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Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, FY25 Budget Work Session, Monday, March 11, 2024

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Place Board Room, First Floor, Government Center, 1 Harrison Street SE, Leesburg, Virginia
Length 3h 33m (video)

- Official meeting video (county, Granicus): <https://loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7623>
- Agenda (Granicus): https://loudoun.granicus.com/AgendaViewer.php?view_id=73&clip_id=7623

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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.

[00:07:18] All right, Amanda, let's do it, ma'am. Oh, I guess we're doing it already. Well, good evening, supervisors. Good evening, staff. Good evening, Loudon. I'd like to call the order the March 11, 2024, Loudon County Board Supervisors Public Hearing Budget Work Session.

[00:07:37] No, Budget Work Session, not Public Hearing, Budget Work Session. Board members, I'm going to once again stress the importance of the Budget Work Session as the time to offer changes, additions, and deletions to the budget. You should try to offer amendments and vote in a way that you're going to support when we get to the end.

[00:07:56] If you have any questions during the work session, please make sure you talk to the staff so they can help you craft your motion or craft proposed budget priorities with staff. When we get to our final vote on April 2nd, staff will not have time to make large changes to the budget during the meeting, and the vote on the budget could be delayed.

[00:08:19] If there are substantive changes that were not discussed, vote it upon during the work sessions. Would everybody please join me for the Pledge of Allegiance. Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:08:46] I'm cold. Okay, so I'm going to just, before, I'm going to get to Ms. Burke in a second, But I'm also going to just change a few things around today.

[00:09:04] I'm going to have our county treasurer, Mr. Eichelberg, present first after we do the update from Ms. Burke, only because all the other constitutional offices went the other day.

[00:09:21] They've already done that. Mr. Eichelberg is an elected official. So it is my practice to have elected officials come first. And so unless he doesn't want to, because he looks awful shocked right now, unless he doesn't want to come first, I'm going to have Mr. Eichelberg present first today after we do the update.

[00:09:45] We have the update from Ms. Burke, and it's going to take a little bit longer than it may otherwise take, because there are some thoughts there. that the staff has had about this budget session. So Ms. Burke, I will hand it to you, ma'am.

[00:10:02] - Good evening, I will do a short presentation on the state revenue options for the Loudoun County Public Schools ahead of Thursday's work session. But just to recap your packet that went out on Friday, you have another installment of County Budget Responses as well as the Tote Board Transmittal.

[00:10:20] And just as a reminder, we'll show the Tote Board after this presentation, but the Tote Board currently sits at a real property tax rate of 87.5 cents. The board has reduced about \$968,000 out of the proposed budget. So turning to the presentation that's on your screens, Mr. Hemstreet and I wanted to provide some additional information about the budget that came out of the House and Senate over the weekend ahead of Thursday's budget work session on the topic of the Loudoun

[00:10:57] County Public Schools. As I said, the General Assembly adjourned over the weekend with a compromise House and Senate budget. Loudoun County Public Schools staff has estimated that there is an additional \$19 million of state revenue in the compromise budget. That is \$19 million of new state revenue with no associated required or mandatory expenditures. And so while we are happy to hear that that is the estimate from LCPS, we also have heard strong indications that the

[00:11:35] governor may not sign this budget. And so there are a few options that we want to talk through with the board this evening to provide staff a little bit more guidance of how best to prepare and support your deliberations on Thursday. Next slide. So again, we'd like to have a little bit of a discussion this evening so that we can assist providing written materials to you in your packet for Thursday's wrap-up.

[00:12:00] We have three options that we think are on the table that might warrant additional board member feedback as we go into Thursday. Next slide. So option one, we have some draft option titles.

[00:12:18] So excuse me that they are not refined at this point. But option one, we're calling expenditure status quo. So this option would assume, sorry, let me back up before I go into the options. So at issue currently is whether or not the state revenue actually will exist on July 1st.

[00:12:39] It does not appear that we will know the answer to that information on Thursday. It could be that we won't know that information when we get to budget adoption on April 2nd. And so we've developed some options for the board's consideration should we not have full information by the time you're asked to adopt the budget on April 2nd.

[00:13:01] The first option is that you can assume the state funding in the amount of \$19 million will materialize, And you could keep LCPS's expenditure budget the same, including the maintaining of the \$10

million gap, and reduce the local transfer by \$19 million.

[00:13:20] That would net the county on the tote board \$19 million that would be available to reduce the real property tax rate. Overall recommendation from county staff at this point, we would not recommend this option because should the funding not materialize, LCPS could end up with a \$29 million funding gap.

[00:13:43] That's the \$19 million that wouldn't materialize from the state and the existing \$10 million gap in their budget as it exists today, and the county would have to address that gap in some way. So option two would be splitting the risk between LCPS and the county.

[00:14:01] Again, this would assume that the funding will materialize. You could recognize the \$10 million in state revenue to address the funding gap on the LCPS side. Of course, if that funding doesn't materialize, the funding gap that exists today would continue.

[00:14:18] For the county, you could lower the transfer to LCPS by the remaining \$9 million, and you could program it or use it to lower the real property tax rate. If you program it, the funding, again, does not materialize. You would need to make a decision at that point to deprogram it or do something else.

[00:14:39] And, of course, lowering the real property tax rate, if the funding doesn't materialize, we would have to have another revenue option at that point as well. The third option is delay the decision until we know more from the state budget. This would mean we would assume the funding would not materialize.

[00:14:58] We continue with budget work sessions. We continue through budget adoption. And should we understand more information between budget adoption and the start of the fiscal year, the board could make a decision at that point. The downside of this option is that you would need to set the real property tax rate on April 2nd.

[00:15:17] And so if the revenue does materialize following budget adoption, you would not be able to lower the real property tax rate at that time. Say that again, please. Start with the words, the downside.

[00:15:33] The downside would be that you would not be able to make a decision on lowering the real property tax rate with full information at the time of budget adoption. And so if that is something the board would want to do, you would have to make that decision without the benefit of knowing what the state's going to do.

[00:15:56] Should that revenue materialize after you set the real property tax rate, you wouldn't be able to lower the rate after you adopt it. That funding would just materialize and fund balance at the end of the year. I believe that concludes my formal presentation, but I'd love to answer any questions that you have or walk through any details that were unclear.

[00:16:23] Okay. Okay. Supervisors, if you have questions, put your lights on, please. Ms. Um, stop. Thank you, Madam Chair. Megan, if we were to decide to lower the real property tax rate by a full penny, What would that do to our numbers vis-a-vis the school?

[00:16:45] We would still have the \$10 million gap. Your question is, what would happen if the board lowered the real property tax rate? By one penny, down to 86.5 cents. You would need to decide what expenditures you would want to cut from the budget if you want to spread that between the county or schools or do it all on the county side.

[00:17:09] How about all on the school side? So one penny is worth \$14.8 million, so that would be a funding gap of \$24.8 million for the schools. And what is 60% of the new revenue that we assumed a few

months ago we would be providing to the schools?

[00:17:36] 60% of the new local funding is \$121 million. That is 60%. Correct. Okay. And the schools are asking for that or for 131?

[00:17:52] 131. All right. Okay. Thank you. Mr. Sains. Thank you, Madam Chair. Ms. Burke, could we just wait until, what is it, after April 7th and then make our decision? You will need to set the real property tax rate by April 2nd.

[00:18:10] So we have to make it by April 2nd? You have to decide on the real property tax rate, correct? Is that by law or is it just part of our process? how we build. Yes. Let me ask another question then. Is there a possibility of us changing, because it's been, correct me wrong, a few times now in the last few years where we're kind of...

[00:18:32] It's coming a little closer to your face. You have to kind of wait and see with the state what they're going to do the last few years. Is there a way to possibly look at changing when we do our budget process to better align with when the state makes the determinations for their funding? Yes, we could look at that.

[00:18:50] We've thought through that calendar, and I think we would still not really gain a whole lot if we address the dates of our budget process, but ultimately that would affect the tax collection date and backing it up from there.

[00:19:08] So there are a few moving pieces to that discussion. Okay, because off the top of your head, if you know that information, when does Fairfax, Prince William County, Arlington, Alexander, when do they do their process? Fairfax is different because their first tax collection is in another fiscal year.

[00:19:26] So that is a very different process than Loudoun's. Prince William County. I don't know that off the top of my head. But this is information that we can gather and provide. Thank you. They're actually a little bit all different because of when their collection dates are.

[00:19:42] And even if they do two collections per year, as we do, a person can choose to do it once, but some localities just do one per year anyway. So they're fairly different. We go first. Ms. Glass.

[00:19:57] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the presentation. Could you do me a favor, and could you show me what option two was again? I think there might be an error on one of my slides, so I'm just trying to see which one it was.

[00:20:15] Yes. No, that was it. That was it. That was it. So does staff have a recommendation on what should be done?

[00:20:36] So. So it has to have a tree. I mean, so no, we, we don't because we really need to understand what, what, what does the board want to do? Right. Because, you know, the problem is we don't know where the state budget's going to end up. Right. And so we're not really clear on where the board wants to be with respect to the budget and the tax rate. So if, if you were to tell me tonight, what tax rate you want to be at And how much funding you want to provide to the schools and approximately what you're willing to do with the county side of the budget?

[00:21:13] I could answer that question for you. I could give you a recommendation as to how to get there. The challenge is we're not really sure where the board wants to be. So that's why we kind of gave you three options. One, option one, that focuses solely on reducing the tax rate, right?

[00:21:31] But the risk there is all on the school side where you could end up with the schools being at close to a \$30 million gap. versus what they requested we're not going to recommend that we can't recommend that to you right because there's no way for them to make that up and that's a pretty significant reduction to their request so we would be somewhere between option two and option three depending on where the board wants to end up so on option two the one thing that i think miss burke was referring to is order to split the risk on the bottom that nine million dollars if you lower the local transfer, you would need to provide that back to LCPS. Otherwise, LCPS

[00:22:09] would have a \$19 million shortfall, right, if the money didn't materialize. There's also the possibility, however, that a portion of the money materializes, right? So we haven't considered that scenario because we have no idea what the governor is going to do with the budget he's received.

[00:22:25] And then we have no idea what the General Assembly is going to do in reaction to whatever the governor does. So we're treating this as either the money materializes or the money doesn't materialize obviously if some money materializes you're in a little bit better shape the only issue is the board is in a position of having to adopt its tax rate before you will know the answer of what the state is going to do so option three kind of sidesteps all that and says you finish your budget deliberations and then if the money materializes you figure out what you're going to do with those funds after you know what the state is going to do thank you mr kirschner thank you

[00:23:04] madam chair i'm megan so i just want to make sure i understand this under our current base budget as has been has been prepared by the by staff and administrator we on a 60 40 split currently the school is going to be receiving around 120 million dollars is that correct 121 million 21 i'm going to round a little bit but yes thank you for that that's perfect all right so what did what did they receive last year do you recollect my recollection was around 70 or 80 but i don't remember exactly but i have my budget document up there someone can someone can find that all right so following up with the actual scenario that we going we're going on right now that is a approximately a nine

[00:23:43] million dollar shortfall from what they are requesting the current base budget is that right almost 10 yes almost 10 okay let's just call it 10 just to be just to be clear they were hoping to get that from the state we don't know where where we are at the state at this point but right now the current budget before the governor which we don't know what's going to happen i'm just making sure I understand this, is \$19 million could potentially be there. Yes. Okay. Do we know if the governor could line item? I know Mr. Hemstreet referred to, he could line item stuff, it could go back. We don't know exactly what it's going to be. Do we, when they say he may veto,

[00:24:22] does that veto the whole thing, line item summit? Does anyone, can anyone answer that as to what? He can line item veto or veto the entire budget. Okay. So there's a lot unknown. And the question is okay so for what it's worth i know we'll have these discussions further i feel like we just need to stick to our process and maybe where the chips fall they fall in hopes that the the necessary funding because i think we knew up here i'm just kind of talking i think we kind of knew up here that we were going to have this 10 million shortfall but i'd kind of like to know what we did

[00:25:00] last year because i know that the student population has pretty much been flat if you compare it with the 2019 numbers so obviously we've had inflation since then but that's it's a pretty big hike if we were only at, my recollection, was \$70 million. But anyway, just a thought.

[00:25:15] Thank you very much. Thank you. I might be able to respond to some of that stuff to the General Assembly in just a sec. Yeah, okay. Ms. Bricksman. Thank you, Madam Chair. Ms. Bork, it was my understanding that the governor can change language in the budget but cannot line item veto.

[00:25:39] I guess John Freeman's not here. I think I might be able to help with this a little bit. Go ahead. So this actually, the J-LARC money is all involved, it's an omnibus bill, right? And so there were different parts that went in to create the money that they're talking about.

[00:26:00] So in an omnibus, I believe you can pull some parts out of the omnibus bill that was put in. So when Mr. Hemstreet talked about we may get some of it, not all of it, that's the more likely thing because it's an omnibus bill. Okay.

[00:26:16] And the omnibus bill is in the budget. The omnibus bill is in the budget. Got it. Okay. Which means many, well, you know what omnibus means. Yes. Sorry. Thank you. Is there a deadline for the governor to make his decision? Because I know some bills that went forward were, quote, unquote, seven-day bills, and he either had to sign them or not sign them.

[00:26:37] Is there anything like that with the budget? I believe he has until April 8th to sign, veto, or amend the budget. Oh, yes, until April 8th. Okay. And then the General Assembly session to consider whatever he asked for amendments is April 17th.

[00:26:56] Right. And so you'd have to get past that, and then the governor has time to react to whatever the General Assembly does. Okay. So there's just no, I mean, you're not going to have to make a decision.

[00:27:18] In option number two, in that case, if the money does not materialize, in option number two, and say we lowered our tax rate by half a cent because we are expecting \$9 million to come, in option number two, if the money does not materialize, the schools will only have a \$10 million gap, correct? That would be a \$19 million gap. That's where the error is in the slide.

[00:27:42] That's right. That's right. Why would the schools have a \$19 million gap if we're going to use \$9 million to lower our tax rate? Because that \$9 million wouldn't have materialized from the state. Well, if we do a 60-40 split with \$19 million, the schools would get \$11 million. No, this is money coming from the states? No, I know it is. I'm just saying, theoretically, we usually do a 60-40 split.

[00:28:10] So that should cover the \$10 million gap. No, the board does a split on new local tax. I know I know that's what we do, but I'm saying theoretically we could do the same with the 19 million. No, theoretically. No, because the revenue is for the state from the state for the school.

[00:28:26] So 100 percent of that revenue goes to the schools. So so the board has to make a decision as to what to do with that money that is coming from the Commonwealth for the schools. We're just a pass through. Correct. OK, I'm sorry. I thought you said earlier there's no. So option number two is assuming the money comes.

[00:28:45] right and so you would give them the first 10 million which closes their gap and then you're going to take the other 9 million to reduce the transfer which gives them keeps their budget whole that 9 million dollars if the 19 million doesn't materialize remember we've lowered their transfer by 9 million plus the 10 million okay because we're counting on them getting 19 million in revenue directly from the commonwealth so we have to give that back to them to keep them whole in that case which is option two that's the risk i don't know that we have a choice other than option

[00:29:21] three then yeah i i think it's normally i'm pretty good about these tea leaves these general assembly tea leaves but this session has been so all over the place and there's um there are feelings involved right in this session that really there are and so you know the in early on the governor actually, the J-LARC money, the J-LARC omnibus bill came out of the Senate really pretty early on

[00:30:00] in the session, before it got a little bit more muddy. And there was no, there was nothing but support for the J-LARC bill. So, I mean, they're going to come out with, they're going to come with something, obviously, more than they, I think, they're going to come with something.

[00:30:18] But I think we just have no way of knowing what that something's going to be. There's no way. And And so, you know, I think it's a little more dangerous to assume that that money is going to materialize. I just don't see that. I don't think it's wise to make that assumption.

[00:30:37] So option three might have to be what we do right now. Now, given that we did option three, if the money did materialize, that all goes to fund balance? The reason I said that is because you would have set your real property tax rate at a rate that you wouldn't have you would collect yeah but we none of that none even so the rates that i get that none of that can pass through us to this to to lcps i mean they they would have done their reconciliation but do they not also have a fund balance that they can use for things

[00:31:16] so what would happen is it depends on when that we understand when that decision is made okay so the issue is do you have to approve your tax rate by april 2nd right so let's say that the the that the General Assembly and the Governor come to agreement on May 15th. Yeah, let's say that. Okay, so if that occurs you could still go back and amend your budget for FY25 and amend the school budget for FY25.

[00:31:43] So at that point, for example, you could go ahead and give them the extra \$10 million for their budget that closes their gap and then take the \$9 million that's in addition and then program it for additional needs in the county budget. So you can amend your budget going into FY25 you have until I we can't if after that after that date is passed if money were to come through we cannot give the school we can't pass this on to LCPS and then they put it in there after they would have done the reconciliation already

[00:32:19] they can't put it in their fund balance for any uses it has to sit so any additional money that is coming from the Commonwealth is going to go to the school okay to school So they have to spend that money. What would happen is anything that is unspent comes back to the county.

[00:32:37] So if there's money that you have spent. Okay, gotcha. So what our recommendation would be is if that comes through is that you make adjustments to the FY25 budget once you understand what revenue is coming from the state. I think what Ms. Burke is saying in this slide, correct me if I'm wrong, is it's too late, though, to change your tax rates.

[00:32:59] You're already going to have adopted your tax rate. And then whatever money comes from the Commonwealth will be new revenue, but it's additional money to address whatever needs were unmet at the time you adopted the budget. I think we all have points of clarification up here.

[00:33:19] How about this? How about we, over the next couple of days, talk to staff offline and try to get some of these questions answered? And then maybe by Thursday, we might have some clarity. Well, not clarity, but some more indication of what maybe could happen.

[00:33:34] Because today was a bad day. There was all kind of stuff going on with them today. So maybe by Thursday. So why don't we just hold our questions, kind of have staff talk to us individually, and then we'll see where we're at on Thursday. How does that sound? Okay. That sounds good to everybody. All right.

[00:33:50] Well, thank you for trying to figure something out because this is just a good hot mess. But we appreciate you, ma'am. All right. Let's get started. Mr. Eichelberg, do you mind going first?

[00:34:07] you don't have to excuse me excuse me i'm sorry she's allergic to me i am not you though sir okay mr eichelberg your budget your description of your resources are on page r27 through r28

[00:34:40] and your budget narrative is on page i54 and we are ready whenever you are sir thank you madam chair and vice chair and members of the board of supervisors my name is henry eichelberg and i am the new roger zern um roger left after 28 years of service i was thinking of changing my name to roger zern the third but i thought the better of it um i appreciate being able to go first although i have to say there was some attractiveness uh being the last group uh standing

[00:35:18] between you and your cars to get home for the evening, but anyways, we are asking for two additional employees for this upcoming budget year. It is important to remember that the Treasurer's Office doesn't take any local tax funding. Our funding comes out of the earnings that we have from the money that we invest, and I'm certainly happy to talk about that tonight.

[00:35:51] um i've had a chance to sit down and speak with each of you i am very interested in making sure the treasurer's office supports your offices as well as all of the great towns that we have in our county and i've had a chance to speak with with leesburg with the lives library people and i'm looking forward to getting that as well as with the school board so if there's anything i can do or my staff can do to try to make sure that you have the information you need to make

[00:36:26] good policy decisions, we certainly want to do it. Would you like to talk about your two priorities? We've got two priorities. One is to help us with tax refunds, and another one is for cash management specialists. That would bring, I believe, our total headcount up to 58 people.

[00:36:50] Okay. All right. Anything else? Supervisors, if you have questions for the treasurer's office, please put your lights on. Mr. Turner.

[00:37:06] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Commissioner. Appreciate it. Welcome to the fray. Thank you. The only question I had was, I thought the justification for the cash management specialist was a little thin. Can you add some more context to that? So we're going to be managing through more turbulent times, and so we want to make sure that we've got somebody that is helping us do that.

[00:37:32] Right now we have 19 different institutions that we use on the banking side, and so we're finding that there's a lot more problems out at least in the mid-market banking area, So we want to make sure that we've got a full complement of people to make sure that we can research those people.

[00:37:54] I don't know if you guys want to add anything. Dane. My friend Dane. I'm Dane Sullivan, the investment officer, and it's my team requesting the position. Dane, move your mic a little bit closer to you, sir.

[00:38:09] Sure. So it's my team requesting the position. We're a fairly lean staff. It comprises of myself, an investment analyst, a banking specialist, and one cash management specialist. As the county grows, the transactions both in and out of the bank accounts grow as well.

[00:38:27] It's really just to take some responsibilities off the plate, particularly on the investment analyst, allow them to focus more on the investment side of things and the research, while having the banking focus be on the banking specialist and the two cash management specialists.

[00:38:43] Thank you. Appreciate it. Mr. Crony thank you good evening so I have a question about your second request your second priority the tax administration assistant how many do you currently have in your department in your office we currently have a supervisor one senior tax administration specialist and then four other tax administration specialists which oversee I think last calendar year seventy

[00:39:19] seven seventy five to seventy seven thousand refunds alone okay yeah and we it's really important I think to understand that like if you return something at the mall they give you your money back right away you give them the product they refund it we're frankly not quite that nice so we want to make sure sure that if there is an overpayment, that there aren't other balances due in other parcels or other areas of your account that we would then use to offset. I mean, that's frankly how this

[00:39:58] office has achieved for a very long time, a near perfect collection rate is because of the prudence that Roger put in place and all really all aspects of running the office. Do you, I saw that you were launching a payment portal. Is that new, the payment portal? It will be rolling out this fall. That is an initiative that Roger started with his team last fall. We do live within the county. I want to be very clear about that. We live within the county. The IT support that we get

[00:40:37] from Mr. Hemstreet and his team is really important to us. We may have our own personal computer, but it hooks up to the county's network. So we've got to work that system into the county IT structure, and then we plan on rolling it out to departments in order to make a lot easier and seamless process for people to pay their bills. Okay. Do you think you'll have a need for less staff once that's launched because it'll become more automated and easier to pay bills?

[00:41:14] We got a pretty high collection rate on there now. I'm Bonnie Brown. I'm Chief Deputy. No, I don't think so. Because the thing is, is that we're finding out every year more and more people are hitting the website, but also it's causing more and more refunds that are coming into the system and more money moves that come in.

[00:41:40] It's the growth of the county, so you can't help the growth of the county. So every time more and more people come to the count, we have more and more transactions, regardless if it's online or in person. So those are causing the increases.

[00:41:56] Okay, thank you. I mean, obviously, we're very sensitive to it. I think Roger, you know, I'm on the job, what, two, two months. Roger was on the job for a long time, and his, I think he was pretty miserly about his head count, and I would anticipate that that will continue.

[00:42:17] thank you he was proud of that actually he's proud of being miserly he was anybody else well i think that mr zern did a good job i think you're picking up that mantle and going to do a good job i don't know about dane i'm not sure what we're going to do with that dane's good i don't know about that he lives in maryland but he's we don't hold that that's one of the problems going on there yeah so does anybody have a motion on the day as for the treasurer's office seeing none thank you guys so much all right you. Thank you. Thank you. We're going to go to the clerk's office. Ms. McClellan, would you come

[00:42:55] to the table? The clerk's office is on page. Description of resource requests is R12 through R14. The budget narrative is 1-10. Well, good evening. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board. This

evening, I'm here to present the budget request for the office of the county

[00:43:35] administrator, specifically the clerk's office. As you'll note in the budget document, each office within the overall budget of the county administrator's office is presented separately each office is unique has a unique mission and role in the organization and function in many ways as separate departments so we'll present our request to you separately our first office with request is the clerk's office function which encompasses the deputy clerk to the board and her staff as well as project managers and this function reports

[00:44:11] directly to the assistant county administrator. The primary mission of this team is to support the board and planning commission's public-facing processes. That's meeting preparation, in-meeting support, after-meeting support, as well as public input. Additionally, this team is responsible for managing the county's Freedom of Information Act, or FOIA, function. And as you know, well, this is a very active, very heavy workload for the FOIA function. In order to continue our high level of service in these areas, especially as it pertains to supporting the planning commission's processes,

[00:44:48] which feed directly into the board's public process, we're requesting two full-time and two part-time positions. Each of these positions mirror existing resources in the office, so it's more of the same resources that will go directly to managing the workload associated with multiple public meetings each week the production of thousands of pages that support those public meetings and then timely requests to FOIA many requests from the public every day and again the clerk's office is on R12 to R14 and Ms. Grimm and I can answer any questions you have thank you

[00:45:27] very much supervisors if you have questions put your lights on please out of administration county administration yeah yeah um mr saint thank you madam chair uh just quick inquiry notice uh for the you're asking for two part-time clerks i guess is it for those positions on the side so those clerks um their primary function is to support the electronic public input that we now do for all of our board meetings um public hearings and the planning commission but they

[00:46:04] also backfill and serve lots of other functions within the clerk's office so they give us more capacity and depth for the clerks as you know a good majority of the clerk's work is done after hours for night meetings and things of that nature so it helps give us bench strength so that we don't have the same people working every night and how many part-time clerks do we have currently now we currently have two two so we're gonna so a total of four okay and you don't feel it's better or just have full-timers instead?

[00:46:33] So we have found that the two part-timers that we have have provided us tremendous flexibility. We were actually able to find individuals who really like having the flexible hours, and so we can use them as we need to supplement the clerk's office.

[00:46:50] So it's worked out really well. So we feel it's a proven strategy, so we want to just add more of those to have some greater depth. Okay, thank you. Mr. Crony. Yeah, thank you, Chair Randall, and thanks, Erin. So I know you guys work really hard.

[00:47:06] We all know that up here, and I thank you for that. And my question is, I saw the project manager will focus on the community development functional area. What exactly is that? So the office currently supports all of the boards, public meetings, committee meetings, all of those, but we also support the planning commission's public process.

[00:47:30] And so we have found that dedicated support to the planning commission's process improves the timeliness and quality of their packets, which improves their process, which directly feeds into a more productive process for the board when things come to you.

[00:47:48] I would say in addition, since the board has adopted the new general plan and has a new zoning ordinance and has committed to updating those documents, we do anticipate greater support needed for all of the special processes that will go into continually updating those documents.

[00:48:07] So we'd like to dedicate some staff to that process. We already have one clerk that works exclusively with them, and this would be an addition. okay so um does the planning commission provide any support um with their staff or not the planning commission planning and zoning department providing to the planning the planning and zoning department provides the staff support for the for the content of those items the clerk's office is responsible for the meeting support and all of the things that go into providing the

[00:48:39] meetings thank you um so does does the clerk's office do four years for every department in the county or just county admin or the clerk's office handles foyers for any department and agency within the county even even um election the election or elections department elections and voter registration they do for you for that yes they can the agency sometimes handle some things directly but the clerk's office can handle anything across the county yeah no we definitely

[00:49:13] need assistance with that then because the the number of foyers that you know i won't even talk about all the things, but to come into the voter registration office, it almost stops the work sometimes. My other question is, so I have long believed and continue to believe that we don't use our advisory boards effectively.

[00:49:39] We have amazing people who have volunteered to work on all of our commissions, committees, and boards. One reason I don't do more with them, the advisory boards, or ask them to do more is because I know that it is a strain on county staff to do more with them because somebody has to staff them and all those types of things.

[00:49:56] Would any of these additions, and no matter what, I'm going to support this request, but would these help with the advisory boards at all? Because I think we could use those boards a lot more effectively. Thanks for the question, Madam Chair.

[00:50:13] The direct staff support for the advisory bodies generally comes from the department that is responsible for that advisory body, the programmatic department that it's matched with. The support that the clerk's office provides is in keeping up with the nominations and that process for the board to actually appoint folks, and then also helping to maintain our system that tracks all of the bylaws, all of the members, and things of that nature. But generally, the clerk's office doesn't provide direct support for the meetings of those advisory bodies that's generally

[00:50:53] from the advisory body the agency that's matched with that advisory body okay that makes sense i like to have maybe later on another discussion about that because again i think that you know we we have professionals in their fields that we put in the advisory bodies that we could i i i think we could learn a lot from them and use them use them a lot more but i never want to add more work to the staff. So I'm always kind of in a quandary of how to do that. And I'd like to have that discussion a little bit more at another time. So thank you very much. Supervisors, is there a motion

[00:51:24] on the dais? Seeing none. Thanks a lot. Appreciate it. All right. Speaking of elections and voter registration, the two most popular people, I think, in county staff sometime, can they come to the table uh judy and ricky your description of resource request is on page r20 through r21 and your budget narrative is i 20 is 122 good evening good evening you're ready when you are

[00:52:04] all right good evening madam chair and members of the board um tonight i have with me the deputy director of elections uh ricky keach for the next fiscal year we have um two resource requests an assistant registrar and voter services specialist. These can be found in your budget book on pages R20 and R21. Over the past several years, there have been many legislative changes that have directly impacted the workload in our office. One of the largest of those changes has been the implementation of no excuse early and mail voting and a permanent mail option in 2020. This change

[00:52:39] shifted a sizable number of voters from voting at precincts on election day to voting in person at one of our four early voting locations or voting by mail. For the March presidential primary last week, our office mailed approximately 16,000 ballots to voters and 8,600 were returned voted.

[00:52:58] During the March 2020 presidential primary, the office mailed approximately 4,000 ballots and 2,000 were returned. Early voting has seen sizable increases as well. During the 45 days of early voting. Proceeding last week's primary, we saw almost 4,000 voters across four early voting sites. In March of 2020, that number was 1,239 voters at only one site. This equates to an approximately 300% increase in both early and mail voting during last week's primary compared to March of 2020. During the general election last November, both early and mail voting saw increases of

[00:53:37] about 500% compared to 2019. Additionally, as the county grows, more resources are required to ensure that the voter rolls are accurate. Over the past year, some of the list maintenance functions have changed and now require more time by office staff to process. These trends are expected to continue. The assistant registrar position will add an additional assistant registrar to our existing team of two. These positions focus primarily on customer service list maintenance and voter registration, and the addition of this position will help to ensure that the office is able to maintain both the standard that Latin voters have come to expect

[00:54:14] as well as meeting all statutory requirements regarding the timely processing of applications. The work of our two existing assistant registrars is currently being supported by other staff in the office and temporary assistant registrars brought in as needed, but as the workload has increased throughout the office, other staff has less time to assist with the basic voter registration functions. Therefore, I believe the time has come for an additional permanent position in this role. The voter services specialist will assist the voter services manager with the logistics involving running four early voting sites. This position will be responsible for

[00:54:51] recruiting and scheduling election officers to work early voting sites, preparing supplies and paperwork needed, and assisting with oversight of the sites while they are operational. For the March 2024 early voting period, approximately 60 election officers were scheduled to work at the four sites during the 45 days preceding the primary that the office was opened and the eight days prior to the primary that the other three sites were open. During a typical year with two elections, the office is open for early voting for a total of 90 days. Communication and scheduling typically begins about 60 days prior to early voting starting, which means that the office is

[00:55:29] either preparing for or operating early voting seven months out of the year now. It is expected that the interest in early voting will only continue to increase which will likely lead to an increase in location and hours going forward. The primary was last Tuesday and on Thursday morning our office began communicating with election officers to work early voting for the June primary which starts on May the 3rd. When not assisting with the management of early voting sites, the voter services specialist will assist with other areas in the voter services division, including candidate qualification, campaign finance, voter registration, and mail voting.

[00:56:07] I thank you for your time and welcome your questions. Those were absolutely amazing numbers. Thank you. Thank you all. All right, supervisors, if you have numbers, put your lights on, please. Okay, Ms. Bricksman. Okay.

[00:56:23] I guess it's just me. I'm happy to support your requests. I know that you guys have been really trying to catch up with the early voting that's been happening. Do you, how has it been going in your office with the Freedom of Information Act requests?

[00:56:42] Have those calmed down at all? Yes. Knock on wood. For a while. Yeah, they've calmed down. I would, I mean, we peaked, obviously, and I think it was 2021 when we had 250 over the course of 60 days.

[00:56:59] But yes, in general, I would say they've calmed considerably. And we do certainly thank county administration. The clerk's office is incredibly helpful when it comes to that. Excellent. Thank you. How is the analysis going for, I think we were looking at additional sites for the June primary for early voting and for the presidential election in November.

[00:57:24] I feel like you guys were doing some kind of analysis or study so that we can balance things out. The board had asked county admin in our office to look at options in Western Loudoun. I can tell you that Judy and I have toured numerous facilities in and around Percival.

[00:57:41] Unfortunately, I believe, as we all know, there's a very, there's a lack of publicly owned buildings out that way. My understanding is that there is currently some movement among the electoral board to potentially keep it at Carver because that worked out.

[00:57:59] During the week preceding the March primary, 359 people voted at Carver over the eight days, seven days we were open. So we do believe that that may be a viable option depending on working with Parks and Rec.

[00:58:15] Okay. And were we not also looking for another location, one or two in Eastern Loudoun, to have early voting for the full 45 days? I think we were talking about maybe Dulles and the Sterling area. We've not gotten there yet. Okay.

[00:58:30] um so yeah you want to talk about that but we're back to our normal at least what we had yes okay okay great and um i think there was some concern that the electoral board had not um uh written or approved bylaws for the electoral board have they done that yet they have um they're working on it okay um they've we've given them uh the draft that was originally presented um and so we're hoping in the next couple of meetings they will have a product that they will okay and when

[00:59:06] was this new electoral board seated um the new person came on board January 1st okay of this year yes ma'am okay all right thank you that's all I have thank you thank you Ms. Bricksman um first of all

thank you all for what you do um we don't see you often but we know the work you do because we have some of the most effective well-ran elections in the Commonwealth that we just do.

[00:59:35] And we appreciate it. I appreciate it very much. A couple of weeks ago, I sent you all over some information because the National Association of Counties has really taken up the issue of protection for election workers.

[00:59:50] Did you guys get that from me? Yes, ma'am, I did. Okay, all right. And anytime you want anything else about that, let me know, because I think it's really important that people actually want to remain involved. Ricky, did you just say that after all that we have gone through, that they're going to still use Carver? Maybe. Oddly, yes.

[01:00:13] That seems to me, from the latest indication we've had, that that may be the direction we're going in, Judy. Is that your understanding as well? Yes, they have individually approached me about my thoughts on it and that's the end of the conversation at this point. I see. But I have reached out to Parks and Rec to see if there is any option for us to stay there for weekday voting in the future. Okay. Thank you very much. We appreciate it. We appreciate you. Supposed to

[01:00:53] you have any motions on the dais? Thank you so much. Appreciate it. Bye-bye. Okay. Supervisors, next we're going to go to emergency management. Mr. Kevin Johnson, come on down. You are on page,

[01:01:11] your resource requests are on page R15, and your budget narrative is 1-10. Good evening.

[01:01:35] Madam Chair and Supervisors, good evening. My name is Kevin Johnson. I serve as the Office Director for Emergency Management. A description of our resource request can be found on page R15 of the budget document. One of the primary responsibilities of emergency management is county-wide threat, hazard, and resilience planning to reduce the impacts of significant incidents affecting Loudoun County. Working collaboratively with our partners, we develop and maintain a variety of plans that are categorized as strategic, multi-agency, coordination,

[01:02:14] or operational. Timeline for plan development varies based on the scope and complexity, but ranges from 9 to 24 months typically. All plans undergo an annual review and a full update every four years. We use the integrated preparedness cycle, which is a continuous process of planning, organizing, training, and evaluation that addresses the ever-changing threats, hazards, and risks.

[01:02:40] Our resource request in the FY25 budget is for a lead emergency management planner. This position will provide dedicated programmatic focus and stewardship on our more comprehensive, dynamic, and multi-discipline plans.

[01:02:56] Examples of such plans include, but are not limited to, hazard mitigation, community recovery, continuity of operations, along with our threat and hazard identification, and risk assessment. In addition to enhancing and sustaining relationships, a dedicated resource will be able to invest significant time and effort, enhancing our current planning capability, allowing for earlier completion of projects and reducing the overall time between development and update.

[01:03:24] This resource request supports the board's equity resolution by enhancing the county's capacity to engage in a more collaborative relationship with community groups, resulting in an increase in equity and inclusion. Overall, engagement in the community and across internal and external

stakeholders will be enhanced through this position. And I thank you for your consideration of our request and I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you, Mr. Johnson. Question supervisors. Ms. Umstead. Thank you, Madam Chair. So the community outreach, what does that look

[01:04:00] like? Are you holding community events at HOAs around the county, especially in what would be considered perhaps disadvantaged neighborhoods? How does that boost equity and inclusion?

[01:04:18] Sure. So this position, when you look at it from the perspective of the complex planning endeavors, we would be able to engage at the community level, the HOA or other organizations through human services or other departments that would engage with members of the community to bring them to the planning table to ensure that plans that are developed will address their needs.

[01:04:50] so it would be with the disability services board it would be with hoas other disadvantaged members of our community would be able to come to the planning table and ensure that their positions are heard thank you very much you actually kind of got to what when i read this with my question so sometimes when we think about um when we say the words equity and inclusion everyone's head goes just to one thing and we forget inclusion is a lot of things including people who are differently abled is there ever when you're making these when you're making your um

[01:05:29] your your plans when you're updating your plans do you ever put an eye to you know what to do with you have people who are differently able maybe can't walk that type of thing i am always reminded no no offense to mr turner i think the most illogical building in all of loudon county is lansdowne woods they are literally the highest buildings in loudon county it is a senior living community the fire the fire trucks um um ladder will not go above the sixth floor of those

[01:06:04] buildings ever and we have people who are where those floors go to mr turner how many floors are in some of those buildings how many floors are in your buildings 11 and they go to the sixth floor i'm always i thought they went to that i thought the ladder went to the sixth floor mr turner has an emergency ladder escaping his bedroom he's saving himself so good for you man i'm all with i'm all for saving yourself i'm all for saving yourself but i always wonder when we do these kind of when we do these

[01:06:43] plans and i know you all you know plan you you do you literally you don't plan for things what kind of eye do we put to people who are yes elderly but also are in wheelchairs or or something like that that's always my concern sure so when we embark on a planning endeavor depending on the type of plan that we're writing we will include representatives from different groups human services in the particular case you're talking about those that that would have

[01:07:15] mobility issues we also have a evacuation assistance needs registry here in the county oh which is a voluntary okay program i didn't know that i did not know that individuals are able to register and that is for those that would be longer term or caregivers can identify an individual that would need assistance at a particular address can you send us that Sure.

[01:07:40] So we can send it out? Yes, ma'am. Okay. That's really good to know. Did anyone know that we have that? Okay. Yeah, please send us that. Sure. Yeah, that's a great idea. All right. Well, thank you. Thank you very much. Supervisors, is there a motion on the dais? All right.

[01:08:01] Thank you. Thank you very much. Okay. Finance and procurement is on page. Description of resource requests, R32 through R35. The budget narrative is I-28.

[01:08:23] A couple of days ago, I asked Mr. Hemstreet, like, what happened to George? Because I hadn't seen you. I hadn't seen you. And he goes, he's here. I'm like, okay, because I hadn't seen you. And then here you are. So it's good to see all of you. Thank you, Chair Randall.

[01:08:39] And we are ready when you are. Good evening, Chair Randall and board members. I am George Govan, the Director of the Finance and Procurement Department.

[01:08:56] And sitting alongside with me are our assistant directors, Ms. Elaine Crawford and Ms. Cheryl Middleton. And we also have one of our division managers, Dr. Megan Cox. Thank you for the opportunity to present on our department budget request for your consideration.

[01:09:15] Our department budget request is located on pages R32 through R35 of the fiscal year 2025 post budget volume one. The department budget request includes four positions, which are an administrative assistant, a procurement systems manager, an accounts payable accountant, and an internal auditor.

[01:09:38] The first three positions identified are needed to address the growing demand for finance and procurement services from a transactional, workload, and customer-focused basis. The department has observed and experienced consistent increases in service levels from the past few years into the present.

[01:09:57] Additionally, the fourth position, the internal auditor, is needed to meet consistent demands for management, advisory, and assistance services of department and office programs. Currently, internal audits are achieved by contract on an ad hoc basis and are limited in scope of services that can be achieved.

[01:10:18] The internal audit position supports the opportunity to effectively and efficiently implement an internal audit program that is comprehensive and integrated in services for assessing programs, implementing improvements, and reporting program results as part of decision support for our county government leaders. The department's budget request supports continued efforts to provide solutions for its stakeholders, and the board's support of the request will provide a significant advantage to do so. That concludes my comments. Are there any questions that we can answer for you? Thank you, Mr.

[01:10:50] Governor. Appreciate it. Supervisors, if you have questions, put your lights on, please. Mr. Letourneau. Thank you, Madam Chair. So the one that I probably need a little bit more selling on is the priority four, which was the lowest priority request, the internal auditor. How much do we spend on the current contract ad hoc audits that occur that presumably this function would replace? So based on my understanding, prior to any increases during the fiscal year, we had a baseline about \$500,000. \$310,000 of that is for

[01:11:28] our financial management audits and single scope audits. Then we have about 70,000 for our volunteer fire and rescue, you know, internal control reviews. And then the last thing is about 125,000 for the internal audits. So that's what we currently contract. So would this position replace that function? So the proposed plan is to hire two internal auditors over two fiscal years.

[01:11:59] The first being this internal auditor position for this fiscal year, and then a second in fiscal year 2026. In this first year, the money would be complementary. To do a proper internal audit program for the services that I identified, you need at least two internal auditors for a pipeline of at least three internal audits and evaluations per year in order to create the efficiencies and have some effectiveness.

[01:12:29] So that sounds like we need \$310,000 in positions in order to replace \$125,000 in contracts. Now, I'm sure you're going to say that it can be done better this way, but is it worth double the cost to do it that way?

[01:12:49] So when we say, so I'll answer on two prongs, Supervisor Letourneau. The \$310,000 for two positions, what you would gain from that is a level of service, whereas if you compare to the contractor services you have today, it's kind of like ad hoc.

[01:13:13] When a department or an office maybe have a compliance requirement or they're not too sure of how programming efficiency or efficacy is going on, then they would contract out for that internal service. By having a comprehensive and integrated internal audit program with hiring internal auditors, what you get is more than that.

[01:13:36] You get the ability to look at your internal programs. You do risk management. Let me quickly get a question now because I don't have 10 seconds. So it seems to me, though, I mean, I don't know the value of adding one position. It's almost like you either add both or you don't add any and you just add both next year when you're not asking for three other ones.

[01:13:55] Because adding one, it seems like we're not really going to achieve much. So I'm out of time. Please, you can respond to that if you'd like to. So the intent was just to phase it out. To phase it in. Exactly. To phase it in, excuse me, to phase it in.

[01:14:11] And then phase out or support, you know, with contractor support if needed, if the demand increased over an average of three audits per year. Okay, thank you. Mr. Crony. Thank you, Chair Randall. And thank you for coming and for the presentation.

[01:14:28] So it seems like doing this in-house would not replace the current contract support because the demand has increased from two to five audits. Is that correct? Correct. Evaluations per year. Okay. And so these auditors would do three, is what you're thinking, three audits?

[01:14:48] Correct. The goal is not to create a pipeline, not to bring in more staff than the pipeline. We project out, based on the increase, that if we can at least meet an average of three audits or evaluations per year, that's enough level of work.

[01:15:05] Because when you look at an audit, when you look at performing an audit, it's not just the act of going out and physically meeting with folks and, you know, having interviews, surveys, and doing the analysis and then the write-up. There's a lot of data collection. There's a lot of data analysis that goes into performing an audit or a program evaluation as well.

[01:15:26] So this one internal auditor, how many would that person be able to do alone? How many audits? Because you're projecting they'll do three, but how many would that one person be able to do? I mean, on average, that person, depending on the size of the audit, for example, if you had a small office or department, then you can have that one auditor perform that audit.

[01:15:51] If you had like a larger office or department like a General Services or Parks and Recs and yes you're gonna need more than one person I saw in one of your write-ups that you estimated that the county would save 342,000 by bringing this in-house is that correct is that the cost of three audits is it 342,000 so the 342,000 was to call the equivocal cost of a contract capability versus an in-house position capability.

[01:16:23] Okay, that's what it would cost for a contractor, right? Correct. Would you be willing to delay the hiring of this person so that we could actually have them do three audits, which is what you were asking for, so that the two of them together could do the three audits? I'm willing to work with the board on how we would phase that.

[01:16:44] I don't know. So I would just like to clarify a couple of comments. The first is the \$125,000 contract typically gets us one and a half to two audits per year. We have a request of sometimes five to six audits per year.

[01:17:03] And the cost of those additional audits come out of the department's operating budgets for whom they're requesting. So we are actually spending roughly \$485,000 every two years on audits, internal audits.

[01:17:19] So that capability, by bringing someone in-house, would help to alleviate by being able to add three audits to the additional one and a half or two that the contract for \$125,000 provides at this time.

[01:17:37] Thank you. Ms. Bricksman? Thank you, Madam Chair. Have you done any sort of analysis of how much time you spend managing the consultants and contractors? Because in my experience, when someone is outside of your organization, sometimes it takes half as much time to manage and get them the right information and answer their questions and make sure they have the systems that they need as it does to just do it yourself.

[01:18:07] So, Supervisor Brixman, no, you're totally right. It does take time, especially in the beginning of the planning stages. Working with the contractor, there's a lot of information that's required. But once that information is provided, then really it's on the contractor at that point to develop their audit plan, you know, their risk assessment within that audit plan, and then to conduct the audit.

[01:18:33] I don't know if you have. Yeah, so just on average, it takes about 15 to 20 percent FTE to manage the contract. And then, again, the departments are helping to support the work through their staff gathering documentation maintaining um communication with the contractor throughout the internal audit so it actually takes departmental staff time as well as dfp staff time to complete an internal audit okay i i i feel as if and this this is kind of like one example of it that we are in um this

[01:19:10] growing pains time in loudon county where really some stuff should come internal and uh there's a number of departments i think that about that are relying on outside resources to get jobs done and i just think it's a fact of how much we've grown that now it's kind of time to just bring it in house and do it ourselves so i'm happy to support this request thank you okay supervisors is there a motion on the dais mr latourno yeah i'm going to move that we remove priority four

[01:19:47] internal auditor second motions made and second that discussion on the motion yeah i think you made a pretty good case for this but I think it makes more sense to add both at the same time a lot of other departments are sort of bundling when we have this kind of scenario I don't really think we're getting a lot of value out of just adding one getting some but it's the fourth position in this department it's one of the absolute lowest priorities in the county administrator's budget it's at the 87 cent level which you know most of the other things there are actually other agencies so I just assume do two next year hopefully there won't be three other

[01:20:25] positions that we have to add in this department and we can just do it once and give them the full measure to really implement it. Mr. Turner. Thank you Madam Chair. I think can the can down and

suggesting that we submit for two positions next year is disingenuous at best. Either we're going to fund it or we're not going to fund it and I defer the department's judgment is the best way to do that, but to say we're not going to fund one position this year so we look a little better on our tax rate just to kick the can down the road and have a more difficult discussion next year when we're going to be talking

[01:21:04] about the same reduction in the tax rate. It makes no sense whatsoever to me. Thank you. After what I just went through the past many months and people talking about how we need an inspector general and all the things that they decided we needed, an internal auditor, there's no way in God's heaven and I would vote against an internal auditor.

[01:21:27] You've got to be kidding me, and I can't believe that anyone would. I'm a little surprised that the motion's coming. Well, I guess not for you. I mean, I get that with you, but there's just no god-awful way I would ever vote against an internal auditor.

[01:21:44] You can give me five, ten internal auditors, and I'll say bring them all on because, quite frankly, what we find is that if there's an issue, we'll find that, But what we have found is when there's not an issue, when things are being conducted correctly as they should, that's important to have people in that place to say that, too.

[01:22:06] And that is exactly what has happened the past months. And so you will get this one this year from me. You'll get the next one another year from me. You'll get five more internal auditors if you want them from me. Anytime you want an internal auditor to check what we're doing, please come ask. I'm more than happy to do that. Mr. Attorney, would you like closing?

[01:22:23] Sure. So to be clear, if we don't give them this position, we're still going to have the internal audit function. It's going to be done as it's been done for the last 10 or 20 years. I don't believe that's a problem. I think we've run a pretty good organization here. I think if the county administrator felt so strongly that we need the position, it wouldn't be one of the very last positions he funded.

[01:22:45] It's just more a question of phasing of when we do it. And like I said, I don't think it really – we're not going to get as much benefit by just doing one. It might have made more sense to do two, but, you know, it is what it is.

[01:23:01] But I think we have a pretty strong audit function. We have a strong external audit function. None of that is changing. Okay, thank you, sir. Mr. Letourneau made the motion that was seconded by Mr. Kirshner. All the people who say aye, oppose.

[01:23:20] I think that is a 6-3 vote with Ms. DeCrony. Mr. Letourneau and Mr. Kirshner are voting for that. Is that correct? Is that what I heard? It was a 5-4 vote. It's a 5-4 vote. You voted yes? You voted yay? Okay. Mr. Sainz voted yay.

[01:23:36] So the position stays. Any other motions? Thank you very much. Thank you. All right.

[01:23:51] General Services is, listen, truthfully, it was my plan to make sure Ernie Brown went dead last in the whole thing. I mean, I was just completely last.

[01:24:07] I don't know. Mr. Humphrey, what do you think? I can go in and have him go right now. Chair Randall, I actually would prefer it if Mr. Brown went last.

[01:24:25] Well, he's at the table, so we're going to let it go now. He walked fast to the table. We're going to let him stay at the table. General Services is on page R22 through R25. Budget Narrative 134.

[01:24:44] I'm so confused. I thought you told me you weren't in general service anymore. You were doing fleet management. Help me understand. In fact, I said that to somebody today. Help me understand, sir. So we love things that roll. Buses, trucks, fire trucks.

[01:25:02] It doesn't really matter. We love fleet and things that roll. So Mr. Hemstreet wisely allowed us to take the opportunity to bring transit along with us. And it has been a great deal. She was right. That's what she thought happened. And Ms. Sustak, you were completely correct on that one. All right, sir, we're ready when you are.

[01:25:19] Well, thank you, Madam Chair. Members of the board, good evening. It is genuinely our privilege to share our 2025 budget proposal with you. With me tonight at the table is our Management Support Services Division Manager, Ms. Michelle Monteith, as well as our amazing Office of Management Budget Analyst, Amber Stiles.

[01:25:36] So with us, the three of us should be able to answer most of the questions that you have. However, we have several subject matter experts in the room with us this evening, should the need arise. As you all know from the questions that were asked in the packets, DGS has recently undergone a comprehensive organizational evaluation to assess our operational and staffing dynamics, particularly in terms of leadership structure and operational support functions.

[01:26:03] Over the last year, or excuse me, over the last nine years, DGS has prioritized frontline staff focused on service delivery. While this was critical to deliver our services, management and operational support responsibilities have not been able to keep pace, resulting in an unstable and unsustainable structure to provide logistical and management support to operations and frontline staff.

[01:26:24] This has resulted in us not being able to keep pace, and the comprehensive organizational assessment highlighted these critical weaknesses in the organization identified key leadership and support positions required to uphold our service standards that we currently are able to deliver. In the 2025 budget, you will see that there are the first phase of a two-phase solution to meet these deficits. The first resource request that you'll see pertains

[01:27:03] to six positions linked to new capital facilities. In fiscal year 2025, it is expected that an additional 179,490 square feet will come online needing maintenance with the opening of Aspirin Rec Center, Lovettsville, and Aldi Fire Rescue Stations, and the new MHSADS Crisis Center.

[01:27:22] This specific request seeks one facility crew chief for managerial oversight and span of control, one building system engineer for the Aspirin Rec Center, and four maintenance technicians, two which will be full year and two will be half year projected on facility based on the projections of facility openings. The second request is a full-time equivalent authority to convert a permanent part-time position in surplus into a full-time position using existing departmental O&M funds rather than requesting additional local tax funding. The surplus program continues to experience growth and backlogs due to county growth and cannot keep

[01:27:58] up with the current service level with its part-time position. DGS's number one departmental priority is the request for six positions resulting from the previously discussed organizational study. These include a budget manager, grant and budget analyst, a division manager overseeing internal services, a division manager overseeing the board's prioritized energy and environmental programs, and a stormwater engineering manager. Each of these positions hold significant importance in general services,

providing crucial support to current staff while simultaneously addressing concerns related to managerial oversight and maintaining the department's organizational requirement. I will note that two of these positions are proposed to start in January

[01:28:38] mid-year. The second priority involves the hiring of two public works technicians as the escalating demand for maintaining county stormwater, wastewater, and pavement systems continue to grow commensurate with the county's growth. This surge in demand has led to a backlog of work orders impacting the timely completion of tasks. We have seen extraordinary growth within general services in order to meet the demand of both new programs and a growing community. This growth has directly impacted our workforce, and all of these positions are focused on balancing the workload on staff and maintaining the current service levels. I would like to thank the entire DGS team for their tireless efforts to keep the county up and running.

[01:29:18] Without question, I have witnessed a continuous commitment to integrity, service, and innovation that makes me proud to serve you, Mr. Hemstreet, and the department as Loudoun County's Director of General Services. With that, I thank you for the opportunity this evening, and we make ourselves available for any questions you may have. Mr. Brown, thank you very much. Thank you very much.

[01:29:37] Supervised, you have questions. Mr. Turner. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks, Mr. Brown. I appreciate it. Can you explain the loss of almost \$2 million in revenue on page I-36? I think a million and a half is in tipping fees and the other half is in miscellaneous revenue that was lost. It just strikes me as a fairly precipitous drop in revenue. I think there was some language somewhere I saw that it was related to the end of COVID and less waste and refuse being generated because COVID was over, but I'm just asking open-ended where that revenue drops. So you'll notice that Michelle and

[01:30:15] Amber are feverishly looking through the books to try to find a suitable and appropriate answer to that question. I do not have the specifics on that one. If they are not able to pull it out quickly, we can get back to you. Okay, that's fine. Thank you, sir. Mr. Crony. Thank you, Chair Randall.

[01:30:31] hey Ernie um so I noticed that you were having challenges filling some vacancies um vacancies were 16 in the summer of 2023 how many positions are currently vacant in your department so our current vacant vacancy there's two questions to that two answers to that question one is how many vacancies do we have for the 2024 uh positions that the board gave um and that answers one but will be hired within the next two weeks. So the department has been able to fulfill and fill all

[01:31:04] the 2020, I'm sorry, the 2024 positions that were provided. The 16% vacancy rate is a rolling rate for us. We have a turnover that's mostly due to workload and burnout is what we're seeing.

[01:31:20] And Amber is giving me a number here, but that's the landfill question. Okay. So do you have the current I can't read this my eyes don't work on that percentage or do you the number so currently we have 17.2 positions that are vacant and and the point two is because it's a part-time position that's open so it's less than it's a less than ten ten percent right now okay and how many public works technicians do you have currently sorry say again how many public works technicians do you have currently the total number of public works technician Yeah.

[01:32:00] Now, that does not include the two crew chiefs, so I believe it's eight. Is that right? Nine. Nine, okay. Plus two crew chiefs and a division manager. Okay. Could you use the current vacancies to reclassify

and fill the two public works technician positions?

[01:32:20] So, we can't. The reason being is those positions that are vacant are still needed, so we're operating at a deficit in those areas, and whether it be facilities, fleet, or other areas, they're operating at a deficit now. So by shifting them to public works, we would make that deficit a permanent impact on that staff, on those frontline employees.

[01:32:42] Okay. So that's the dilemma we have right now. We have actually squeezed as much out of our reclassification process as we can. We're looking at reclassifying five positions, certainly four if not five positions in this current budget, to try to triage our greatest priorities.

[01:32:59] We've already gone through that exercise, and the two public work positions we're not able to fill through that process. Okay. And then do you think you'll be able to fill the 14 positions requested in the FY 2025 budget? I have a great deal of confidence that that will happen by the nature of those positions. Yes, ma'am.

[01:33:14] Okay. Thank you. Ms. Umstead. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll be supporting all your requests, of course, because you're Ernie Brown. And I know you don't ask for anything you don't feel you need.

[01:33:30] I have just a one question. In the many years you have been in local government, do you find that many different departments have needs for their own grant analysts, budget analysts that cannot be satisfied by a centralized grant analyst or budget analyst?

[01:34:00] Yes, ma'am. Thank you for that question. I think that's a very pertinent question, and it depends, is the answer. Over the last year and a half, we have gone from eight grants to 24 grants to manage. Now, that's managing the grants. These are operational analysts, and they're very different than, say, the great work that Megan Cox's team does.

[01:34:21] They do a phenomenal job supporting us in attaining and working through the process of applications and then managing the overall reporting requirements in many of those areas. But from operational grants analytics, it's a totally different ballgame when it comes to that.

[01:34:38] Thank you. You're welcome, ma'am. Thank you, ma'am. Mr. Letourneau. Mr. Hemstreet told me to give you a hard time, so. And he already started early, so. Especially since Supervisor Umstead was so nice. So the Alvarez and Marshall study, we didn't hear anything about that prior to the budget process, right?

[01:34:59] So the answer, and I asked about it, and you provided the whole study, I kind of feel like if there's something significant coming that's going to have a pretty significant budgetary impact, it might be good to just give us a heads up prior to the budget so we know more about it.

[01:35:16] And quite frankly, like the justification sheet here on R24 is pretty meek for such a big request. So it's hard to evaluate. It's just kind of hard to. So the organizational study itself, I didn't really get through.

[01:35:32] But was it simply that we need to add a bunch of positions or was it sort of an actual reorg where you're changing reporting and who's doing what and all that kind of stuff? So I'm going to start back about two years ago. You know, we grossed, well, I'll start back much earlier than that.

[01:35:53] Over the last nine years, we made a heavy investment into service delivery, and you saw that chart. It's quite a market frontline hiring process, and we did that very intentionally because we needed to ensure that our service delivery was strong.

[01:36:10] In fact, our service delivery is very strong. We had over 700 survey feedback questions or surveys that came back for feedback. 97% of them last year were satisfied or higher. Currently, right now, we have over 550 survey responses, and it's about 94.8% in satisfaction.

[01:36:31] So, hands down, our team is knocking it out of the park. They're doing exactly what they need to do. About two years ago, we started observing some fractures in the organization. Um, some of those fractures, uh, were primarily span of control, but also of our inability to, uh, be strategic because so much of my time to be quite blunt, uh, and my division managers and the few assistant directors that I have were heavily invested in operations.

[01:37:00] Um, because we, that, that was, that is our priority and it will continue to be our priority is, is effective delivery of services. Uh, we owe that to you as a board. We owe that to the community and we owe that to the departments that we serve. and I think we're good at that. So back to the two years ago, we started seeing cracks in the structure, and Mr. Hemstreet and I started this conversation about how do we fix this, how to resolve it.

[01:37:23] And last year, those cracks became more evident, and we had some ideas of what the issues were. I'm going to just interrupt for a second because I've got 10 seconds, and then you can finish. Okay. I'm probably, I think, going to support everything you're asking for. It's not that I'm questioning so much that. I just wish I had more than three minutes to ask you about these things and, you know, the whole board, not just me.

[01:37:43] the round um well they had a little bit more of a conversation that's chair randall mr hamstreet i'm sorry thank you i just want to make it clear that that's my oversight that we didn't bring the item to the board or about the uh the study the organizational study that was not at all dgs's fault or mr brown's fault that i should have called you sure i mean we can i am absolutely certainly. I'm not shy about talking to Mr. Brown when I think he's done something wrong, but that absolutely was not on him. That is my oversight.

[01:38:22] I'm sure you'll find something else. He's like, I'm off the hook. He can't, absolutely, you can finish the narrative. I forgot what year you left on, but you can finish the narrative. Thank you. I have a great epilogue, so here we go. Continue. We hired Alvarez and Marcel because we needed a true public works subject matter professional to do a deep dive into our organization and really figure out how we needed to restructure, what we needed to revise.

[01:38:51] And they came back with some pretty positive accolades, frankly, about the organization and how well we did in delivering our services. But they did identify some very clear and glaring gaps in our ability to be strategic and proactive versus reactive at a number of levels.

[01:39:08] And that, frankly, because I'm a very flat organization person, right, that's just how I like to operate. And much to Mr. Hemstreet's frustration, you know, we need to build the organization so that it can truly support our organization and our staff while still responding to the information demands and the strategic planning demands that are upon us.

[01:39:29] And this is the way we have to achieve that. Ms. Brooksmen. Thank you. This is a really big budget request. One thing on the reorganization where I was reading here, it said that this is the first phase.

[01:39:54] So what do you think the second and third phase are going to require? This many staffers? One less. Actually, we'll be bringing back to you five positions, unless I can find the ability within our

organization to do a reclassification, but the proposal is five.

[01:40:11] Okay. And we had a lot of conversations about that, because as you might imagine, I wanted to go for all of them now. Yeah. But there's a great deal of work that goes on in Mr. Hemstreet's office and OMBs to try to find that right balance amongst all the departments that have needs.

[01:40:29] And so the correct decision was made to phase this. Okay. And you already said that two of the positions in the RE-ORG are going to come in January. You're asking for those in January. Yes, ma'am. Right? Okay, so we're probably already saving a little bit of money by phasing that this year.

[01:40:47] The MH-SADS Receiving Center, when is that going to be coming online, and how many positions do you think you need for it? So the way we, so we instituted several years ago, the International Facility Maintenance Association, IFMA's standard of one technician for every 45,000 square feet that comes on for maintenance.

[01:41:10] So I don't recall the exact size, but I think Michelle or Amber will give me that. I believe that particular location is 1.2 FTEs. Okay. And so we round up or down. Do we know when it's coming online? I guess my question is, do we need those right now?

[01:41:28] Because I know we funded the building of it. Two of those positions are delayed. So what we do is we project based on when the facilities are coming on. Okay, okay, okay. So you've already kind of thought about that. Yes, ma'am. Okay. And then what's the difference between a capital facility's priority and an FTE priority?

[01:41:45] So Mr. Hemstreet and Office of Management Budget prioritize the positions and the funding that are needed when capital facilities come online. A great example of that is fire rescue, when they hire staff to support a Parks and Rec. Okay, okay. And of the six that you're asking for for capital facility staffing, could you live with getting three of those in January?

[01:42:07] Do you think you can hire them fast enough? So we pushed two of those off. You did already? To January, yes, ma'am, because of the timing of those. Okay. And we can move immediately. We actually almost, some of them we have open, continuous hiring for our technicians.

[01:42:23] Okay. just because there's a continuous need for those. All right, all right. It sounds like you've done the phasing that we might have asked for. Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Brown. All right, supervisors, are there any motions on the dais? Seeing none, thank you very much.

[01:42:41] Appreciate it. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you. Okay, we have, I think, one, two, three, four more. Everybody good to keep going? Keep moving along, yeah? Supervisors?

[01:42:56] Yes? Okay. Human resources is the scripture of resource request is page R29 through R31, and the budget narrative is I-42. Good evening, I-29. I-29 through I-31. There we go. How are you? Well, good evening, Madam Chair and members of the board.

[01:43:29] Jeanette Green with the Department of Human Resources, and with me this evening is Michael Drager, the Deputy Director for the Department of Human Resources. I have some brief introductory comments. The Department of HR has a total of three resource requests in the FY 2025 proposed budget, totaling four positions. Our priority number one request is a human resources information system, also known as an HRIS manager, and an HRIS analyst. These positions are requested to accomplish two goals within HR. Number one is to create strategic oversight and coordination

[01:44:07] of the approximately nine technology systems that are currently in use in HR. Many of those were recently added, as well as to address a single point of failure and a workload issue within our current HRIS staffing model.

[01:44:24] Our second priority is for a classification and compensation analyst. We are requesting this position to address the number one customer service complaint from our management level HR customers, which is the length of time it takes for HR to reclassify positions and to approve salary offers and adjustments. And then last but not least, our third priority is for a management analyst that will focus on HR data reporting and analysis and project management. This position is being requested to address a critical organizational need for better and more frequent reporting and analysis of

[01:45:00] employee and positional data. This position will also provide support to both strategic and ad hoc HR projects. And with that, I am prepared to answer any questions. I'm sorry. Would you please go back to the priority one and talk about that one more time?

[01:45:23] That is the Human Resources Information System Manager and Human Resources Information System Analyst. It's two positions. Okay. All right. I think I missed something on that one.

[01:45:39] All right. Thank you, ma'am. Supervisor, if you have questions, Mr. Letourneau. Thank you. Well, almost everybody who's come to us today has talked about the fact that they've largely filled their vacancies or they've made better progress.

[01:45:56] And I think it's fair to say in some previous budget years that wasn't necessarily the message. So clearly, either some of the resources we've put there or, you know, your own work within the department have paid off. Do you have any kind of metrics? Do you know if our time to hire has improved and those kind of things?

[01:46:14] Can you share any of that? Yes, I always have that for you, Supervisor Letourneau. For our post-to-hire this year, we are at averaging 116 days. By comparison, last year was 131 days. Post-to-hire is one thing.

[01:46:30] What I pay attention to is application to hire, so how long does it take an applicant to actually be onboarded. And this year we are at 94.11 days, which is the best that we have been since we started tracking this metrics. How much, where were we at last year? Prior to that, we were at 102.29, and FY21, we were at 105.

[01:46:52] The county administrator did a very targeted, had a targeted conversation with all department has at the leadership team advance on prioritizing the filling of vacancies, and I think what you're seeing is a result of process improvements to get people on quicker and faster.

[01:47:08] Okay. Well, do you think, I don't think any or any of these resource requests, they're not necessarily to support that function, right? No. For other things. Yeah. So it's kind of hard. I mean, the job titles here are a little bit gobbledygook unless you're in this industry.

[01:47:26] So I don't know if I know the difference between a management analyst for data and projects and then some of the staffing, system staffing. The data and projects one, so basically this is a function, it's an existing function, but it's an enhancement, or at least to keep to the current service level.

[01:47:52] It is an existing function that rests with one workforce planning analyst as sort of an other duty is assigned. I'll change my answer slightly to the question you just asked me as far as whether any of these

resource requests would support things like time to hire.

[01:48:09] Well, the answer to that is yes, in the calculation of those numbers. Right now, anytime I get that question, it's an all-hands-on-deck affair. We're pulling manual reports. We're doing manual calculations. So that's what we're trying to get in front of, to have better data reporting for the organization.

[01:48:25] Okay. Okay. Mr. Sainz. Now, I wasn't going to ask a question, but you just made me ask a question. When you said all-hands-on-deck to pull data to answer that question, shouldn't our ATS and our HRS system automatically be pulling that data?

[01:48:43] Well, our HRAS system does not have the capability to do so. We just rolled to a new ATS system, applicant tracking software, for those of you who don't know the jargon. You'll be pleased to hear we have rolled on to NeoGov. But even within NeoGov, you need staffing capability in order to be able to build those reports.

[01:49:04] Some of the changes that we'll be making when we roll to Oracle Software as a Service will be helpful in terms of being able to calculate things like vacancy rates. but again you still need staff and be able to be able to extract the reports build the reports share the reports and analyze the data yeah i get running the report but your ats for example your open rec once you have open rec you have say march 1st and then say once i you know offer and the person accepts and we get the offer letter in and all that stuff and you close it however you do it your rec file should be able to just display a number to you right away in neogov yes which we

[01:49:43] just literally rolled to 30 days ago. In job apps, it was a much more complicated process. And also, without getting too technical, some of our positions stay open to fill. So being able to calculate when that position was actually posted and then if there were multiple incumbents hired from that, it's still a manual calculation process in order to get to your average time to fill in your application to hire. So you can pull the report out, but my staff still has to run calculations to get to the true averages all right miss green

[01:50:15] oh i've never heard that tone all right um mr crony so he's an hr expert i'm not but uh good to see you um so is the With the introduction of collective bargaining, is that one of the reasons you're asking for an HR classification and compensation analyst? Not really. The HR classification and compensation

[01:50:51] analyst is really as a result of the fact that the staffing model for that was put in, was recommended probably eight or seven years ago when we were initially looking at recommendations for the new comp system. The consultant thought that we would need about three positions, but we've grown by about 800 positions since there.

[01:51:12] We're seeing an increase in new hires year over year, and as you've heard many department directors present over the course of the budget workshops, they're using the word reclassification a lot, and right now it can take anywhere to three to six months in order for us to produce a reclassification, which then hangs them up on their business needs and objectives because that's with HR.

[01:51:34] That also impacts your retention and your recruitment because if they're waiting to move a position along to increase the salary and increase the level, that's an opportunity for that employee to start looking for employment elsewhere. Okay, so how many HR management analysts do you have?

[01:51:56] Right now, one assigned to the benefits division, which is in part to support a lot of the analytical work that happens around benefits for collective bargaining. It was given to us as part of the tranche for collective bargaining positions. Oh, okay.

[01:52:13] So what's this new position, Priority 3, for? This new position would primarily support workforce planning, which includes recruitment, selection, data analysis, and classification and compensation work. Okay, so not for collective bargaining.

[01:52:29] Not for collective bargaining. Okay. Do you think the other systems, information technology, systems manager that you're asking for the two could do some of that data analysts that priority three you're asking for the HR management analysts not with a number of systems that we've added we've gone through a process to try to modernize HR as much as possible with bringing in new technology I just don't see a junior analyst who we really need to back up the system administrator having the time with the number of systems that we've added to be able to support the

[01:53:07] data analysis work. I think there's going to be more than enough work for him or her to do in that role. Okay. Then one thing I asked, and it'll probably be in the packet, is how many HR staff do we have in total in the county in all the departments and divisions and constitutional offices, because we just added a whole bunch over the course of this budget work session.

[01:53:32] So I'm just wondering how many we have total. We just provided that number to budget. Alan, do you have it? I think you can pull it out of the email. Look for that one we're calling from, oh, okay. How many? 84. 84? That's okay. 84.

[01:53:48] Okay, in total. Yes, uh-huh. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Briggsman? Thank you, Madam Chair. The priority two classification and compensation analyst, to what extent will this position be analyzing stuff related to collective bargaining?

[01:54:10] Not that I can think of. It may support the class and comp manager. Our class and comp manager did quite a bit of work related to collective bargaining during IAFF negotiations, which was quite a heavy lift.

[01:54:25] So it may support the class and comp manager at that level. But when it comes to the collective bargaining analysis, that's pretty high-level strategic work that we do in conjunction with OMB. I think this job would be far more focused on actually servicing customer departments and not doing that type of analysis.

[01:54:43] Oh, okay. I thought I saw that analysis in the job description. It would be one of the duties that they would. We try to include everything in a job description that we may ever ask an employee to do. Duties as assigned. Do these as a sign. So, yes, I mean, it could potentially support the class and comp manager, but typically that's with the manager.

[01:55:02] I just don't want to duplicate efforts between this position and the one that's being asked for in OEM. Is there a clear difference in what those two positions would be doing? I'm not familiar with the OEM position. OMB. OMB, I'm sorry. They're completely different positions.

[01:55:20] Okay. All right. Okay, we have the verdict. That's all I have. Thank you. My only question is, how are we doing on updating our manuals and our job descriptions as it relates to what we kind of loosely call temporary employees?

[01:55:36] Oh, actually, that project is occurring in earnest, and it's actually with Michael Drager. It was one of the first projects that I've given him since he started with us, and I do expect to have recommendations to the county administrator probably by the end of this month, early next month. Oh, wow, really quickly then.

[01:55:52] And then we would work with Tim to decide when to bring it before finance and then the board. wonderful. That's wonderful news. I know that's been a big lift, so thank you. Thank you. And part of that trouble getting that done was the data analysis, not to put too fine a point on it. Okay. All right. Perfect. That's good to know. Good to know. I think it's going to just clear so many things up, answer so many questions, and yeah. Yeah. All right. Supervisors, do you have any motions for the dais for this department? All right. I don't think so. Thank you very much.

[01:56:28] Thank you. So, Buzz, we're going to take a 10-minute break because I think the next two are going to take a little bit longer. So, let's take about a 10-minute break.

[02:10:37] Okay, we are back, and we are going to do the IT position, the information technology, [02:20:04] which is the description of resource request is on page R26, and it is Budget Narrative I-48. Good evening. Good evening. I'm John Bayless, Director of Information Technology. I'm joined by Julie Krim, our IT Business Manager, Brian Kimberley, the Deputy Director, and Callie McLean Project Portfolio Manager.

[02:20:28] In addition to the DIT staff, I want to highlight the collaboration on this request with Carl Rush, Carl's here, thanks Carl, and our Chief Equity Officer, and Michael Drager, our Deputy Director of HR. We're here to request a pilot program for workforce innovation, call it the Learner's Program.

[02:20:47] This program seeks a non-traditional way to build a diverse talent pipeline that serves three complementary purposes. One, assisting the county in augmenting technology needs. Two, providing job opportunities in the technology field to emerging talent for underrepresented demographics and communities.

[02:21:06] And three, supporting the county's mission statement in the board's equity resolution by utilizing the equity lens in personnel decisions and service delivery. The learners would be recruited locally, and candidates with a high chance of success in the technology field would be selected.

[02:21:23] With that, we're happy to answer any questions. So before we take questions, we're going to go to Mr. Hemstreet, who wanted to give a little more information about this position or this program. Thank you, Chair Randall. This is another one of those things where I should have brought this to the Finance Committee as a preview for what we were trying to do here, and I do apologize for that.

[02:21:47] And Mr. Bayless went into a little bit of detail about what this was about. What this grew out of was an effort to try to address our difficulties in hiring IT positions and IT people.

[02:22:04] And so, Northern Virginia in particular is a very tough job market for IT staff. The other thing that you will see across the departments is also positions and requests for positions that deal with IT applications on the business application side. Those positions are equally difficult for us to fill. The other challenge that we have is the majority of our positions require some level of experience in order to come into the county, which when you add up all of those barriers has given us

[02:22:38] a challenge of significant vacancy rates around these types of positions. And so I think Mr. Bayless gave a little bit of too short of an introduction, although I think he was following Ms. Burke's direction to keep it tight. So what we did was we challenged John and his team to work with HR and to figure out a unique way for us to create our own pipeline to address these types of positions. And that is what the Learners Program is. And so we partnered with a nonprofit. And what

[02:23:12] we do is bring people in who have aptitude towards IT and an IT career, but don't have the experience necessarily to qualify for our positions. And so what the program does is it gets them qualified to compete for our positions and the positions of the Loudoun County Public Schools.

[02:23:31] He's calling it a pilot program, but I think we did scrape together some extra money last year, and we did implement a portion of this program during 2023, which was highly successful. We We gained a number of people that work for us now or are working for the Loudoun County Public Schools through this effort.

[02:23:54] And we really focused on people who are either fresh out of school or people who were trying to transfer from another type of career into the IT field. And so it's just one of those unique things that we kind of put together to address a critical need that we really have.

[02:24:11] And at least the initial toe we stuck in the water, which I think we spent about a half a million dollars or somewhere in that range, was very successful in terms of getting applicants for positions we otherwise would not have been able to fill. Interesting.

[02:24:30] Okay. Supervisors, questions? I'm going to go to Mr. Crony first, who I know has had some thoughts about this. Yeah, thank you, Chair Randall. Sure. So the learner's program is really expensive. to train six candidates for two years, the cost is \$171,000 per trainee.

[02:24:51] And I was kind of wondering if it might make more sense to partner with Loudoun County Public Schools through the Monroe Advanced Technology Academy or even the Northern Virginia Community College.

[02:25:07] Like, they have a data center operations program there. I know, you know, we'd have to create a grant or some way to fund these types of programs, but I'm just wondering if those considerations were considered during this process.

[02:25:27] In some of the grant programs, they want the program to be established, and we will partner with them. Remember, the idea of the pipeline is to go into our community and tap that talent that has no other way of getting into technology and give them that experience so they get benefits they get paid from from day one they get a lot of training they get coached and mentored and those are those are things we don't find in our kind of in our sphere of what we do so that's really the pipeline project as we outlined it is something

[02:26:04] very unique and i appreciate mr hemstreet giving that introduction apologize if i was a little a little brief on that but it is a very complex problem and it is a complex program that we put together it's it's being um done in two other jurisdictions but i think those other two jurisdictions that are doing this locally are doing it more on the training side to your point but really we're missing the experience of providing that experience for someone to come in and learn the county remember these are these are citizens these are our residents that have no

[02:26:39] other way of getting into technology and for six people to provide that care and feeding does cost um you know there's there's a cost for that okay well i noticed that there was no obligation or guarantee that the six trainees will work for the county at the program's conclusion can you explain that yeah so uh being a pilot program uh we are working with hr to build classifications. A lot of our technology jobs are years of experience, college degrees,

[02:27:11] things of that nature, and to the point that it's hard to find these folks. So this is kind of a build, a program to build that talent and bring it into the county. They work beside us. They work beside our departments. You've heard some of the other departments have technology requests, and we wholeheartedly support them in that, but then they've got to find the talent.

[02:27:35] So this is really, when you give an FTE to another department that's for technology, we want to have the pipeline to actually have a good pool of candidates to be able to fill those jobs as quick as possible. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Sayings.

[02:27:51] Thank you, Madam Chair. So are we talking about IT help desk or full stack, front end, back end? Yeah, so this is a great question. So this is our hardest segment of those developers to come in and work with workloads to understand the business of our customers and how they are going to automate and provide workflows.

[02:28:14] I'm not mentioning actual technology, but it's more of the developer side of the house. So the software development. Yeah, software development. That's really where we struggle trying to bring talent into the organization. Front end, back end, okay, which are definitely very complex and highly skilled folks that you want.

[02:28:33] Working with our data and those types of things, correct. So is the program, is it more like something like a jobs training program slash boot camp? So is a period of time, how long is the boot camp or training for? Yeah, so they, through the application process, there's three to four months of just intense work, coaching and mentoring.

[02:28:55] There's a lot of introductions they do. I believe Supervisor Glass was in one of these presentations probably about a year ago for a program that I believe you mentioned that. So there's a lot of introductions they do.

[02:29:10] You all will be part of the program, the participants of this program, the learners. We ask that you make time to meet with them and talk to them. That's part of their journey here in the county. So are we teaching Python, React, Node, which one?

[02:29:27] Python, low code, no code in particular, a lot of that kind of code. I'll say a ServiceNow shop for a lot of things, so a lot of our workloads, and we have a huge amount of work there that just isn't getting done. So that's, yeah, Python, Ruby, yeah, they get trained in like eight different technologies.

[02:29:49] Are we using AWS or Azure or Google Cloud here? We are, well, it's Power Platform, Microsoft, Power BI, Power Platform, Power Automate, correct. All right, very good. And then you mentioned that you kind of did this last year in 23. How many folks were in the program and how many folks converted over?

[02:30:07] So those were folks from another jurisdiction that didn't, as I mentioned, that they actually didn't provide experience for those folks. So we had five, and I believe all five of them found jobs fairly

quickly after they've worked with us.

[02:30:25] We still have two that are working with us kind of as coaches and mentors, but one of them was an LCPS student that had multiple job offers and had been looking for a job after graduating, trying to keep track of time. And when their program is done at the boot camp, they graduate past their testing and get certified.

[02:30:45] What's the certification that they're getting? So they get certified in Agile, they get certified in ServiceNow, actually, and they'll get certified in Power Platform. Very good. All right. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Sayings. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[02:31:02] So I'm fairly excited about this program. How are you going to find students who might not, based on the resources their families have, might not know that they can get into this kind of field?

[02:31:25] What's your outreach going to look like? So we're going to work with each of you in your jurisdictions to publicize this and help us get the word out. There's organizations like Girls in Technology. I got a list of them here, you know, Virginia Values Veterans, Bridges Independence.

[02:31:43] There's a whole list of organizations that would be reached out to, but you know your jurisdictions best, so we want to participate with you all. Make sure you're putting it in your newsletters, getting it out to the public, and I can say that these six positions, you know, if we want to go on the record here, we're probably going to get over 100, at least, applicants, if not more.

[02:32:07] I think that that's been the experience in other jurisdictions. So in general, in, say, software engineering, I think we're still at only about 25% of software engineers are women.

[02:32:22] Very low percentage belong to minority communities, and there often seems to be a built-in bias against getting a more diverse group of software engineers.

[02:32:40] That's just one technical field.

[02:32:55] But as you and I briefly discussed, I think it's important for us to make sure our young women know about this, our Latino residents, and African American residents, because they are so underrepresented in software engineering and other technical fields. So I think this is great. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Glass.

[02:33:11] Thank you, Madam Chair. And I think you probably answered my question. You said you're looking for six candidates to start the program in the first year? Correct. Okay, and how many do you plan? Is that like six each time? It's the same six, so it would be six for a total of the two years, so that really at that two-year mark, that first year they're getting coached and mentored, they're going to be working with us, and then that second year is really where we see them taking off.

[02:33:42] And most jobs in the two years of experience is kind of what everyone's looking for. So if you have someone that may have had some college experience with, you know, being in, trying to get an IT degree, would they, would you all look at them also?

[02:34:04] Or would they, you know, just, I guess, look into them just getting into a job? No, absolutely, anybody that applies, we're looking for the desire to learn a high capacity to succeed in the technology field, regardless of any other experience they've had.

[02:34:25] Okay, so, and I'm looking at the, thinking about the comparator of the private industry versus, you know, someone working in local government. I guess, you know, people are looking at pay.

[02:34:43] Is our comparator close to private industry, or is there a large gap? You mean our technology jobs as a whole? Yes. Yeah, I would say local government is on the lower end of that. Absolutely. Thank you.

[02:34:59] Mr. Turner. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to be clear, because it was counterintuitive when Mr. Hempstreet said it. So we're having trouble finding IT employees at this level, which sounds counterintuitive since Northern Virginia is sort of like IT mecca.

[02:35:21] And putting two together, two and two together, it's the entry-level jobs that you're really struggling with, right? I mean, there's so many high-pay. You can't compete with the private market for IT around here. They're looking for experienced workers. So an entry-level is going to be really tough finding work around here.

[02:35:36] Is that what we're saying? Yes and no. So, the entry level of that two years of experience, but someone that has a high, you know, high ceiling, and that's what we're really going for here, and to bring the diversity, to bring that equity into the organization, because, you know, we will have a discussion at some point about who does the programming, who builds the systems, are we making sure we don't have any blind spots in the things that we're doing with AI and things of that nature,

[02:36:12] So we're trying to really get ahead of that with this program, and that's the secondary kind of goal for this program. But really to bring someone in that really wants to work for the county, that has a passion for technology, and let us coach and mentor and foster that and build that into a platform that the county can have these long-term employees.

[02:36:31] And during that two-year period, they're actually doing productive work for the county? Absolutely. They will be working in production systems. So it's not just a learning environment. They're actually working for the county. They're satisfying our need. Really quick, I'm just curious why you don't, I mean, the Army sends you to college for four years and then asks for four more back.

[02:36:50] Why do we not require them to work for the county for two years beyond that or some sort of thing? I mean, to have them for two years and then have them be trained and then go off somewhere else and work somewhere else seems counterproductive to me. Well, the hope is that they come here and they find a department, right?

[02:37:07] Because as an IT department, we work for everyone else. So whether it's Parks and Rec or Ernie, who was up here, they really find that and they want to stay here. And we can foster that and build those jobs. And that's what Michael and I have been working on as far as an entry-level job.

[02:37:25] We call it a developer job to bring that into the organization. One last ringer question in my last 30 seconds. From 2022 to 23 to 24, we had a public safety support revenues of \$2 million, then it jumped to \$4 million, and then it dropped down to \$1.4 million last year.

[02:37:43] That seems really strange to me. It doesn't coincide with COVID. What was going on there? I apologize. I don't have the book in for me, but I believe it's the revenue tax. Can you pull that up, Alan? It says public safety support revenue.

[02:38:04] I-52, sorry. Thank you. I think so.

[02:38:27] I'll have to look at it in return, get you an answer tomorrow. Is that okay? Sure. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Turner. Mr. Letourneau. Thank you. So you've been asked a couple times, and no disrespect, I don't think you've quite still answered the question. If there's a lot of demand and you think we're going to get 100 applicants for six spots, why can't we actually require somebody to stay and work for the county for a period of time after the two years is up, as opposed to just hoping that they will?

[02:38:59] We can work with HR on that. That was the pilot program piece of it for two years. So if we wanted to require that, I believe we could probably do that. I don't know. Mr. Hemstreet, do you have any comment on that?

[02:39:15] So we can work on that a little more. I think the main answer was we can't guarantee them a job either. So it's a two-way street. We may not have, if it works really well, we may not have any vacant positions at that point. Well, we're only talking about six people a year, though, right?

[02:39:31] So we can work with, we can work with HR and see if I feel more comfortable just as a, like an investment. This is a, I really applaud anytime staff comes with something innovative like this. I really appreciate it. So I don't want to be negative about it. I wish it wasn't quite so expensive.

[02:39:48] So I'm trying to, you know, justify in my mind, like the return on that, you know, you put all the effort into somebody and then they leave. This happens to LCPS on CDL drivers all the time at a much different level, but they, they're constantly training people. and then they leave to go drive for Amazon or something.

[02:40:06] So I would be more comfortable if we could work something like that out. Who is the partner agency? It says selected candidates are hired by the county's partner agency. Do you know who is the partner agency? Or is that you mean another department?

[02:40:23] It says selected candidates would be hired by the county's partner agency and provided with a three-month mentor training period. Yeah, that's our nonprofit vendor. You have a nonprofit vendor. The same one that's doing two other. So of this million thirty, how much of it's actually going to salaries or is the nonprofit vendor getting some of it or is there overhead that we're taking?

[02:40:44] Yeah, so we it's about 70 percent that goes into the salaries. And then the the mentor is about 16 percent of that. And then there's governance and oversight, about 12. And then there's a program set up.

[02:41:01] Recruiting is about two percent. Mentor gets. What do you mean the mentor gets 16 percent? That's salary as well. That's salary as well, meaning there's a mentor. So does somebody get paid extra if they're mentoring? I'm not following. As part of the program, there's a mentor for the six.

[02:41:20] Oh, so that's not another job function. Their job function is solely to be a mentor. Yeah, a mentor, and they're experienced programmers. They're teaching them how to work in this environment. Is that a dedicated position, or are you to, like, rotate people into that role from within the department?

[02:41:39] No, it's dedicated. It's dedicated. Is there one person currently doing this? No, we don't currently do that today. Okay, I'm out of time. Mr. Rush, would you come down to the podium, please? A podium, please, if you don't mind. Ms. Bricksman?

[02:41:59] Thank you, Madam Chair. This is very interesting. I also am a little uncomfortable with the fact that they might get trained and walk away. You know, my company, when they helped me with my master's degree, I had to stay a little while or pay them back.

[02:42:15] I know there's no, like, monetary thing here, but there might be one way to resolve it, and that is that the county would get first right of refusal or something like that. Like, if the county has a job, that needs to be your, you know, we could word it better, but if the county has a job, then they would be, that would be the choice for them, right?

[02:42:37] Or we would have first right of refusal. I don't know how you would do the language, but. So if we have a job open, somehow they would be obligated to take the job that we have open. But Mr. Hemstreet said we might not have a job open. So if we don't have a job open, we can't make them stay for two years.

[02:42:56] But we could say if we have a job open. Anyway, I'm wasting my time. We can talk about it later. I presume you're working with NOVA. You will work with NOVA because I sit on their advisory committee, and they're talking about this sort of stuff all the time. Exactly. Okay, great. correct um and then i just wanted to get you said you worked with mr rush on this um idea and we did okay i just wanted to ask mr rush have you ever worked on something like this have you seen them be successful anywhere else in the country yeah so um i came from education side here as well um there are currently two innovation centers within a 50 mile radius of here for high school

[02:43:36] so you have the academies allowed and you have the shahada center in winchester and they part of of that focuses on programming and technology and things of that sort. So there are students that are looking to roll into programs like this. This is a very beneficial program because some of the students are first generation college students that may not have the funds to go to college, but they're looking for those necessary job skills as well. I can see this being beneficial as well as there's a whole untapped adult learning, a learner's model to that as well.

[02:44:07] It could be, let's say, a mother, a single mother that doesn't necessarily have access to child care that could work in IT and work remotely. I could see that as well. Okay.

[02:44:22] All right. Thanks. That sounds good. Thank you. And then could you just explain a little bit more on the increase, the \$8.7 million for contractual licensing costs increases, IT, security services, and support costs? I'm just wondering if any of that is like one-time expenses.

[02:44:52] There are actually ongoing costs, ma'am. They're all ongoing costs? All of them are ongoing. I mean, we only had one that was one time, and it was \$88,000. Okay, you know where I was going with that. Yes. Okay, thank you.

[02:45:08] You're welcome. So, Mr. Rush, stay there. So why wouldn't it be more cost-effective to just do tuition reimbursement? I don't care who answers it. Yeah, that doesn't address the experience issue.

[02:45:26] So it's not necessarily a degree completion or a certification program. What we're trying to get them is their two years of experience that then allows them to qualify for our entry-level positions. So we require training and certification or degree and certification plus experience.

[02:45:46] So tuition reimbursement addresses the training side or the education side. It doesn't address the experience. Oh, but couldn't we build something in that address the experience with it? So, I mean, I love the idea, and I agree. We love doing something, trying to do something different.

[02:46:02] But couldn't we address the experience and do tuition reimbursement? And if so, wouldn't that just be more cost effective? I'm just thinking, I don't know that you, I agree with everybody else. I don't

know, we're not the military. I don't know that you can make somebody stay here. I mean, like, what are you going to do if they leave?

[02:46:19] You're going to sue them? I mean, you have to go into it with a contract that says they are going to stay here. And if you don't do that, I'm not sure how you can encourage them. You can give them bonuses, incentives, you know, whatever. But I don't know that you can make them stay here. I don't think that's realistic. I wish it, because we're not the military.

[02:46:37] But if we could figure out the experience issue, tuition reimbursement might be a better way to get at that. Mr. Rush, are we, if we're looking at trying to, you know, bring a diverse population and meet some of our DEI goals, are we looking at expanding this to any of our HBCUs in the region or in the state?

[02:47:02] I would say yes. I mean, the ones that I think about initially are Howard University. They have grants that are catered towards this. I know they're currently right now is at Virginia State.

[02:47:18] There are ones that are going through Virginia State currently right now that could virtually go through college for free, and they're looking for job placement as well. And then if they're rolling into an IT field or an education field, you could possibly have a first-generation college student go through, get a degree and a job without paying a single dollar for education.

[02:47:40] Which is always to go. It exponentially changes. So couldn't it be something like, you know, you do an internship program where you're going to school and you're getting the experience as well. Is that something like that possible?

[02:48:00] And then doing tuition reimbursement so it's not costing so much. This is a lot of money for the number of positions. I think it's an interesting idea. I love the thing outside the box, but I just wonder if we can figure out a different cost. We can look at the costing model of what it takes.

[02:48:19] Again, the experience part of it, to provide somebody a good salary so they're not worried about other things in their life and provide benefits and those types of things, that's part of this program. But if we need to go look at a different model, we can try to do that.

[02:48:38] I just don't know how that would be accomplished. I'm not sure. I think we're all trying to just think up here what, I think we all like this mostly. We all just kind of think of a different thing, yeah. Chair Randall. Yes, sir. If we make the board more comfortable, if someone wants to make a motion just saying that the job retention element is a requirement you want us to build into it, we'll definitely take that back and incorporate it.

[02:49:05] Is that legal? In front of the contract, what we would have to do is make it the condition of hiring and then we would build in, we'd hire them via contract and then they would agree that they would stay for a certain amount of time.

[02:49:21] Yeah, yeah, yeah. I would make that motion, actually. If that's a legal motion, I'll make that motion. Do you have another question? I was just going to say, I was going to move that the item be sent to the Finance Committee for discussion on those issues. Well, and the question, just a point of information, a more point of clarification, if we did that, oh, that's tomorrow.

[02:49:45] Well, I don't know. Well, I'm actually asking if we've got to get it back out in time to get it back here on Thursday because we're in the middle of a budget session. Yeah, I wasn't going to, I was assuming

that the positions would be funded, but I was going to still. Oh, oh, oh, so you said the program goes in and the positions are funded.

[02:50:03] I feel like we're having a whole anomaly. I understand. Then I will second that motion. I like that idea. I will second that motion. We can have discussion on this motion. Yeah, just so we can dive into these. I think the idea would be to keep it in the budget, but get into HR is going to have to talk to legal and figure out if there's a way.

[02:50:26] So one of the items that will come to finance is, is there a way to do some sort of a clawback or requirement or something like that? but we can also maybe get into some of these other questions that Chair Randall was just asking and other things. So we'll call it a budget development post-item, post-budget development.

[02:50:43] Yeah, no, I like that idea. I love that idea. Yeah. Okay, do you have discussion on the motion? Yeah. I second the discussion on the motion. So question. So I'm not really comfortable with the amount. I think it's really high. I like what Chair Randall is saying about looking at tuition reimbursement and then maybe some internship.

[02:51:02] I know when I was in college, I did, like, student teaching, you know, while I was in college. So that's possible to get the experience while you're in school. But I think a million dollars for six people is a lot. So I don't, I think it is the motion, but I.

[02:51:20] Not the motion. Okay, that's. The motion to send it to finance. That's the motion. Okay, well. Yes, it is. Okay, well, yeah, I support it, but I don't like the amount, Chair Randall.

[02:51:32] Well, okay, no, no, we're not doing that, no, no, let's do that, no, we're not doing that, okay, well, you can, you can, you can vote against the motion, you can vote against, you can vote against the motion, and after this motion, we still have to go back to the, to, to ask whether we want, well, whether we want to keep it in here or not, so, yeah, well, actually, that doesn't make any sense, that, that's just backwards, okay, now let's finish the motion, we're in the motion, let's finish the motion, Mr. Sainz.

[02:52:00] I was going to say I support the motion. I think there is some fine-tuning that we can do and set some parameters and guardrails to answer some of the heartburn that some folks have. But overall, I think it's a good idea coming from a good place, and it's definitely worthwhile to do. Because, for example, my day job, a person coming out of school for four years, no experience at all, just the degree, we're offering 100, 110 off the jump.

[02:52:23] So I think a person who's doing a career transition might not be in a school or just getting their associate's degree or whatever. This will be a set them up for a pathway to success once they go through the program. Mr. Letourneau, can you just kind of amend the motion to say that this motion will pass?

[02:52:41] This is this motion. And unless somebody after this takes a makes a motion to take out the budget altogether, which I don't think it was going to. Yeah. OK, I would argue even if somebody does do that, we can still have the discussion about it. in finance. Like, I don't think it's opposites.

[02:52:59] Okay, you're going to close in. Ms. Brixman. Thank you, Madam Chair. I think from the discussion the idea is that this person or these people would already have their associates? Not necessarily.

[02:53:14] Okay, okay. Alright. I was a little confused about the idea of tuition reimbursement. I'm comfortable with discussing it in finance. I think it's a really good idea. I think it's helping us reach our DEI

goals and that's what we've been asking you to do we've been asking everyone in county staff and to work with Mr. Rush on these sorts of programs and so I'm happy with the investment thank you um I want to I'm going to say this for the record because there are times you know you just need to say things for the record although I know I know everyone in this room knows this there will never

[02:53:51] be a moment where we would hire somebody who wasn't completely qualified or be in the program that wasn't completely qualified just because we're trying to reach a DEI goal. We all know that the people we're doing this with would be people who would be qualified, probably more than qualified.

[02:54:09] We're trying to get people in the department to stay. And just for the record, because that's going to be a discussion, so let's just say it, and now we're done. So, yeah, I think, well, truthfully, I think it's going to stay in the budget anyway, so I don't think it matters.

[02:54:29] So would you like a closing? I don't think so. Okay, all right. So this is the motion to send this to finance, not to take anything out of the budget, but to send it to finance to work out, to kind of suss out the details a little more, just to have a bigger, longer discussion. Motion is made by Elizabeth Letourneau.

[02:54:46] I second the motion. All in favor, please say aye. Any opposed? Okay. Now, great. Now, is there anybody on the dais who wants to make any other motions to remove this or to do anything different with it? Ms. Tocroni.

[02:55:03] Okay, I move that the Board of Supervisors allocate \$100,000 per trainee for the Workforce Innovation Program in Information Technology. So that would be \$600,000 total. Motion is made by Ms. Tocroni, so a second on that motion.

[02:55:23] That motion will die for lack of a second. Are there any other motions? All right, we're good. Thank you very much. Management and budget.

[02:55:39] You are on Description of Resource Request, page R6 through, I'm sorry, page R9 through R16. Budget narrative is 1-10.

[02:56:02] Paul, it feels like I've seen you in like five different departments. What department are you working in, sir? Paul.

[02:56:18] He is a management analyst in the Office of Management and Budget. Okay. Yeah, you are a busy guy. You're here every night. You are. Good job. All right, we're ready when you are.

[02:56:35] Good evening. I am pleased to be presenting for the first time the Office of Management and Budget's two resource requests. OMB's first resource request is responsive to the board's priority of collective bargaining administration. Since FY21, the board has added two of the three positions OMB identified as being necessary to support this board priority.

[02:56:57] Now that it is likely that SEIU will be certified as the representative to the General Government Bargaining Unit, a third analyst to the team will be necessary. The Fire and Rescue Bargaining Unit represents 651 employees and covers 15 position classification types in one department.

[02:57:15] And by contrast, the General Government Bargaining Unit represents almost 1,800 employees and covers 300 position classification types in 20 departments. OMB's second resource request is for two management analysts for the operating budget division, which is made up of Paul Hale and all the other folks you see at the staff table and in the audience during budget work sessions.

[02:57:37] These positions serve as assigned budget staff to all the county's departments and are responsible for shepherding their departments through the budget development process, which begins in July and ends in April, in addition to the active monitoring of the budget throughout the year. Analysts for this purpose have not been added to the team since FY17.

[02:57:58] Since that time, the general fund budget has grown from \$1.4 billion to \$2.7 billion, or 93%. And total FTE, which I consider a measure of workload and complexity, has also increased by 1,200 FTE over that same period.

[02:58:15] I'm happy to take any questions the board might have. Thank you very much. If you have questions, please put your lights on. Mr. Luterno. So the collective bargaining position, as it turns out, there's going to be likely collective bargaining for the general government work group, but not the trades.

[02:58:38] Does that change anything with what the needs are in the department? No, the labor and trades unit, should it have been represented, was only about 160 employees versus the 1,800 of the general government. Can you describe just in detail kind of what that position will end up doing?

[02:58:57] Sure. So this position, and Alan Drew is at the table, he's our one existing analyst that supported the IAFF negotiations. But the analysts responsible for this part of collective bargaining work on costing out all of the proposals that we get from the bargaining units.

[02:59:17] For example, with IAFF, we received 76 proposals from the union. In addition, that work also included the estimation or the costing of management proposals as well as the counter proposals. But on an ongoing basis, these positions will be used to monitor the personnel budget, which is an \$860 million line item.

[02:59:41] And we only have one analyst kind of assigned to manage that area of responsibility right now. And so there is work associated with the negotiations, but there's also ongoing work to maintain our modeling efforts as well as the personnel budget. Is it fair to say that if we don't have the position, it will take longer to get through the general government negotiation?

[03:00:04] It will be very near impossible to do that work without significant amount of resources that will go to our financial advisor for outside contractual support. So we have to farm it outside, basically. That's correct. As tempting as that might be, I think you need the position.

[03:00:23] Thank you, Mr. Crony. Thank you, Chair Randall. So I'm just wondering what the workload is of your current, you have two current analysts, right, for collective bargaining. I have one that is a revenue analyst or, yes, a revenue analyst that does the long-term and short-term revenue forecasting that supports what the board can put on the table during negotiations.

[03:00:48] And then I have one analyst who works on the expenditure side right now. Okay, but how's their workload currently? It's pretty high. It's very high. He is 100% dedicated to the responsibilities of his current job.

[03:01:04] And you're just with the Firefighters Union? That's correct. Okay. So you're asking for this one just for the Government Employees Union, SEIU? Yes. Okay, and you said since it's just the one that will go to negotiations, You still need, even though we only have one union.

[03:01:24] Yes, the size of the labor and trades compared to the general government is very large. Okay, and you can't get any assistance from the 10 other employees that are hired for the union for collective

bargaining? Because we have 10 employees and four departments.

[03:01:43] Right, those positions are not within OMB and would not be tasked with the responsibilities that the Office of Management and Budget has. Okay, all right, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Crony. Ms. Brixman. Thank you, Madam Chair. So when we did the IAFF, how many employees was it?

[03:02:02] I think you said that. 651 employees are in that bargaining unit. Okay, and there's going to be 1,800 in this bargaining unit? Correct. Okay. Because it kind of seems like one for that negotiation, maybe one for this upcoming negotiation would seem to make sense.

[03:02:18] How many people then total are on the county's internal negotiating team? I do not know the total number, but there's representation from the Department of Human Resources, County Administration, and the County Attorney's Office, and then the program departments that would be involved with the specific bargaining unit.

[03:02:39] Okay. I think that's all I have. Thank you. All right. Supervisors, does anyone make a motion on this item, on this department? Seeing none, thank you very much. I have one. I have one. You have a motion? Mm-hmm. Mr. Crony, I'm sorry.

[03:02:55] Okay. Can I make it again? Mm-hmm. I move that the Board of Supervisors remove the senior management analysts from the Office of Management and Budget. Motion made by Supervisor DeCrony. Is there a second on the motion? Seeing none, that motion would die for lack of a second.

[03:03:13] Thank you. I need a point of, I guess, clarification. Mr. Hemstreet, on something different. On page R10, it is the request for the purchase of development rights positions.

[03:03:32] Since everything in the budget is already in the budget and funded, and since this, the PDR program, did not pass, do we need to make a motion to take this money out of the budget? If there is, I need to be reminded, what has the board already done with this?

[03:03:55] You've retained the stewardship manager, but removed the other two positions? We took it out already. My recollection is you took out the components that were specific to the PDR program. We had been asking for the stewardship position, which is for the existing easements.

[03:04:13] Okay, all right. All right. I just didn't remember what we did. I was hoping to get more money. I was trying to get more money. All right. Thank you, supervisors. We are at Public Affairs and Communications. It is description of resource requests R-17 to R-19 and budget narrative 1-10.

[03:04:39] Good evening. Good evening madam chair and board members.

[03:05:04] We are ready when you are. With me at the table is senior deputy county administrator Erin McClellan who as you know serves as the department director for county administration. Also with me is deputy public affairs and communications officer Dr. Mary Frances Forcier. And joining us in the back of the room are the health and human services services portfolio department directors. I believe you see Ira Holland. Ina Fernandez, Margaret Graham, Stuart Bermick, and Chip Sullivan.

[03:05:28] Also in the portfolio is Animal Services Director Nina Stively. I saw all those people. I thought they just wanted to hang out with us tonight. And they all report directly to Deputy County Administrator Monica Spells, who's also in the back of the road.

[03:05:45] And if you could just imagine Dr. Goodfriend sitting back there as well. He couldn't be here tonight, but he obviously is a big part of our resource requests. Sounds good. I'd also like to introduce you to our Health and Human Services Communications Manager, Sarah O'Connell.

[03:06:04] She's also in the way back. And so our third priority is intended to support her work. If I may just take a minute to provide you a little bit of context to our resource requests. You may recall that the public affairs and communications program within the office of the county administrator has five overarching activities in the public affairs program.

[03:06:30] Those activities are constituent services, accessibility services, media relations, internal and external communications, and cable channel and broadcast operations. We have three resource requests that are priorities in the county administrator's proposed budget that fall into those last two activities that I mentioned, which are internal and external communications and cable channel operations.

[03:07:00] These are the first new resource requests from the Public Affairs and Communications Division that the board has considered since FY22. As a brief summary of the resource requests, our first priority in the proposed budget falls to support the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission meetings within the cable, channel, and broadcast operations activity.

[03:07:25] This priority is to convert an existing part-time position into a full-time position. The gentleman in the back of the room in the control room is that position we're talking about. This position, as you may recall, was established by the board, and FY21 is a part-time position to provide some needed capacity at that time.

[03:07:45] Over the last couple of years, as things have evolved and the number of meetings that require support from our broadcast folks have increased over time, we now have a need for this position to be full-time as well. The types of meetings that demand this service are typically to support all of the board's meetings, committee meetings, work sessions, and the planning commission's multiple meetings each month as well.

[03:08:12] This request also fulfills an essential succession planning process to ensure that we preserve within our organization the very highly specialized expertise required daily to maintain and operate television engineering and broadcasting equipment that supports the boardroom and Dulles room operations.

[03:08:32] Our second priority within the county administrator's proposed budget is in the internal and external communications activity, which is by far the largest service area within the public affairs and communications program. Our second priority in the proposed budget was prompted by the continued increase in demand for services from all county departments.

[03:08:56] This is for a senior communications specialist that's proposed to provide some much-needed capacity to our core communications team members that serve 20-plus departments directly and the offices that rely on us for their communication requirements.

[03:09:13] The demand for services right now from all county departments far exceeds the current service level. Only by enhancing our service level can we begin to address the countywide needs from all departments. And finally, our third priority in the proposed budget is for communication specialists to support the health and human services portfolio.

[03:09:33] I hope there's jazz hands going on behind me. This resource request is also informed by the board's equity resolution. This priority is intended to provide additional capacity in public affairs and communications to begin to address the requirements of the now locally administered Health Department and the Departments of Family Services, Mental Health, Community Corrections, Juvenile Court Service Unit, which includes the new RISE Youth Shelter and Youth and Family Resource Center.

[03:10:05] Currently, one position is supporting all of these departments. That's Sarah O'Connell, which is not sustainable and does not meet the department's needs. This third priority request is also intended to provide some much needed support to the Department of Housing and Community Development, which you may recall was sort of born out of Department of Family Services, and that's why Sarah continues to support that department as well.

[03:10:31] That department is not technically in the Health and Human Services portfolio. And so with that, we're happy to take any questions you may have about our requests. - That's great, thank you very much. Supervisors, put your lights on please if you have questions. um mr um letourneau thank you um and thank you glenn for all the work um so where i've had a little bit of heartburn is the fact that it's two positions on the health side um i think you pretty well convinced me on priority two because you know trying to handle all those departments and i

[03:11:07] certainly get why the health department is kind of its own animal so you know but adding one is doubling the capacity obviously um is it is it really need to be tripled in one year well what i would say is that we've been trying to increase the capacity in that uh portfolio for the last couple of years but obviously there's been many priorities that have been competing and so the need for the health and human services portfolio that these directors could testify to um is just far beyond our ability to meet and so there are many unmet needs specifically in that portfolio

[03:11:46] And so we're looking to provide specific resources that are dedicated to them. Obviously, two is better than one. We could probably put five in that portfolio, and it still wouldn't meet the needs. Do you kind of swing people over, though, as needed?

[03:12:04] I mean, is it strictly like, I don't know exactly how, this is more into how you're set up. Is it strictly that, okay, I've got this person, and they only service this department? Or are you more of a team where if a particular department, and I understand you're going to tell me that department's always busy, but if a particular department is surging, can you kind of bring additional support?

[03:12:23] Absolutely. I mean, public affairs works as a team. We support the county as a whole. Everybody would be called upon, particularly in the pandemic, to do whatever is needed. So very much like the model that the board implemented a few years ago in DTIC, those resources that are deployed to DTIC to support them are, you know, 98% doing DTIC work.

[03:12:50] But when transit, for example, was moved out of DTIC and into general services, we actually still have those two communicators supporting transit because they already had the expertise. Similarly, that's how it would roll in health and human services.

[03:13:07] All right. Thank you. Mr. Crony. Thank you, Chair Randall, and thanks, Glenn and Mary Francis. I am wondering if you moved the Department of Housing and Community Development outside of the HHS portfolio, if that would help.

[03:13:27] Because I agree with Supervisor Letourneau that three seems like a lot in the HHS portfolio. Well, the model that we have in Loudoun County is really a bare-bones model. Most jurisdictions in the National Capital Region have three professional communicators or more in a single department.

[03:13:51] If you look at Fairfax County or Washington, D.C., there are teams of communicators just like in economic development, just like in the Loudoun County Public Library, embedded teams of professional communicators. So three resources to cover five-plus departments is really a drop in the bucket to meet those departments' needs.

[03:14:14] We've implemented a decentralized model or a centralized model here in Loudoun to try to stretch our resources as best we can, where we will have all of the resources in the central public affairs office, and we support all those departments out there.

[03:14:31] And so it allows us to sort of, as Supervisor Laterno just mentioned, surge our capacity in one area when a certain department like planning and zoning lately, and in the future will certainly need support, but also to build up that subject matter expertise by having people focus on a particular area.

[03:14:52] And Health and Human Services, those communications are difficult. It's not easy for somebody to just drop in and whip out a communications plan for the health department. So people who are working in that arena day in and day out will build up expertise over time, which will improve the efficiency of our service to those departments.

[03:15:13] Do you think, you know, Loudoun County Public Schools has a full communications department, and they do a lot of public campaigns on bullying, vaping, suicide prevention, You know, some of the things you mentioned in this resource request item, can your department work with Loudoun County Public Schools Communications Department in these areas?

[03:15:37] You know, is there some collaboration that could help with the workload? There is collaboration, but may I call on either Monica or Margaret to speak on that? Sure. Hello, Ms. Graham.

[03:15:55] Good evening. Within the Department of Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Developmental Services, we chair the Prevention Alliance of Loudoun, which is a collaboration and a coalition building team to address the very issues you speak of.

[03:16:12] And based on the very limited resources currently within our communication teams, there are messages and campaigns we would like to do, but we have had to refrain. We collaborate with the schools through PAL and vice versa, and I do think there are messages we'd like to share more of, but have had to be selective about how we do it.

[03:16:38] And you think you're... The schools is primarily responsible for communicating with the school audience, whereas Margaret's department has responsibility for the greater community, which includes the school audience as well.

[03:16:55] All right, thank you. I know you tried to sneak it in there, Mr. Cronin. I really appreciate what you did. You tried to. All right, Ms. Bricksman. Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, I know Ms. O'Connell, and I know that she did this work in Fairfax County, so yay for us for snagging somebody from Fairfax.

[03:17:20] I also know how much stamina she has because we've run a lot of races together, so i think she can keep doing this by herself no i'm just kidding i'm just kidding she's going to be great and she is doing great i'm sure um so i was a little bit skeptical until i read the justification and knowing that you're going to

have responsibility for the entire health department right now is is kind of what sold me on it so i'm happy to support your resource request thank you No, I will absolutely support this request.

[03:17:54] You know, Glenn, I've said over the years many, many times that, you know, I don't think we have to look as far as Fairfax or DC to see what they do, to see how much they do with their televised broadcast and things like that.

[03:18:14] Look at LCPS. The material they put out on a constant is just fantastic. And actually, it would complement, if we could do more with that, it would complement everything else that we do. If I'm not mistaken, you know, first of all, I will support your research request, but if I'm not mistaken, is the issue that we don't have the facilities or the equipment to actually push out more information or different types of programming?

[03:18:40] Is that the issue? Partially. I would argue that the process of creating content for a cable channel the way Fairfax does. Or LCPS. Or even LCPS. That's a resource-intensive activity.

[03:19:00] It is. And so our broadcast folks are currently putting most of their time or all of their time into the board meetings, the planning commission meetings, as well as maintaining the equipment. The school boards broadcast their meetings, too, which I think actually goes back to your statement that I think your department is kind of bare bones, to be quite honest.

[03:19:23] It is. And has been for a while. I think that sometimes when we don't actually invest in both people and materials and equipment, we end up at these moments.

[03:19:39] Because if we were able to just push out more material about what all these good departments do, it would be amazing. It would be amazing if we could tell somebody what we're doing with this crisis or that crisis or where to go. But we don't do that because we don't have neither the people nor the equipment.

[03:19:57] And so, you know, at times I do get concerned that, you know, Loudon often just works on a shoestring for so many things. And we take pride in that. And I'm not saying we should just, you know, not be as efficient as possible.

[03:20:15] But sometimes, you know, efficiency doesn't get you to where you want to go. And you actually may end up hampering your efforts when we do not invest in both the personnel and the equipment that we need to invest in.

[03:20:34] And, again, I don't think we need to go all the way to D.C. I think, I mean, if you look at what they do in LCPS, and everyone here is doing a great job. I mean, you're doing a fantastic job. But you are bare bones, and I think you've been to bare bones for quite a minute, actually, for quite a while.

[03:20:51] So I'm not going to make any motions to take anything away. Is anyone else going to make any motions to take anything away? I didn't think so. Thank you very much. Thank you, everybody. I appreciate you all. Yeah, everybody's in a sense. Okay.

[03:21:09] I think that might be it for tonight. Supervisors, we actually, on Thursday, we will be inviting back the Commonwealth Attorney. We will be inviting back the sheriff.

[03:21:25] And I have sent an email to the chair and vice chair of the school board to join us as well at Thursday's meeting. Megan is sitting down. Is there something you want to share with us before we leave? We do have on the agenda the non-departmental section of the budget.

[03:21:41] Is that here on the agenda? Right, which largely just features the pay proposal as well as the non-profit. But you're going to sit down and tell us what the governor did with the budget. I would like to not replay earlier this evening. Thank you. The non-departmental section of the budget document just includes the merit increase as well as information about the county's non-profit grant program.

[03:22:06] It's always on the agenda, so we just wanted to make sure we don't have any questions. And I actually do have, do you want to give anything more on that? The pay proposal for general government is a 7% merit with a shifting of the pay scales by 5%.

[03:22:22] And then for fire and rescue and the sheriff's pay plan, there's an average of 12.4% pay increase. That includes a 9.4% pay scale adjustment and a one-step, which is an average of 3%.

[03:22:43] And on the other question you asked my office today, I will get that answer to you tomorrow. And then anything you want to say about the grant funding process? Just that it adheres to the board's guidance of providing funding based on last year's applications.

[03:23:00] Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, yeah. Questions for this, Mr. Letourneau? Yeah, so we submitted one today. I'm just more telling everybody. Is it one more time? We submitted a question today asking for a scenario which the general pay increase is 6.5 instead of 7.

[03:23:19] I'm sure you probably don't have the answer yet to what the financial implications are, but in case you did, I figured I'd ask. I do have a response on the financial implications. I do not have at this point what that does to our market position. Yeah, I asked too, which is number one, How much do we save, but also does that put us in some kind of issue related to our 95-105?

[03:23:41] So a half percent reduction for the general workforce is a \$1.3 million value, and a full percent decrease to 6% would be a \$2.6 million value. Okay, I'm not sure if I'm going to make any motions on that.

[03:23:58] I want to find out the second half of that. One of the reasons I asked the question is because LCPS is at 6.5 across the board, And we're at seven. And honestly, I think seven is pretty high. You know, private sector is certainly not doing seven.

[03:24:13] I know we're not the private sector, but, you know, I can tell you what the discussion is with WMATA. And the fact that we're asking WMATA employees to take a zero this year is based on the fact that they got seven last year. And all of our other jurisdictions think that that's a really high number.

[03:24:30] So I'm a little concerned about how high that is. I don't know if, you know, where I am on how that nets out, depending on the question. But I'm just flagging it because I might bring it up Thursday, depending on sort of what I decide to do. Thank you. All right. Thank you. Ms. Bricksman.

[03:24:46] Thank you, Madam Chair. A couple questions. If it's a 7% base and then a 5% step, is that what you said? So that's a total of 12%. No, the general workforce pay plan is not a step in grade plan. So a 7% merit increase would affect every employee.

[03:25:05] The 5% pay scale adjustment would just shift the minimum and maximum, so that wouldn't not be a total 12% pay increase. Oh, okay. And LCSO, is that 12%? Yes. That one's 12% flat.

[03:25:21] Yes. Okay. And is that included in Mr. Letourneau's question, what the impact would be of making the LCSO 8% or 8.5% or 8%? No, that was not a question posed, but we can respond to that in writing.

[03:25:38] That'd be great. Thank you. Also, to clarify, you want the cost estimate for 8.5% pay increases? And eight. And eight, please. And then did we, I'm not finding it in here immediately, but did we increase the bucket for nonprofits for the funding for the grant program?

[03:26:03] Yes. Mr. Govan is here to correct me if I'm incorrect, but I believe the increase was approximately \$425,000 for FY25. Okay. And does that, I can't remember if I submitted this as a budget question or not. Maybe I didn't.

[03:26:20] Does that get us to the place where we would have been able to fund everyone that qualified last year? Yes, it is consistent. And you did submit that budget question and it's consistent with the board's guidance on this area. And that is to get us where those who, I think it was like 75% or 80% score, gets the funding?

[03:26:42] Yes, that's correct. Okay. Okay. All right. I just wanted to make sure, if not, I was going to make a motion to increase that bucket. But it sounds like you guys already did. Thank you. So I'm much less concerned about saying it's 7% or 6% or 10% or whatever that is, as I am about saying, what is Comparator County's doing?

[03:27:02] Because what we're trying to do is stay in line with our guidance, which is 95% to 105% of our comparator counties. So if that number is 6%, then okay. But if that number is 7%, then that's what, then so I would like to know maybe on Thursday that question.

[03:27:20] Like what does that 7% bring us at the 95% to 105% of our comparator counties, which is our board policy that we want to do. And so that's the real question for me. The other thing is when we did the nonprofit grant funding, we took out six nonprofits and we gave them the stream of income from the county because they were the core nonprofits.

[03:27:47] Since the time that we did that, one of those nonprofits dropped away because they just didn't make it, that nonprofit. If I wanted to insert another nonprofit in that slot where that sixth nonprofit used to be and have another nonprofit come into that slot right now, how would that look?

[03:28:07] How would that happen? Because I'm not talking about money in the nonprofit grant pot bucket altogether. Ms. Bricksman, I already took care of that. I'm talking about our ones that are funded. So, Chair Randall, we would want to talk to you offline.

[03:28:23] So when we talk, just to understand where the definition is coming from, when we talk about the core service providers, we've defined those as entities that if they did not exist, the county would come to the board and ask for positions to create that service. Well, we did, but we also have some other things to that, too.

[03:28:39] We also said the county uses them as like an arm of county services. We said that they're maybe the only ones that do that service in the county. So we had a few different things that would define them. answer your question I would like to talk to you offline to understand what you're trying to address okay that's fine that that sounds fine yeah that sounds fine and and and based on that answer there may be some motions that I make on Thursday as well okay I thought Miss Green was sitting there and I couldn't see her so she's here at the table right now if you address any of

[03:29:14] your market first yeah sure I'm just point of clarification the 7% doesn't impact our market position because by the board policy, we measure market position by the pay scale. So the impact to

market position for the general workforce would be the 5% that we're asking for the pay scale adjustment. Your market position is calculated against the midpoint of the pay scale. And that's what we look at to be 95 to 105%. I do have data on what some of our other comparators are doing for their, um, I honestly don't know what you just said. I'm not

[03:29:51] kidding. I'm not, I don't know if you answered my question. I'm trying to get to an answer because truthfully the, the answer is the answer. If it's 5%, that's the answer. If it's seven, that's the answer. My, my question is if, what is it to keep us at the 95 to 105% of our, of, of our competitors? Five percent adjustment on the pay scale, which is not the same thing as a merit increase for your general workforce. The merit increase is a separate number and separate percentage. So when we shift our pay scales and we move the minimum and the maximum, that also

[03:30:28] moves the midpoint. That is what we calculate our market position against. And it's the midpoint of the pay scale. So if you want to know your market position, what you're looking at is the pay scale adjustment, what we're recommending, we're targeting to get us to 100% of the market.

[03:30:43] There is some estimation going on with that because our other comparators haven't completely finalized all of their budget numbers yet. But we think that 5% would get us to 100% of the market. And I can provide data as early as tomorrow on what some of the other comparators are proposing for their merit, which is a separate number.

[03:31:03] I see. Chair Randall. Yes. So when we combine that with the scale adjustment, the reason why I recommended a 7% is in order to provide a 2% separation between anybody who is a current employee and sitting at the minimum range at 25% of the range or 50% of range because that's typically where we hire our new employees to address a future compression issue so that new employees are making a little bit less than existing employees who are here.

[03:31:36] And so that's why I recommended the 7%, so there would be that separation between people who are here and people who are newly hired. I understand. Now, since Ms. Green is here, if I may, Chair Randall, can we address the sheriff's deputy's pay?

[03:31:52] Because the pay proposal that we made at the 12.4% places us at about 97% of market, if I recall correctly. Yes. So to go to a 8%, which I believe would be a 5% scale adjustment and then one step, we can calculate that, but I believe that will place us below 95% in terms of the market.

[03:32:16] Okay. I got all that. But that's actually different. That's not why they're coming back. That's not why they might come back. That's not why we're going to ask them to return. That's not the issue. We just got a question to calculate.

[03:32:31] Oh, okay. Okay. All right. In the pay proposal. I just want to make sure that we're being clear that our recommendation is based off of the market position for law enforcement positions. I understand. I understand exactly what you're saying. Okay. I understand. I understand. All right. Okay.

[03:32:49] So I think we're going to have more discussions about this on Thursday. Great. Thank you. Thank you. Appreciate it. If I was anything else. All right. Thank you. And we are adjourned. Jeanette, come talk to me for a sec.



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