak at us, please? That's about it. Okay, well, there we go. Thank you. Thank you very much.

[00:09:14] Supervisors, it's going to be a little, a tiny bit of a change in the order today because, as we are all aware, we had a tragic incident happen on Friday night and firefighter Trevor Brown lost his life in the line of duty death.

[00:09:33] So I'll go through the rest of the agenda or the schedule in just a second, but can we all, will you first all join me in a moment of silence for Firefighter Brown?

[00:09:55] Thank you. All right, before I go to Mr. Kirshner for the invocation, what I thought I would do is ask our fire chief to come to the table and give an update on anything that he wants to give an update on regarding the incident that happened on Friday.

[00:10:28] I think he's probably the best one to give the to give us the update as he comes down. I will I will say chief Johnson My gosh, I listen I'm not just behalf of the board but on behalf of the a very grateful county Will you please extend to your command staff and to the entire combined system our our condolences first to?

[00:10:58] to Firefighter Brown's family, his wife, his children, our concern about the firefighters who are still hospitalized and our deep gratitude for the entire combined system. We, you know, we every day, but this weekend most especially.

[00:11:17] And thank you because I am aware of how tough this weekend's been for you as well. So if you'd like to give us an update, we'd appreciate that. supervisors I will allow just a one round of questions post-update if you'd like to ask any questions. Chief Johnson thank you very much. Thank you Chair and the members of the board and I'll direct it to Mr. Hemstreet and Ms.

[00:11:39] McClellan as well. Thank you for having me and just to provide a brief update kind of gives the high-level overview of where we are because I think it's important that the folks understand and you understand where we are at this point in in our environment. I think before I even start I have to provide a Thank you to the board and to county administration and to all citizens of Loudoun County.

[00:12:02] In my 41 years as a firefighter, I have never, ever received as much reach out, contacts, thank you, letters of support, offers of support, coast to coast. This is not a Loudoun County thing. This is a Virginia thing, national thing, fire service thing, and has truly been overwhelming to receive the accolades and the condolences of so many people within this county and abroad everywhere.

[00:12:31] And that is truly overwhelming, to say the least. So not to dwell on that, most people know that obviously on Friday night our crews would dispatch for an outside gas leak, something we run very often, an outside smell of gas.

[00:12:47] that requires a limited response and our folks responded accordingly with a limited number of units to an outside gas leak when they arrived on the scene they found that on on silver ridge drive they've in sterling they found a propane tank underground propane tank 500 gallon propane tank that it's pretty standard for homes in our area that was not served by natural gas it was propane and they found that tank leaking our folks go into a mode of investigation they go into mode of monitoring finding out where the tank is leaking from why it's leaking and first and foremost we look for the occupants of the home to if they're in any type of hazard to get them out of the home

[00:13:25] so our folks are doing that they found a leak they were identifying trying to identify where they are most folks in this room remember your chemistry days that propane is heavier than air which means it'll seek the lowest areas and indeed that's what happened here is that propane obviously got into the home how and why that we're still determining that but propane got into the home and obviously caused a flammable atmosphere our folks entered the home we're in the home investigating they were actively removing both occupants from the home i have spoken to both occupants who 100 credit fire and rescue with removing them from the home they had two dogs

[00:14:02] and three cats and as board members parents you know that when you have two dogs and three cats your priorities getting your pets out of the home which i always urge you to get yourself out first you've heard me say that before but they they were they were actively in the home in the basement of the home looking for their animals and we removed them from the home it was during this that our folks were inside investigating and our folks most of them were outside and during that time a catastrophic explosion happened so something happened within the flammable range where an ignition source ignited the flammable atmosphere in the home and explosion occurred subsequently you've you all seen the pictures the house was a hundred

[00:14:42] percent leveled two firefighters two that are remain in the burn unit were trapped inside and immediately what they became trapped by the rubble they initiated what we call a mayday that's the mayday on the radio asking that they're trapped and they're they can't get out and they need help and they did that heroically once that happens our battalion chief that was on the scene went to work he arrived on the scene during right after the during the explosion and then had to go into the mode of rescuing multiple firefighters that were trapped inside as well as the numerous ones on the outside our crews asked for help from our hazardous materials response team which was

[00:15:19] critical and then the battalion chief was added ultimately this event went to three alarms and numerous units. I believe it was over 100 units that were on the scene at some point during this event, during the entire event. Ultimately, immediately, we determined that one firefighter, Trevor Brown, from the Sterling Volunteer Fire Company, was found on the scene deceased. There was no resuscitation efforts ongoing. It was immediate that it was determined that he was deceased on the scene. But nonetheless, they went into the mode of rescuing at least two

[00:15:55] firefighters that were trapped and calling their maydays. I was asking this morning about, I don't believe we have any statistics on the survival rate of firefighters calling maydays that are trapped, but I can tell you it's not very high. And we've rescued those two firefighters as well as everybody else. To make a long story short, we ended up with 14 injuries on this incident that were transported. They were 11 firefighters, 10 from Loudoun, career and volunteer, one from Fairfax a sheriff's office deputy with a minor injury that was refused and then the two civilians so there were 14 injuries ten of which were allowed in

[00:16:34] County Fire and Rescue and Sterling Volunteer Fire Company injuries that were transported to the hospital all required treatment and some form of care I'm happy to report today that one additional firefighter came home yesterday and in one today we are left with two personnel one career lieutenant and one firefighter from Sterling Volunteer Fire Company that remained in the Washington Burns Center, and they remained there.

[00:17:00] So we are left with two hospitalized at this moment. Our lieutenant is doing well with second-degree burns admitted to the hospital. He's in a step-down unit, which is very good news, and he remained for an undetermined amount of time in the hospital, but most likely a shorter stay.

[00:17:16] The firefighter from Sterling received second- and third-degree burns to himself, and he has a longer road to recovery, for sure. I have spoken to every single firefighter and person that was injured today. My goal today was to re-follow up with them, and I've spoken to every one of them to check in and see how they were doing, including the ones in the hospital and their wives, for that matter. And all are positive, all are doing better and improving. But the majority of those injuries, including firefighter brown he was outside the home when he got um killed um he wasn't inside he wasn't in the

[00:17:54] basement or anything like that um so we often think of the outside of the home as our safe refuge area and certainly this did not prove to that fact to be a safe refuge um so our folks are heavily engaged and it would be worth it if i've done something that mr hemstreet's now probably heard four times because he's been with us the entire time of this event and this morning was the first time I saw him leave our side and because he I think came to work his real job but our four pillars of our organization of what we're doing for the last since this occurred was most importantly taking care of our people so the behavioral health needs and peer support needs for our folks those

[00:18:32] that are on the scene and those were at the fire scene and just people in general is enormous I know you appreciate that chair Randall but I can't tell you how massive this is to be able to reach everyone and do get our clinicians out there to meet with people and assess their mental status and provide them you know some support of course with anything there comes an HR and a risk stamp a risk part of it risk management part of it you know injuries require paperwork they require state forms to be filled out so that's a massive amount of work that has to be done certainly our county HR and county risk management have been assisting us greatly with that first and foremost that has been our priority is taking care of our people

[00:19:13] And that certainly does include the family of Firefighter Brown, and I'll get to that in a minute. Simultaneously, our fire marshals are still on the scene today. They have not left the scene since this occurred on Friday evening. They are completing or working on their origin and cause investigation to find out what happened, why this tank, there was a failure, why there was an explosive atmosphere, what happened to the tank, and all the details, just like we would on any fire.

[00:19:40] I anticipate that they'll be at least there through tomorrow, completing their investigation. Of course, they're working with the insurance company, the entities, the stakeholders that are involved with the incident. So they have not left the scene. We did have the ATF involved, not simply because there's any suspicious activity.

[00:19:56] There's none, except they bring resources to us to be able to, we have a partnership with them to be able to leverage some additional resources. So that is ongoing. We have begun our efforts to employ a significant incident team, what we call a SIT team, and that's a review process that we will look at every aspect of this incident and find out what our folks did, what they did well, and what we could do better, and what we will learn and share with everyone.

[00:20:27] So this is a group made up of internal and external stakeholders. It actually is being led by Chief Tom Coe from Frederick County, Maryland, who just went through a line at Duty Desk about a year

ago. So he's leading our group. We have folks from all entities of the organization, career, and volunteer as part of this group.

[00:20:46] And I'm happy to report that I found-- got word this afternoon, after I requested this through the US Fire Administrator, that NIOSH will be part of our group. So that's by their choice. NIOSH will be an official part of our investigative team. They will fly in resources to us to be able to complete a objective look at this which will follow the efforts of this board and be fully transparent when that report is done this is a report that will be released nationwide and my expectation as it will be truly transparent and everything that we did right and wrong if there is anything found of that but it will include NIOSH entity it's not an enforcement arm is an

[00:21:25] arm that will provide recommendations of things that we could do better and and things that we did right uh in this incident so that is uh kicking off tomorrow morning uh it already had some initial work done but that group will kick off tomorrow morning officially and begin the long work of doing that that's a multi multi-month uh process of completing that report and last but not least as i said we have a we're in the full efforts of planning a funeral um for firefighter brown i'm happy to report today that trevor was released from the medical examiner and if you know most of you there i did that were part of that uh unbelievable display of

[00:22:02] of community affection that he was transported from the medical examiner and prince william back to the funeral home here in leesburg um will he be prepared for a future funeral again that was a unbelievable display of support from our community from you And that was a very moving effort to do that.

[00:22:23] The funeral, the date has been planned for March 4th at 11 o'clock at Cornerstone Chapel here in Leesburg. And then further details on that will be forthcoming. But I have personally met with the family multiple times. We took the family out to the site yesterday.

[00:22:39] Trevor was 45 years old, survived by a wife and three children ages 11, 9, and 6. I met with the family, met with the children, and as you can imagine, they're devastated, very private folks, and asked that they respect their privacy, and so far everybody has with that.

[00:23:00] But they did visit the scene. That was a private moment with just very few of us yesterday. They wanted to see where their dad was laid to rest on it and gave his life for that. So the funeral is in full swing. One of the media asked me yesterday, it must be tough to plan a funeral, In this kind of environment, I said not at all.

[00:23:19] I said we do this for all of our members and that we recognize. And as you know, most of you, some of you there, just last week we laid to rest Charlie Grant in same type of honor. So it's something we do often because it's what we deserve, our respect for all of our loved ones that pass. Thankfully, we don't do line of duty that's funeral, but something we're very good at is honoring our members.

[00:23:38] So we will give Trevor the same honors moving forward with that. The last but a couple of finer things is, you know, our community has been so supportive of trying to do something to tell you how bad it is that Sterling has enacted a food manager, Sterling Volunteer Fire Company, to handle all the food, make sure we don't get sick on all the food that we're eating.

[00:23:59] But more importantly, our folks have asked about donations, and jointly, the Sterling Volunteer Fire Company and myself have designated the Loudon First Responders Foundation as the entity that will

support our efforts. as you know you all know what they do they support us year-round public safety we're going to hear from them in just a little while actually great awesome and so they they are a remarkable organization i have members that sit on the board of directors and the best part about that is we will certainly support the family of firefighter brown but i have nine other members obviously that need support as well and some will require extensive treatment out of work and things of that nature

[00:24:39] so that organization can supply unilateral support to the families and to our firefighters, all of them that are in need with that. So we have been working a lot on the assistance to all the families, and especially the family of Firefighter Brown that lost Trevor, and we're doing everything we can to support them moving forward.

[00:25:02] I probably could go on forever and just talk about the remarkable efforts of our community, but I think I'll stop there and just see if you have any questions for me. Well, thank you, Chief Johnson. And the community has indeed been remarkable. Before I go to any questions or comments, you shared yesterday that firefighter Brown's family and his widow has received some calls from different entities, different people.

[00:25:31] Would you like to share any of that? I would. So we've had some support immediately. We have a great relationship with the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, Secretary Cole. and his deputy secretaries that that's ongoing we have a great relationship with them secretary deputy secretary schletter came to our office within hours after this to offer his support from his office and ultimately the governor's office secretary Cole and the two deputies came to our second briefing on the second day and participated in our briefing it was on to have them and we received word that the governor Yonkin in fact did want to call the family of

[00:26:08] uh firefighter brown the widow of firefighter brown um and in fact uh we i did receive notice and and then he did governor yonkin did call me prior to um calling the wife um and offering the condolences from the governor's office and i thought that was admirable i thought that's where it would stop but it didn't uh we had word that the white house was involved in this and was monitoring the situation so i we had some correspondence back with some staff from the the White House staff. And then there was an indication that the White House wanted to assist in some way and to make something maybe a little bit comical in the sense that when the White House

[00:26:46] called and asked me what they can do to assist, I asked them, what do you have to offer? And so I got word that President Biden was interested in calling Laura, the spouse, Ms. Brown, the widow. And, in fact, shortly before, about 3.30 yesterday, I received from a staffer at the White House Oval Office called me and said that when they hang up with me, President Biden would be indeed calling the spouse.

[00:27:12] And that did occur yesterday. President Biden did reach out to the widow and explained her condolences and, I believe, offered a future visit to the White House for them and their family. So that was pretty awesome. And I think it's not awesome for me.

[00:27:28] It's awesome because I think the fire service deserves that. And it also shows that in these moments, everything else falls away, and it just becomes a focus on, you know, the main thing is the main thing, no matter what. I have been told that Governor Youngkin does want to visit some of our folks in the burn unit, and we're working on that arrangement right now, but everybody's been so supportive.

[00:27:46] Good. Okay. So, Buzz, if you have any questions or thoughts, please put your light on. Ms. Umstead. Thank you, Madam Chair. Chief, along with everybody else up here, we are also very sorry. Going forward, do you anticipate the possibility that you would want to see any changes in the Virginia Building Code as to the placement of propane tanks?

[00:28:16] It's too early to tell because I really don't know the cause right now. You know, the fire remains under investigation, and it will likely remain that way for some period of time. I hope to get some more information out to the community, but it's too early to tell. It will remain under investigation.

[00:28:31] There's a lot of analysis and scientific evidence that has to happen. We have the world-class fire marshals that are on this case. They're working with the Commonwealth Attorney's Office. They're working with law enforcement. They're working with the ATF insurance companies. So undetermined at risk time.

[00:28:47] You know, if I could tie this to residential sprinkles, you absolutely know I would, but I don't think it would have helped in this situation. But as of this time, no, but we'll see. All right. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Letourneau. Thank you. Chief, it may just be because I'm overly sensitive to the calls now, but it seems to me that we've almost seen an uptick in gas leak calls over the last couple of days. Is there any fact to that or just my perception?

[00:29:15] I think I'm probably to blame for that. When the media asked me what they can do and what advice do you have for people, I said, if you smell gas, call 911. That's still my advice today. So I think people are being a little more sensitive. However, work doesn't stop, and I think all of you know that.

[00:29:33] Yesterday we had a garage fire at a home in Sterling. The same crews that responded on that call. They had a working garage fire. Later in the afternoon we had an outside gas leak, and we evacuated 23 homes in the area, legitimate gas leak outside that was a natural gas leak. This morning we worked on another commercial building fire in the town of Middleburg.

[00:29:52] So work doesn't stop, but that's probably my fault, but that's okay. I think it's a bad thing. We'll handle those calls. That's what we do. Right. I think it's, I can say this now because the family came forward. So the volunteer firefighter that's in the burn unit, Firefighter Diamond, was also a Loudoun County Public Schools teacher.

[00:30:13] Has there been coordination with LCPS that you can speak about? Yes. From what I understand, the Loudoun County Public Schools, as you know, has had counseling on staff for the children that were the school, the children attended school. You know, we tried to, there was actually what we know as a bus stop right near the intersection of this incident.

[00:30:31] So I think we work with school systems to navigate some changes to the bus stop route and so forth. We have some road blocked off in the area. So, yeah, the school system has been awesome in assisting us and working with them. Well, I know that I've heard from many folks in the community that the firefighter Diamond, Mr. Diamond, is an eighth grade English teacher at J. Michael Luntz for Middle School.

[00:30:51] Spoke to him today. and a very popular one, one that the students really enjoy. He's got four children of his own. Sounds like his road's going to be long in the future, but certainly I know the community's thinking about him, and I saw that the school PTA has set up a meal train, and they're covered for an entire month just to his family.

[00:31:15] So just an example of the community support that everyone's receiving. But thank you, Chief, for everything you're doing. Thank you. Representing us so well in this really difficult time. Thank you, Mr. Letourneau. Mr. Sainz, do you have anything? Yes, thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:31:33] Thank you, Chief Johnson, for being here and giving us this briefing. Just, you know, send our condolences to the Brown family, and our hearts and prayers are with those that were on the call on the scene that day and who were on the road to recovery. I was able to go to the scene that night, and what I saw was nothing short of amazing work.

[00:31:55] of our combined fire company here at Loudoun and Sterling Volunteer. Our company was on scene at Ashburn. We had folks from Fairfax County, Metropolitan Airports Authority. They had sponsors there. ATF was on scene, the Sheriff's Department as well.

[00:32:12] And I'll just, you know, again, everybody did a great job handling their work, and it just reinforces to me how important and dangerous the work that they do day in and day out. So I just want to thank them for their service to our community. And, you know, hopefully we can find out the results of this accident and make sure we can do better in the future.

[00:32:31] But, again, thank you to everybody that was involved in our prayers with everybody every single day. So thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Kirshner. Thank you, Madam Chair. And Chief Johnson, I want to just thank you personally for all the leadership that you've shown here. I believe you were out of town at the time this occurred.

[00:32:47] It was a long night right back. Yeah, it was. And we exchanged texts a few times. So thank you for showing that leadership. and stepping up when it was needed i know i know you probably need you didn't second guess it i'm sure but i just wanted to thank you for that and for everybody who's who stepped in the the only question i really had was i'm and i've heard a little bit and i've gotten a lot of questions from constituents and whatnot how they might be able to help as you find out if there's a gofundme or different ways that the community can help please continue to share that with us i know there are a lot of different families that are impacted here but anything that you hear please would you be willing to share that with our office so we can then so we'll do that in just

[00:33:24] That's my voice for a cause. You'll do that in about two minutes. You'll get that information. Yeah, excellent. Is that all of the information? Except for the homeowner, and I can talk about that. That'd be excellent, but anything in addition, that'd be very much appreciated. Thank you.

[00:33:41] Before I call on Ms. Bricksmitt, Ms. Chief Johnson, you might want to just discuss why the decision was made to do the contributions through one source. because I because mr. Kirshner's questions are great questions we got and we've got it quite a bit that but but with the exception of the homeowner the the request is that that all the contributions go through one source correct yes okay and that was a joint decision between myself and again chief short who's the chief of the sterling volunteer fire company and their board of directors because holistically we wanted to make sure that everyone was being taken care of firefighter Brown being a line of duty death is entitled

[00:34:19] to benefits because of that from the state of Virginia, nationally, some nonprofit organizations. But for other folks that were injured in various degrees, they may not be entitled to those same benefits because obviously they didn't receive a line of duty death. So our efforts were to try and help everybody.

[00:34:37] So everybody will have an opportunity to receive some assistance as they need, right? And everybody's need is differently. um you mentioned our school teacher um mr diamond's going to be out of work for a long period of time and um you know we've got to protect he's got a family to support as you mentioned four children supervisor letourneau everybody has different needs some of our folks aren't married and they're single and they might have a different need than a family a father of four um so that's where this organization comes in um it's obviously a non-profit organization that can handle the paperwork right GoFundMes and things could be problematic, which is why we chose to go with this in lieu of a GoFundMe page that you would normally see.

[00:35:18] And then it can be controlled and the family doesn't get the burden of dealing with, you know, dealing with money. And the First Responders Foundation will handle that. Thank you. Thank you very much. Ms. Glass, I know there's something you would want to say, but I also know that you just have no voice.

[00:35:34] And so I know you're just going to send your love and support to Chief Johnson and the entire system. Yes? Yes. Okay. Ms. Brixman. Supervisor. Oh, Supervisor Turner, you just turned your light on.

[00:35:50] Yeah, thank you. Just very briefly, I used to work for Red Cross Disaster Relief, and the language we used, there were 25,000 disasters in the United States every year, if you include house fires and those sorts of things. And the language we used in the Red Cross was, please donate to help the victims of this and other disasters.

[00:36:06] And it was very specific language because everybody wants to help the victims of this disaster. But as the chief is saying, by donating to this single source, you can certainly earmark your contribution. But I would suggest please don't.

[00:36:24] And it's because I know the family is being taken care of and the firefighters that were injured in this are being taken care of. But there are hundreds and hundreds of thousands of first responders that will benefit from a general contribution to that single source.

[00:36:41] So I really encourage you to resist your urge to focus it in your market and give to the foundation to trust them to get it to the people that need it the most. Thank you. Supervisor Turner, you just reminded me of something when you said the Red Cross, and something I forgot to mention was we're focused on this single home and the actions of this homeowner.

[00:37:00] We've been working with building development, and our farm marshals do that all the time. There are other homeowners in the area that have significant damage, And there are at least two other uninhabitable homes due to this. So there are other people in the area, many homes in the area, that are affected by this.

[00:37:18] And, again, two other homes are completely uninhabitable at this point, at least. There may be more. And we work with building development to make sure that they'll have to work with their insurance companies. Thank you. Ms. DeCroning. Yeah. I just wanted to say thank you for everything that you've done.

[00:37:36] I mean, my heart goes out to the family and to the injured firefighters. If there's anything I can do, please reach out. Do you know if the homeowners, if they've done a GoFundMe page or anything? I think Chair Randall has information on that. Oh, okay. So that's separate. Okay. All right.

[00:37:51] Thank you, Chief Johnson. Thank you. Ms. Bricksman. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you so much, Chief Johnson, for being here. Supervisor Sainz touched on this a little bit, but being on the scene Friday night, I've never seen anything like that in my life.

[00:38:09] And I have to switch the channel when a Serve Pro commercial comes on now because it's unbelievable. And what was also unbelievable was the response. And Chief Williams did a great job. Please tell him that for us.

[00:38:24] The coordination from on the scene and then over at the firehouse for the peer support groups was nothing short of amazing. And so, of course, we wish everyone well and, you know, our deepest condolences to the family.

[00:38:42] And as I started to think about Company 11 and how much that company has meant to my community, not just as a supervisor or, you know, a gonking supervisor or vice chair of the board. That company has checked my child's car seats 19, 21 years ago.

[00:39:02] They hosted my girls' brownie troop. They used to come to our triathlons and shower everyone with water. They came to my son's birthday party. They hosted our swim meet banquets. They were just out a couple years ago checking my smoke detectors.

[00:39:22] And they couldn't have been more friendly and more responsive and just happy to be there to help prevent things like fires and what happened Friday night. And so please do let us know if there's anything the community can do to help.

[00:39:42] People have been reaching out, as you know, and I'm glad that we have the central location for that. One thing that I think I emailed you about, and we've been getting a number of folks who are worried now, of course, about their gas lines and are there other propane tanks in the county?

[00:39:58] And what do we do about that? And I just want to confirm, I think you're kind of working on a communique about those sorts of things so that we will have sort of answers. You probably have all this information already, maybe even accessible, but just wanted to confirm that folks will be getting some more information about that.

[00:40:18] Yes. And as I mentioned to the supervisor previously that, you know, if you smell gas, 9-1-1, hopefully you don't smell gas. That's the goal. You don't smell gas and don't have to call 9-1-1. The biggest single thing that a homeowner can do, just like you do for everything else, just like you do for your car, hopefully, is have it serviced annually, right?

[00:40:36] Propane is not abnormal, right? You can heat your house by electric, by fuel oil, by natural gas, or by propane. Or there's probably other methods, too, solar, maybe. But there's hazards with each of them. So have your equipment serviced each year, right? I'm not an HVAC technician, so call somebody and have your equipment serviced, right?

[00:40:55] Especially if something's 20 years old, just like your car, cars don't last 20 years without having somebody, a mechanic, look at it every so often or having it checked. You go for an inspection every year. Think of your devices, your HVAC devices, the same way. Have it checked every year. Have a service technician come out and check. Have your propane company come out and check.

[00:41:12] They're the professionals, not me. We deal with the emergencies, unfortunately, but you've got to call the right people at the right time to have it checked and serviced. Thank you. Thank you. Well, Chief

Johnson, I actually did not come out to the scene because you all expressly asked us not to and because I did not believe I would be a value add by being there.

[00:41:32] So it wasn't just I won't be in the way. It's if I can't add to why I'm there, there was no reason for me to go to the scene. So I did not for that express reason. I will say that I do want us to also remember the homeowner.

[00:41:50] Her name is Kelly Woods. She does have a GoFundMe page set up by her sister, Elizabeth Exix. It is a valid GoFundMe page, and so if someone wants to go look for the Kelly Woods GoFundMe page, that would be there as well.

[00:42:06] I have seen some criticism of Ms. Woods. She did nothing wrong. She did everything right, in fact, by making everyone aware and calling, and she has lost all of her worldly possessions. So I do want to remember that the civilians are also our constituents and be aware of that.

[00:42:30] If you could just briefly, because I'm getting the same questions that Ms. Letourneau talked about and Ms. Bricksman talked about. I've heard a lot of people say, you know, why would anyone have a propane tank in this day and age and that type of thing? And from what I understand, it's not that unusual to have a propane tank.

[00:42:47] So could you a little bit talk about that, the fact that we do have those in Loudoun and when somebody should call like Ms. Woods did or when they shouldn't call? Could you maybe have that discussion just a little bit? Sure. You know, propane tanks can be two methods, right, above ground and below ground.

[00:43:03] You know, gas filling, you know, for gasoline can be above ground tank or below ground tank. So it's a choice for those that come from this community, know that it's an older community. It's not a young community. At one point, I don't believe there was natural gas in this community. There is natural gas now near the community, but I don't believe, I don't know 100%, but I don't believe this home is even serviced by natural gas.

[00:43:25] So your only option then is electric equipment or propane. I can't speculate even what the propane supplied, right? There's propane tank underground, there's lines, and I'm not here too. I'm not, you know, the fire marshal hasn't completed their investigation. So it's too early to tell that what this propane even supplied.

[00:43:44] That's what they're looking at now. where the lines go and so forth. So it is not abnormal at all to have a propane tank above ground or underground tank. We run them often. A lot of times what's happened when we run propane tank emergencies underground is that they'll bring in heavy equipment to their yard to do landscaping, and the piping is usually above ground.

[00:44:03] And more than likely what happens is a mower or an excavator runs over the top of the piping and shears it off, and then we have a leak, and we come out and do that. And we either offload the propane into another tank or occasionally we have to flare it off, which means we have to burn off the propane.

[00:44:20] Our hazardous materials response team has the ability and has done that on many occasions. So we can't leave the propane in the tank leaking. We have to mitigate it. Folks have asked, why were you in that home? The media asked me that. The media did ask you that. We had to mitigate the emergency. We

have to stop the flow of gas and control the flow of gas and then get the occupants out of the house and then obviously ventilate.

[00:44:41] So that is not a note. We had to be in the House to do what we needed to do. Right. Yeah. Well, Chief Johnson, I know you're going to keep us informed. You guys have done a great job of keeping us informed. We will share what you ask us to share, and we will do what you ask us to do, no more, no less, because, as you said, the Sterling Volunteers are leading a lot of this effort, and then, of course, the combined system overall.

[00:45:05] And so we're just trying to follow your lead and respect that. So thank you very much for being here this evening. I appreciate it. And I just will add one thing, Chairman, if I can by chance. You know, I have to remind myself that because it's so natural in our combined system, you know, yes, there were career people on the scene and there were volunteers on the scene.

[00:45:23] Trevor Brown was a volunteer, Sterling Volunteer Fire Company. Near and dear in my heart, you've heard me say it before, I started as a volunteer. I'm a fourth-generation firefighter. Most of our staff started as volunteers, many of them. And, yes, we have our local folks that are working with us, local 3756. Trevor was indeed a volunteer and did this for free.

[00:45:41] and gave his life to his community for free. And it's no different. We stand side by side with our volunteer corporation. And we have a great system here in Loudoun County. Absolutely. Thank you so much. Thank you. Supervisors, after I go to Mr. Kirshner, I'm actually going to change the agenda just a little bit, and I'm going to go on and go to the Voice for a Cause because I do want the Loudoun First Responders Foundation to come up and talk a little bit and give them a little bit more time today.

[00:46:09] So, but first we're going to go to Mr. Kirsten for invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Thank you, Madam Chair. Let's pray. I think I would just bow our heads somberly this evening. And everything we've heard from the Chief and experienced this week reminds us of the verse in Scripture which says, Life is but a vapor, and it's here today and gone tomorrow.

[00:46:34] For some of us, it's longer. For some of us, it's shorter. But you give us a time here on earth, Lord. And I pray that the passing of Trevor and the injuries to these first responders and their heroism will not only remind us of our own lives and the work we have to do while you have us here on this earth, but will remind us to be kind and to love and to work hard and diligently in everything that we do.

[00:47:09] We do pray for each of these families. We pray especially for those little children who have lost their dad and for those whose families are injured. And I just pray, Lord, that you would wrap your arms around them and comfort them in the next couple of weeks, especially in the next couple of years, and that you will minister to them and give them peace that passes all understanding, as only you can give.

[00:47:35] Pray that you'll give each of us in leadership, both in the fire department here on this board in our county, their pastors and spiritual leaders who are working with each of them, their mental health experts, give them wisdom and give us wisdom in helping these injured folks in our community along. And we do thank you for men and women like this who step up and are willing to put themselves in harm's way to protect those of us in the community who depend

[00:48:10] upon them, Lord. May we never take them for granted. And we just pray a special prayer upon them today. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

[00:48:38] Okay, as I said, I'm just going to go a little bit, a tiny bit out of order right now and go on and call my voice for a cause up. And to say first that I actually changed my voice for a cause. It was going to be somebody else, but I thought the First Responders Foundation was an appropriate voice for a cause to get into the room tonight.

[00:48:58] So if Jennifer Andos will come to the podium, the First Responders Foundation serves our county by providing immediate financial support to active first responders personnel in their time of need, both career and volunteers.

[00:49:14] The mission of allow the first responders is to financially support active first responders and be there for any illness or conditions in the line of duty or loss of active duty at times. I'm going to take just a moment to say that there has been, you know, Chief Johnson and the Sterling Volunteers expressly ask us to say that they want to know, to please not have a lot of contribution efforts going forward, a lot of GoFundMes.

[00:49:48] I really, really, really, really appreciate it that everyone almost kind of reflexively wants to do that and wants to help. But for some of the reasons that you're going to talk about, Jennifer, it was decided to go through one organization. And I'd like you, I'm going to ask you a couple of questions.

[00:50:07] But first, I'm going to just ask you why it is that the combined system and the volunteers made the request that their contributions funneled through one body, one system. So we are an established organization.

[00:50:26] We've already been established for, I think, 15 years. Don't quote me on that. And on our board sits representatives from all of the Loudoun County agencies. So they come to us with, often come to us in meetings saying somebody got injured.

[00:50:44] He's not asking for help. What do you suggest we could say to him that he would ask? Our first responders, very, I'm really emotional. I'm sorry. Our first responders often don't ask for help. They're very, they just, you know, they consider this their life mission, and they don't ask for help.

[00:51:03] And so we are there all of the time. Sometimes we just pay someone's gas bill, mortgages, all kinds of different things. But the reason why we've become the central collection agency, I don't even know if that's the right way.

[00:51:19] Contribution. contribution is because there is a very specific but simple way for our first responders to apply for benefits. There's a one-page form that they download from our website or they get from the HR representative, and they write a little tiny, I mean, literally one page. It gets signed off by their supervisor to actually say that they're an employee, and it gets sent to us, and we evaluate the donation.

[00:51:51] Going forward, it's not just going to be these 11 people that we hear about. Some people were driving the trucks. People were digging out. There's going to be a lot of mental health initiatives that will do. A lot of the requests we have are for mental health services.

[00:52:10] And so it will go far beyond what's happened. You know, Trevor, of course, we've paid for his funeral, and we've already allocated extra expenses if that is what we've donated is not enough. But our other injured firefighters, and like I said, the ones on the scene, everyone's going to need help.

[00:52:29] It's going to be at least a year that they'll be coming for services. And so we, I don't want to say what they'll be the forgotten, but there's people that are not, their names aren't in the paper, but they're going to need help. And so we're the people that will be ready for it. Yeah, yeah.

[00:52:44] Well, thank you for saying that, because, I mean, I know that some people have gotten frustrated when I've said and we've said, like, please don't start a lot of pages, try to go to one location, but to one organization. But that was the request of our firefighters.

[00:53:01] So you talked about, just briefly, but can you talk about some of the different services you might be offering for during this incident? Yeah, so during this incident, we, so essentially, Chief Johnson is on a daily text with our president of the board, Tina Johnson, but we will, we're really just standing at the ready.

[00:53:28] I don't even know a better way to say it. This is what we do. We've prepared, we raise money all the time ready for an incident. We'll go six months without getting a request, and then something like this will happen, which thankfully we haven't had a tragedy in a very long time, but we'll respond to requests the fire department themselves 11 seems you know they've gotten a ton of support but there still might be something that they need we as an organization really what we do is respond to requests the only three things that we do all the time is we give scholarships to first responders and their children on first

[00:54:06] responders day we bring gifts to the stations to say thank you and then at the end of the school year, we do, with LCPS, we do a luncheon for SROs and firefighters, and now basically anyone that wants to go, to thank them for their service for the year. Otherwise, we're really a response agency. Well, and the last thing is, there are a lot of people, as Mr. Kirshner said, who are looking for ways to contribute and give money. And this is, again, this is a part for Ms. Woods, who does have her own GoFundMe page up. So can you tell all the people who have been reaching

[00:54:45] out to say, how do we help? What do we do? Now is the time. How do they help and what do they do? Yes, now is the time. So I would be remiss, I have to say, I just want everyone here to know that we are a fully volunteer organization. So none of us get paid. Our return rate for the money we collect, we give roughly 97.5% of every dollar that we collect.

[00:55:09] back. We have zero overhead. So that's part of the reason why it's important to all of us to collect it in one spot because we really make the most of every penny. That's really important to know. Yes. And we're all, I think everyone on our board is a business owner. So we have really great connections. So we've done things like get HVAC units installed in someone's house that went outside of a financial donation. So we also kind of work our, we work our networks because everything we have are financial donations from business partners and from individuals in the community.

[00:55:48] So in order for anyone to donate, our website is lfrf.org. You can learn all about us. We have our history there and where our funding goes. Simple donations, PayPal, anyone can do it.

[00:56:03] In there, there is a note section. So we encourage people to include their name and contact information because we have a 501c3 we send letters and receipts to everyone who donates oh wow that this time may take quite some time yes sure but generally very quickly yeah yeah yeah well please thank um miss johnson who i think we all know and i feel very fondly for and everyone on the board you guys are i know you're going to be very busy over the next over the next couple of well really the next year, because you're right, some of the mental health and the trauma won't

[00:56:41] even manifest for quite a long time, so please thank them as well. I will. Thank you very much. I thank all of you for supporting us in the community. This is just unbelievable. Thank you, Jeffrey. All right, thank you. Okay, we're going to try to get back on script now. I'm going to read the consent agenda. It is as follows. Item 1A, appointments and confirmations.

[00:57:10] Item two, the AIR report for February 20th, 2024. Item three, the assentance package added for the retention and expansion of TTM technologies. Item four, A, contract award consult services for transportation planning and preliminary engineering.

[00:57:29] Item four, B, contract roadway and civil design services for Ecola Mills Drive, Segment 1, Belmont Road to Stone Bridge to Stone Springs Boulevard. Item 4C, Contract Renewal Engineering Services for the Loudoun County Stormwater Management Program.

[00:57:46] Item 4D, Contract Renewal Information Technology Solutions and Services. Item 4E, Affordable Multifamily Housing Loan Program Application for the Commonwealth's Lofts. Item 4F, Affordable Multifamily Housing Loan Applications for Old or Colder School Apartments.

[00:58:04] Item 4G, community development block grant funding recommendations, public service activities. Item 4H, 2023 Loudoun Health Commission annual report. Please, please, please, please go read that. Item 4I, proposed amendment to the codified ordinance of Loudoun County Chapter 4, sorry, 848-023A1, Criteria for open space, use qualifications, historic resources, protection.

[00:58:34] And then item 5A, the permanent pump and haul request. That is not that we do have one pump and haul that stayed in TELUC. This is not that pump and haul. And it's motion number two in the item. So that is the consent report.

[00:58:51] Is there a motion to approve? In fact, I'm making a motion to approve. Is there a second? Motion made seconded by Supervisor Bricksman. Discussion on the motion. Mr. Sainz, do you have a discussion on the motion, the consent agenda? Yes, Madam Chair, thank you for going to me.

[00:59:07] Just real quickly wanted to say that TTM Technologies, I'm very happy that this is going on with consent. And with the work of Buddy Reiser and his team over at Economic Development, they did a good job to attract or maintain TTM Technologies here in Loudoun County and Sterling District.

[00:59:24] They've been here for a few years now, but they're going to be consolidating their locations. And I'm happy to say that Sterling is going to be one of their locations. They're going to be bringing in more resources. So I'd like to say TTM Technologies, thank you. This decision to go all in with Loudoun is a testament to the strength of our local economy and the quality of our workforce.

[00:59:45] This expansion will provide valuable job opportunities for Loudoun skilled workers and further solidify the county's position as a leader in advanced manufacturing. So again, thank you, Mr. Reiser, and all the economic development folks and TTM Technologies for going all in to Sterling and Loudoun County. Thank you, sir.

[01:00:03] And I will associate myself with your comments. And so will Ms. Burksman. Anybody else? All right, all in favor, please say aye. Any opposed? That motion will pass 9-0. I want to say for Ms. Glass that there is one deletion to tonight's agenda, and that is a closed session item number one will be deferred to the March 5th business meeting.

[01:00:26] This item actually is in the Broad Run District. And since Ms. Glass can't be here and can't talk, she asked that we defer the item so that item will be deferred to the March 5th business meeting.

[01:00:43] All right, for my chair's comments, I have a lot because we went to NACO. So there was a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot. and I think everybody else will have quite a bit as well.

[01:00:59] And then, Ms. Tocroni, you're going to cover COG for me, right? All right. So I'm going to hand stuff out to you all as we go along, just because sometimes I say I'm going to, and I put it in your box, and then sometimes I don't put it in your box.

[01:01:15] So some things are going to be for staff. I'll give that to the clerk so she can give to all the staff members. First, I want to hand you the federal policy priorities through the National Organization of Counties for everyone to have one of these. Just in general, I want you to know what NACO's federal policies are.

[01:01:35] And so you're getting the federal policies, federal policy priorities. I also have one for Mr. Freeman and for Ms. McClellan. I'll give that to the clerk. NACO this time was, NACO's always about a lot of things, But this time, the two main items at NACO was housing and mental health, which is interesting since those are the two things we talk about quite a bit also.

[01:02:02] So on the housing discussion, as we have said before, the housing issue or the lack of attainable housing issue is not just a Loudoun County issue or a Virginia issue or a regional issue. It is a countrywide issue. There is a report, the Nexus report, that came out, and it talks about how grants and other forms of revenue can be leveraged using housing trust fund matching funds.

[01:02:31] So I brought a copy of this for Monica Sales, for Mr. Hall, and for Aaron McClellan. I have a copy of that report for all of them. Somebody said, and I thought this was really a good statement.

[01:02:46] The only way to solve the housing crisis is to create more housing opportunities. They also talked about the fact that not having housing actually is much more expensive because it is much more expensive to serve precariously housed youth or other people because we are going to serve them.

[01:03:09] And the best way to provide health care, the best way to provide mental health care, The best way to provide all that is to put people in a supportive living environment, a housing environment with wraparound services, so there's kind of a one-stop shop so you can help people.

[01:03:25] So sometimes we think we're saving money when we don't provide homes, and all the studies, and there are many, and I can send those to you if you're interested, show just the opposite. You actually cost your county or your locality more money if you don't provide homes. Obviously, where you provide them is important.

[01:03:43] Obviously, we have zoning, and we don't put them everywhere, but it is more cost-effective and, in many ways, more humane to provide homes than not. There are also some numbers that were truly disturbing.

[01:03:59] I share some of those, especially for African-Americans, people of color, and single mothers. As I said last week, African-American homeownership is the same as it was in 1968. That has not changed, and that is just a problem.

[01:04:15] And so lots of discussion in NACO around housing. On mental health support, there was an interim resolution to enhance mental health parity and equity. I have those reports available as well.

[01:04:31] There was a report done, or a report that will be done regarding the relationship between the benefits from the Veterans Association and suicide prevention, which is, I think, a really interesting discussion. There was a really, and this is Mr. Kirshner, he and I talked about this a little bit after I came back from NACO.

[01:04:54] There was a fairly robust discussion in the Health Steering Committee. So the Agriculture and Rural Committee came to the Health Steering Committee to ask if the HHS committee, which is what I'm on, the Health Committee, would co-sign an effort to have EMTs who serve rural areas get paid more.

[01:05:19] Because they have a hard time finding EMTs to serve rural areas, and an even harder time to get EMTs to serve what's called frontier areas. frontier areas means you have to be at least 30 minutes from any type of medical care at all, even an urgent care center. So that motion went up and I voted against the motion. The reason I voted against the motion was because in my head, if you give more money to the EMTs to go to the rural and frontier areas, that's where they would go. And in urban and suburban areas where you have the populations, we would have a dearth of them.

[01:05:59] I came back and had this discussion with Mr. Kirshner, who wasn't able to go to NACO, and he had some different thoughts on that, and I kind of wish we had, had I known this was going to come up, Mr. Kirshner, I would have got some of those thoughts before, because he had some thoughts on, you know, how we can get EMTs out to the rural areas and what is needed out there and talked about some things I really wasn't aware of, and it was a really helpful conversation.

[01:06:27] I just didn't have that information before. But in the end, the decision was made that the HHS committee would not sign on to that effort. However, Ag and Rural Affairs was going to go forward with it themselves and still ask that EMTs in frontier and rural areas get paid more.

[01:06:48] There was also a lot of discussion around, and Mr. Torpy's in the audience, he might understand this a little bit and I have information, around aging in our counties. And, of course, because we've put so much senior housing in Loudoun County, we have to be aware that when you make housing for people who are 55 years old, they're going to be 85 years old in no time at all.

[01:07:15] And so the aging discussion. And one of the discussions had was that often people who are taking care of the aging population is a spouse who is not much different in age themselves, who sometimes are in the same social, emotional, physical shape themselves as the person they're trying to take care of, and the fact that caregivers often are dying faster than the people they're taking care of.

[01:07:46] And then what to do with that, because now you still have somebody who has that need. And so there's a national strategy to support the family, to support caregivers. I thought that was interesting. And then there's a whole different discussion about the county's role for people in long-term care, especially people who are trying to age in place in that long-term care.

[01:08:07] And I thought that was a really interesting and important discussion. Two more things. There has been, across the entire nation, discussion on crisis intervention centers and why.

[01:08:23] Why crisis intervention centers? I bought some information back for Sheriff Chapman, for Margaret Graham, and for, I think, Mr. McLean, I think you're getting this. Oh, no, for John Freeman. We know that crisis intervention centers actually, again, save us money in the long run, And it means that people who are sheriff and police are not sitting in emergency rooms of people for hours, sometimes days.

[01:08:51] And so there is an effort just on Capitol Hill, period, to get much more money in localities for crisis intervention centers. I have had that discussion with our federal officials and will continue to have that discussion with our federal officials.

[01:09:06] And finally, and Mr. Sains, you're not here, but I brought something back for you and for Ms. Bricksman and others. There was an entire discussion on elections in this country. And there have been quite a few studies done, and without equivocation, it has been shown that the 2020 election was one of the elections that had the most people involved and was

[01:09:41] completely a safe, secure election with no abnormalities in the election at all, period, the end, stop. The problem has been because of all the disinformation around that election, we're having a very hard time getting election officers.

[01:10:00] And I don't mean people who work for the counties for elections. I mean people who work as election officers. So, unfortunately, there had to have been a toolkit created for election worker protection, which it's so unfortunate that we're here right now.

[01:10:19] But there is now a toolkit created so that people who are working elections, who are just citizens, who are trying to be good people, actually feel like that they can do that without being threatened and without putting themselves at risk.

[01:10:35] Because counties across the country are not being able to find people who are willing to work elections. So I brought one of these back for you, Mr. Sains, because I know that that is something that you've been very involved in. I bought one back for Ms. Brixman. I bought one back for Judy Brown.

[01:10:52] I bought one back for everyone on the board of elections, one for county administrators, for the county administrators, and one for anybody else who might want information on the national election protection and county's elections administration.

[01:11:10] So I have a lot of them, and I have the link. If you want to have the link, I can send that to you as well. but what we know going forward is we have to take care of both our election staff, but also the people who are trying to work elections in this country.

[01:11:30] So it was a lot more than to that at NACO, but those were the highlights. And anything else you want, anyone can reach out to me, send me an email. I can send you the things. I can send you the links. I can send you whatever people want. But I did want to just at least provide people with that information.

[01:11:48] And I will give the clerk everything that I have that's going to go to the staff members, okay? All right. Thank you, everybody. All right. Mr. Hemstreet, do you have anything you'd like to share this evening? I do, Chair Randall. You know, the main thing I was going to talk about was the incident on Friday.

[01:12:08] I know we covered most of it earlier in the meeting. But I did want to express on behalf of the county staff our sincerest condolences to the family and friends and colleagues of firefighter Trevor Brown. I think earlier today might have been mentioned the family has set a date that's been announced publicly, which will be March 4th.

[01:12:32] I think that's also been printed. I'd also like to extend our wishes for speedy recoveries to those first responders who were injured and to reiterate the county's commitment to supporting all of those who have been impacted by the incident.

[01:12:49] You know, I can't say this enough, And when I see them, I certainly pass that along. But can I express enough gratitude for the first responders who, you know, we did save two lives, right? So there were two occupants of the house, and they were focused on that.

[01:13:09] And not only did they save the occupants, but I think you heard Chief Johnson talk about it in his remarks. There were several firefighters trapped in the structure after the explosion occurred. and Battalion Chief and Shift Commander, and you mentioned Assistant Chief Williams, as well as all of the crews worked together, and those folks that called the May Day were pulled out of the building.

[01:13:33] And so that also goes to the professionalism and the capabilities that our system has, as well as the dedication that those folks have when faced with an imminent or acute threat. It was also mentioned, though, that this is kind of the beginning.

[01:13:52] I know that there's a long road for a couple of those firefighters ahead of them as they recover from their injuries and as they're released from the burn center. I also want to thank all those in the Loudoun County community and beyond who have offered their support through a multitude of different ways and donations and well wishes.

[01:14:16] But there's going to be a lot of questions and concerns and opinions and everything else like that that comes out in the coming days and weeks and months. Speculation about what happened, speculation about who should have done something differently or what have you.

[01:14:42] So I would encourage the public as well as everybody else, everybody else who's not the public, so the public and those who are not the public, who want information and how they can support those impacted to visit our official information channels only. You know that we have for a long time been a transparent organization.

[01:15:02] Chief Johnson, Loudoun County Fire Rescue, we are doing a significant incident review and a report will be issued. We will provide everything we know about what happened in this incident when we know it.

[01:15:17] That's going to take a while. Chief Johnson talked about the fact that the incident is still under investigation. I don't need to reiterate what happened. I mean, there was an explosion. I think Chief Williams used it during his press discussion that evening.

[01:15:37] Total devastation was, I think, the term that he used. And so in order for us to figure out what happened, we have to dig everything up, and we have to try to put it all back together. So that is going to take a while to figure out exactly what happened.

[01:15:55] So I would ask and encourage everybody who has an interest to get their information from our official information channels and not other things that are out there because we will provide what we know when we know it. I also want to mention a little bit about the organization.

[01:16:15] So, you know, it's often things like this and times like this that test the community as well as the county organization itself. And, again, you heard from the chief, but I can tell you that any incident like this includes a lot of people coming together and doing a job, right?

[01:16:37] So I do want to, you know, this is a holiday weekend. I think I was talking, Chair Randall, to you earlier today, and, you know, we talked about how the fact that a lot of people were scattered, leadership

particularly, had to come back. It was a holiday weekend. But I will say that anybody who was called, anybody who was asked to come and help out, dropped whatever they were doing, came to work, right?

[01:17:03] Starting with OEM, starting emergency management, who brought additional equipment and things like that to the scene. Support from county administration, from human resources, DIT, finance, budget, procurement, billing development, parks and recreation, DTIC, PAC, public affairs.

[01:17:27] Sorry not to use all these letters, but Loudoun County Sheriff's Office. You know, one of the things the chief talked about was, you know, I think it was a little after, almost 3 a.m. in the morning, Saturday morning, Firefighter Brown was transported from the scene to the medical examiner.

[01:17:47] Valley County Sheriff's Office, along with the fire department in Fairfax County, provided the escort. That's 3 in the morning. So somebody had to come to work, was at work, stayed longer, what have you, to do that. Animal services, and there's others.

[01:18:06] I mean, I, you know, part of the problem with naming departments is I always forget somebody. So there were other departments out there that responded, you know, Friday night, Saturday morning, Sunday, you know, we, we ran the operation all the way through the day from Friday night, all the way through into the evening on, on Saturday, the crews were back at it Sunday morning.

[01:18:32] You know, externally, I can't say enough about the response and the support from Fairfax County, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. Both of those agencies provided a significant amount of law enforcement as well as fire rescue support, but more importantly, behavioral health support. I know that Vice Chair Brisman and Chair Randall, you both kind of mentioned those things in your comments, but Patton Hall was set up to provide that support.

[01:19:02] You know, we did have our folks there, but we also had mutual aid that came in for peer support and behavioral health support that came from those entities. So our external partners, and I'm forgetting others, I think Prince William County and, you know, definitely Washington, D.C. and others provided the support to us when we needed it.

[01:19:24] So thank you to all of them for that assistance. We just sent out a mutual aid request for additional behavioral health support because there is an aftermath and an impact to this incident to those of us who were those that were on the scene and responded directly.

[01:19:42] So, you know, but, you know, the county organization showed up as well. So I just want to thank everybody that helped out.

[01:19:58] Thank you, Mr. Kimstreet. Mr. Kimstreet, you are incredibly uncomfortable with praise. It's something to tease you about all the time, so I do tease you about that all the time.

[01:20:15] Having said that, what you and Ms. McClellan did that night was also absolutely incredible. I don't believe that the best of our county shows up without consistent, strong leadership.

[01:20:37] And when I'm talking about you, I'm talking about Ms. McClellan, I'm talking about the assistants, the assistant deputies, and in fact, the entire staff. I say all the time who our staff is and what our staff is, and it showed that night when it was needed.

[01:20:58] So I know you always say, you always say, that's my job. And it is true it is, but not everyone does their job as extraordinarily as you do your job. And if you're uncomfortable with that praise, you just

got to get over it right now because you and Ms. McClellan and everyone, you all were phenomenal that night in every way that you needed to be.

[01:21:27] And as you said, this is the beginning. We have a long way to go. And I think it gives us a lot of comfort that we know that our county administrator is steering the ship in this way. So we appreciate you.

[01:21:43] Thank you, Chair Randall. I did want to mention one final thing, if I may. After all of that, I do want to welcome Chris Quintine, who is our new assistant county administrator. Where is he? He is right there. I'm proud, Chris, to welcome you to this organization.

[01:22:03] Thank you, Chair Randall. Thank you. Chris, you've actually moved to Loudoun, haven't you? Good job. Thank you very much. Welcome. Okay, we're going to move on to our ledge report, because right now we have no one to speak.

[01:22:24] Well, I don't think we have anyone to speak. We have no resolutions, and I don't think we have any speakers for 5 o'clock or 6 o'clock. But we do have a ledge report, and we're going to, I think, Mr. Freeman, I think you are remote, correct?

[01:22:44] That is correct. No, he's not sick. He's in Richmond. Mr. Freeman, this one tonight is not an action item. It is just an information item. Now, when I ask for questions, if anyone has questions, you can do that. If anyone wants to offer a motion at that time, you can do that.

[01:23:01] That is what that is for. So let's just put that right out there. But in the meantime, Mr. Freeman, how about you give us that report, please? Madam Chair, before Mr. Freeman begins his report, I would just like to say, Tim introduced you to Chris Quintine, our new Assistant County Administrator.

[01:23:19] I'd just like to mention he will be overseeing the legislative program with Mr. Freeman going forward. Oh, that's good to know. So will he be like getting up and got off for early times in the morning and drive down to Richmond with us? He will be helping John with the legislative program, Madam Chair.

[01:23:41] Wonderful. Wonderful. I know this is awkward, and it's completely out of context. Well, then I'm not sure I'm going to. It's a point of. It's important. I'm not sure what it's a point of. I just donated to Kelly Woods on GoFundMe.

[01:23:57] There is already a spoof page up that is a bogus page, and I inadvertently donated to the bogus page. So everybody who wants to help out Kelly Woods, it's the GoFundMe page that's Kelly Woods by Elizabeth Essex. That's exactly what I said. Not the other one.

[01:24:12] No, I said that. I said that. And that is why we put it through one central location is that very thing right there is why we put it. And I know there's been criticism of that and criticism of me for saying that, but that's why it goes through one location.

[01:24:31] because people, you know, 99% of Loudoun is good, 99.9%, but then we have that 0.1% that might do something. Probably not even somebody from Loudoun to be quite honest. All right, we are ready when you are. Is Chris going to do this whole thing?

[01:24:49] No. Really? You know, I was going to give him a break tonight, but I'm here. Next time. All right, all right, we'll take it. All right, Mr. Freeman, we're ready. Well, good evening, Madam chair, members of the board. I would like to start off with the Loudoun County initiatives. So, I'll figure off with the job of the contracting bill that was passed by the Senate today. It's sent to the governor's desk for signings.

[01:25:19] And if you remember, this is the limits to job order contracting, which is the routine figuring method that we use for HVAC maintenance, things of that nature. The public notice bill, which is probably you all's favorite bill, that is on the Senate floor.

[01:25:41] There was a Senate bill that dealt with public notices that was amended to match our House bill, and that is on the House floor. So we anticipate that both of those bills will go to the governor's desk for some.

[01:26:00] The next is, sorry, give me one second. I think there's some feedback. The next is the updates from Budget Sunday. On Sunday, the subcommittees in the House and Senate reported out on the committee amendments a very general report.

[01:26:30] The amendments were posted today, so staff is still doing a deep dive into exactly what the House and Senate passed in totality. But I'll go over some overarching issues that are important to the board.

[01:26:50] So particularly on Metro funding in the House budget, where FY25 was included, \$65 million. In FY26, there was \$84.5 for Metro funding, waiver of the 3% cap over the biennium, as well as funding for a study of long-term funding solutions to transportation in Northern Virginia, which includes WMATA.

[01:27:17] In the Senate, unfortunately, there wasn't any additional funding for Metro. There was a 3% CAAT waiver in funding for a study for Metro as well. For K-12 funding, and I anticipate you'll hear from LCPS soon on what this exactly means for Loudoun County, but the Senate proposal threw \$1.6 billion on top of the billion that was in the governor's introduced budget to bring total education investments to \$2.6 billion.

[01:27:59] The House took the same approach, particularly in the Senate budget, which was interesting, was that they wanted to highlight that they honored their prior commitments by providing \$400. 6 million to fully remove the cap on support positions, as well as \$243. 1 million to restore the grocery tax, grocery sales tax, supplemental payments that the governor removed.

[01:28:19] So that was something that they highlighted. Again, how much money that exactly means for Loudoun County, I anticipate, we'll hear from LCPS soon on that. Particularly for crisis services, the House put \$55 million dedicated to crisis services to provide immediate support to individuals who need it most.

[01:28:42] This means developing more crisis receiving centers and crisis stabilization units and further building the Marcus Alert program. The Senate took a different approach. They were still evaluating exactly where they appropriated a lot of their money, but it looks like they focused on staffing issues and the behavioral health field.

[01:29:06] And the arena bill was written entirely into the House budget, and the Senate did not include language for the arena bill. So I just want to highlight that. Although we don't have a position on the arena bill, I know that that is something that has been in the news a lot these past couple of weeks.

[01:29:25] And I would just like to finish with the fact that the House and Senate both adjourned their floor sessions yesterday in honor of Loudoun County firefighter Trevor Brown.

[01:29:36] Yeah, well, thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much for that. Mr. Letourneau. Thank you. I just wanted to ask about two bills in particular. I've had some discussion with the airports authority on SB 354, which is the one that would strike our airport impact overlay district noise regulations. And I'm aware

of some of the strategy around that. But I assume that, you know, that that's in our opposed column, I assume that we're also engaged.

[01:30:09] and working with the group on that one? That is correct. We are currently working with M.Y. on the best path forward on those bills. You know, the issue with those bills is the patrons.

[01:30:26] So Delegate Simon and Senator Locke are very, very well-respected, and they are in the majority party. And so, you know, we are engaging in a ton of lobbying activities to make sure that, you know, mandatory disclosures dealing with noise, in particular to homes that are in close proximity to Dulles Airport, maintain their existence in the Commonwealth.

[01:30:58] Yeah, and I know there's potentially an amendment there as well, but that might be one where some individual outreach from us to our delegation might be helpful, a few in particular. SB 544 is another fun bill that supersedes our zoning authority.

[01:31:20] I was actually, to be honest, kind of surprised that that passed the Senate. Was there a House companion on that one, and did it pass? There wasn't a House companion on that bill. That is another issue where it really, I would say, passed the Senate mostly because of the patrons, Senator Bagby, who's well-respected, and the majority party as well.

[01:31:47] And so we are actually working side-by-side with Vaco as well as Virginia Beach to make sure that that bill doesn't get through the House. Okay. Mr. Sainz, do you have anything? No, Madam Chair.

[01:32:06] Okay. Oh, one thing, I thank you to Ms. Sidner for her response in regards to Bill SB304. I don't know if everybody saw that. No, which one is SB304, Mr. Sains?

[01:32:24] That's the accessory dwelling unit. Oh, the accessory dwelling unit. Okay, gotcha. Ms. Settner sent an email to the board late this afternoon. Okay. Ms. Settner, thank you. So, you know, this is not so much a question but a comment.

[01:32:41] You know, I think it would behoove us to have a discussion in VACO and VML about what zoning is. The amount of bills this year that would completely destroy our zoning have been astounding, including bills like, you know, if a religious organization buys, owns one acre of land, then they can build on that acre of land without ever coming to the board about, you know, whether or not we even allow residences in that area.

[01:33:17] or the one that Mr. Higgins called me about, and that was a solar array can be built almost anywhere in the county. I mean, the misunderstanding around what zoning is, I mean, some of these bills would have completely taken Western Loudoun County off the map.

[01:33:38] We wouldn't have Western Loudoun County anymore. It just wouldn't be anymore. And so maybe after the session, we can talk to VACO and VML and have some type of joint effort to help the General Assembly members who have never served in local office understand why we have zoning and why you have to have an infrastructure if you're going to start putting homes everywhere and why we don't want to put homes in Western Loudoun County and all those types of things.

[01:34:10] because some of those, like, discussions were really, I have been surprised. And we've stopped almost all of them. I think almost all of them have been halted, but not everyone. And so that would be my suggestion that we, you know, work with other counties or organizations just to have a discussion about what zoning is and why it exists.

[01:34:35] I do want to say thank thank gracious for Mamie Locke, who did serve in local government and more than once said, this will destroy local zoning. You can't do this. She has been such a great voice for us in the Senate to stop so many of the really bad bills that would have just decimated our entire zoning law.

[01:34:57] So I want to publicly thank Senator Locke for that. She has been a champion of local government this session. I think that might be all. Except for that one bill I just mentioned. Except for that one bill she just mentioned. I do want to, oh, speaking of Mr. Luterno and whomever else, so you did speak about the arena bill.

[01:35:18] Have we, for lack of a better word, decoupled Metro from the arena bill? Yes, we have. Okay. Okay? I think that everybody understands that they really shouldn't be tied up.

[01:35:37] Together, yeah. Yes. Okay. That does not stop political negotiating tactic type of things from happening. Sure, sure. But people understand they shouldn't be coupled. The governor said it publicly, so I think... That's good. Okay, that's good. That's good. That's good news.

[01:35:54] All right. Mr. Freeman, thank you very much. We appreciate it. Next time, we're going to let the new assistant county administrator do the entire thing, though, just because. All right? Thank you.

[01:36:11] Okay. Supervisors, do we have, if you have any nominations, please put your lights on right now, please. All right. Mr. Turner.

[01:36:29] Thank you, Madam Chair. I nominate Brent Campbell to the Housing Advisory Board to fill an at-large representative seat. Mr. Crony. I nominate Angela Ruckman to an at-large seat of the Historic District Review Committee and Douglas Steele to an at-large seat on the Art Advisory Committee.

[01:36:48] Mr. Sains. None for me. Ms. Glass, we'll get yours next time, okay? Okay. Okay. And I will nominate Linda Silverman to an at-large seat in the Community Services Board and re-nominate Michael Rells to an at-large seat on the Advisory Commission on Youth.

[01:37:11] Supervisors, let's do this. Let's go into closed session, have our dinner in closed session, come back out, do our board comments, and then go home. How's that sound? That sounds awesome. Okay. I'm sorry, and I'm doing that because I have to get us, we need to get to 6 o'clock because we need to get to the time where public input would start.

[01:37:36] We can't be off, we can't adjourn before the time the public input would start. So we need to get to that time. So that's why I'm doing it in this order. All right, I'm sorry. I guess that's fine. I move that the Board of Supervisors recess this public meeting and enter into closed session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711A3 of the Code of Virginia to consider acquisition disposition of a parcel or parcels of property for public use in the Algonquian Election District.

[01:38:07] Is there a second? I was seconded by Mr. Crony's discussion on that. Mr. Sainz. Mr. Sainz, do you plan on coming in closed session? Yes, ma'am. Okay. And Ms. Glass, do you? Can we just put her on the screen?

[01:38:29] I think she said yes. She said yes, okay. I got to hear it from her. Doesn't matter, but I didn't count unless I hear it from her. I'm just messing with you, Sylvia. All right, all in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Aye. That motion will pass 9-0. All right, Supervisor, we're in closed session.

[01:38:59] My staff made me come to.

[01:41:40] You have a motion, right?

[02:05:36] All right, Supervisors, we are going to ask Ms. Bricksman to read out of closed session. Before I do that, let me make sure that Mr. Sains and Ms. Glass are on with us. Mr. Sains, can you hear me? Yes, ma'am, I'm here. Wonderful.

[02:05:51] Ms. Glass? I'm here. Okay, thank you. Oh, my gosh. Some people up here are going, aw, aw, I am not. I am laughing at you, just so you know how this is going up here. No, Ms. Glass, if you need something, like, let us know.

[02:06:10] We can bring you by something, hot tea or food or whatever you might need. Let us send me a text and we'll take care of you. All right, Ms. Glassman, Ms. Bricksman, let's read our closed session. Okay, I move that the closed session be adjourned, that the Board of Supervisors reconvene its public meeting, that the minutes of the public meeting shall reflect that no formal action was taken in the closed session, and further move that the resolution certifying the closed session be adopted and reflected in the minutes of this public meeting.

[02:06:42] Motion is made and seconded. I'll second that discussion on that motion. No. Mr. Sainz, Ms. Glass, you guys good? All right, please say aye. Aye. Oh, very good. Whoa. Any opposed?

[02:06:58] All right. I'd like everyone to affirm, please. Ms. Glass, will you please affirm? Affirm. Mr. Sainz. Affirm. Ms. Umstead. Affirm. Mr. Kirshner.

[02:07:15] Mr. Duterno. Affirm. And I affirm as well. Okay. Ms. Brixman, you have another motion? I do. Thank you, Madam Chair. I move the Board of Supervisors authorize the county administrator to execute a purchase agreement approved as to form by the county attorney with James and Mary Askegren for real property consisting of a total of 90 acres

[02:07:42] identified as PINs 027-48-5634 and 027-38-8257 and 027-386159 in the Algonquian Election District for a purchase price of \$5.5 million.

[02:08:02] And I further move that the Board of Supervisors direct \$200,000 be allocated for due diligence studies and closing costs and authorize the amendment of the FY 2024 Capital Improvement Program by directing staff to execute a budget adjustment not to exceed \$5.7 million from the County Land Acquisition Fund project to a newly created land acquisition and due diligence for the Askingum Property Project in the Capital Projects Fund.

[02:08:32] Motion is made and seconded by Supervisor Tacroni. Discussion on the motion. Supervisor Brixman. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to say thank you to staff. This has been a long negotiation to come to an agreement on the purchase of this property, but I'm very excited that we are going to be extending the Potomac Heritage Trail further west toward the Broad Run and Bless Park.

[02:09:02] We also will hopefully have an additional put-in for kayaks and canoes. There's also a beautiful barn on the property that I hope that we can preserve and use for county facilities and or storage and or interpretive areas.

[02:09:19] It's a beautiful property, and I'm very excited that we're going to be able to add more passive recreation to Algonquian District. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you. Anybody else? I don't think Mr. Sains or Ms. Glass has anything. All right.

[02:09:35] Ms. Bricksman, congratulations. Thank you, ma'am. Very good job. Please say aye. Opposed. Aye. Opposed. That motion will pass 9-0. Supervisors, we have one speaker for our 6 o'clock time.

[02:09:54] It is Mr. Renard Parker, who wants to talk on Step Up Loudon. Mr. Parker, if you would come to the podium closest to you, state your name for the record, and you will have two and a half minutes, sir. Did I just get started?

[02:10:11] After you say your name. My name is Renard Parker. Yep, you can just get started. My name is Renard Parker, and my brother and I are working on a project for Step Up Loud and called Sustainable Solutions Empowering Communities Against Hunger. This project is driven by teenagers who believe in the power of youth led by inactivities to make a positive impact on the world.

[02:10:32] Our project is focused on addressing hunger with our communities. We aim to create sustainable solutions that empower individuals and foster a sense of unity. Together, we're taking on a big challenge that aligns with one of the goals of the 2023 Downing County Energy Strategy to reach net zero by 2045.

[02:10:51] We're all about applying the principles of composting and community gardening to achieve broader county goals. Research and needs assessment, we're diving deep into understanding the hunger crisis in our community.

[02:11:07] Education and awareness campaign, we're spreading the word about composting, sustainable farming, and how it all ties into a greener future for Loudoun County. Phase three, community gardens and sustainable farming, we will get our hands dirty to grow fresh, healthy food right here in our Loudoun County neighborhoods.

[02:11:29] Youth engagement and empowerment, we will inspire our friends to the next generation to be environmental stewards and change makers. advocacy and policy change we're amplifying the voices of our community to ensure that policies align with our goals for a greener more equitable future monitoring and evaluation we're committed to tracking our progress and adjusting along the way to ensure art that our efforts are making a real difference but our work doesn't stop here we need your help out in County joined us in our mission to empower communities against hunger and build a a more sustainable future for all.

[02:12:09] Together we can make a difference. We'll be back to keep you posted on our progress, thank you. - Thank you, thank you very much, and we look forward to you keeping us posted. Let me ask you one question, where do you live? Do you know what district you live in?

[02:12:24] Tell me where you live in the Aspen, that's what I thought, in the Aspen District, thank you. Thank you very much. All right, supervisors, let's do your board comments, and don't forget your disclosures, please.

[02:12:40] Ms. Umstead. no disclosures no board comments thank you um mr saints no mandatory disclosures this time uh again just please please keep your thoughts and prayers on those that are affected by the incident on friday obviously the brown family and those injured and on the road recovery but also let's not forget about the residents that we're living in this neighborhood that are affected uh thinking of miss kellywood's so

[02:13:18] So please visit the GoFundMe page organized by Elizabeth Essex and her tenant, Maria Paolo, her GoFundMe is organized by Lauren Opensick.

[02:13:37] And if you visit my Facebook page, I post some information on Monday. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Mr. Crony. Thank you, Chair Randall. So my disclosures are on Thursday, February 8th.

[02:13:56] I met with Kathleen Leonard and Dominion staff to discuss the Aspen to Golden substations and transmission lines. And regarding my board comments, I attended NACO as well, and I thought I'd bring up the farm bill reauthorization. I attended the rural caucuses at NACO.

[02:14:18] The reason why I bring that up is this is a five-year farm bill, so the last time it was enacted was in 2018, so this is going to be the 2024 Farm Bill reauthorization. And NACO priorities are support for small and mid-sized farmers. So the gentleman that just spoke, they're looking out for farmers so that we can grow healthy foods for nutrition and hopefully help with hunger across our county. According to the USDA, small farms make up 90% of the nation's farms, and they

[02:14:52] often struggle to obtain access to affordable sources of financing and land. And then another thing that NACO prioritizes with this farm bill for counties is to maintain and expand conservation programs, which is very important to our rural policy area because we continue to lose farmland.

[02:15:12] We've lost 11,000 acres between 2017 and 2022. And lastly, of course, they're looking for broadband in the rural areas, because that's critical. I also attended COG with Chair Randall, and in February, at our February meeting, we received a briefing from the Office of Management and Budget about the federal workforce, and we heard that the federal workforce today has a 50-50

[02:15:44] split in person and remote work, and that this policy will have an impact on metro ridership, because we heard from Randy Clark, who was saying that it's really important to get the federal workforce back into the office. But their policy is that 50-50 split.

[02:16:08] And recent surveys, on a positive note, recent surveys showed that 88% of people are satisfied with Metro. So that's awesome. So that shows that Metro's doing some hard work regarding their performance, and 88% of customers are satisfied with Metro.

[02:16:27] Lastly, I attended a Route 50 safety and operational study meeting, public input meeting, last week, and we had a great turnout. A survey is now open until March 1st. Please go to the county website, loudon.gov, Route 50 Safety and Operational Study to complete the online survey.

[02:16:50] Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Kirshner. Thank you, Madam Chair. I did not have it ready, so can I make, do you mind if I go a little out of order, make an appointment, which I, so we don't- A nomination, you mean? A nomination, yes. Yes, you may. I would like to nominate John Musgrove for the at-large position for the Route 28 landholders advisory group, landowners, I should say.

[02:17:15] Okay. Route 28. Yes. Okay. There was one position at-large, so thank you, Madam Chair. No comments? No comments. Okay. They'll be brief. No, no, take your time. We want to hear the message from the talk there. There are two things I'd like to talk about this evening.

[02:17:32] The first is I want to point out to everyone that the U.S. Department of Agriculture released their 2002 census of agriculture last week. A couple things that are important for Loudoun County is we are still the top equine county for horses and ponies in the entire Commonwealth of Virginia with 4,898

horses and ponies and 476 equine related farms. The runner-up is our neighboring county, Fauquier County, with 3,748 horses and ponies and 399 equine related farms. So I think we're pretty doing pretty darn good in terms of our equine industry so congratulations um to all

[02:18:10] those who are making London a um excellent place for our equine industry there are a lot of other goodies in there i can get uh other board members that copy if they want um switching gears a little bit and giving you uh a little update um Woodgrove High School anyone heard this they are the they um their wrestling team had a historic victory last weekend the students and coaches of the Woodgrove Wolverines traveled to Virginia Beach for the state wrestling championship, and they won all eight of their matches, and they came home as the 2004 state champions.

[02:18:44] This has never happened before. Wow. So this was the first ever time, this has never happened before in Loudoun, as a matter of fact, having a state wrestling champion. So it's kind of a great way to end a perfect season where Woodgrove was unbeaten in their dual meets, 22-0, kind of special to me since my father was an All-American and I grew up wrestling and my young sons are all wrestling as well so congratulations and there may be a resolution coming um in the future so congratulations to the Woodgrove Wolverines please do please do thank you Mr. Turner thank you Madam Chair um Supervisor Kirschner just said we're the top

[02:19:23] equine state for horses i wonder how you could be the top equine state for something other than horses i'm just i'm just asking just a little ask um i have uh two uh two disclosures On Friday, February 9th, my staff and I met with Ron Meyer from RMA LLC, Antonio Calabrese from DLA Piper, as well as Brad Hout and Lee Timmons from Cyrus One to discuss the by-right application for Cyrus One Broadlands Data Center.

[02:19:52] Today, my staff met with Sashanka Brower from Walsh Kalushi, Don Knudsen from Knudsen Companies, John Paltenew from Goose Creek Village, and Matt Leslie from Bowman Consulting to discuss the application for Goose Creek Village West.

[02:20:09] I attended one session at NACO that was a discussion with the, I want to say they were EPA lawyers on PFAS and PFOA. That's per and floral all-kill substances.

[02:20:28] These are forever chemicals. They've been around in the environment for about 70 years. They persist. They don't go away, and the EPA has started to link them to some serious health issues. And I became aware of this issue about a year ago, and I've kind of been following it for the past year, trying to think of what kind of mitigation can we do at the county, what kind of responses.

[02:20:47] I went to Loudon Water and said, look, how do we get this out of the water table? And they said it's almost impossible, it's enormously expensive. If you want to get rid of these substances, you have to stop them at the source. You can't do them at the end of the process in the water filtration system.

[02:21:03] So I kind of processed that through. They said also the EPA has identified six of these substances for measuring. There are 6,000 of these substances currently in our environment. So at the NACO meeting, this has been an ongoing year, investigation for myself and at the NACO meeting these lawyers uh talked about the class action suit with 3M and DuPont um and the impact it could have on local communities and I I listened to the conversation and I consider myself to be a pretty ardent uh and strident environmentalist

[02:21:40] I have been for a long time and I had to make the comment that the the EPA has now lowered the threshold for what they consider to be a harm from these substances to four parts per quadrillion. The lowest measuring device that we have is two parts per trillion, which is a thousand-fold less precise needed than to even measure these substances. And I made the sacrilegious statement in the meeting. I said, look, I said, I understand there's an issue here. These substances have been around for 70 years. You've just acknowledged we don't have any measuring devices that can measure

[02:22:20] these substances and we don't have any way to get them out of our systems and water supplies and I said I've got I've got serious issues that I have to deal with in my county and I just can't justify spending extensive county resources to tackle a problem that you basically have just acknowledged is a undetectable and be unresolvable and it was a I had a met another member from the Virginia delegation approached me afterwards pretty hot that I had said that but i think with pfas and pfoa going forward you need to address the egregious offenders the

[02:22:58] people who are dumping 55 gallon drums of these chemicals into water supplies and they exist they are around the country we need to focus on those but i think we're we're kidding ourselves we think that we're going to eliminate pfas and pfoa from our entire environment it's just it's just not an achievable goal right now so it was not a it was a it was a surprise to me and it was kind of a counter intuitive observation for an environmentalist but I think we really need focus on what we can solve and I didn't think this was one we could solve just another perspective on that issue because I know you'll hear about PFAS and PFO going forward thank you madam chair thank you

[02:23:36] miss glass do you want to you want to try to say anything or you want to try to send me something two disclosures okay i met with reps from redland cyrus one data center every 15th i met with reps for quantum park ccp application miss glass do me a favor and send that to me a text so i can say it in just a sec for you okay just so we make sure we get on the thank you make sure you get on the on the record thank you i'm sorry you feel bad mr letourneau

[02:24:15] thank you uh just one disclosure on february 14th i spoke with ron meyer of ron meyer associates about the belmont innovation campus um i want to just provide a reminder that next monday i'll be having a town hall meeting may sound a little trivial in light of the the weighty week we've had but it's actually on retail in the dullest south area and we're going to be joined by representatives of two of the larger retail establishments that have projects in the area to talk to residents about how it all works.

[02:24:50] So I'm really hoping this is going to be an informative discussion really for our residents to understand what some of the challenges are, how it all works, how it's decided, what goes where, and the efforts that are underway to try to bring some of these establishments to this part of the county.

[02:25:06] Otherwise, we are about to enter into our more intense period of the year with the budget, starting with a discussion on the capital budget and are also with our colleagues and the school board on Thursday. I will say just at the onset here that I'm a little bit worried about status a few places, but especially after spending the weekend looking at the budget, our rate of growth is just very high and probably not sustainable, in my opinion.

[02:25:37] So I will be looking for some ways to try to slow it a little bit this year beyond what's been proposed and with a broader strategy and broader discussion. And I think partnership needed with our school system and others to help us kind of get to where we want to go on this, particularly in light of kind of where the conversation is going on data centers.

[02:26:00] Because in one direction, we're moving one way, the other direction, we're moving the other way. Those things when they start getting too far apart are really going to have an impact on the community and the time to think about that is now not when it's truly happening so that is it thank you thank you I'm going to just real quick don't this is not on my time I'm going to real quick say that Miss Glass said on Thursday February 8th she met with representatives regarding the Broadland Cyrus One data center site plan on Thursday February 15th she was ever she met representatives on the Quantum Park ZPA application she did attend the NACO legislative conference

[02:26:38] She's on the Human Services and Education Steering Committee and on the International Economic Development Task Force and she would talk about the NACO um her NACO update will be given at the next meeting so thank you Miss Glass Miss Brixman thank you Madam Chair um I don't have any mandatory disclosures I did attend the NUTC program policy committee meeting last week where we kicked off the regional transit policy research project and we received an update on commuter

[02:27:12] choice and then the National Association of Counties conference um we for those of who may not know the the National Association of Counties has committees that work on certain areas and then provide resolutions for the American Agenda much like our our legislative agenda but the agenda that they lobby our federal counterparts with I sit on the community economic development workforce committee with Supervisor Sanes and also there Madam Chair housing was a huge part of the

[02:27:46] conversation as employers are very interested in making sure their employees can have housing and attainable housing another thing that I've started talking about on that committee is a resolution on affordable quality child care and it is already in the American Agenda with another committee I think it's health and human services so we're talking about maybe cross-claiming that resolution but I also think it might need a little bit of a tweak to

[02:28:18] make sure that we have an economic angle when we adopt it in the Community Economic Development Workforce Committee. So we'll be working on that moving forward. Supervisor Glass and I sat in on International Economic Development Task Force. We had some great presentations about direct foreign investment, and a couple things came out. One that was very relative was the folks that presented said that the county leaders, chairs, mayors, supervisors are the best ambassadors for their

[02:28:55] district when it comes to international direct foreign investment. Madam Chair, thank you so much for bringing the elections documents back. We did learn in another session that one out of every five of registrars in elections, you know, county employees that run elections will be running an election for the first time ever this year, one in five. So I really appreciate your bringing that back and getting that to the electoral board and our leaders over there. At Healthy Counties Advisory Board, we talked about mapping. It was very, very

[02:29:35] interesting data and mapping discussion and how you can study the social determinants of health by mapping your county on certain topics. So it was fascinating. I just got an email from them with all the information if anyone else is interested. Very exciting. The child care needs assessment has kicked off and will be going until March 14th. So I would love it if my colleagues could share that information on their social media and in their newsletters so that we can get as much feedback as possible from the community. There'll be a survey and then

[02:30:10] there'll also be focus groups for the child care needs assessment. So that'll be going on through March 14th, so very excited about that. I think I made all of my comments about the catastrophic

explosion in my district on Friday, but I did want to share one thing about Firefighter Brown that Sterling Volunteer Fire Company Chief David Short said, and this is a quote about Firefighter Brown. He said he was a great guy. He was one of those middle guys in the company that you depend on, day in and day out, and he delivered. His loss is going to be felt by the entire company and the

[02:30:49] community, and I think just our discussion tonight bears that out, and I know that the community is responding and will continue to do that. Madam Chair, gun violence from the Gun Violence Archive, in 2024, only just beginning, we have already had 55 mass shootings. There have been 2,214 gun deaths.

[02:31:09] The deaths include 34 children under the age of 11, 167 teens, ages 12 to 17. I think that's all I have. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you. Which committee was that, Ms. Bricksman, that you said talked about the importance of local elected officials and international economic activities?

[02:31:29] That was the women of NACO. That was the women of NACO. Yeah, it was a presenter at WAN. Okay. All right. I'd like to see that. Yeah. Thank you. Thanks. Okay. So I was going to share some information on, because it's still Black History Month, I was going to share some information on black, some stats on the progress in some areas and the severe lack of progress in other areas for African Americans in this country.

[02:31:58] But we've been focused on other things, obviously, this weekend. And so although next month, I think, is Women's History Month, I will be bringing some of those stats and some of the information next week because they were very, very concerning, especially, and I know there's been some discussions about this, the maternal death rate for women of color, but especially African-American women, how much more we die in childbirth or right after childbirth and the the reasons for it are completely preventative so i'll talk about that a little bit more next week i want to i do want to

[02:32:36] say that on february 25th the loudon county chapter of the jack and jill is having the black history month program a journey to freedom heritage tour it might be getting close to being sold out it's at 2 o'clock at the Douglas Community Center, and so if you haven't got tickets for that, you might want to do that because I think it is getting close to being sold out.

[02:32:58] I have planned on going to that, but I cannot after all because I have been invited to go listen to one of the Little Rock Nine speak, the Little Rock Nine, one of them, well, Little Rock Nine was the nine African-American, at that time, high school students who integrated Central High School in 1954, so to be able to listen to one of them speak about that experience is like a once-in-a-lifetime event, so I'll be doing that, but I do encourage everyone else to go to the other event. I also encourage people to, you know, to maybe just, if, you know,

[02:33:37] if you don't, if there's something about black history you might not know, just go to some research. I have a list of black inventors, and it was just amazing and interesting that all the things that African Americans have invented, you know, I mean, the stoplight, right? Benjamin Banneker has invented the stoplight. It was just amazing. So, you know, during this month, when, you know, when it's Women's History Month, we focus on those things. And, you know, when it's Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we go find something about breast cancer awareness. And there's no

[02:34:10] reason at all that people should not kind of kind of urge um others and and um to you for yourself go find out more about black history because black history is not always incorporated in

american history and i keep saying that i would be i would be fine when we don't need black history month anymore because that would mean that black history is talked about as part of american history and Right now, it's not, and until that day, we will still discuss Black History Month in this country.

[02:34:40] I also want to say that I had two disclosures. On 1220, my staff met with Dominion Energy on the Wishing Star. I'm sorry, on 220, not 1220.

[02:34:57] No, no, on 28 and 220, which is today. They met on the Wishing Star substation from Dominion Energy, with Dominion Energy. And I'd like to take a point of personal privilege, and I will send this to her, and say happy birthday to my older sister, Robin.

[02:35:14] I am horrible about remembering birthdays. There's so many people in my family that I just forget them, because there's just so many of us. And one time I wished Robin happy birthday in, like, August.

[02:35:29] And she said, is this belated or is this in advance? And I'm like, whichever one works for you. So today I actually remembered that this is my sister Robin's birthday. I love you very much and happy birthday to you. I think that might be everything.

[02:35:48] Amazing. At 630, we are adjourned.



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