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## Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee, Tuesday, April 9, 2024

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**[00:11:29]** Good evening. I will now call the order of the April Finance, Government Operations, and Economic Development Committee meeting. This room has a hearing loop. If you need hearing assistance, switch your hearing modes to telecoil mode. If you need a headset, we have those available. Please leave the clerk to request one.

**[00:11:46]** We have a few items this evening, a little bit unusual for the Finance Committee. One of them is a closed session. We don't do that too often, but we will be having a closed session discussion a real estate issue probably around 7 p.m. depending on exactly where we are on the agenda.

**[00:12:04]** We also have a legislative item that we're adding to the agenda which is really due to the timeliness of the sessions and the veto sessions. So if we have no objections I would like to propose the following additions and deletions for tonight's agenda. The addition of a discussion and potential action for letter to the general assembly administration about the budget amendment's impact on funding to amada and loudon county specifically and also deferral of item 15 fy 2025 human services non-profit grant recommendations that item was not ready

[00:12:39] for the committee's review we will be taking that up next month it will result in a little bit less time for the board to have with this item so we'll just need to be cognizant of that but it should It should not impact the timing for the program and process itself for the nonprofits.

[00:12:58] So are there any objections to that addition and deletion? Chair Randall? Mr. Chairman, thank you. I don't have an objection. Is it possible that somebody could let the head of the Human Services Network know that we will have a month delay? Is that okay? Ms. McCollum. Madam Chair, to answer your question, I believe staff has already notified our nonprofits of the delay.

[00:13:18] Wonderful. Thank you. Indeed they have, yes. Okay, moving on, adoption of consent agenda. We have seven items proposed for consent, and they are number five, quarterly report, upcoming contracts, fourth quarter, FY24. Item number seven, contract award, architectural and engineering services for the renovation of the existing courthouse facility.

[00:13:37] Item number eight, contract renewal, intersection improvement design services. Item number nine, contract renewal, day support, and employment services. Item number 11, fiscal year 2023, Loudoun County Community Services Board annual report. Item number 12, resolution authorizing the issuance of appropriation-backed bonds through the Economic Development Authority of Loudoun County, Virginia.

[00:13:56] And item number 13, resolution authorizing the issuance and sale of general obligation public improvement in refunding bonds. I will move approval of the consent agenda. Is there a second? Seconded by Chair Randall. Any discussion on the consent agenda? Seeing none, all in favor say aye.

[00:14:13] Aye. Anyone opposed? Motion carries, 5-0. All right, we'll move into our information items, starting with our monthly Department of Economic Development report. Mr. Reiser, you always bring visitors for us. I like to have others carry the load as much as possible.

[00:14:34] Okay, good. We'll get to the EDAC report in a moment. Through the end of March, DED is reporting 104 wins, 2,766 jobs retained or created, and \$4.9 billion in investment.

[00:14:50] We have already met most of our annual metrics at this point, including business retention visits, as noted in the item, minority-owned businesses worked with, ombudsman assistance, and the targeted pipeline, which is our economic diversity metric. Jobs increased by 303,000 in March, which is, once again, a stronger number than was expected.

[00:15:11] January is the most recent month for local unemployment data. the rate was 2.3 for Loudoun, 3.0 for Virginia, and 3.7 for the U.S. The prime age labor force participation rate, ages 25 to 54, was 83.4 percent in March, really the highest it's been since the early 2000s, which is, I think, really good news. The overall labor force participation rate was at 62.7 percent in March. That's still down a little bit from the rate before the pandemic.

[00:15:45] The next CPI report released tomorrow. The report last month showed prices in February were up 3.2% as compared to the year before. That is right in the pocket with 3.1 in January, 3.4 in December. And I wanted to offer just a quick reminder for the annual Small Business Week.

[00:16:04] It's held April 28th through May 4th, highlighted by the second annual Launch Loudon Small Business Summit that will be held April 30th at the Lodge at Hanson Park. The following week, May 6th through 10th, we will be once again coordinating small business visits in each of the county's districts, and we appreciate your staff working with us to get those scheduled.

[00:16:25] And with that, I'll turn it over to Siobhan and Tim from EDAC. Good evening, Chair Letourneau. Tim and I, we're going to give a quick update on what EDAC has been working on over the last quarter. We've got several areas, and of course, EDAC loves serving at the pleasure of the board in partnership with the DED.

[00:16:44] Our first order of business is that we've been tracking the implementation of the zoning ordinance and monitoring the implementation of that ordinance on its impact on business in the county. We're also monitoring the data center CPAM-ZoAM process.

[00:17:00] It was our intention to ask for a data center ad hoc at this meeting. We're going to delay that ask to align with the new timeline and the separation of the CPAM-ZoAM process That was recommended by the board, and we'll make that ask at a later time this year to make sure that we're aligned with that process.

[00:17:19] We're also aligning EDAC with our cluster strategy. There are several ways commissioners serve EDAC. One of the major initiatives that we have is alignment of commissioners with the Department of Economic Development's cluster strategy.

[00:17:36] We do that to make sure that our expertise is best aligned to support the department's business development measures and that alignment allows us to do that the way that cluster strategy works is each cluster is led by a business development officer for the for the department and they set their own cadence of meetings outside of our regular edak meetings to provide subject matter expertise and support and business development retention for the department so it's a it's a major asset for the county it's a major lift for the for the department and for the commission, but that's how we best utilize the talent in the commission

[00:18:13] outside of our ad hocs, outside of our committee meetings, outside of our regular meetings. I'm now going to turn it over to Tim to give an update on the budget and everything else that we're working on. Good evening, committee members. Just a quick thing from our March full EDAC meeting. We had a presentation from the 2023 Loudon Innovation Challenge winner, Blue Vigil. So Mr. Rob Schumann came in and gave us an understanding of his company, but also the innovative use of his technology in the lighting world. And that was really good to hear about the

[00:18:49] economic development and path that they have there. Obviously, one of our most unique values in our EDAC meetings is when we had Mr. Hempstreet in for the budget. So we had the budget presented. A lot of good discussion, as we always have. The board was very positive in the remarks back for the sustainment of the AAA bond rating.

[00:19:07] So the business leaders do appreciate how the fiscal responsibility of the county has been handled, and I'll just stop with those two points from the board meeting. - Okay, questions or comments for any of our speakers?

[00:19:23] Chair Randall. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I wanna say to Mr. McFadden, Alabama went to the family floor, and one of the most fun things I did during this whole dance was to watch your Facebook page, And the night that they went, your Facebook page was, let's just say you were excited that night.

[00:19:43] And they lost to UConn, so that's a good run right there. I think that was to be expected. It was to be expected. No, no, they did. They had a great year, and I really enjoyed watching your page. It was lots

of fun. If I may just interject on that, there was just a comment about our bond rating.

[00:20:01] So one of our bond councils, as a matter of fact, was there in Alabama, of course. our Deputy County Administrator also has some thoughts on this. So perhaps that is why we have such a strong... Well, we were in Congress because... I don't know about that.

[00:20:18] I'm really just going to be watching here tonight. Okay, a couple of things. First, Buddy, I want, Mr. Reyes, I really want to say that we haven't just met our year-to-date goal for the minority businesses that we've worked with.

[00:20:33] You have just blasted through it 142 percent as of right now is absolutely exceptional. When I think back to when you started this effort, it was, I mean, we were not getting people talking to us. There were not, minority businesses were not joining the chamber or staying in the chamber.

[00:20:51] I've said before that African-Americans were the only minority population that went down in Loudoun County in the last census, and people really were not feeling like that they were getting that assistance. I hear from business owners now all the time that they feel the difference, they see the difference. I hear them talking about you, I hear them talking about joining the chamber.

[00:21:09] It is a whole shift, and so I want you to know that that effort has not gone unrewarded, not just in the numbers, but what I'm hearing out in the community has also been very, very positive. So I just wanted to reflect that back to you. I also wanted to say that I was recently over at One Loudoun and having lunch, And they had their own small, I mean, their own restaurant week.

[00:21:35] And I realized that we stopped doing restaurant week in Loudoun County. We do small business week, but we don't do restaurant week. I was wondering, I know why we stopped it. I was wondering, do you think it, I have two questions. One, do you think it's maybe we can revisit that discussion?

[00:21:55] Because I think there's a lot of restaurants now, areas are doing them themselves. So there may be a lot of restaurants now that are going to. And then my second question is, for Small Business Week, can we give you names of businesses we'd like to visit in certain districts? Can we do that?

[00:22:11] Because there's a couple that I would like to see and some that are actually restaurants. Is that how you want to do that? No, absolutely. Just let us know, and we'll be happy to set those meetings up. We have looked at Restaurant Week, especially over the last few years.

[00:22:26] Supervisor Brissman actually inquired about it a few years ago. And we have worked with Visit Loudoun on coming up with a concept. We were getting ready to go forward with that concept right around COVID. Of course, we stopped doing it then.

[00:22:41] But I do think that there's a lot of validity in that concept, and it is something we should probably revisit. Okay, great. Thank you. And I'll send you some ideas for Small Business Week. Thank you. Okay. Other? I think Mr. McClendon.

[00:22:57] Yes, go ahead, please. just wanted to make a comment madam chair on your recognition of how the business ecosystem is changing and more inclusive there's been a major shift on our Commission as well and it's something that we focused on for a number of years not only getting subject matter experts but finding subject matter experts that represent the community on our Commission more fully if you

look at the Commission now I think we have 21 voting members the The majority of those members are minority.

[00:23:35] Nine of those members are African-American. That is amazing because not long ago when Bernard Mustafa was the first, he was the first. And that was eight years, I mean, second. Necessarily not, Chair. That's two different groups, EDA. Okay, EDA, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

[00:23:51] So Bernard was the first chair of the EDA. I was the first chair of EDAC. Okay. And both of those groups have had a significant shift over the years. Right. And that is an effort of the commissioners, the members, and the department just making sure that we have complete representation from our business community on these groups, as well as subject matter experts.

[00:24:17] And we don't announce that. That's just what we do. And truthfully, to my Mr. Chairman, you're so right. Sometimes you get the right people in the right places, and you look for diversity. You look for excellence first, and then you look for diversity, and it all just comes.

[00:24:34] You don't actually have to announce it, but it's happened, not just on those committees. You are absolutely correct, but also in county, in the chamber, just county-wide. And I just want to recognize how well that has gone.

[00:24:50] And I think I like your wording. We changed the ecosystem. I like that wording. I appreciate that. So I would invite any of you to come experience a meeting. They're open. The feedback that I've gotten from past chairs that come and say, Siobhan, it looks like Loudon.

[00:25:08] And that makes me feel good. And that should make the county feel good. Okay. Any other questions or comments? Thank you very much. I do want to acknowledge you said that you would likely be coming back to us with a request on the data center cluster group.

[00:25:25] Yeah, I think that will be June-ish. Okay. June-July time will be more appropriate. Yeah. Okay. We'll be ready for that. Thank you. Thank you very much. Okay. Next up is the Quarterly Report of Capital Improvement Projects.

[00:25:51] Good evening, Chair Letourneau and members of the committee.

[00:26:18] We are here to present the Quarterly Report for the Capital Improvement Projects program for the third quarter of fiscal year 24, which ran January through March of this year. Along with me tonight are Nancy Boyd, Jim Zeller, and Mark Hoffman. And I'd also like to introduce our new Assistant Director of Facilities, Design, and Construction, Don Breedice.

[00:26:40] Don has been with the county for over 25 years and most recently served as DTIC's program manager for transportation construction. So we're happy to have Don in his new role, and he's here to support answering some questions. As we noted last quarter, our PMO, or Project Program Management Office consultant, has been putting together this quarterly report and is quickly getting up to speed.

[00:27:06] As a part of their review and implementation of process improvements, it is our plan to revise the formatting of this quarterly report in the future to more clearly deliver project information. And just want to let you know that our plan is to roll out that new format with the new fiscal year, which the first report will come to this committee in October of 2024.

[00:27:31] So it would be the first quarter of 25, July through September. beyond that note we don't have anything to highlight for you beyond what's in the packet and so with that we're happy to take any

questions you might have for us okay i do have a question but i will see if others do first no okay i'll jump in then um so one of the delayed projects identified was the braddock road widening from paula 6 to loudon county parkway and design is getting pushed from fall to spring um so it said in the packet that vdot's adding a requirement for

[00:28:09] bridge plans due to the fact that we have to expand a culvert there um so i'm kind of baffled by you know sort of how we how we came to this point why they would have that requirement whether we knew they would require that or whether we were surprised from a design standpoint because that kind of seems like something considering how long this project's been around for you know we would have known. So, can you kind of walk me through what's going on there? Well, first, I'd answer your question by yes. It was a surprise to us. Okay. And so, to step back a little bit,

[00:28:46] that original segment of Braddock Road was designed and constructed by a developer. And at the time, correct. And at that time, the developer, instead of using the standard VDOT box culvert detail, they decided to use a precast culvert. It's an arch culvert. And that was what was installed. So as a result, we contacted that manufacturer. We were going to replicate that exact design for the widening. And to us, that's kind of a no-brainer that that's just an expansion

[00:29:25] of an existing design. Well, VDOT's interpretation is that since we're not using their standard box culvert detail they're going to treat this as a new bridge and we need to go through a bridge design process so we've already initiated that we have we're in the process submitting that first package and we are going through that process but um we we didn't take that necessarily sitting down but that was essentially either we do that or the county is becoming will become responsible for that addition for maintaining it do we always have to go through the bridge process when we're

[00:30:04] installing a like a box culvert so if we use the typical detail if we use the typical detail standard design it's a standard design and that's already pre-approved could we use the vdot standard design in this case even though it doesn't it wouldn't be mirrored on the other side that's hydraulically that's kind of tricky because you would be altering the flow that's in that existing culvert, and I would suspect you may have to do some modifications to the existing, which we would not want to do. We would want to try to mirror the existing condition as much as

[00:30:43] we could. Now, the good news is when it comes to construction, that'll actually help the construction process because it's precast and we do not have to cast it in place and go through the 28-day curing period before we can do further disturbance or place fill on it so it will make up a little bit of time in construction but not the not the months that we've been pushed back on

[00:31:13] okay well great thank you keep pushing through I don't know what else to say that's the answer Mr. Sains thank you just out of curiosity how are relationships and communications going with uh say dominion loudon water or novak or whoever washington gas etc all the utilities for some of the projects regarding realigning utility and whatnot is everything going well or do you need any help and trying to oh and vdot too to try to speed up the process when it comes to all those all

[00:31:52] that coordination so i i would say things are going actually quite well with dominion uh since We've had further discussion with them, specifically on the trail crossing at Sterling Boulevard. We have worked through, Dominion actually had to work through their relocation plan with Nova Parks to make sure Nova Parks was okay with it.

[00:32:16] We've gone through that process, and that's all been coordinated. So now we're in the process of submitting final plans and plats for that particular project. So that's going fairly well. Where we do have some difficulties is more in the actual implementation of the relocations and coordinating among the different utilities of, like, who goes first, who goes second when we get to relocation.

[00:32:45] And I know our utility engineers are working very hard to coordinate that up front, so we do not encounter some of the challenges that we did on the Waxpool Road project at Pacific Boulevard and Broderick Road where, you know, we essentially had utilities on top of each other.

[00:33:06] And it didn't really flow very well because it wasn't, the utility providers do not talk to each other. And this is more the fiber carriers. They're the ones that we notoriously have like the most issues with because a lot of the existing fiber in the ground, even the carriers are not exactly sure whose fiber it is because the companies keep changing and merging and so forth.

[00:33:39] And so that's always the biggest challenge for us is identifying who is in the ground fiber-wise and making sure they're coordinated with all the other utilities and then just working through the relocations themselves.

[00:33:55] We do know that, like, Washington Gas does require a lot of lead time to get the appropriate approved crews in place in order to facilitate those relocations. So we're making a concerted effort to work with washing the gas first and early on projects where we know that that's going to be an issue.

[00:34:18] Yeah, I was just asking in general, not even specifically anything in my district, but just in general, just curiosity. As I always told you guys before, if there's any time you need our help to reach out to their government fair folks and the different companies and kind of poke and knock on the door to help speed up the process or get a meeting or whatever, please let us know so I'm sure I can speak on my other colleagues.

[00:34:43] They'll reach out to anybody when we need to to help with these projects and realignments and stuff. Okay. Supervisor Armstead. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Two questions.

[00:34:58] One on the Route 15 and Lockett's bypass. Do we have any greater sense of exactly where that will go at this point or where it would be preferred to go? I know it's west of Lockett's.

[00:35:15] Beyond that, no. As you'll note in the report, we have issued the RFP to get a design firm on board in order to begin the planning to get those specifics, to start nailing down those specifics.

[00:35:31] So in a few months, we'll get somebody on board, and then we can start working through that. But I'm sure it's going to take a while for them to first inventory what all the different encroachments are through the various properties and then start working on alignment options.

[00:35:53] All right. Follow up on that. Are you at a point where you can be comfortable with the idea that we will not be taking that through the mobile home park or through the, what is it, JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary? Or is it possible that there might be an encroachment on either one of those?

[00:36:19] i think at this point it's too early to tell all right we we just have we need to get some of those we need to get more property information to understand what all the encumbrances are to even determine what kind of options we have alignment wise okay and then on a different project another one in i think catoctin district on the route 7 route 287 interchange improvements i think That was one of the projects that's been delayed.

[00:36:52] As a matter of curiosity, is any part of that delay related to the back and forth we had over the Route 690, Route 7 interchange? I know that we needed to get 697 resolved before we started 287 and 7, but is this delay at all related to that, or is it purely based on the field testing that you mentioned in the report?

[00:37:25] It's the latter. It's not a result of anything to do with the 7690. The field testing, I won't go into great detail, but some of the field testing that was done on existing pavement that's there today came back showing that the pavement may not meet the standard thicknesses that's required for that type of facility. And so VDOT has questioned some of the expansion pavement design that we have proposed and how it's going to tie in. So we're going to do some additional field

[00:38:03] investigation to verify what the existing conditions are and that we can tie into that successfully without having to go through and basically rebuild the existing pavement on one the existing ramps that's out there. And is this a common issue? No. And we're bringing this up to VDOT that this is not a standard comment that we've seen in the past. And what we see in the

[00:38:37] field is that the pavement is not failing. So we kind of question why it's a significant concern, but we've kind of split the difference with them and they've agreed that let us do some additional testing they will be there when we do it just to verify what we find to make them feel okay that what's out there is appropriate and that we don't have to do any kind of rehabilitation of the existing pavement and that doesn't even include any improvements that we're proposing okay yeah

[00:39:11] thank you very much that's all okay any other questions comments seeing none thank you very much. Next up, internal audit, countywide risk assessment. So this is planning for a countywide risk assessment to be completed that will sort of drive our audit planning over the next several years. And then we'll get some more specifics coming to us for approval that kind of drives

[00:39:41] out of this process. Mr. Govan, good evening. All right. Good evening, Chair Luterno and committee members. I appreciate you allowing us to give us the opportunity to come before you to talk about the Internal Audit Program Risk Assessment. To my right, I have Dr. Megan Cox. So I have a brief presentation to provide you an update. Please, next slide. And so the primary purpose of the Internal Audit Risk Assessment is to identify risks that could threaten an organization's

[00:40:17] ability to meet business objectives, whether they are financial, operational, or compliance-related. By pinpointing these high-risk areas, the county can take proactive measures to mitigate them. The last time we had such a risk assessment was in 2015 by Clifton and Larson.

[00:40:39] And so it's best that we go after 10 years to redo another risk assessment. Next slide. As you can see, as of 2018, we had about 13 of the internal audits conducted primarily requested by departments and offices for performance or compliance determinations.

[00:41:06] And these audits, of course, were in some way, shape, or form related to risks identified. Next slide, please. So, the primary purpose of the risk assessment is just to identify top performance and management challenges, which will then feed into building a multi-year internal audit plan.

[00:41:29] We have SC&H group on board from Maryland who will be performing this risk assessment. Note, this is a one-time event. Next slide, please. So the department has already started, you know, presenting to leadership on the upcoming risk assessment since February.

[00:41:51] And now we are working with our consulting firm to develop the training plan for the county's staff awareness of the internal audit plan. In addition to training, the consulting firm will collect data that include interviews and surveys and other documentation like budgets, policies, and procedures to develop what the level of risk is for the county's programs in order to determine which programs should be included in the audit plan.

[00:42:24] Next slide. Some key areas, of course, in doing so is identifying contacts for the interviews and surveys, which we've already started down that path. We've also started to identify for data collection purposes different programs and process details.

[00:42:44] And, of course, we've started to also work with our DIT counterpart to identify, you know, major IT system or core applications. Next slide. So from a timeline perspective, we plan to have the risk assessment completed by around the October time period and then have an audit plan ready in November and hopefully for a December board item to the committee.

[00:43:17] That concludes my presentation. Any questions, please? Questions? I don't think we have any questions. Supervisor Epstead does. Sure. So at the bottom of page one of the staff report, you list three objectives.

[00:43:38] Do you anticipate maintaining those objectives as we go forward? Correct. Yes. Okay. Thank you very much. All right. Anything else?

[00:43:54] No. I think we are up next again for a grant program overview. You're staying right here, then? We sure will. Okay, moving to the next item, then. Thank you very much for the presentation. We look forward to seeing you back for the specifics that's discussed. Next up, item number four, countywide grants program overview.

[00:44:15] So this is kind of coming because we've had a number of questions that came up during the budget and kind of some discussions with staff about how we pursue grants, how we manage grants, those kind of things.

[00:44:30] And so staff thought it would be helpful to have a presentation. My hope would be that our non-finance committee colleagues would take advantage of this and perhaps watch this presentation as well. Thank you, Chair Letourneau.

[00:44:47] Next slide. Thanks. So a response, like Chair Letourneau outlined in response to questions asked by the Board of Supervisors during the county administrator's budget request, 2025 budget request proposal on 14 February.

[00:45:04] This presentation was developed at a high level to hopefully address some of the questions that were identified related to success rates, staffing, the functions process of the program, and then some barriers.

[00:45:25] So the grant program's total funding for grants received and issued for at least the past five years since 2019 is possibly \$327 million. We provide you a breakdown at the federal, state, and county levels. At the federal level, the grant program has gradually increased over the last five years.

[00:45:44] For example, we provide some numbers for 2023 and 2024, 70 and 100, respectively. Keeping in mind that pass-throughs are federal dollars sent to the states and then to local governments.

[00:46:04] We have a success rate that we've tracked since 2022 of 48%, but we've had some challenges, of course, as far as working within federal rules in order to identify projects that meet certain criteria or qualifications for grants.

[00:46:25] At the state level, there are two key indicators that we note in presentation related to the amount of grant funds received and volume of grants specifically. For example, VDOT grant dollars make up about 46%.

[00:46:43] And then when you look at the volume, which is the quantity of grants from the states, we're looking at the higher end of it being in Health and Human Services and other recurring annual grants, such as like Justice, Housing, and EPA. We cannot readily identify a success rate because of the challenges previously identified with the federal pass-through.

[00:47:08] So we'll continue to be working on that. At the county level, those grants are primarily issued to nonprofits for like the human services and economic development programs. So in program staffing, the administration of the grant program has been kind of decentralized through the Department of Finance and Procurement and includes a mix of full-time and part-time positions and contractor support.

[00:47:39] And I have a next slide, a table that kind of breaks that out and shows the investment amount. But although it's kind of centralized, we still do work with other departments and offices as well with varying roles related to like funding to set up, grant set up, monitoring, reporting, training, and then also some advisory and compliance support.

[00:48:01] And so here, what we try to show you is that the county has invested, at least within DFP, the Director of the Department of Finance and Procurement, about \$1.3 million into the grant program.

[00:48:19] This pays for, on an estimated annual cost, about seven full-time employees with two part-times. The two part-times are for ARPA, the American Rescue Plan Act, which those positions will expire in December 2026.

[00:48:39] There's three contractors that support the program. We have a KPMG consulting firm, which provides our application process reviews for, like, our human services nonprofit grant program. We have Amplifun, who supports our integrated grant management system.

[00:48:59] And then we have the Ferguson Group, who performs a lot of our outreach to support the county and looking for grants and opportunities to apply for. So we have two primary grant functions.

[00:49:16] They're a proposal process and administration process in the proposal process the county role is basically we are the grantee. Therefore we are actually applying for a grant to support a community program or infrastructure project. And in the administrative administration process the county's role is a grant tour where we are actually issuing grants the Board of Supervisors have a role in both functions as approval authorities and so we bring them we bring

[00:49:52] at times we bring those budget adjustments or reality or allocations for approval to the Board of Supervisors the next two slides are mainly just kind of showing big picture the steps that it takes for the proposal and the administration here in the proposal process and supports their process starting at pre-proposal where we work with the Ferguson group to do the outreach, and then it ends with the acceptance of a grant received from a particular agency.

[00:50:23] On the next slide. And then on the administration process, a little more lengthy, seven-step process, beginning with the application process, we go out and solicit from nonprofits to send in their applications for which we then review and score. We come up with a recommended allocation of funds, and we present that to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

[00:50:49] There are several challenges identified, but we are developing initiatives to try to work through these challenges. The key, obviously, that we've identified earlier is working with the federal agencies as far as trying to find projects that are aligned to their rules.

[00:51:11] And we are also looking at our initiatives as far as the AmpliFund system, the grant management system, an integrated system that will help us at least look at some efficiencies across the board, across the county, as we try to do more accountability of these grants.

[00:51:29] And then also we are looking at an initiative to look at, you know, building a grant program working group so that we can bring, you know, a cross-functional county-wide working group that we can bring folks together to kind of look at these barriers or limitations and figure out ways to mitigate them.

[00:51:50] And that concludes the presentation. Are there any questions? Questions? Start with Vice Chair Bresson. Thank you. And I received the presentation from staff yesterday, and so I really appreciate it.

[00:52:09] It did kind of help ease my mind anyway about, and I know you guys are doing great work, but it did help ease my mind about, you know, that we're trying to take advantage of all the things that are out there. Is there a, I mean, ROI might not be the right word, because I believe in the 1.3 million investment, but it might be nice to see like an ROI, and I don't know what you would put in the inputs as far as the resources, but I think that might be an interesting exercise if you come back to us at some point.

[00:52:46] And also, I think it might have been in chart form here. Was one of the grants that we've received, was that in chart form? My iPad is not cooperating right now, so I can't open the staff presentations. It might have been like the second.

[00:53:03] Second. Okay. No, that's exactly what I was looking for. So thank you. But, yeah, maybe just an ROI or something like that. And I do also highly recommend that some of our other colleagues who are more concerned about this at the NACO conference receive the presentation. Thank you.

[00:53:24] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also received a briefing, and I really do appreciate it. Can we go back to page three of the item? So you mentioned that there was a kind of big pulse up of grant money that we received over the past five years.

[00:53:42] Was any of that because of the COVID, I say kind of loosely COVID money? And if so, are we expecting that number to possibly go down in future years? Some great questions, Chair Randall. Yes, about \$80 million of the federal funding, kind of in line to COVID.

[00:54:00] And when those funds expire in 2026, yes, that amount of the portfolio would be expected to decrease. Okay, and that's just important, I think, for us to remain aware of that, to be honest.

[00:54:16] The next question I have is on page six of the package. So, the county role is in applying for grants. Can you give me an example of where you might apply?

[00:54:33] And do we look, I know we look outside of just the Commonwealth. Have we ever looked at, because I know, for instance, NACO has a lot of grants for infrastructure programs and that type of thing. How are we looking for places to apply for grants? How's that, what's that process like?

[00:54:49] It does say that we look for places to apply, but how do we decide and how do we look for those places? So we actually have a standard procedure that our grants analyst goes through with the Ferguson Group. We start with the Federal Register and then work our way out, looking at federal opportunities that align with the CIP, with the energy strategy, et cetera.

[00:55:11] We then go to state opportunities, then foundations, and additional funding opportunities. So the NACO opportunities would be included in that process. And then finally, I would say that whether we're talking about infrastructure grants, whether we're talking about nonprofit grants, whatever we're talking about, I really do appreciate that this feels like, not that we haven't had a professional operation before, but it feels like we're kind of honing this more and trying to professionalize this operation even more.

[00:55:42] I'm so glad that we have kind of a grant staff on board now. We didn't used to have that. So I really do appreciate what we're trying to do. And these types of positions are positions that actually pay for themselves later on because they find money and bring money to the county. So I received the briefing, but I also read the item, and I think it's a really good item, and I appreciate what we're doing here.

[00:56:03] Thanks so much. Thank you. You said that we have several positions that are ARPA-funded. Did I hear that right? Yes. Are those ARPA-funded positions specific to ARPA funds? Correct.

[00:56:19] Okay. So when the ARPA funds end, presumably the positions end? Correct. Okay. How are those characterized? Are those temporary positions? Yes. Okay. So those folks know? Yes. Okay. All right. And we're not going to have a need for them following the expenditure of all the ARPA funds?

[00:56:39] As far as our plans, no. When those positions expire, they expire. We are looking at, we will look at, like, the efficiencies of the grant management system. We will look at how, when we do form this working group, how we can look at limitations to then determine if there are other resources that are required.

[00:57:03] But at this time, we first need to, you know, learn more about the system and then formulating the working group in order to look at those challenges. Thank you. Any other questions? All right. Thank you very much. All right, we're going to do one more item before we do our closed session, and that is a commuter bus service update.

[00:57:25] So this is a continuation of last month's discussion, which was focused on our metro service and our local fixed-route bus service. This is similar metrics and data around our commuter bus service.

[00:57:44] So, Mr. Brown, Mr. Gross, before you get started, I am just going to ask, because I was confused by it. I think probably everybody else would be, too. The root numbers don't match from, like, the schedule to the data.

[00:58:02] They're four-digit numbers versus three-digit numbers. And whatever metric we're using there, I wasn't smart enough to figure out how that was coded. So can you just tell us up front? Sure. So they don't match the route numbers or the 484.

[00:58:20] The first three digits are the route numbers. The last digit on each one is the trip number. So 484-1 would be the first trip out. 484-2 would be the second trip of that route out. It may be an hour later, and there might be several other trips in between it from other routes.

[00:58:37] But that's that designation. Okay. Sorry. So, Chair Letourneau, also on that second page of the item, you'll see how many trips each route has on the far right, far right inside. So that's how that correlation, you'll see that like 281 has five trips.

[00:58:56] So you'll see 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. So there'll be a 2811, 2812, 2813, 2814, 2815. Okay, Chair Letourneau, members of the committee, thank you again for allowing us to present this to you.

[00:59:12] As you saw last meeting, we presented information about the local fixed route system. Tonight, we're going to focus on the commuter bus route system. There's a lot of data in here, and really our objective is to bring this information to you as early as possible to start the conversation and thinking about the outcomes of the transit summit.

[00:59:37] In particular, as it relates to the commuter bus service, back in January, we presented some information on commuter bus during one of the budget prep items and then we had the conversation with the local fixed route last month we're really interested in your thoughts and feedback as it relates to the commuter bus service in preparation for the transit summit and maybe some outcomes that staff can prepare for your consideration at that time so that's really the our desired output of this if we're able to get at that tonight, and I'm going to turn it over to the subject matter expert, Scott, to lead us

[01:00:15] through the presentation. Okay, good evening. So we just kind of went over this slide right here. There's 17 routes in total. There's 8 a.m. peak period routes at 9, I'm sorry, and 9 p.m., I'm sorry, 8 a.m. peak period routes and 9 p.m. peak period routes, but there are multiple trips.

[01:00:37] There's 23 trips in the morning, and there's 27 trips in the evening, so 50 trips all together. Compared to pre-pandemic, just to give you a comparison, we were at 111 trips a day in pre-pandemic. Next slide, please. So this is just to kind of revisit the income level by transit mode on the commuter bus side of things.

[01:01:02] For those folks who chose to respond to our onboard rider surveys, the minimum, essentially, amount of money that folks make a year is \$75,000, with the majority of the folks making more than \$150,000 a year that ride this service.

[01:01:23] Next slide, please. So this slide's a little difficult to read, but essentially what it tells you is riders per day per route. So our best route is we're averaging about 48, 48, almost 49 people a day on that route.

[01:01:40] Coming out of D.C., it's actually the first trip out of D.C. in the evening. And as you can see, it goes all the way down to four and a half riders per trip on the right-hand side. We'll visit those numbers a little bit later. wait um before you go on though how many how many seats are there on one of these buses 55 55 so when you got 42.7 out of 55 that's pretty full exactly when you have 3.7 out of 55 that is not correct

[01:02:08] so this slide is important um in when we went over the local fixed route services we talked about riders per revenue hour. That's a general metric that we use in the transit industry.

[01:02:29] On the commuter bus side of things, because most buses make one trip, we look at the number of passengers essentially that you can carry in one trip on an average. Also what happens is from month to month and from year to year, you'll have some less Monday through Fridays in March of 23 than you had in March of 24. So if you're actually looking at total ridership numbers, it's not a good metric. This tells you what your average riders per day is. So in March of 24, for example, we're averaging almost 23 riders a day. In March of 23, we were averaging 12.

[01:03:08] So that's the growth over the year. And this is a system-wide average. So that's average per route per day. Next slide, please. Essentially, this just sums up exactly what I was just saying on the previous slide the 1948 is actually a combination of all of the routes put together for an entire year this slide I just added in here so you can kind of see the drastic difference between pre-pandemic and where we're headed on the in 2024 now we are climbing in 2024 we'll be

[01:03:45] higher than 2023 but we'll be nowhere close to 2020 just wanted to kind of show you that realm On that slide, so, I mean, obviously that's COVID and work from home, but we also did open the Silver Line.

[01:04:02] Do we have any way to track how many of those former bus passengers are using the Silver Line? We could, but it would be extremely tedious. We'd have to go back and literally compare smart trip card to smart trip card usage, and there's no real clear report that does that in the system, unfortunately, but it could be done.

[01:04:24] I can tell you, not even anecdotally, but data-driven-wise, that our Silver Line ridership is much lower than it was pre-pandemic. So it's hard to gauge how many of those folks actually maybe left the commuter bus world and went to riding, or whether these were all new riders or the majority of them are new riders.

[01:04:47] It's almost impossible to tell. This slide is just a linear graph to kind of show you that equals the bar graph earlier. It's basically showing you from last March all the way through the end of February from a line perspective so you can kind of see where it leveled out.

[01:05:06] So when we started, obviously, we were provided the guidelines of implementing a fair structure that brings the commuter bus service into a revenue-neutral state. In FY 2019, we were just about there.

[01:05:23] We had only used \$43,000 in local tax funding. That is not the case and hasn't been the case since COVID has hit. Next slide, please. As is shown in this slide, the average route is about \$115,000 a year to operate.

[01:05:43] Local tax funding needed is about \$2.8 million projected for FY25. Fair advertising revenues and other revenues is about \$2.5 million, so it's a 53-47 split for a year FY25. Next slide, please.

[01:06:00] This is just to revisit the farebox costs if we were to go all in on fareboxes, and this is what we are going to have to do because the fareboxes are, as Supervisor Letourneau, you probably are aware, or Chair Letourneau, I'm sorry, sir, they're running out of steam, and we're going to have to replace them soon.

[01:06:24] So if we replace all 103 units, it's going to cost the county about \$775,000. We do have an MBTA match for that. But that's if we went all in with 103 buses. Last slide, please. The commuter buses.

[01:06:40] That's all buses. That's all local fixed route. How many are just, because we're only just talking about commuters tonight, and we kind of already have that other discussion. Yeah, so the commuter coaches are 29, correct. Okay. Correct. So the costs associated with that is, yeah, it's 29% of \$775,000.

[01:07:00] Well, it's not quite the same because when you get below \$100,000, the cost of the farebox goes from \$36,000 up to \$49,000. So it's a little bit of a shift. In the next slide, we can actually discuss that.

[01:07:16] So you can see that's where you would drop down to 34 units, including spares, and you would get to it per cost of fare boxes at \$49,000. So your actual cost would go down to \$387,000 for strictly the commuter buses.

[01:07:32] How does a fare box cost that much money? I ask that question every year. What the world is in a fare box? And last slide. Happy to answer any questions. Okay. Chair Randall.

[01:07:51] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we go back to slide three, I seem to remember some, and I don't know that this is still true, this may be more anecdotal, and you can tell us, some time ago, I mean, like, I don't know, before COVID, there was a, the question was asked to commuter bus riders, if the commuter bus went away, this is before Metro opened, would you get on Metro?

[01:08:16] And the answer was no, they said they'd get in their car. And I think part of that might be, if you just look at the income levels of commuter bus riders, I mean, they just may not get on the Metro. So anecdotally, I have a feeling that those are two separate groups of people, like people who ride Metro, people who ride commuter buses are two separate groups.

[01:08:36] And when we ask that question, that's exactly what they said, that they wouldn't. I say all the time, the commuter bus is the only thing that people have stopped me as I'm marching in a parade and said, don't take away the commuter bus. That's happened more than once. So I thought that's interesting. If you go to page four, Mr. Letourneau just brilliantly explained how it all works if you have a full bus or if you have a bus for four people.

[01:08:59] However, my question is, so this is by the time that the buses are going out. Is that correct? So that bus that has 48 seats full is going out. It's the first bus out of D.C.? Yes, that particular bus is the first bus out of D.C. in the evening. Is this a time chart? I mean, is this so so so? OK, so so have we figured out, you know, have we figured out the times of when people are on these buses or not on these?

[01:09:25] But how have we meshed all that together? So. So, yes, it's it's it's not quite as crystal clear. But however, what we have noticed is that Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday are the busy days. And we have noticed that people are going in later in the morning when I say later in the morning, 730, 8 o'clock in the morning.

[01:09:45] and they're actually coming out earlier in the evening so i we attribute that to the whole covid you know work-life balance where they decided they weren't going to stay later anymore so that's that's how we're attributing that to the early buses out being fuller it's possible that the that the low ridership might be on a friday with it at at four o'clock or something because everyone's already either working from home or have gone home already well the lowest ridership route that's up there is actually your latest route out. It would be our catch-all route.

[01:10:18] So anecdotally, if we were to go back to pre-pandemic, the graph would look very similar to this. It wouldn't be nearly that low, but your lower numbers would probably be at 10 or 11, and your upper numbers would be at about 64. Okay, so that didn't, I mean, the numbers changed, but the pattern didn't change. I think that's all. This is really interesting. Thank you very much i do notice that when you go from march to march the dip is in like in july i think the dip is in the is in the summer months so just maybe people are on vacation again another anecdotal pre-pandemic that had leveled out um and then i i attribute that back to people gaining their

[01:10:58] work-life balance back and now in last July we saw a dip which was much similar to older numbers 2014, 2012, 2011 numbers where vacations definitely, you know, affected commuter bus ridership. You see it again actually in December.

[01:11:15] For holidays, correct. For holidays, yeah. So that actually does make sense. Thank you. Thank you. So I guess the question is, how different is the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday ridership versus the Monday, Friday ridership when we look at these averages? So like those lowest routes, those lowest 10 routes, for instance, how high do they get?

[01:11:35] you don't you probably don't have that i'm just saying like that you know that would be interesting information to have to really evaluate these well i can tell you that fridays our ridership drops in half yeah but i guess what i'm saying is if we're talking about potentially eliminating some of these routes then what we have to look at is at its peak what are we losing by eliminating the route you know what i mean so this is the average um yeah yeah this is the average i know it's the average yeah yeah at its peak the majority of them are below 14 15 riders

[01:12:11] okay that's that's at their peak yeah that's no not not great utilization no so i noticed on some of these like some of the really low ones they're like the fifth or sixth trip so i would imagine we could simply consolidate you know have the same route but be offering fewer trips you know merge times a little bit and save some money that way and chair letourne that's exactly the The conversation we're trying to glean from the committee is, you know, should staff look at consolidating in certain areas where there's low ridership and try to, you know, so we've got a couple primary areas.

[01:12:51] We've got South Riding, we've got Leesburg, and we have Dulles Town Center, right, where Leesburg Harmony runs. So, you know, do you look at consolidating on certain days where there's low ridership into one time frame and trying to find something that maybe can still accommodate people?

[01:13:07] The nice thing about the Silver Line is that last ride out, it can be accommodated by the Silver Line. And we would just need to make sure that we have a local route that can accommodate that to where their vehicles are parked. Yeah, I think we should certainly look at consolidating. I think that we need fewer routes, clearly, or fewer trips anyway, because we shouldn't be running 55-seat buses with fewer than 15 people, really, routinely.

[01:13:34] And we are with some of these routes routinely. The other question I would have is, which trips, which routes do we run are not good silver line routes? I guess what I mean by that is, and I agree with what Chair Randall said, I think they probably are kind of different riders, but I still want to be able to generally offer people a transit option.

[01:13:59] My instinct is the bus runs that we have to the Pentagon are runs that would really be not very good runs if you had to take Silverline only just because of the transfers involved there.

[01:14:15] But could we look at it that way? You know, in other words, do we have some routes here where we're essentially mirroring a pretty solid metro trip, you know, where we're staying in the west end of D.C. and we kind of loop around and out, and that would be a pretty solid metro ride for somebody that wouldn't, you know, be excessively long versus some that we know because of transfers and things like that would be a very long ride i don't know if we've ever looked at it that way but so yes we look at it that way every day sir um the lowest ridership runs we have are

[01:14:50] to the pentagon because they're not working and where they used to right okay exactly so the highest runs we have are the ones that go into dc the highest runs that we have out of that are more than a quarter of a mile away from a metro rail station so that's hopefully that answers your question okay yeah and then more than a quarter mile away so that would make sense because there's no and then i guess the question is on the fares um we haven't raised this fare since 2019 right for the industry 47 fair box recovery although it's not quite because you were looping advertising

[01:15:27] in there too but it's probably what 40 45 on fair box the fares and the majority of that money okay well the majority but what is 80 80 000 83 024 is what we've collected so far what's the actual farebox recovery uh dollars wise percentage um gosh last time i looked at it i think it was i'd have to go back and look i really don't want to give you a bad number okay i was about to say we're actually doing pretty good for industry if it's 40 in the 40s but it sounds like we're

[01:16:04] we're doing great in an industry we're just not yeah we're not not where we were and we're not where the policy was and the policy obviously isn't going to work at this point but i do think as part of the transit summit a fair increase should absolutely be on the table because we haven't raised it since 2019 i think we should consolidate routes um you know start shrinking the number of total routes that we're we're offering and i think that we should raise fares some reasonable amount to account for inflation and the increased cost of the county and the fact that this has gone from entirely revenue offset to less than half.

[01:16:40] So that would be kind of my guidance for where I would want to go with this. Sharon. So, Mr. Mayor, I agree with everything you just said. We haven't always agreed on this commuter bus route discussion, but I agree with everything, especially in the consolidating routes, for obvious reasons, to be honest.

[01:16:57] The only other question I have is, you know, when we've talked about our fixed route buses, we've had long talks about people with differing abilities and how well they're using or not using that bus we haven't had the discussion with the commuter bus do we do we see people with differing abilities using these and having no issues on them or do we see them getting to the bus just fine not just getting on the bus just fine so anecdotally I would I would answer that with it's a tough metric to follow on the commuter bus side because we do not have a

[01:17:29] senior disabled affair which is how we would track that okay on our fixed routes you know you know we have the we we you know we have the so far from a fixed route bus route we you can you can call and and get a ride and those types of things do we have do we know if we have anybody coming from the fixed route routes from the fixed route routes to get on the commuter buses who are, who's a person with different abilities. We just can't, we can't track that

[01:18:04] at all. I just don't, I don't have, we could track it. We could track that in that way, right? We could track it if they were on a disabled, senior disabled car, because then we could track the train car. Correct. Okay. Not right next to me, but when, when that's a question I would have, because I, well, just because I want to make sure that all of our modes of transportation that we're providing are being equally enjoyed easily enjoyed by our all of our differing communities so that's all thank you thank you okay does anyone else have any input or questions they

[01:18:41] want to give if not thank you very much um mr hamstreet we just lost supervisor umstead i was about to read into closed session do i need to wait yeah i'll defer to mr rogers who's in the audience to go

into closed session if you'd like to take a break until she comes back you can do that as well um here she comes okay perfect there you go we wanted we wanted to read in the closed

[01:19:16] session all right do you want to do it you want to do all right here you got it yep mr sayings i move that the finance government operations economic development committee recess this public meeting and enter into closed session pursuant to section 2.2 dash 3711 a3 of the code of virginia to consider acquisition of parcel parcels of property for public use in the kontocton election district. Second.

[01:19:43] Motion's made by Mr. Sainz. I second it. I do want to note that Supervisor Ducroni has joined the meeting. I don't believe she can vote on the motion, but we wanted to note that she is here, present, to go into closed session. Okay? Any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, all in favor say aye. Aye. Anyone opposed?

[01:20:02] Motion carries. 5-0. Oh, you're just so funny.

[01:28:45] Excuse me. Alright, Mr. Sainz.

[01:48:55] I move that the closed session be adjourned, that the Finance, Government, Operations and Economic Development Committee reconvene its public meeting, that the minutes of the public meeting should reflect that no formal action was taken in closed session, and further move that the resolution certifying the closed session be adopted and reflected in the minutes of this public meeting.

[01:49:11] Motion is made by Mr. Sainz, seconded by Supervisor Briskman. Any discussion on the motion? All in favor, say aye. Aye. Then we'll have everybody affirm that there was no formal action taken by the board in the closed session. Affirm.

[01:49:27] And to President Crony, affirms, I affirm as well. Why don't actually we go to item 14, just so we can finish this topic, which is the Philomont Fire and Rescue Station.

[01:49:52] Good evening. Good evening. We're here to present the findings of an initial feasibility study review of three parcels identified by the public as a possible alternate location for the Philomont Fire and Rescue Station.

[01:50:15] At the board public hearing on January 10th, 2024, the board suggested for members of the public who are not satisfied with the location of the replacement station to bring forward any possible alternate locations. Three properties were brought forward by the public and staff has performed an initial desktop feasibility review of each of these proposed sites.

[01:50:37] Today I'll provide an overview of those proposed alternate sites and note some of the site features and constraints of those properties. Due to the possibility that the board may direct staff to negotiate to purchase one or more of these properties Specific details of these properties are not presented in this item or in this presentation I'll just provide a general overview of each property with a broad description of the site features and considerations Parcel a in approximately 10 acres No apparent structures or prior development on it Contains a wooded stream channel that bisects the parcel with no mapped cemeteries wells or drain fields on the property

[01:51:17] Parcel is surrounded by existing homes on one side and farmland on three other sides. Parcel is within the optimal location area for the Philmont station, but is on the edge of that area. Parcel is zoned AR1, which does allow for a fire station as a permitted use by right.

[01:51:35] However, a commission permit may be required. Currently, there are no site entrances on the property, so they'll need to be installed two entrances in coordination with VDOT requirements. Site distance onto the road should not be an issue in that location. Environmentally, there are no mapped floodplains on that parcel A.

[01:51:55] The existing wooded channel is a predicted wetland along with another channel running across the property. Wetland impact credits would likely be required to develop the site and it's assumed that the development of this parcel would require the avoidance of most of the wetlands in that wooded channel area.

[01:52:11] Utility-wise, there are utility lines that are running across the parcel's road frontage, allowing electric and telecom accessibility. No public water or sewer. There are no wells existing on the property. However, wells on the adjacent properties are up to 900 feet deep with yields, low yields, as low as one gallon per minute, with others in one or two, up to 10 gallon per minute range.

[01:52:40] Attic water supply to support a fire station may be a challenge and is something we would need to investigate further. Buildable area, considering the use of the buffer around the property, any setbacks, and the wooded stream that bisects the property, the buildable area is reduced to approximately three acres of that site, with the width of that area being around 190 feet.

[01:53:04] And for reference, our current design on the fire station is about 330 foot width design, and that includes the facility and the surrounding drive aisles and parking, et cetera. So that would be considerably less than what we currently have, and we need to alter our design for the station.

[01:53:23] One alternate would be to design the property so that we did impact that wooden stream area to make a larger buildable area, but that would come at a cost for wetland mitigation credits, stream restoration, routing, and undercutting poor soils in that area, and really a cost to do all that above and beyond some of these other properties or the current station horseshoe grounds.

[01:53:48] The property, in summary, the property is on the edge of the optimal area for the station, will potentially have domestic water supply issues, require cost for site entrance, and only allow a small buildable area that would require a suboptimal design with the station and require costly wetland impact mitigation efforts.

[01:54:12] Parcel B, this parcel is approximately 10 acres as well. It does contain an existing single-family home on the property that was built around 1900. The historic significance of that structure and associated property is unknown at this time.

[01:54:27] And due to zoning ordinance requirements for the lot in an AR1 zone, subdivision of this property to allow continued private ownership of that house and surrounding property is likely not possible. There are existing homes on three sides of the property with farmland on the fourth side.

[01:54:48] There are two wells and one drain field on the property. The parcel contains one access road on the edge of the property that is the main access for an adjacent property. And so that would need to remain on the property for that use. And the subject property is located approximately 500 feet outside of the boundary for the optimal search area for the replacement station.

[01:55:11] As I noted, it is zoned AR-1, which would allow public safety use as a permitted by right. And a commission permit may be required as well. There are some site access entrances on this property, but

they would either need to be revised or reconstructed to create a new VDOT required entrance.

[01:55:33] Site distance onto the road should not be an issue. Environmentally, there are no mapped floodplains or predicted wetlands on this parcel. Utility-wise, there are utility overhead lines that run along the road's frontage to allow the electric and telecom connection.

[01:55:49] No public or sewer on this property. There are two on-site wells, one from the 1960s of unknown depth and yield, and one from the 2010s with a depth of 300 feet and a yield of about 12 gallons per minute. And there's no drafting pond on this to fill tanker trucks.

[01:56:08] Just one added, a feature that does exist on the existing property, the horse showgrounds. A buildable area with the buffers surrounding the property, access roads and setbacks, the buildable area is reduced to approximately seven acres.

[01:56:25] And the width of the building area, including the building in Drive Isles is about 370 feet. And again, we have 330 feet, so that is more than we have on our current design. The property, in summary, the property has seven acres of buildable area that would be sufficient to build a fire and rescue station.

[01:56:42] However, the property is outside the optimal area for a station. It contains a 125 year old home that likely could not be subdivided to maintain ownership and has an access road that serves the adjacent property. And parcel C is a parcel is approximately 9.5 acres with no apparent prior development. There are existing homes on three sides of the property and farmland on the other. No mapped cemeteries, wells, or drain fields.

[01:57:12] The property does have a significant elevation drop of approximately 90 feet from the road frontage to the center of the property, and it is within the edge of the optimal search area. Zoned AR2, public safety use permitted by Wright.

[01:57:29] However, a commission permit may be required on this as well. Site entrances do not currently exist and will continue to be installed. Environmentally, there are approximately 3.7 acres of major floodplain, 1.8 acres of wetlands, and 2.9 acres of steep slopes, very steep slopes, on the property, and approximately 3.8 acres of forested land on the property, which is a part of a overall large contiguous forest and anticipated to be a habitat for multiple endangered species of bat that we need to design and work around.

[01:58:01] Utility-wise, overhead lines do run on the frontage, no public water or sewer, and buildable area with all the noted above environmental constraints and the setbacks, really the buildable area is reduced to under one acre approximately, not making this a very viable option.

[01:58:22] The property has the insufficient buildable area and contains all those noted environmental constraints. So it's not staff's recommendation that this would be a feasible option. All options noted above, if we were to change location from the current design at the Training Horse Show Grounds to a new location would impact the delivery of the replacement station that we are currently designing. The land acquisition cost, due diligence period, settlement of that property would need to be completed prior to starting a design on the new site, and that process could take 18 months to two years, depending on those

[01:59:01] negotiations and how the due diligence proceeds. A new design consultant may need to be procured through an RFP process in order to get a new designer that could take about six months to

procure that designer if we cannot use a task order, if the cost exceeds what we can use for a task order consultant.

[01:59:24] Design need to be restarted from the site survey on this new site and study the property and through the development applications for the commission permit and going through that legislative process. And then through the design development phase to get back to where we are today with the 35% design near completion.

[01:59:45] Altogether, relocating to a new site could delay the project up to three years with some of that time being concurrent through the design and acquisition process. Budget increase with those delays come the, well, so all the three properties are at this point not expected to be donated and the additional costs would include for land acquisition costs.

[02:00:08] We note in the item about \$650,000, but again, that's not the final amount. We're not sure what that ultimate negotiation would be. The increased design fee, approximately \$550,000 to redo some of the design that we've already done. And the delay in construction would cost approximately 2.3 million and that utilizes a 4% escalation factor for reference Ultimately, that could result in a total project budget increase of approximately \$3.5 million.

[02:00:41] So in conclusion, after an evaluation of the initial feasibility study on these properties, staff does not recommend further pursuit of any of these properties, as none of the proposed sites offer any advantage over the current training ground site, and in all cases have several deficiencies that would need to be designed around or that may prohibit the construction of a station on that property.

[02:01:01] Additionally, the schedule delays and budget increases further detract from making a location change to one of these proposed properties. So with that, we are available to take any questions. Thank you. So I will say for the benefit of the public, the board did have a closed session.

[02:01:17] The committee did have a closed session item on this. There was significantly more detail provided to the committee on each of the parcels, specifics around each of them, and we had the opportunity to receive briefings and ask questions. Are there any questions here for staff?

[02:01:36] Brother Brisbane? Sure. I just had a question for Chief Johnson. How urgent is it that we get a new fire station in Philomont, in your opinion? Urgent. I think, you know, in my opinion, we've obviously been waiting for this station for quite some time.

[02:01:53] We're continuing. We're at the 35% design phase. You know, we have constraints at the current site, right? Constraints with offices, constraints with workspace. importantly our desire is to put an ems unit there permanently and increase our staff and that's just simply not possible with the current constraint we have the constraint of sharing a parking lot with the community center and a daycare which is extremely dangerous in our opinion luckily nothing has happened yet but we don't want something to happen so in my opinion it's very urgent we had that two weeks ago when we had a significant fire out in the unison area you know You know, the folks from Philemon were on another call.

[02:02:32] We relied on Percival to get there first, and we had a catastrophic fire for one of the owners of the property. So it's those type of things why I think we need a new fire station sooner than later. Thank you. Yeah, that was catastrophic, but no injuries, right?

[02:02:50] No injuries, thank goodness. And, yeah, that EMS unit would have come from Round Hill if there was. So we're very thankful that the occupants got out and there were no injuries. Right, after touring the existing fire station out there, I don't know how they're operating under those constraints.

[02:03:06] So thank you. Thank you. All right, any other questions? If not, I'm going to make a motion. Hold on one moment.

[02:03:22] We're having some technical difficulties up here with our iPads, so we're going to let Mr. Hemstreet distribute paper items. We can go back to the pre-technology era. We do bide our time here, Loudoun County, after all.

[02:03:55] Okay, I move the finance, government operations, Economic Development Committee recommend to the Board of Supervisors that no further analysis be conducted on alternative Philomont Fire and Rescue Station locations. Motion's been made and seconded by Supervisor Umstead. So I appreciate the additional work that staff did. I did go back in time a little bit to around the 2020 era and reminding myself of the clock should be going that there was a significant amount of discussion around sites at that time.

[02:04:32] Certainly a process that was extensive. The district supervisor at the time reviewed many alternatives to what was proposed and came to the conclusion that what was proposed by staff was the best site. The reality is any alternative is less ideal from a fire rescue standpoint.

[02:04:57] And it's going to take longer and cost more money. It's going to take significantly more time. And in my opinion, the Board of Supervisors should defer to the judgment of our professional fire and rescue staff when they tell us that they have an urgent need to replace the station.

[02:05:16] That is the paramount concern that we should have. If certainly, if nothing else, the events of the last several months should remind us of that. So I came to the conclusion that other sites have various issues and constraints.

[02:05:34] Some could be overcome with money, for sure, and with time, but there's simply no reason to do that when we have a site that is being provided to us that is a preferred site by staff and by fire rescue and operates how we need it to.

[02:05:52] And in time, I know that's not something that all of the community is happy about, although we have heard from members that are, but I think in time it will be appreciated for future generations when we're able to provide a safe environment for firefighters and for the public. Other discussion on the motion? Seeing none, all in favor say aye. Aye. Anyone opposed? Motion carries. 5-0. Thank you very much. We're going to go back to item 10, which is conservation easement assistant program

[02:06:25] updates so there's actually not just an update but also a proposed change to the program which is a reason why I did remove this from consent you will also note if you read the item that I did not support the program in the first place um and my opinion has not changed but um I did want the full committee to be able to discuss uh especially the proposed change to the program

[02:06:53] which I think is interesting and um how the program has been performing thus far okay good evening again, Chair Letourneau and committee members. I am going to pass to Dr. Meakin-Cox to provide you a presentation on this board item. Thank you, Mr. Govan. This item presents staff

recommendation to expand eligibility criteria on the conservation easement assistance program to include family limited liability partnerships, limited partnerships, and general partnerships,

[02:07:33] with the caveat that these entities must be comprised of family members who are related by blood, marriage, or other legal means, and must be natural persons. The conservation easement assistance program was developed to support landowners in placing their land into conservation, thus preserving the landscape and natural resources in accordance with the county's comprehensive plan that was adopted in 2019. The comp plan outlines preservation of farmland, rural economic areas, as well as historic villages and historic areas. Since its inception,

[02:08:09] The conservation easement assistance program has undergone several revisions based on the number of applications it has received and some anecdotal data based on meetings with land trusts and residents. Overall, the program revisions were designed to be more inclusive of the reality of land ownership in Loudoun County, balanced with the intent of the process, which was to support landowners who might not have the means to provide the upfront costs for placing their land into easement.

[02:08:47] So since 2019, when the program started, it has expended roughly \$165,857 across 12 applications that were approved by county staff. For fiscal year 24, the applications, we declined two applications.

[02:09:08] both were LPs or LLPs. So this is actually working to include those similar to LLCs. So land trusts are citing that some of the problem is just the inclusiveness of the types of partnerships and the types of family businesses that are run in Western Loudoun County.

[02:09:30] So what we are looking at is including limited partnerships, limited liability partnerships, and general partnerships. And each of those is defined in your staff briefing. And again, to make sure that the intent of the process is maintained, this would be for real persons, natural persons who are related by blood, marriage, or other legal means.

[02:09:56] So our recommendation to support a more inclusive application process is to include LLPs, LPs, and general partnerships in the eligible entities to apply for the Conservation Easement Assistance Program and continue to allow the top earner in a partnership to be excluded, which was something that was passed in previous sessions.

[02:10:22] And with that, we'll take questions. So what's the \$500,000 limit? So that is eliminating the top earner from the LLC or LC partnership. So we would eliminate that, and then the \$500,000 income requirement was passed by the board, I believe, in 2022.

[02:10:46] Okay. So the change that's being proposed tonight is to allow LLCs, GPs, or LPs to be included in that. Correct. With the up to \$500,000 income limit. Correct.

[02:11:01] Yeah. Yes. So what we normally charge for a conservation easement was something in the neighborhood of \$25,000? Approximately. The average request for application assistance is around \$18,000. Okay. And that is based on the amount of staff time and effort that goes into the application.

[02:11:22] That's our fee structure generally with planning and zoning, right? Actually, no, that's the request coming from the applicants. No, I know. But what does it, generally, we kind of base the costs on what we charge an applicant.

[02:11:38] let's just say there was no request but somebody was pursuing this without the request we charge them roughly what it costs us to process the application right correct that's our policy yes right so it's taxpayer dollars that would be going to then pay for someone to receive this assistance for free instead of offsetting the staff work that's being done right correct by collecting the applicant okay um do you want me to say that again yeah so the program is

[02:12:12] we're already doing it for free and is that what you said no I'm what I'm saying is that when we provide a grant then we are not receiving what it would what actually is costing us to process an application so we're subsidizing it for that amount so my kind of philosophical objection to this was that we're subsidizing now for people that are making up to a half a million dollars using everybody else's money and I felt that that was inappropriate which is why I've consistently voted against this and now they're proposing to allow LLCs and LPs to join as well and I would

[02:12:51] I would personally feel the same way but questions okay and then it's for explain the 500,000 to me again the board approved the 500,000 income cap I believe it was 2022 it's in your packet so if they make more than 500,000 they can't apply for the grant correct but you're eliminating the top earner? If it's a family run LLC or trust. Okay. Okay. And is there, is there a tax benefit

[02:13:29] otherwise to doing this with, as an LLC or a trust? The benefit would be to the beneficiaries or the LLC members of which the requirement is that they are all family to participate in the program, but there are other tax benefits for conservation easement, placing your land in conservation. Yes. Okay. I mean, is there a way that someone could set up an LLP or a GP or an LP

[02:14:02] sort of as a shelter or a shell organization and do this? We request documentation of the membership, along with all of their tax records, will not us. The land trust actually reviews their income and their records and provides us with a written affidavit that they meet the income qualifications.

[02:14:28] Okay. Okay. Thank you. Ms. Umstead. Thank you Mr. Chair. In the staff report it says there was one application that was submitted from an LP. I thought But maybe you had said two applications from entities that we don't currently allow.

[02:14:53] Correct. Do you recall how much total acreage those involved? 120 acres. All right. That was combined. That's combined. Thank you. Sarah Ann. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[02:15:08] If I'm reading this correctly, and my staff and I spent some good time in this today, is one of the goals here to incentivize more people to be able to put their land in conservation easement? That has been part of the discussion, I think, for the land trust.

[02:15:30] Anecdotally speaking, this helps to support landowners who are maybe on the fence and maybe would not be able to financially pay for the upfront costs of placing their land in easement.

[02:15:49] Yeah, no, that is how I read this, to be honest. And so I am in support, I'm always in support of that effort. So thank you I appreciate it. Mr. Sainz. Thank you. All right on page four in the presentation we see application history 2019-1, 2022, 21-2, 22-3, 23-5, and 24 so far only one. So it looks like this program hasn't generated that much buzz. Do you feel with the increase from to 500,000 the cap from last year or whenever we did it and then now if we move forward with this do you

[02:16:28] you think that it will change and we'll go, let's say, get to 10 or 12 or 15 or so? Do you see, or you really just, it just really depends? Without predicting or having any predictive analytics, these numbers are

small. And we've received only a handful of applications each year, they trickle in as, um, on a, you know, as needed basis. So when the land trust finds

[02:17:03] someone who, um, meets the criteria is when they apply. So, and do we have like, um, say application deadline period or is it just pretty much? It's open year open throughout the year. Okay. But in your heart of hearts, you really don't feel with the updates. It's going to somehow shoot up, uh, based on, based on the data that we have right now. No, no, I think we may get one or two additional applications and the application cap the award cap is \$25,000 all right thank you okay I am NOT going to make the motion

[02:17:42] but I would invite one of my colleagues to if they wish chair Randall I'll make the motion I'm with the finance government operations and economic development committee recommend the board supervisors direct staff to include family partnerships such as general partners family LLP and family LPs in the list of eligible entries to receive conference conservation easement assistance program funds, and furthermore, that the top earner in such partnerships may be eliminated to qualify for the program.

[02:18:07] Well, she's made second by Supervisor Umstead, opening, Chair Randall. So, and this is an interesting item before we get to the item tomorrow night, actually, but if one of the goals, in fact, the way I read this, maybe one of the main goals is to encourage more people to put their land in conservation easement and to allow it for more family groups to do that as well. I, you know, I, I appreciate Mr. Letourneau because Mr. Letourneau has always been consistent on this, on this issue and this item. But if we're looking

[02:18:43] at, at, at, at ways to decrease possible housing applications and decrease housing in places we don't want them, I don't know why we wouldn't do all that we could do to incentivize more conservation easements. My only one question is this is, can you, and I probably should know this and I kind of apologize for not knowing it, but this is a conservation easement program. Can you talk, which is a third-party program, right? Does this have any, just doing this, would this have

[02:19:14] any bearing on an open space program? That's a great question. I appreciate that. So actually it doesn't right now have um any bearing on the open space program that is something we've we've limited to conservation easements um and per the um comp plan we've kind of stuck to that specific area we've not explored uh through the open space no okay thank you all right i guess it's just me so

[02:19:51] i don't support this um for a number of reasons it's fine to have a goal i support more properties and conservation easements as well, and it's a great program. My contention at the beginning was the amount of money it takes to get through the process is not the reason why we aren't getting a lot of property.

[02:20:09] We actually are getting a lot of properties in conservation easements, but it's not really that big of an impediment. And I think the numbers have borne that out because 1, 2, 2, 3, 5, 1 are the total number of applicants we've gotten. I just think if you're making a half a million dollars, you don't need our \$25,000 to go through the conservation easement process.

[02:20:34] And it's honestly kind of insulting to the people in the rest of the county who don't have this opportunity or this land that we're going to subsidize somebody making a half a million dollars so that they can then save even more money on their taxes. And I want them to do it in a conservation easement. When we first set this program up and it had a smaller income limit, I didn't think it was as egregious.

[02:20:54] But at this point, with a half-a-million-dollar income limit and we're dropping the top earner, now we're adding in LLCs, it's really just, to me, just kind of an insult. So I'm certainly not going to support it. I don't think that this is the impediment for folks to do it or to not do it.

[02:21:14] If we were going to do it, I would certainly want to see a smaller income limit so that at least it's folks who are genuinely kind of needs-based in doing that. The terminology we've used is ability to pay, and I just have a hard time thinking.

[02:21:29] Now, these are hard costs that we're incurring as well. I mean, these are recordings. These are deeds that we have to do. So it's not just staff time, but it's literal actual things that are costing us money that we have to do it. So I don't favor expanding this. I think we should take a look at the whole thing. We put time and effort into the program.

[02:21:47] It hasn't been particularly successful. If we're interested in conservation easements, which I think every single person up here is, We're having a lot of debate about it as it relates to the Prime Act soils item, but I don't think that this is the right way to go. Any other discussion?

[02:22:05] Closing? Yes, please. So this board is voted down a PDR program, and there is not support for conservation easement. And so at some point the logical conclusion will only be that you support increased development in western Loudoun County, in rural Loudoun County.

[02:22:24] It's hard to get to any other conclusion than that. If you knock down every single program we have that encourages people to be able to monetize their land and not have to build on their land, then you're going to have people who subdivide and build on their land.

[02:22:41] And now you're going to have, and I never care about school costs. Let's educate those little people all day long. But you're going to have, I mean, the reason we talk about, and we have to widen Route 15 right now, It is not because boards in the past have said yes to housing developments in the West because going three, four boards back, they haven't.

[02:23:02] It's because of by right development. And so the amount of money we're about to spend just on widening Route 15 alone, think about how much money we're about to spend on that. And then you add in every other need that will come if we keep having development in parts of Loudoun County that, I mean, it's not just roads and schools.

[02:23:25] It's roads, it's schools, it's fire and rescue, it's police or the sheriff's department. All the infrastructure issues that are required when we have new houses that, by the way, because they're in this part of the county and they could be by right, there are no profits or profits don't cover.

[02:23:43] So we, you know, this is one of these, you know, penny wise and pound foolish moments. You could very well pay one way or the other. And every time we put up a program or an ability to say that we want to encourage people to monetize their land and not building their land in rural Loudoun County, it gets voted down.

[02:24:06] So at some point the conclusion is this board is okay with building or having homes built in rural Loudoun County. I don't know if a conclusion can be logically reached, to be quite honest. And if you want to do that, okay. But I prefer we just say that, to be honest, because either way, you're going to pay for it.

[02:24:26] You're going to pay more for it. I don't remember, I guess I'll have this number when we come to the, I'll ask for this number when we come to the board meeting, how much we are putting into widening Route 15 right now. It is a boatload of money. So I think we're being penny wise and pound foolish long term.

[02:24:47] So, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Chair. All in favor of the motion, say aye. Aye. Anyone opposed? No. Motion carries, 3-2. It will be reported to the which business meeting? Oh. I think it's just whatever the natural.

[02:25:04] I'll have to look at it. April 16th, business meeting. Okay, thank you. Okay, thank you very much. Next up is item 16, licensing exemption for parks, recreation, and community services, school-age, after-school, and camp programs.

[02:25:38] Good evening, Chair Letourneau and committee members. Steve Torpy, Parks Recreation and Community Services. And the item before you this evening is an item about accepting the Commonwealth's licensing exemption that is out there for these types of programs.

[02:26:01] And we do have a PowerPoint presentation with me at the table. It's one of my assistant directors, Jenny Jones, and Deputy Director, Jeremy Payne. and they're going to walk you through the presentation at this time. Unable to fully staff our after-school and camp programs.

[02:26:25] One way to address this issue is to accept the licensing exemption offered by the Code of Virginia. PRCS school-age programs include CASA, CASA Academy, all of our camps. Our licensed preschools are not included in the school-age group request.

[02:26:46] Next slide, please.

[02:27:13] It's the eclipse.

[02:27:30] It's the eclipse. Just throwing everything into iPads, stop working, Granicus is down, you can get the slides to work. Imagine if we had had the total eclipse, be in the dark, could be.

[02:27:47] Do they have the slideshow that they could follow along? Have some candles. Do they have the slideshow that they could follow along? That sounds good to me.

[02:28:03] How about we improvise?

[02:28:34] Sorry, go ahead. Okay, slide two. Across the state of Virginia, 571 agencies have accepted this exemption, 571. This exemption is only available to local governments, so the list does not include private child care.

[02:28:55] The only known local government that has not taken this license exemption is Fairfax, and that's because they operate using grants that require their child care programs be licensed. We're going to slide three now.

[02:29:15] CASA management are a part of an after-school coalition that includes managers of after-school programs in neighboring jurisdictions. The licensing exemption has been a hot topic at the quarterly meetings. The exemption has been claimed by many in the area, and there's a list there.

[02:29:34] We spoke to Alexandria and Arlington in particular. We talked to those managers who have accepted the licensing exemption and have been following under that now for a year and two years,

respectively. And they gave us some feedback and said that they were very happy with their decision to accept the licensing exemption.

[02:29:54] And they gave four very specific reasons. They can provide program-specific training rather than the pre-service training that is required by licensing. And that's the Department of Education is the licensing agent. They can promote within, promoting experienced staff that may lack the college credits.

[02:30:15] They can fill positions much more quickly, and it also improves staff morale. We're moving into slide four now. These three benefits of accepting the licensing exemption is going to be explored in this presentation.

[02:30:38] Slide five. The slide shows who will be impacted by the decision to accept a licensing exemption. We have 607 staff working in licensed school-age child care and over 6,500 children enrolled. Slide six, there are varying education and experience requirements depending on staff position, with supervisors being required to have a four-year degree in a child-related field plus experience.

[02:31:11] Finding substitutes with required qualifications that can fill in for supervisors is nearly impossible. Administration staff specialists must cover all supervisor call-offs, some leader call-offs and some aid call-offs. The average number of call-offs daily is 18.1.

[02:31:28] To date, specialist coordinators, program managers, and other CPD program staff have covered over 900 CASA shifts. Accepting this licensing exemption would allow PRCS to assign staff that have years of experience but lack the education requirements into supervisory positions.

[02:31:49] This would also allow PRCS experienced leaders to substitute for supervisor call-offs. Slide 7. Inability to attract applicants that meet the qualifications for licensing requirements restricts camp capacity based on the staff-to-child ratio.

[02:32:12] In 2023, our camp days and fest enrollment was less than half the staff capacity when it's fully staffed. So when it's fully staffed, it's over \$5,000, and in 2023, I can't see the slide, but it was around \$2,300.

[02:32:29] Slide eight, CASA supervisors, this is only a 30-hour part-time position with partial benefits, so PRCS is competing against other employers who offer full-time jobs with full benefits.

[02:32:47] The four-hour-per-day on-site work schedule allows for flexibility with schooling. We can attract more college students with less restrictive requirements. And then finally, internal hires with experience are held back from promotion due to the education requirement.

[02:33:08] Slide nine, new requirements. Oh, it's working. Okay. Slide nine, new requirements approved by the governor are now out for public comment and will make filling leader positions more difficult than they already are, and aides will no longer be able to handle a group of children alone.

[02:33:30] In a nutshell, the new changes are doing away with the A position. It will now be called leader underfill, and the staff will need to have at least a leader qualifications in order to be left alone with children. Slide 10.

[02:33:50] Leader qualifications in after-school programs will be significantly impacted by the proposed changes and qualifications as well, requiring more education, more experience, and eliminating the option to use the underfield leader aide's position. With the governor's proposed changes, our aide leader pool of 106 leaders would lose about 30 staff.

[02:34:16] And then we're moving on to slide 10. When specialists can focus on priority job duties instead of substituting, they were able to guide staff and conduct child care site inspections, resulting in fewer standard violations.

[02:34:33] Specialists are our in-office staff that supervise a cluster of five to eight schools. They focus on training and development, development plans, coaching, and communications with staff and parents. Next slide, please.

[02:34:52] It's important to note that accepting this licensing exemption doesn't mean that our programs are unregulated. Our department has hired licensing specialists from the Department of Social Services that now work as licensed program managers for our department. These staff complete internal audits and CQI visits actually in excess of what the state requires for licensing.

[02:35:16] Our policies, training, and handbooks are all license-centric and that meet or exceed current licensing standards. Next slide, please. As you can see from this chart, the employee screening and training process that we follow is equivalent to the process required under licensing with the exception of pre-service training.

[02:35:35] That training is oriented towards preschool programs only and is not relevant to our after-school or summer camp programs. Our preschool and child care programs will remain licensed and will continue to participate in that training. Tasks like the sworn disclosure statements, fingerprints, CPS registry, and out-of-state background checks are all covered with the Castle Branch background check that is currently performed by the county.

[02:36:02] Next slide, please. One of the benefits of accepting the licensing exemption is a reduction in the onboarding costs for new employees as well. On the next two charts, you can see a comparison of those costs that we currently pay versus if we accept the licensing exemption.

[02:36:19] Next slide, please. And one more time. Next slide. As you can see, there's a projected cost savings of approximately \$1,200 for each new employee. In addition, we also anticipate that the hiring and onboarding process will be accelerated significantly.

[02:36:37] so that certainly helps with hiring. Next slide. In 2023, CASA parents were surveyed about the reason they chose to participate in their CASA program. With 345 responses, less than 3% of parents chose CASA because it is a licensed child care program, so we do not anticipate that this will have a significant impact from a parental perspective. Next slide, please. There are additional requirements for the department if the county chooses to accept the licensing exemption, including an annual disclosure, a report of incidents, and posting a public notice at each

[02:37:14] program location that the program is exempt from licensure. Next slide. And exempt programs must follow the including, all the including what you see on the slide, which are already part of our operational procedures. Next slide. To summarize, the required educational and experience requirements for licensed program has significantly hindered our ability to hire and staff our sites for our afterschool, and summer camp programs. As hundreds of other agencies in the state have already done, including jurisdictions around Loudoun, we can help address this issue by accepting the licensing

[02:37:53] exemption with no impact on the safety of the participants or the program quality. At this time, we'd like to turn it over to the members of the committee for any questions that you may have. Thank you

very much for the presentation. So this is one of these items that when you hear the title, you kind of cringe a little bit and say, oh, do we really want to be doing that?

[02:38:13] But I really wanted the committee to have the full presentation because obviously it's a much more complicated story than just saying a licensing exemption. And, in fact, there's a lot of checks on this, and we'll be able to provide more service to more kids by going this direction.

[02:38:32] Chair Randall. Thank you. Well, I've said many times that my kids were in CASA and in YAS all the way through from kindergarten on, CASA and YAS. And I don't know, between the two of them, probably 10 different summer programs.

[02:38:50] So Loudoun County was a big part of my kids coming up. Now, I do know, though, that the YAS teacher, the YAS supervisor, did not have a degree in any child care. He actually had been a former D.C. police officer.

[02:39:08] I know him well, and he became a very good friend to my son for years after that, in fact. So I am a big fan of the CASA and YAS programs and say that all the time and thank them for what they did. A couple of questions. Will there be a pay differential for people who are licensed versus people who are not licensed?

[02:39:29] Is there any such thing as a certification and as a difference between what a license is and what a certification is? Will people who receive, who are not required to be licensed, and I understand all the reasons why, will there be or can there be ongoing CEUs and so they can keep kind of working toward a certification or a license?

[02:39:52] Is that required? Because most positions have requirement for ongoing CEUs. And then finally, if somebody goes from the, you talked about supervisor versus an aid person, let's say an aid person, are we saying, because I might have missed that, that the supervisor would be licensed or just would have to have a certain amount of experience, but the aid wouldn't be licensed?

[02:40:21] So the, to answer your question about would there be a pay differential between somebody who is licensed or unlicensed, just to be clear, the staff themselves are not necessarily licensed in something, it's the program that is licensed, the overall program is what gets licensed, and then the supervisors currently have the minimum qualifications from the state.

[02:40:46] But, for example, you would have, we have currently, we have several folks that have worked for us for over 20 years in this program, but they cannot move into a supervisor position because they don't have a four-year degree based upon the state license.

[02:41:03] So it's not a, the state qualification requires a four-year degree if it's a licensed program. Correct. And if it's not a licensed. Then we can set them right here. You can set whatever question you wish to have. That is correct.

[02:41:19] I see. And so to answer your question about the differential in pay, every one of our positions, including these leaders and supervisors, do have the minimum qualifications and then things beyond the minimum qualifications, and that's what sets the pay offer when they are hired.

[02:41:38] So that would be taken into account when the various experience. And then you keep that going with seniority and all those types of things that you have. Correct. Okay. All right. Other questions, if you don't mind? Yeah, go ahead. Yeah. Ongoing CEUs, do they do that right now?

[02:41:56] No. We do not. You do not do that right now? That's correct. Okay. Okay, I think that's it then. Thank you. Supervisor Brisbane. Thank you. So it was a little bit confusing to me when I read the item. It was a little bit clearer when you said that the program is licensed, not the people necessarily.

[02:42:18] But what are we able to relax? I understand you listed a lot of the benefits, but what are you able to relax as far as policies or procedures if we're not licensed?

[02:42:34] And I would start, and I'll turn over to Jeremy and Jenny to add to what I have to say here. But I would say that we are actually not relaxing anything except for the criteria in order to hire the ability to hire people that we know have the experience, just not the educational background for these particular positions.

[02:43:01] We actually, the way we operate our programs now, we have more things in place as far as checks and balances than the state requires. And as Mr. Payne was saying earlier, we're very fortunate in that some of those folks from the Department of Education, we have been able to bring on board to help create and then enhance our own programs for checks and balances and do that currently even more so than the state.

[02:43:31] It's just the hiring aspect that we're trying to get away from right now so that we can provide more, particularly in the summer camp season. okay okay um and did i did i hear that you might reduce the child to um i want to say teacher but that's not really the right that but are you going to be reducing the teacher to child ratio no okay the uh child to teacher ratio will remain 18 to 1 we'll try to do better than that but that

[02:44:06] standard will remain okay great and then um will you still so i remember like way back in the day when I worked at Village Green, which had after-school programs, we would have inspections that were unannounced and those sorts of things.

[02:44:25] Are we still going to be getting those unlicensed? It wouldn't be coming from the state per se, but that is what we do currently. The inspections that we do are not scheduled. They are unannounced so that we have the ability to have those checks and balances internally.

[02:44:42] And we actually do more than the state does out of each one of our sites. Okay. And then you mentioned something about Fairfax County not wanting to do this or can't really do this because they have grants that require them to be licensed.

[02:45:02] Would operating unlicensed or getting this waiver have any unintended consequence of us not being able to apply for grants? Are you worried about that at all? Because we're not licensed, maybe we'll be leaving money on the table somewhere. Yeah, I'm not aware of any.

[02:45:21] I know that there are certain jurisdictions who do get grant funding who have gotten this exemption. And I just, with Fairfax County, I think it is a percentage of kids that are covered under a grant that is prohibitive for them to go unlicensed.

[02:45:38] I see, I see. And there are programs in Fairfax County that have taken the license exemption. like the Park Authority, I believe, has some of their summer camps, but it's some of their after-school program that is run, I believe, through community recreation that has not accepted this yet.

[02:45:59] Okay. Okay. Thank you. Okay. Any other questions? If not, I will move the Finance, Government Operations, and Economic Development Committee, recommend the Board of Supervisors

accept the licensing exemption under Virginia Code 221-289.030 for all currently licensed school-age and summer camp programs for the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services.

[02:46:21] Motion is made, seconded by Supervisor Umstead. Thank you for the presentation. I think we've had a good discussion about this and laid out a case why it makes sense to move forward. Any other discussions on the motion? Chair Randall. So I would say that this is one of these, Mr. LeTurner, you said it right, this is one of these things where the headline is very different from when you get into it.

[02:46:43] When the media picks up on this issue, and they will, I think it might be a good idea to have something ready to go so we can actually explain what this is and what we're doing and why and what other counties and jurisdictions and facilities have already done this and how the fact that we actually have more stringent qualifications already and all those types of things because, quite frankly, the headline's going to read something that is very misleading.

[02:47:09] And if all has failed, you can say that the Randall boys went through this, And they are now the most talented, beautiful, handsome, fantastic boys just about in all of Virginia. So as you can say that, if all else fails, you can feel free to say that. I'll call you and we'll work something up.

[02:47:26] Thank you. But just to add to what you said, Chair Randall, the part of going unlicensed with some of these programs, we still have to notify the parents that this is an unlicensed program. So we have been working up how to go about to do that as well as that information that you're talking about.

[02:47:43] And I tell you, no kidding, as a former parent, you know, I would want to make sure that the same level of service, the same ratio, the same attention, all those things were paid to my children. And I think that would be, I'm more concerned about, you know, I just think that these are one of these times that we should be ready to answer the questions or even preemptively say something before the headline comes up.

[02:48:12] That's all. Thank you. Okay. Any other discussion on the motion? All in favor of the motion, please say aye. Aye. Anyone opposed? Motion carries. 5-0. Thank you. Thank you. We have one final item tonight, and I placed it on the agenda.

[02:48:30] It is regarding funding for the state budget for WMATA. This is time-sensitive because the governor issued his budget amendments on Monday evening, and some of them didn't stay until Tuesday morning.

[02:48:46] and there is a veto session next week. So any communication from the Board of Supervisors about those items needs quick action by the board. I did wanna bring to the committee's attention the fact that the governor is proposing no additional state funding to WMATA and FY25 and 33 million in FY2026.

[02:49:11] The justification for this is that there is some existing funding that is in a NVTC trust fund. That funding was provided to NVTC at the end of the Northam administration. It was additional funding to help localities with their contribution to Metro.

[02:49:30] It is a really important point that Loudoun County did not receive any of that money because we were not a WMATA jurisdiction at the time. We were paying into the capital operating budget, but not the operating, sorry the capital budget but not the operating budget at the time of that transfer and therefore mvtc did not allocate any funding split to loudon so the assumption by the administration that

all of the localities received funding extra funding in 2022 and should utilize that is not correct in loudest case and that is different than our neighbors in northern virginia in addition there

[02:50:09] There are, this money has been planned to be used by the localities for some period of time and was part of an overall strategy. I don't know, Mr. Penn Street, if you want to talk any further to the discussions that you've had with METC about that funding.

[02:50:26] Yes, Mr. Chair. Our understanding is the state aid account is a revolving account. So the payments, each of us as jurisdictions, we pay quarterly.

[02:50:41] our WMATA payments for both operating capital, and then we draw from that state aid account to be reimbursed. And so our understanding in this case is that any funds that were provided as state aid in fiscal year 2022 have already been reimbursed, spent by the locality to pay WMATA and then reimbursed back to the locality. So the funds that are in the state aid account today or in the NBTC Trust Fund today are not the same funds that were allocated by the Commonwealth in fiscal year 22. Those funds have been spent. And so what this would amount to for Loudoun

[02:51:19] is us being asked to come up with our own source funds to pay for the state's obligation or the state's share of this funding. For the other localities that did receive assistance in fiscal year 2022, what they would be essentially doing is using own source funds to refund back to the Commonwealth what they received in state aid in 2022 to make this payment for the Commonwealth in 2025. Yeah so in addition to this and it's not in this letter I think we can still talk about

[02:51:55] how to work on the letter a little bit there were also budget language amendments that were provided by the governor and I will speak a little bit as a metro board member here those requirements are that metro hire an outside consultant and that we produce a business plan and that business plan has to close our operating deficit and it has to be presented to the governor the director of rail public transit I believe the secretary of transportation and then several members of the

[02:52:27] general assembly each of whom singularly have to approve the plan themselves if not then funding for metro is withheld up to the full mile or three percent and then we're also held to the three percent cap in addition the metro board would be required to adopt the findings of the report and put them into action and as a member of that board I can say it is an interstate compact board which means that for one jurisdiction to tell the board which consists of board members

[02:53:03] from other jurisdictions that they have to do something like that is not our practice and I think would create a lot of imbalance in how the board operates really effectively neuters the board's ability to govern the organization so I would also request that the county and I believe other localities will be address those budget amendments as well as part of this letter given and their, I think, significant impact to the potential for future state funding and also governance.

[02:53:36] Mr. Habstreet. So that was a question that we had was how long does the committee want the letter to be? So we were trying to get it down to about a page. To add that would probably require a second page to explain, because what you just explained verbally when we reduce it to writing is a little bit complicated.

[02:53:57] And so we can definitely do that. I think it's an important point. i would just suggest and i want to word smith your letter but um it just was provided to us right before the meeting i think we should lead with the stuff about loudon county not receiving funding because that is that is our problem i think we can

say less about the overall state aid issue because quite frankly mvtc and at least four other jurisdictions are going to be addressing that and that's i'm not saying it's just their problem but it is a you know it's actually not really our shared issue so i would prefer our letter to focus on kind of our issue primarily and then bring up the other governance issue which i think is significant

[02:54:35] okay that's kind of my why we're talking about this chair randall so thank you mr chairman a couple of things um one this is a budget amendment this is budget amendment 179 out of 264 budget amendment that the governor sent down so this will be taken up probably not this is probably not an issue of a veto section as a veto session it's more of an issue of a reconvene session that probably won't happen until June which is good news because we can send this letter and we should

[02:55:11] and still have time to do some serious educating of our especially our general assembly members especially General Assembly members who are connected to NVTC. I agree when I just did a very cursory reading of this letter that the last two paragraphs of this letter probably should be kind of pushed up front because they have some of the more important wording, I think, is in the last two paragraphs.

[02:55:40] I will also say that I have been talking over the past 24 hours with other chief elected officials in the area. My colleague from Fairfax County put out a statement within, it felt like, minutes of the governor finishing his budget update.

[02:56:02] And there is discussion of having a letter come out from the chief elected officials with the exception of Prince William County and possibly a discussion of even having some type of press conference. And so I will know more about that tomorrow, and I may tomorrow ask without objection, you know, that I will sign on to a letter that comes from the chief elected officials in the Ramada jurisdictions.

[02:56:30] I think that there is a lot of, it feels like there's a lot of information that the governor is not aware of. I'm not quite sure who should be making the governor aware of some of this because this is, quite frankly, not that difficult to understand, I don't think.

[02:56:47] But I do think that possibly that, you know, we do have, I think, relationships enough to talk to people in the administration to help talk through some of these issues and hope that they will listen.

[02:57:08] I know that this is not really an issue for the Secretary of Transportation. It's more an issue for the Secretary of Finance, but I do also know that there are some fairly good relationships in the Secretary's office for transportation. And so, yeah, let's kind of work on the wordsmithing a little bit, but we do have a little bit more time before the reconvene session to do more educating for people who need to be

[02:57:34] For our state delegation, and not just maybe Northern Virginia state delegation, but just the state delegations in other places as well, because we do have those relationships, too, to try to help people understand why this is not, why Budget Amendment 179 is not really going to be helpful.

[02:57:57] Thank you. Vice Chair Rispin. Thank you. I'm not sure who might have this information, but could someone remind me what was in the Senate or the adopted budget for 25 and 26, I guess, for the two years?

[02:58:13] Yeah, it was \$65 million in 25 and \$84.5 million in 26. So that's additional new money on top of the sort of normal 3% state contribution. So we're getting, and the amendment would have us have Northern Metro getting zero in 25 and 33 million?

[02:58:34] Yes. Okay, okay. Yeah, that's just horrible. How much do we think this, I don't know if we've done enough analysis to get this answer, but, you know, if this holds and we can't change any minds, Do we know how much this will cost Loudoun County if we need to live up to our, if we need to fill in the gap?

[02:59:00] Mr. Hempstreet. So I'll need to go back and check that. I mean, my memory is it's, for Loudoun, we're such a, we're not a huge member. So it's in the \$10 to \$20 million range. So it's within our ability to fund. For 25 or for 25 and 26?

[02:59:18] That would be for each year. Each year, each year. Okay. We have gas tax revenue that is... That's not a little bit. No, it's definitely not. That's not a little bit. So we have saved up some funds within Trust Fund to take that on.

[02:59:37] We also have planned for these costs to come. I guess it's better to say that the jurisdictions to the east of us, Their financial contributions are much, much more significant than Loudoun County's.

[02:59:59] And again, the assumption, I think, in the governor's proposed amendments is that the General Assembly will eventually fund the state share. The amendment appears to be saying that there are funds in the NBTC trust fund, So therefore, the trust fund should be spent down without fully acknowledging that what's in the trust fund are locality funds.

[03:00:23] And so the Commonwealth is not actually funding its share. It's funding the localities are actually paying for it. So when I give you that number, it's making the assumption that the localities are picking up not only our share, but also the state's share as well, which is the purpose of the letter is to say, you know, the state, you need to pay your share.

[03:00:44] does the state have any authority to go into the nbtc funds and take them or are they just making are they just trying to say you can do this instead of the state giving we found a pocket of money for you that we think you can use but they can't really okay okay i mean look this is not we've had these discussions like this has come up over the last few months about the the trust fund yeah it is confusing it is if you are not really familiar with this and understand the way it revolves and all that kind of stuff okay um but yeah i think they're saying use that money

[03:01:21] before we give you more money to me the most important thing here is we never got the money they think we got in the first place yeah for us we are in a totally different predicament yeah yeah okay um and i i would agree with um with chair letourneau in that it i and it i don't think it should take that much ink to just say this is a multi-jurisdictional operation here Virginia has no authority to require a business plan from an organization that has members from D.C. and Maryland in it.

[03:01:59] So I do think that that should be included in the letter. Thank you. Okay. So I was going to make a motion if you want to. Yeah, I'm going to make a motion. I'm just going to move that the board, that the committee recommend that the board send a letter indicating our opposition both to budget amendment 179 as well as the other budget amendment that refers to the operations of the WMATA board and that we do so with the assent of our colleagues by straw vote until the next meeting.

[03:02:38] Second. Motion is made in a second. I don't know if we need to keep talking about it, but I'll just say we've had a productive discussion with our General Assembly delegation. I think I agree with what Chair Reynolds is saying, but we have heard already from them that they have some urgency to understand.

[03:02:54] No, no, yeah. Yeah, so we do want to move on the letter. We've had, I think they do understand, some of them understand the notion of the interstate compact and the way this is set up and why the language is kind of difficult. But there are varying degrees of understanding in the General Assembly.

[03:03:12] And I think there's, you know, a certain amount of, when you see that there's money in a trust fund, it instantly is like, oh, okay, well, they can use that. So we need to explain, you know, and others will do that too. But, you know, we've obviously, we're going to delay the adoption of the metro budget, which was supposed to be, what day is today, Thursday.

[03:03:32] So I have postponed that because we obviously need to have some understanding of what's happening here. We, to Chair Randall's point, we don't know how long this is going to go on. So we may not be able to delay adoption of the metro budget until this is resolved because we operate on the fiscal year.

[03:03:48] And, you know, although we're not sending tax bills, we are sending bills to our subsidy partners, and we do have to implement our own things like PICS and all that stuff with our union. So, we will have to act sometime in May, certainly, by May, and this may be unresolved.

[03:04:06] And so, we may have to go with what we've kind of proposed based on what the House and Senate budget was and hope that it gets worked out. And if it doesn't, then I think the implication would really be that all that trust fund money is going to get wiped out this year. There will be none for next year, and that will make next year's problem much, much worse for everybody.

[03:04:27] And that, you know, would be a difficult conversation. And then we still have, we get through the next two years, the longer-term issue of really how to get us out of this cycle and have a dedicated revenue source for METRA. Okay.

[03:04:43] Chair Randall? So, no, I certainly wasn't saying let's not get this letter out. Yes, I'm saying that we should get the letter out right away, and then we should start talking to our General Assembly members, especially since more than half of our delegation is new, and many of them have not served in NVTC or other regional jurisdictions to do that education with them because they're going to have to be the ones that make this argument on the floor is going to be really important.

[03:05:11] I will tell you, as chair of NVT, you know, in 2018, we had money that was, you know, it's the same thing, only they had to, it was the same thing, But NVT, they had to literally put legislation down there to do it.

[03:05:26] It wasn't just a suggestion. They actually had to do that. My fear is if they don't figure this out this year, next year when it's only, what was it, \$33 million next year, \$34 million next year, they're going to look at NVT again.

[03:05:42] And I think that what Mr. Letourneau, Chair Letourneau is saying is so right because sometimes you look at a regional body and you look at their books and you think, well, look at all that money sitting there. It's like, well, that's not real money. It's been spent or it's actually accounted for and all those types of things.

[03:05:58] And the other discussion, and I will say this is, I can actually say this is a pretty nonpartisan, my annoyance is pretty nonpartisan since the MBTA money happened during a Democrat administration.

[03:06:16] I mean, this inability to recognize how important Metro is to all the Commonwealth and, in fact, in some ways, to all of the nation continues to confuse me and to some degree frustrate me. But I do

think that the no kidding sitting down with our General Assembly members after we send this letter, one by one by one, is going to be really important to do that as well.

[03:06:43] So thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, oh, by the way, if, you know, if by tomorrow I hear, if I have more discussions with the other chief elected officials and there's going to be something more done in way of either a letter, other correspondence, or a press conference or something, I will make sure I bring that and let you all know that as well.

[03:07:05] Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Prisman. Yes, I mean, I'm happy to support the motion and support the letter. I mean, I am happy also to help out, you know, speaking with anyone from our delegation, although I think that our delegation probably understood and probably supported the, you know, the budget that came through, you know, the budget negotiations.

[03:07:29] You know, it's interesting. I'm new to NVTC, but it's my understanding that there used to be senators and delegates from the General Assembly that sat on NVTC, but that was changed with this administration because the governor wanted to appoint his own folks to NVTC.

[03:07:46] So he has, I think, at least three appointees to NVTC, so they should understand, presumably understand, the process and, you know, local transit. But another question, Chair Letourneau, did you basically just, did you make the draft motion that's here?

[03:08:08] I didn't even, sorry, I didn't even see the draft motion. Okay, there's a draft motion here. I just want to make sure that we have, that we covered all the elements in the draft motion. Does staff think we did that? I think you did that. Okay. You said straw poll.

[03:08:24] We would take that to mean staff would poll the board separately. Okay, I just wanted to make sure. And just to further clarify, because there are five of you here, we would have already counted your votes, so we will pull the balance of the board to come up with a full poll of the board that would then give us authority to work with you all, send the letter on the board's behalf, and then ratify that decision on the 16th.

[03:08:53] Thank you. I'm good. Thank you. Just to clarify on the MBTC, the governor actually does not appoint. So that's the General Assembly members. So what happened was when party control changed, the Republican members of the General Assembly, there weren't enough from Northern Virginia, so they changed it to allow for designees to serve instead.

[03:09:17] I will say we have had a Democratic House since January. They have not appointed anybody to NVTC. That has not been the practice. It is not. With all respect, I'm the one that served on the commission.

[03:09:34] I know when they've started. Anyway, absolutely, that is irrespective of any of this. So, yes, all in favor of the motion, say aye. Anyone opposed? Motion carries 5-0. And the meeting is adjourned.



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