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Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Budget Public Hearing (Session II), Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Date Wednesday, February 28, 2024
Place Board Room, First Floor, Government Center, 1 Harrison Street SE, Leesburg, Virginia
Length 26m (video)

- Official meeting video (county, Granicus): <https://loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7605>
- Agenda (Granicus): https://loudoun.granicus.com/AgendaViewer.php?view_id=73&clip_id=7605

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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.

[00:09:31] We are waiting for Mr. Turner, who was stuck in traffic, he said he'd like to be here for the public hearing, so we're just going to wait about three minutes before we start. Thanks.

[00:11:06] Well, we're going to go in and start because hopefully everyone who's coming will be here soon,

[00:14:35] but I don't really want to hold us up. So I'm going to call to order the 6 o'clock, Friday, February 28, 2004, Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Budget Public Hearing. This room has a hearing loop. I'm going to ask Mr. Kirster and Ms. Umstad to please stop talking while we do this.

[00:14:53] If you need hearing assistance, please put your hearing aid to the telecall mode. If you need a headset, we have those available as well. Please see the clerk to request one. This public hearing is to allow members of the public who would like to address the board on the proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025, The fiscal 2025 proposed budget and the proposed tax rates on the real and personal property for tax years 2024 beginning January 1, 2024, and then January 31, 2024.

[00:15:34] There are three sessions for public hearing. This is our second session on the proposed budget. If you'd like to speak, you may speak, but only at one of the three sessions. If you've not already done so

and you want to speak at this session, please see the clerk to my left to sign up to speak.

[00:15:51] If you've signed up, you're going to be allotted at two and a half minutes, so I don't do anything different in these public hearings as we do in regular public comments during board meetings. When your name is called, please come to the podium closest to you. State your name, and if you don't mind, let me know if you live in the county. The timer on the podium will indicate your remaining time, and when your time is expired, please yell at the floor to the next speaker.

[00:16:14] If you're providing your comments by phone, I'm going to ask that you keep your own time because you're not going to be able to see your timer in the room. And if I stop you while you're doing, while you're giving comments, you could lose your flow. And so I'll stop you at the end of the comments, but I won't stop you while you're commenting.

[00:16:31] So please, if you don't mind, keep your own time. When taking public comments, I will first ask for everyone in the room, and then I will ask for anyone who is on the web or here virtually. and we have one virtual speaker today, some board members cannot attend.

[00:16:48] If they are not able to be here, they have committed to review the recordings of the public hearing and to listen to the public comments on the budget. So we're going to go on. Do I have any more speakers down there that have signed up?

[00:17:04] No? Okay. Then we literally only have three speakers? Okay. So we have three speakers, two in person, and one is online. The two in person are Amy McKinney and Christy Helsinki, and one online is Stacey McVison, McVison online.

[00:17:23] So I'll go and call Amy, Ms. McKinney. Ready when you are, ma'am. Good afternoon. I guess it's actually now it is evening. I'm graduated to this country with nothing more than dreams and determination.

[00:17:59] Growing up in a family that often struggled financially, I witnessed firsthand the challenges of living paycheck to paycheck. I stand here today as living proof that with the right support and resources, anyone can overcome adversity and achieve their dreams. Unfortunately, not every child in our Loudoun community is as fortunate as I was. Many are growing up in unsafe and unstable environments facing hunger, neglect, and abuse. Tonight, I bring forth three critical initiatives for family services funding. Number one, right-sizing the public benefits team. By creating

[00:18:38] a dedicated team with reduced caseloads, we aim to align Loudoun County with other localities, ensuring more effective support for those in need. Loudoun County continues to have the worst caseload ratio in Virginia at around 1,342 cases per worker compared to the 500 to 850 for other localities, which is obviously simply not acceptable. Number two, increasing the CPS team.

[00:19:06] Adding additional 11 positions to meet professional practice ratios will enhance our ability to investigate cases promptly, providing essential protection for our most vulnerable population. The demand for these services far outweighs their capacity to respond effectively.

[00:19:26] And thirdly, funding for the Quality Data and Compliance Unit. By investing in this unit, we improve service levels while ensuring fiscal accountability and future funding awards. Investing in these initiatives means investing in the future of our Loudoun community.

[00:19:45] It means investing in the safety and well-being of our children, the most precious resources we have. It also means breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect and giving every child the opportunity to thrive. Having experienced firsthand the transformative power of support and opportunity, I urge you to prioritize these funding requests.

[00:20:06] Let us ensure that every child in our community has the opportunity to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment. Let us be their voice. Thank you. Thank you. And I don't normally do this when it's a public speaking time, but I'm just a little, little confused, and I need to know.

[00:20:23] And Ms. Fernandez, I see you're here. I may need to call you tomorrow just to do some follow-up questions to this public comment. Are you saying that the case managers or CPS have that caseload? Because you mentioned CPS, and then you mentioned caseloads, and I was a little confused as to what you mentioned both.

[00:20:44] Can you help me understand what you just said? Sure, Ina, I might make your help with this, but what I saw in the budget and what I was provided is that the caseload ratio is at about 1,342 cases per worker. Am I right?

[00:21:01] Public benefits. Oh, okay, okay, thank you, thank you. Okay, okay. My first point, number one, is right-sizing public benefits. Okay, it's public benefits. Okay, I understand. And I get what you're saying, but that just didn't make any sense to me at all. I got you. I understand. I'm fine. I may call you anyway, Ms. Fernandez, but I understand what you're saying to me now. Okay. Thank you. You're welcome. Thank you. Chrissy Helsinki. Good

[00:21:34] evening. Good evening. I'm Chrissy Helinski, but that's okay. Sorry. I think that autocorrect always autocorrects it to Helsinki because I get that forever. That's okay. That's okay. But thank you. And I am no longer a constituent. I had to move out of the county last year. So I'm Chrissy Helensky, and I'm an employment specialist in mental health, substance abuse, and developmental services. And I'm excited to speak to you tonight as a proud founding member of the Loudoun chapter of SEIU Virginia 512, and not on behalf of the county. For the last 30 years, I've had the

[00:22:13] privilege of helping Loudoun residents with disabilities find, learn, and keep their jobs in the local community. It's rewarding helping others learn and grow while becoming more self-sufficient. The budget proposal is heartening. I appreciate all the board's work to hear and incorporate the priorities of the community and its workforce tasked with serving them.

[00:22:33] I ask you to keep the 5% salary scale adjustment and the 7% merit increase to equitably compensate Loudon's workforce. I stand with our brothers and sisters in the new Virginia majority and ask that you double the amount of money budgeted in this proposal for affordable housing. I further ask that you increase the staff in the Department of Housing to address this, as well as fund rent relief for tenants making 40 percent of the area's median income. And I stand with ATU urging you to bolster transportation for Loudoun residents by ending outside contracts for the transit system,

[00:23:10] thus providing a more efficient, seamless, and user-friendly bus service. As highlighted by the LEA, fully funding the education budget as an investment in strengthening the future of the county. And lastly, we're excited to bargain our first contract just as our fellow employees in the IAFF are now leading and paving the way for exemplary services and high-performing employees to make Loudon one of the best places to live and work. Thank you for your consideration. Thank you very much.

[00:23:38] Thank you. And then we have one person who is on the WebEx, and that is Stacey me visiting. Ready when she is. Good evening. I hope each of you are doing well. My name is Stacey Mewson. I'm a planner in the Department of Planning and Zoning, and I'm speaking with you tonight as an SEIU 12 board member, not on behalf of the county. I don't have the privilege of living in Loudoun County. I'm just an employee at this point, but I hope to one day be able to

[00:24:13] afford living in the county. To begin, I would like to extend a big thank you to each supervisor who went out of their way to help us jump through the hoops and hurdles to get to our election. It was a busy time for each of the election and holidays, but you really showed up when we needed you. And thank you very much for living up to your word. The budget proposal has been well received and celebrated across the county. We appreciate your generosity and ask that you keep the 5% salary scale adjustment and the 7% merit increase. Your recognition of our hard work that

[00:24:49] we do in Loudoun County, it's humbling. Side note, could we get that in July instead of October? We also ask that you extend the same financial recognition to the new Virginia majority in our mission to provide affordable housing and also to ATU by ending the outside contracts for the transit system and keeping it local instead. 2024 is going to be a year for SEIU 512 as we get the chance to bargain our first contract and we look forward to doing so in good faith thank you again

[00:25:25] and have a wonderful evening well thank you i appreciate it very much um any more speakers have signed up okay uh supervisors our last um public comment section uh public comment time will be saturday we will be in in this building not this not not the school like we have done in the past but we'll be in this building and help me out we start at nine o'clock correct so at nine o'clock. All right, until nine o'clock on Saturday morning, we are adjourned. Thank you.



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