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Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, FY 2026 Budget Work Session, Monday, March 10, 2025

Date Monday, March 10, 2025
Place Board Room, First Floor, Government Center, 1 Harrison Street SE, Leesburg, Virginia
Length 3h 24m (video)

- Official meeting video (county, Granicus): <https://loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7891>
- Meeting page: <https://loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7891>

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[00:09:52] turn me on there we go well good evening supervisors good evening staff and good evening loud and into all the staff who heard Miss Bricksman singing I apologize to you for that singing from Miss Bricksman that you just heard I'm going to call to order the March 10th 2025 for supervisors budget work session board members I'm going to stress the importance of this budget work session as a time to offer changes additions and leachings to the budget you should try to offer all desired amendments and ask questions you have during the work sessions. Please

[00:10:29] offer only motions that you intend to support so we can be efficient with our time for our limited time during each session. In addition, if you'd like to offer motions on items that do not appear in your proposed budget, please work with staff in advance to the work session to ensure your motion is accurate and accomplishes what your goal is. When we get to the final vote which will be on April 1st. Staff will not be able to make large changes to the budget during that meeting, and the vote on the budget could be delayed if there are substantive changes that were not discussed and voted on during the budget work session. Supervisors,

[00:11:05] I will also tell you that I wasn't able to be here for the first budget work session which was a week ago today, which was Monday, and there is one department that is the Commonwealth Attorney's Department that I know I'm asking to bring back. I have some questions. They were sent, I sent them to

Ms. Burke today. She sent them to Commonwealth Attorney. I will bring him back to get those questions answered. Depending on his answers, because I, depending on the answers, I may be making another motion or other motions for the Commonwealth Attorney. So I'll let you all know that

[00:11:40] right now. I will send you all both the questions and a possible motion. Let me Let me reiterate, it's only a possible motion. I will not make a motion unless -- it depends on the answer to its questions. Let me also say that we have found out that the -- where is it -- Ms. Bricks, did I hand it to you?

[00:12:01] Here it is. We have found out that the Probation and Parole Office, State Probation and Parole Office, Their wording limits us to only do supplements to probation and parole officers, supposedly not to office staff.

[00:12:20] Now the difference, the fiscal impact would be about \$19,800 to the counties on the county side. However, we're not going to make that motion tonight because I'm going to have Mr. Rogers or somebody go talk to whomever they talk to because what we understand is that there There are other localities in Loudoun County that actually are doing supplements, not just to probation parole officers, but to the staffs over there as well.

[00:12:50] And so we're trying to clarify that before we go any further. So it's a \$19,800 difference, not that much money, but I do want to make that, I do want to check that out before we make any motions. Because what the state's basically saying to us is they're not paying their employees, And they're not letting us pay their employees a supplement either, which it's just kind of illogical.

[00:13:12] And if other counties are doing it, we want to find out what's going on. So we'll talk to Mr. Rogers and try to get that straight. I will, at the end of the wrap-up meeting on Thursday, make a motion regarding putting money again back to the positive in the amount of \$189,750 to back to the budget because There was money allocated to expand early voting to four sites.

[00:13:38] We have expanded early voting to two sites, and so we put money back in. So we will wait until the wrap-up session to make all those wrap-up motions until we get to the final Tote Board date. And so just let -- just know that I'm aware of those -- I'm aware of those discrepancies, and we're getting some answers on those, and we will make them on that day.

[00:13:57] Supervisors, I will also say, if you have any other motions that you would like to make or have at the wrap-up session, please let me know right now. please let staff know um asap please do not bring motions to the dais on thursday i am begging you do not bring motions to the dais on thursday that no one has seen already in advance that would that is not helpful so if you have one please put them in there in advance all right before we start i would like everyone to please join me in pledge of allegiance to the flag the united states of

[00:14:34] America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Okay, all right, today before we do anything else, before we go to our departments, we do have some capital, the capital improvement motion that is going to be made.

[00:15:02] That motion is usually made by the Chair of the Finance Committee. Do you have that motion available to you, Ms. Brixman? yep all right i want it i want it now no you didn't have that mr turner you had this sitting right there that's not the finance motion okay i have i have a mint in my mouth okay i move that the recommendation of the finance government operations and economic development committee that the board of supervisors adopt

[00:15:40] the fy 2025 fy 2030 amended capital improvement program capital asset preservation program major equipment replacement fund metro garage garages fund public facilities fund and transportation district fund as amended by the committee on march 5th 2025.

[00:15:57] i further move that the recommendation of the finance government operations and economic development committee that the board of supervisors direct staff to include a motion in the fy 2026 appropriations resolution item to authorize the amendment of the fy 2025 capital Improvement Program by directing staff to execute a budget adjustment to move \$250,000 from the capital project management account in the capital projects fund to a newly created Fleetwood Road Improvements Project. I further move the recommendation of the Finance Government Operations and Economic Development Committee that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to

[00:16:33] include a motion in the FY2026 Appropriations Resolution Item to authorize the amendment of FY2025 Capital Improvement Program by directing staff to execute a budget adjustment to appropriate \$1.2 million of cash proffer revenue in the Linear Parks and Trails Project to construct a pedestrian crossing over Beaver Dam Run.

[00:16:55] Second. Thank you, Madam Chair. Discussion on the motion, Ms. Brixman? Sure. So this year, the CIP, the Capital Improvement Program, was not a year to add any projects. We only do that every other year. So this year, it was minimal work to bring it through.

[00:17:15] And we just had some minor adjustments to do basically a safety study on Fleetwood and to do the Beaver Dam Run crossing. And otherwise, things will chug along as normal in our CIP. And I think that's all I have.

[00:17:32] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Ms. Bricksman. Anybody else? Ms. Tocroni. Thank you, Chair Randall. And I want to thank my colleagues for supporting the Fleetwood Road Safety Improvement Study. This is a critical improvement needed for residents that live off of this road.

[00:17:53] It was paved as a rural rustic road, and there is significant traffic on it. The study will be looking at upgrading the section of Fleetwood Road between Kennedy Lane and Route 50 from a rural rustic road to a two-lane rural collector roadway with shoulders and a shared use path on one side of the roadway.

[00:18:14] So I look forward to seeing the results, and that should be coming in, well, the study will begin in first quarter of 2026, FY2026, and take about a year. So I look forward to sharing the results with the community. Thank you. Thank you. Anybody else?

[00:18:32] Ms. Bricksman, I think the CIP budget is one of the toughest things that the finance chair will do, especially if you've never done it before. There were some changes this year, which makes it even a little more tough because you're first one to do some of these things I thought the changes were good because it allowed TLC members to see it a little earlier but but either way the cap budgets not particularly easy budget to do you did a great job so I kept closing thank you madam chair I will also just point out that while this year you know there were a couple changes next year is going to be a really big year we

[00:19:08] definitely have a list of future years projects that will outstrip what we are thinking that we will have funding for. So there will be a number of conversations next year about what we will be putting in the last two years of the six year CIP. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you. All in favor, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? That motion will pass 801. Mr. Sainz will not be joining us tonight. He had a personal item

he had to take care of. Okay, we're going to go on and start today with General Government. The first person up is the Commissioner of the Revenue. Mr. Wertz, will you come to the table, please?

[00:19:45] good evening sir good evening madam chair members of the board i want to thank you for the schedule this evening it is very much appreciated very excited to see that mr mr mr kirschner just ask can we just pass you by and come back to you at the end by the way you're on pages 62 to 64. yes ma'am thank you good to see everybody uh here with me what was the madam chair except mr kirschner who's giving you a hard time okay um i've got here uh subreen my chief deputy and uh with me to answer questions if there are relative

[00:20:24] to their specific divisions um brian williams my commercial real estate assessment deputy julie rivard is my deputy of business tax compliance phil mcalevey is my business tax assessment deputy john john de meester is my it deputy and rob drake is my deputy over tax exemptions and deferrals i asked them to be here this evening so they could see how the process worked and then answer any specific questions relative to their divisions i have other deputies in the office but i did not have requests for their specific divisions so they are not here

[00:21:01] with me tonight. My office performs tax assessment, which is one of the core functions of local government, and affects every property owner and business in the county. This involves the county's top three locally administered sources of revenue, real estate taxes, personal property taxes on vehicles, and business equipment, and business license tax that are projected to generate \$2.5 billion in the FY26 proposed budget. Prior to requesting additional staff,

[00:21:37] I consider workload of existing staff anticipated increases based on population growth and studying other potential solutions such as the use of technology or process changes. I had no request last year and I have no vacancies in the office. I requested and received authorization for one commercial real estate appraiser in FY24. This year's request, including the county administrator's proposed budget, is based on the growing body of work that needs to be accomplished and focuses on

[00:22:15] three areas. Tax assessment and compliance, that involves a commercial real estate supervising appraiser, a business tax assessor, and a business tax compliance officer. The next component focuses on operational support. That includes an administrative manager and an IT analyst. And the last but not least request is a property relative to property tax exemptions for tax exemptions and deferral specialists. Regarding tax assessment, the growing data center tax base causes the need for

[00:22:55] additional staffing, but the real estate and business equipment components form the basis for this particular request. The number and value of these facilities and the equipment within them continues to grow substantially. As mentioned in the past, the challenge is getting the information necessary for proper assessments, and this will assist in that effort. I will point out for retail data centers, we could have up to 1,500 property owners within one data center alone.

[00:23:31] Just like income taxes, business license and business personal property are self-reported taxes. The lack of proper staffing results in data accuracy issues due to the time available to review data center properties as the county data center portfolio continues to grow.

[00:23:49] and it could negatively impact staff morale due to increased work demands. We want to focus on fair, equitable, and uniform assessments, and this request will support that effort. My second request is for operational support.

[00:24:08] Staff is divided between two full-service offices, the one here in the Government Center and the other in the Loudoun Tech Center in Sterling. IT staff manage our real estate assessment software application, as well as the tax billing and collection software for the assessment of vehicles and business equipment that is overseen along with the Treasurer's IT staff.

[00:24:31] These two offices and 90 FTE require additional administrative and IT support to keep up with existing needs. And this IT support is not just internal customers, it's external customers and departments as well.

[00:24:48] Lastly, the population eligible for the tax exemption continues to grow. Veteran-related property tax exemptions have exploded 200% in the last five years, resulting in the need for support to keep up with the workload.

[00:25:04] And these are mandated exemptions. These are not local option. I presently have space in both my Leesburg and Sterling offices to accommodate this request. And I and my staff are prepared to take any questions you may have.

[00:25:19] Should you do me a favor? I think everyone up here probably knows, but just for the public, I always say for the tens and tens of people watching us, because I'm sure everyone is at home and riveted to their television screen right now. Could you just talk a little bit about what you just said, that you said you can have up to 15 customers in a data center. Could you talk a little bit about that and how that happens? Because I don't think most people really do understand. You could have a retail data center that leases out space to companies who wish to have their equipment hosted. The data center provides security, a locked place for them

[00:25:56] to keep their equipment. They provide the power for that equipment. And so there could be 1,500 customers in one particular data center alone. Yep, yep, yep, yep. Okay, thank you, sir. Questions for Mr. Wirtz? Mr. Letourneau. Thank you, Madam Chair. So Mr. Wirtz mentions that The target is 30% for business accounts being audited, and even with the enhancement, we're at 19%.

[00:26:27] So how critical is it that we get to 30%? What would you need to get to 30%? And then in terms of those audits, what are the kind of common outcomes? You know, is the vast majority of the time everything fine and no adjustments, Or how often does your team actually find issues that require changes or maybe underpayment of taxes or those kind of things?

[00:26:50] I appreciate that question, Supervisor Letourneau. Actually, we were discussing this earlier, getting ready for this meeting today. And we were having a discussion about companies that have equipment in our data centers. Any company that you might think of, whether it's here in the United States or around the world, probably has data center equipment in our data centers.

[00:27:13] servers, racks. If you are a business that's located abroad and you lease space in one of our data centers for your equipment, you don't know anything about Loudoun County, Virginia. You don't know anything about personal property taxes in Virginia. Heck, you don't even know where we are.

[00:27:41] So it is a big challenge to reach out to everyone that has equipment here and make sure that they understand what their obligations are and get them to comply. So is that kind of what your audits end up doing? Absolutely. Yes, it does. And how often? We are very successful, but I will tell you it is a challenge to get information from companies that are abroad.

[00:27:59] So is that where a lot of this gap between the 19% is kind of coming from versus the? Some of it. Some of it is coming from that. We also have companies that are not very cooperative and they don't want to provide us information about who their customers are in their data centers.

[00:28:16] Fairfax county recently had a lawsuit relative to that and was successful it's only a circuit court ruling we'll see if the company appeals but the department of tax administration had requested a list of all the customers with equipment in one of their data centers and the operator of the data center refused to provide the information but the court instructed the data center operator to provide all the information they requested, and so we're all experiencing a similar type of thing.

[00:28:50] Yeah. How often, though, do these audits net additional revenue to the county? The vast majority net additional revenue. They do. Most of the audits that we conduct where there is a reduction in revenue are due to appeals, where we're reviewing records based on a request for a reduction, where, let's say you're a center operator and you have equipment here in one of our data centers you might have some in Prince William county or Fairfax and maybe you misreported it to a particular locality and we need to make adjustments based on that so that would be the most frequent time when there's a

[00:29:27] reduction in that but most often it's an increase in assessment thank you Mr. Crony yeah um thank you Mr. Wort so just to follow on with Supervisor Letourneau if it's an increase in revenue um do we need more compliance auditors?

[00:29:48] I'm just wondering how many you have and if you think an additional amount would net more revenue.

[00:30:09] For the business tax compliance division, I have two senior business tax auditors and three regular business tax auditors and five tax compliance officers. Do I think we could accomplish more with more people?

[00:30:26] Yes, I do believe we can. Obviously, I'm not going to ask for more people than I can reasonably train and handle on an annual basis.

[00:30:41] I think that after someone has been audited, they are more likely to comply in future years. So I'm hopeful that over time that the number of folks that need that type of assistance would go down.

[00:30:58] Okay. Do you expect to bring another position like this in FY27? It's likely. Okay. Wonderful. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Kirshner. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Mr. Wirtz, for being here. I have two kind of primary questions for you.

[00:31:16] As you well know, I'm a big proponent of reducing the car tax. Thankfully, we can separate those now. I hope that makes your job easier. I'm not sure if it does, but if it does, you can share that with me. So, as part of that, I'm looking at ways that we can maybe cut the budget, and one of the ideas I have to bring at wrap-up session, and I'll just say it now, is to probably put forward a motion to cut the three and the four priorities, which gets us to about \$3.829 million, being nondiscriminatory.

[00:31:47] Unfortunately for you, that motion would include one of your, I think, one of your positions, which is the tax exemption and deferral specialist? Yes, sir. I think that's a priority three. Can you talk to me a little bit about that in terms of if that were to not be funded this round, how would you, number one, manage that, and two, how are you managing it now?

[00:32:09] The answer to that is the individual that would be hired in this position would deal with tax relief for the elderly and disabled, which is a program that we've seen growing over the years, and they also administer a tax exemption for veterans, surviving spouses of veterans killed in line of duty, killed in action, and 100% totally disabled veterans as well.

[00:32:38] That's the segment of the population, at least as far as this program goes, that has grown substantially. What would happen is we would not be as quick in granting those exemptions to those individuals who may be qualified, and it'd be more workload on the existing staff.

[00:33:01] Okay. The second question I have is specifically concerning, one of the things we obviously have is the Revenue Stabilization Fund you're somewhat familiar with. One of the things that I think has been discussed coming to the end of this wrap-up is to possibly, I think we have a little bit of a surplus there.

[00:33:25] In terms of, and one of the things that Mr. Hemstreet has cautioned us about is perhaps dipping into that because we don't know fully what our revenue will be from our data centers. What has been your, do you have any crystal ball or foresight as to what, and it kind of hits a little bit on Mr. Letourneau's question, that we will see, do you think there's some risk in seeing a reduction in the tax base there once we are able to get all those, because I know we're a little bit, we're making an educated guess at this point.

[00:34:00] We have a pretty good sense, but we haven't received the total values on that computer equipment. Can you speak to that at all? I don't have a handle on that for this year. We talked about that a little bit before when we were talking about ppfr personal property tax relief as I mentioned a lot of our large businesses ask for and receive an automatic 30-day extension to report their equipment so many of them have not even reported to us yet I don't have a handle on

[00:34:35] that I wish I did have a crystal ball to answer that question for you okay thank you I'm out of time so um I'm going to go Mr. Turner but I'm going to go back to Miss Burke which which I should have done that before and I apologize to talk about the tote board because before I ask if there are any motions on the day as because Mr. Kirsten just mentioned he might have one we do want to know well wrap up we do want we're going to want to know like oh not to wrap up you might have that well it is Thursday except except are you are you saying wrap up because you want to

[00:35:10] see where we're at as far as as far as what well if you try if you're trying to see what what what the amount is to the next lowest penny to the next half penny we're not going to do all that at wrap up normally we actually do that when the when the when the department comes in I'm actually doing Mr. Uh come with the turn because I wasn't here last Monday but normally we do those do those here but it's hard to know until they give us an update on the tote board so I'm going to Mr. Turner then I'll go back to that and that may you may get some questions answered at that time Mr. Turner

[00:35:49] thank you very much Commissioner Wurtz thanks for being here um I'm fascinated with with the billing process for the co-location data centers that have all these retail customers so you're required to collect taxes on them by going to the individual rack renters the is it lessor or lessee the people renting the racks wherever they are to assess the value of their property on the rack and they're all common racks I would assume the racks are all identical correct they're just renting the space it's equipment and a data center here depending regardless of who owns it so if it's a large data center that's operating let's say an enterprise

[00:36:26] data center where the owner of the real estate is operating the data center oftentimes they will own that equipment or they'll they'll at least under capital lease terms those are a lot easier but for as far as the retail co-location data centers yes we need to get through to each owner of all the property in each of those data centers and so so how do you assess the property with the actual data center land board they have separate property that that that they're they're assessed as well yes if they have business equipment they're assessed separately okay and

[00:37:05] then we also ask them to provide us a list of their customers and their contact information so we can reach out to them directly okay um regarding you commented several times on the increase in value of the property and and i accept that i at first blush i think value the property shouldn't change the amount of work involved with assessing the value of the property but i would bet now as i think about more about it the speed with which the change in that value occurs would probably generate a tremendous workload to try and assess what's the impact of this increase in value can you just expand on that a little bit as far as the real property that is the a major factor

[00:37:44] relative to the valuation of the real property for the business equipment it doesn't have an effect on the workload at all you could have a a hundred thousand dollar piece of equipment and a thousand dollar piece of equipment that the workload wouldn't vary at all based on that the challenge is the growth in the data centers here and all of the various tenants that may have equipment in those data centers. Okay, and then I noticed that the increase in 200% in exemptions was primarily the veterans exemptions, I believe, correct? It is.

[00:38:16] The motion that we just passed to automatically tie the increase in elderly and disabled tax exemption to the CPI, will that ease that workload? Will it make it easier for your staff to be able to assess that and it will automatically tie to the inflation rate? It's not going to have an effect on the work it's not going to have effect on an effect on how we handle it it will affect the workload because i anticipate more folks will qualify okay all right thank you um yeah i don't

[00:38:49] thank you i don't have i don't have any questions um miss burke i'm going to go to you for a wrap up and then we're going to i'm sorry not for a wrap up before you for an update um mr kirchner we'll talk in a sec miss burke so the toe board that you see here is a culmination of the straw votes you took last monday and last thursday the tax rate is 80 cents which as the chair requested me to note is a penny and a half lower than the homeowners equalized rate you have 455

[00:39:28] thousand dollars available at the rate of 80 cents it would take eight million one hundred ninety five thousand dollars to lower the real property tax rate an additional half penny and you also have for just illustrative purposes row 28 is tracking if you wanted to keep the real property tax rate at 80 and a half cents how much you'd be total have contributed to the revenue stabilization

[00:40:00] fund madam chair may i ask a question uh yes yes you may ask a question um do we know what the contribution to the revenue stabilization fund will be at 80 cents the proposed budget would have a contribution that would bring your revenue stabilization fund to 127.7 million dollars you have not taken any actions to reduce that amount at this point or increase it i'm sorry

[00:40:37] wouldn't wouldn't lowering the tax rate from we we started at 80 and a half wouldn't lowering it to 80 cause the revenue stabilization fund to decrease no oh okay i mean i mean you recognize state revenue that's why you were able to lower the real property tax rate you recognize state revenue for lcps and lowered your payment to lcps that's why you've been able to change expenditures

[00:41:08] and not have okay thank you um sure thanks madam chair um well now i'm confused because it's good to sit here through all this i thought i thought um if we have a revenue stabilization 136 805 and as i remember that is higher than we budgeted we anticipated the 127 i think yes so that row is to be consistent with the guidance or recommendation that the county administrator had that you he would not recommend lowering the tax rate to lower the revenue stabilization amount

[00:41:48] and so what we're tracking here is all of your toe board changes are calculating out to a change in the real property tax rate. If the board chose not to lower the real property tax rate, but remove expenditures or remove revenue from the budget, you could alternatively show that in an increase or decrease to the contribution of the revenue stabilization fund. So the top part of the blue boxes is showing you one version of the budget. Row 28 is showing you a version of the budget should you keep your tax rate at 80 and a half cents you'd be increasing your contribution

[00:42:24] to revenue stabilization by about 9.1 million dollars so stated in another another way if we went with the one and a half cent reduction in the property tax rate it would reduce the revenue stabilization fund no i'm totally confused that's what i thought you just asked if i may Okay. Just to repeat what Ms. Burke said, you received additional state revenue for LCPS.

[00:42:56] Which allowed us to lower the property tax rate. Correct. So when you lower the property tax rate, you don't get as much revenue because your property tax rate is lower. Right. I understand that. So that has no impact on your revenue stabilization account. You're still collecting the same amount of money.

[00:43:13] Let me ask it this way. If we added \$9 million, roughly \$9 million more in resource requests, and then directed you to reduce the stabilization fund by \$9 million, would we still be in an 80-cent tax rate?

[00:43:29] Yes. Yes. Thank you. That's what I needed. Thank you. So I do believe, though, first of all, I do say, and Mr. Kirshner is doing exactly what I say, to try to bring everything to the dais before the April 1st meeting, because we can't do this in the April 1st meeting.

[00:43:46] And so the wrap-up meeting would be an appropriate place. I think Mr. Kirshner is talking about personal property tax, not real -- well, car tax specifically because we can now separate them out, not real property tax.

[00:44:01] And so it's a different discussion. However, I will also say that it's a -- as I look at what Mr. Kirshner, what you're suggesting, it's a very involved discussion. and I will tell you right now I wouldn't let that motion be one motion. I would break those out by departments because I think each department would deserve to have that separate discussion.

[00:44:25] All the departments come back anyway for wrap-up. They all come back. They're all here for wrap-up. And so it is the appropriate time to do it. It would take a minute to get through it, but I would allow that because it's appropriate to do, and I understand what your goal is.

[00:44:44] You and I should talk because I would like to know if that's the number to the penny or is there how much room you got in there to where you're trying to get in personal property or rather car tax specifically. So you and I should talk about that just a little bit before we get to Thursday.

[00:44:59] But otherwise, I understand what you're trying to do. Okay, having said all that, as of right now, are there any motions as of right now on the day as for Mr. Wirtz?

[00:45:20] Seeing none, I guess I'll see you and everybody else on Thursday. Thank you. Thank you. All right, the next person, next department is the Treasurer's Office. Mr. Eichelberg, will you come forward, please? You are on page 115 to 116.

[00:45:58] good evening sir how are you doing great madam chair good ready when you are all right thank you my name is henry eichelberg and i have the distinct privilege of serving as the county's treasurer started last year this year we have two resource requests just to frame our department most of us think of the treasurer's office as money managers and we do manage money about a billion and a half to two billion dollars on a base on an annual basis for the county that department has four

[00:46:31] people in it right now we've got an allocation for 56 the majority of our people are involved in collections collections effort in the county we are nearly a hundred percent collections and I know that the bond rating agencies, that's a very important metric for them.

[00:46:55] We want to continue to do that. We try to be as absolutely humane in that process as humanly possible. The next largest department is a reconciliation department.

[00:47:12] We reconcile the funds that come in from the various sources, as well as do the billing and collections administration for each one of our great towns that are located within the county.

[00:47:30] They pay us a fee in order to do that work, and from my perspective, the fee outweighs the headcount that's allocated to that venture. In addition, it saves each one of the towns a tremendous amount of resources because they would have to be calling and running collections on the exact same people that we're running collections on.

[00:47:59] So we have a reconciliation tax group for that, and then we have a customer service group, which is separate and apart from the tax collections people. So if you have an issue with a bill, you'll start there.

[00:48:17] It will either get resolved within my department, within the treasurer's department, or working in conjunction with the commissioner of the revenue. From a workflow standpoint, the commissioner of the revenue says how much every person in the county owes.

[00:48:39] And then they send us a file. We print that on our stationery, and we send it out. My job is not to determine how much is supposed to be on that piece of paper. My job is to make sure that we collect it and then manage the money, and then when the finance department from the county says we're about to release \$10 million in checks, then we will fund those accounts for either the schools or for the county or the various

[00:49:14] departments that the administration manages. I think we have a very good relationship with the county administrator, and I want to keep it that way. What we want to do going forward is to continue to enhance services within the county. What do I mean by that? We have a very geographically large county and as wonderful as it is to get out west if you have to pay a bill out in luckettsville you got to drive into leesburg which is no small venture same thing

[00:49:49] if you're down in south riding you've got to go up to either sterling or leesburg this year we opened up a satellite office in the dulles south center to receive car payments and we intend to expand

that service continue to do that for dulles south this year and and out into luckettsville uh for the lucketts or lovetsville lovetsville sorry lovetsville sorry as far out as you can go yeah and they've been they've been very they've been very very receptive to that um so they're

[00:50:29] going to make space available we can take credit card payments and we can take checks unfortunately were not set up to be able to take cash. We do get a very large cash influx out of the Sterling office and work closely with the sheriff's department for security reasons there. I have two requests. One of the requests, priority one, is essentially a floater. The person is going to be a highly skilled individual. They have the ability to work in a number of different departments.

[00:51:06] and that person is going to be involved in cashiering and debt collections. We do have a large Hispanic population as well as Pakistani and Indian citizenry, and so we've got people that are fluent in those languages and are able to help people either on collections and or on the customer service.

[00:51:33] The other position I've got, which is a level two, is on the collections team. Again, we've got 12 people. I want to take that a little bit higher. Hopefully, we won't see a growth in collections efforts, but I really believe with the economy, where we're at, and the uncertainty, we will see that.

[00:51:58] So I just want to be prepared for that. We are going to be offering a new payment portal. that portal will then be rolled out to each one of the departments the it's a little bit complicated but if i may take a second to just explain how it works if you have a fee that you owe the school that invoice is generated not by me but by the school so if i need to collect it

[00:52:32] as the treasurer i don't know that the school sent you a bill so if you want to give me money i don't have anything to apply it to and what this application is going to do is going to allow people to be able to see all of the charges that they have from various departments from the county we'll be able to pay those in one spot so we're very excited we're going to

[00:53:03] roll that out. The other thing is in 2020, the Treasurer's Office stopped doing the collections for the courts. So there's fines and forfeitures that happen at the court system. Those are currently done by the Commonwealth of Virginia. As great as the Commonwealth of Virginia is, they charge 18 percent for that effort so we're going to gear up to be able to do that effort to

[00:53:36] take that back in-house. So we're in the position of getting a computer system to handle that for the court fines and forfeitures. I did get a question on our relationship with parking tickets, traffic tickets, and so forth. We do collect parking fines, but we do not collect moving violations. Those are paid through the court system. And then I did have a question

[00:54:09] from one of the supervisors about dropping the VLF fee. This board decided to, on a recommendation from my office in October, to drop it to zero. What will happen is it will be, we still got to collect it for the years where we people owe it so it's only going to get dropped going forward and there are people that owe it from prior years they still owe the \$25 even though going forward they won't but you're basically just going to see a zero in that column and just as a some

[00:54:47] backdrop. Each one of the towns did notify my office that they will not be imposing a VLF for the upcoming billing cycle. Whether they do it in future billing cycles is going to be completely within their prerogative, but just to close the loop on that. So it's been eliminated both at the county level and at the at the town level so i don't uh i'd be happy to take your

[00:55:24] questions i really hope we can have a conversation about where i'm trying to go and how we can best serve the county together well thank you mr eichelberg and i say i say this about you all the time i don't know that there is any other elected official that i see out and about in the community as much as you and i know that because i'm everywhere and you're everywhere with me and i appreciate how involved you are and how many things you attend. I really do.

[00:55:49] Mr. Kirshner. Yeah, just real briefly, you mentioned something that kind of triggered my curiosity. You said we have not been collecting the court fees, I guess, what was it, defaults? No, it's fines and forfeitures. Those used to be collected by the Treasurer's Office. And why did it stop? It just stopped under the prior administration. And how long have we not been doing it?

[00:56:17] i think they it was either 19 or 20. okay so we're collecting them but it's being done through the commonwealth so the collections are not being done at the do we treasurer's office do we gain from this or only for local collections on whatever the fees are in other words well does this add to our because no many of those fees and costs it will theoretically um if we can do it at a lower price point you would essentially have more revenue now would it be a material amount probably not but I mean I think so why are we can all agree people are

[00:56:54] trying to do things as efficiently as possible and if so if we can do it cheaper than Richmond then why not so so you're a thought process behind this if we can do it less expensive to service the community it's better than having Richmond do it and so that's right it's got to get done either one either way okay it's going to get done right so it's somewhat revenue neutral really yeah i mean i'm planning on well it's part of my resource request i'm looking at having the capability to have a person to to do that function okay all right if i may clarify so the commonwealth's attorney has the option

[00:57:33] at their discretion to you to ask the treasurer if the treasurer will provide the service the treasurer has to agree which i am or they can ask the commonwealth of virginia the tax department to collect those revenues or they can hire a private firm to do it so the prior commonwealth decided to ask a private firm to do it and so that's how it was done my understanding this request is that mr anderson is requesting that the treasurer do it we've talked so that's what the position is for to to bring that back to the treasurer yeah in addition to support that effort

[00:58:12] yeah yeah got you mr letourneau thank you mr eichelberg always good to see you um just curious you mentioned some changes coming um in terms of making it easier for customers to pay um would that include by chance the ability to pay the um vehicle tax monthly broken into monthly increments instead of just the twice a year yes yeah the pro the answer is yes if you pay it out of your bank it's going to be it'll i don't think i think it may be one dollar per transaction okay or some

[00:58:47] low amount yeah um you know people ask us why we have to charge the two and a quarter percent it's because we do get charged yeah by uh by the credit card company yeah there's if i could waive it i would right um but then that's lost right right yeah yes no i think what where i'm going with it Obviously, we're trying to do what we can to reduce that tax by utilizing other revenue and so on.

[00:59:13] But I do think one of the reasons why it hits people so hard is because it's a big bill all at once. You know, your mortgage typically is an escrow. 70% are paid through escrow of the mortgages. Yeah. This is just, you know, that one thing that you always kind of forget about and then May rolls around and there's your couple thousand dollar bill, depending on your car.

[00:59:35] So, if you could space that out over the course of a calendar year and just be making a monthly payment, you know, I don't know how many people would prefer to do that. I probably would. But if that's possible. It will be possible, and I will think there will be a very low uptake.

[00:59:51] Really? Yeah. Most people, maybe I'm too cynical, but most people think they'll cover it when they get there. If they've got the money, if they're not, well, we're a very high-income county.

[01:00:08] but I would not say we're a very wealthy county. Yeah, we make that point a lot. People have a lot of expenses. Yes, you're right. You're exactly right. This wealthiest county in America stuff drives us crazy. Yeah, but I still got 13 people looking for people to pay.

[01:00:24] Now, we have almost 100% collection, which just goes to show that we've got enough wealthy people to cover it, but we still have property that goes to tax sales. Yeah, okay. Well, I'm looking forward to that. Whatever kind of communication we can do with residents about that. Thank you. And thank you for your Dulles South efforts. I know it was kind of an experiment last year, but we'll certainly help promote that.

[01:00:52] yeah we we will it's obviously not going to be a full-time facility but it's a temp you know pop up because well we're working on trying to get some county space there that you could i believe i don't want to speak for but you could potentially utilize as shared space for county departments you know to be able to awesome yeah that'd be awesome thank you thank you mr crony yeah thank you chair randall and thank you mr eichelberg so i call it the pesky car tax and i know um supervisor kirchner calls that too we're hoping to get rid of that eventually but um i have a question with the elimination of the vehicle license fee and i'm really glad to hear that all

[01:01:31] the towns took took us up on that do you need as many positions collecting that fee is is there any way that you could move people around do you need you know so that we don't have to add two people this year i don't know how many people you have for the vehicle license collecting that yeah so So the vehicle license fee is just part of the bill.

[01:01:53] Oh, okay. So you don't have people dedicated to vehicle license fee collection? No. Okay. Okay. Yeah, you either get a bill with the car tax and the VLF, or you don't get a bill.

[01:02:08] Okay. Okay. Thank you for clarifying that. Sure. Thank you. Thanks for the question. Mr. Eichelberg, you mentioned that you like to have people who speak different languages or because you and to do to work in some in sterling in other areas is that correct yeah we have a large Hispanic population just finds it easier in the county HR group does provide incentives for multi language speakers I think right now it's just limited to Spanish but it'd be good if there were other

[01:02:43] languages that could be added to it because we got a real prevalence. Well, you get around, I get around, and a lot of people that speak Paraguay, so forth.

[01:02:59] So it would be maybe appropriate to say that you're looking to have diverse staff so that they have equal opportunity to pay those fees and so that can be included in our budget? Yeah, absolutely. Well, we've, I've got a very diverse staff right now yeah yeah yeah you have to by the way one of the things I don't I don't think we want to say we get around I think we're really really involved yes there you go yes a better way to say that you're more experienced at me than right Chair Randall and Scherzer Eichelberg get around

[01:03:31] yeah we do get around in a good way in a good way and yeah so yeah I I I think that um I think you're correct i think if we're going to um you know be able to include those uh those those uh people um and give them an equal chance to pay their bills and we need to have a diverse staff i agree with that thank you absolutely all right well thank you for all that you do mr eichelberg we appreciate it um supervisors are there any motions on the on the uh dais right now for mr eichelberg's office seeing none thank you very much sir thank you we'll see you thursday well Well, maybe you might see your CS Thursday, exactly.

[01:04:11] All right. The next we have elections and voter registration. Judy Brown, Ricky Keech, coming forward.

[01:04:31] Good evening. Good evening, Chair. How are you both doing tonight? Good. Ready when you are, and you are on pages 44 and 80.

[01:04:48] Good evening, Chair Randall and board members. I am Judy Brown, Director of Elections, and I have with me this evening Ricky Keech, the Deputy Director of Elections. We have two resource requests before you this evening. The first resource request is related to the board initiative to expand access to early voting.

[01:05:06] As you know, the board voted on March 4th to add two new early voting sites in Eastern Loudoun, one in the Algonquian District and one in the Ashburn District, that will open in time for the November 2025 general election. Even with only two new sites, we still believe adding a full-time position is necessary to ensure a successful launch of these two new sites.

[01:05:27] The Office of Elections currently has one position that allocates approximately 50% of its time to early voting. And due to the increase in the number of people taking advantage or choosing to do early voting and the anticipated demands of managing additional sites, we believe one position devoted specifically to managing early voting is necessary.

[01:05:48] This resource request also reflects the staffing equipment and other operating expenditures that would be needed for opening four additional sites. The sites are estimated to be \$94,875. Our second resource request is an operations assistant.

[01:06:07] This position will allow the Office of Elections to centralize our human resource responsibilities, payroll records retention, basic finance and procurement transactions, and help to coordinate our FOIA requests. A dedicated position will help ensure greater accuracy and timeliness and ensure greater compliance with all county policies and procedures.

[01:06:28] This position will also oversee the onboarding of hundreds of new election officers each year, requiring HR processing, as well ensuring each new officer has taken the required oath of office and has registered for mandatory training. In addition, the operations assistant will be responsible for HR and payroll responsibilities related to the large number of seasonal employees hired to manage the heavy workload around the elections.

[01:06:54] That's it. - Thank you very much. Supervisors, questions for Elections Office. I'm sorry, Ms. Bricksman. - Thank you, Madam Chair. And I just want to say thank you so much, oh, sorry, for all of your hard work on the early voting studies and initiative and making sure that we were able to find two sites to open up by the fall and definitely you know we talked about finding something in Little River that's conducive and I still think that we need to have a little bit of a hole we need to fill

[01:07:32] there and look forward to working with you on it. Do you know offhand that I'm sorry I didn't preview this question but I think you know what the answer. How many more people are early voting? In 2020 which was a record early voting year we had 89,000 vote early. This year we projected that 75,000 would vote and we had 92,000 vote. Oh, wow. Yeah. What we are, what we are seeing is a dramatic increase in early voting, um, which coincides with a fairly significant drop in mail voting. Um, it's an interesting, it's interesting. The, um, the ratio of early to mail in a November

[01:08:11] election is significantly higher than, than a June primary. Um, June primary, it runs about 50, 50. And for this last election, it was about 67, 33. So in a November election, which tends to have voters that don't vote in every election. We are seeing very significant increases. We were quite shocked because we actually had a lower turnout overall for the presidential election, and early voting was the one place where the number actually increased. Interesting. Okay, thanks for that. And just to be clear, the early voting 45 days also happens in primaries, right? Not just generals.

[01:08:45] Yes. Okay. Early voting, that's code. Right. And I just lost my other question I had for you. going to think about it keep talking no just kidding um well i guess if i'm not going to remember that question i will just say i think that you've justified the early voting person for your office i'm actually surprised that you didn't have a dedicated person since 2020 so i'm glad that we can supply it now and thanks for all of your hard work thank you mr um leterna you're good well madam chair i think you said it before i came in but just

[01:09:24] confirming there's going to be a motion Thursday to reduce the O&M and I don't know maybe some staff on the additional two or just O&M. It's my understanding it was just the O&M. Okay okay well the staffing amount was 241.8 but it was yeah for one FTE so we're gonna I don't have any desire to take away the one FTE but I wondered if this also included additional staffing for those two sites that we weren't going to use. Yeah our budget is our budget is interestingly complicated because we So we have permanent staff, seasonal staff, and then we have election officers.

[01:09:58] So the \$189,000, give or take, includes the money that would have been one time to outfit the site, as well as the recurring costs plus the recurring cost of election officers. So that's in O&M and not in personnel? It's in personnel, but since it's – Megan, shaking her head.

[01:10:16] Megan, can I explain? It's an interesting way we have to do it because of the way it's budgeted. Okay. A portion of the personnel costs that you're seeing in your budget are associated with the temporary election workers. That would be reduced out of the resource request to account for the two sites.

[01:10:35] So both lines will probably see some reduction? Yes. Okay, that's all I was asking. Thank you. So I'm not at all surprised that early voting is up. I think that it makes perfect sense, to be honest. I think that if we ever add things like so to the polls back, it will be even higher.

[01:10:56] Early voting has become, in some ways, a bit of a celebration. When you go out there, there's literally food, trucks, and music, and all type of things when you're doing early voting. So I think that people sometimes want to have a, believe it or not, voting experience. And they have that sometimes with the early voting versus the mail-in voting.

[01:11:13] So that doesn't surprise me. I do think you all do a great job. I have seen lines just as long for early voting as I have a day of voting, which is always, for me, thrilling to see those, and so I think it's fantastic. My only question is just in general about you all's safety.

[01:11:33] Are you feeling -- because we had this discussion at National Association of Counties a couple of weeks ago that the Voter Registration Office and voter offices get more threats. get more, they get more harassment and things like that. Are you seeing any of that? Do you need us, I mean not us, but Mr. Hemstreet, is that something you guys are experiencing at all? Either in mail, via email or in person?

[01:12:01] Judy's going to let me answer this one. I would say we work very closely with emergency management on security needs. We do have security present during high profile events such as board meetings and after election processes, which we've done recently and we plan to continue and we're very thankful for that support.

[01:12:20] In general, on a day-by-day basis, I think we're very lucky here in Loudoun. We've not been the direct recipients of any of that sort of behavior, but we certainly have a hotline directly to the emergency management staff and that would be reported immediately. And so I personally would say that we feel safe overall here in Loudoun.

[01:12:38] Very good. Very good. Keep that hotline open. All right. Thank you very much and thank you both. and your host staff. Please thank your host staff for what you do, including all the seasonal staff as well. Supervisors, is there a motion on the dais for this department? Ms. Bricksman?

[01:12:55] I just had a point of clarification, if I might. Yes. I just wanted to clarify the early voting sites that will be open in November will only be required to be open the two Saturdays before election day and that would be up to the electoral board to increase the hours beyond that of the voting locations is that correct our instructions are all early voting sites are to be open the same hours in January we presented our early voting hours for the primary and November um to be the

[01:13:32] same and they were approved so it's in addition to the two Saturdays it's uh three days during the week before the election for the primary and then two whole weeks Monday through Friday for the November election. Now that is subject to change but that has been our direction once we had our issues last year with the Carver Center not being open the same hours. Brilliant. Thank you. All right. Thank you. Are there any motions on the dais? All right. Thank you very much. We appreciate

[01:14:06] it um okay i know you did your question as a point of clarification i got that um the emergency management safety and security office is next my fire chief my fire chief you all are on page

[01:14:29] um i know exactly 68 good evening good evening chair randall and members of the board um thank you for having us tonight um so i'm here representing as the interim director of the the Office of Emergency Management Safety and Security not as the fire chief.

[01:15:02] Just don't have any other clothes to wear, so. But tonight I'm joined by Jacob Bull, and I'm not sure if many of you have met Jacob Bull. Jacob is our program administrator for the Office of Emergency Management Safety and Security section, been here several months now.

[01:15:20] So I'm not sure you have an opportunity to see him before the board. I'm also joined by Fran Cavallaro, our administrative manager for the OEM Safety and Security. And in the audience I have Kevin Johnson, our OEM coordinator, as well as one of our newest employees, Tony Charlin, who's our safety program manager with us tonight.

[01:15:39] So tonight I want to present our fiscal year 2026 resource request for the Office of Emergency Management Safety and Security. Before I forget, I really did want to go back to the question that you just

answered about the elections. So with this election we worked extensively, I say we, safety and security worked extensively with the elections office and we had Leesburg police obviously providing patrols, but what you're going to hear tonight is requesting safety and security specialists.

[01:16:07] They were integral in the part of working with the elections office. We actually deployed mobile vehicle barriers that were borrowed from Enver's and we are in the process of buying our own sets here in Loudoun County. Those are what you saw, remember, if you saw in the news about what happened in New Orleans that were kind of not there, those are what we had present in front of safety and security for protection, and that was done through a whole assessment that was done by what you're going to hear about tonight.

[01:16:34] So a lot went into the security for election. We realized the threats that could come. So perfect segue into what we're going to be asking for tonight. So currently the Office of Emergency Management Safety and Security Division has only three safety and security specialists, and two of them are FTE staff.

[01:16:52] One is a contractor, altogether they only have seven employees in safety and security side of Office of Emergency Management, again one of them being a contractor. They're tasked with managing safety and security over 250 county sites and for the nearly 5,000 employees that work here.

[01:17:10] The current staffing level that is totally inadequate to maintain the required service standards. So tonight we're asking for five additional FTEs and the conversion of that one contractor security specialist to a full-time FTE, so basically six FTEs.

[01:17:27] I will say personally, when I arrived and took over as intern of OEM safety and security, I was amazed at how little staff there was there and then the responsibility that they're tasked to perform. So safety and security specialists are responsible for monitoring, training, and administering the county's weapons screening ordinance, something that you all put in place and is very important.

[01:17:50] They oversee the Administrative Policy EMER01, which is our Disruptive Behavior and Facility Ban Policy, something that we utilize quite a bit, as well as overseeing all the Allied Guards and parking here at the Government Center at 1 Harrison Street.

[01:18:07] In FY24, our Safety and Security dedicated 1,126 hours to investigating and conducting follow-up safety and security incidents at county facilities. And we think with more staff, we'll be able to do more of those follow-ups on security incidents.

[01:18:26] Our safety and security program oversees critical functions such as emergency -- all of emergency action plans for every building that's required by code, actually. Our incident reviews every time it's a security incident that is reviewed by staff to perform risk assessments, right, performing -- going out and looking at all new buildings, existing buildings to find out what is the risk to our employees, to you, to our citizens that enter those buildings.

[01:18:50] We conduct all the respiratory fit testing absent fire and rescue, but they do all the fit testing for all of the county employees that wear respirators or fit testing or even the medical HIPAA masks. They manage all the life safety equipment, all the AEDs, all the first aid kits throughout the county, something that we struggled with in fire and rescue for years.

[01:19:12] And I will tell you, to have safety and security take it over has been a lifesaver because is something that we just didn't have time to do. And that's over all the facilities and areas in the county. They

provide essential training, including CPR training to our employees.

[01:19:27] They do a training in conflict resolution, and then before the help arrives, giving our employees tools and resources and training to know what to do before fire and rescue can get there, which is critical, right, sec and save lives. And they perform all of those training sessions.

[01:19:44] And I think the takeaway from this tonight is that they could do so much more if they had more people. So additional specialists, safety and security specialists are needed to ensure our employees receive this training regularly, meeting our compliance and safety goals established by the county administration and you as a board.

[01:20:04] These positions are being requested in the 26th budget for three reasons. First, according to the Northern Virginia Regional Intelligence Center, government facilities are the most targeted sector and I think that's obviously you all know that second recent local altercations and threats at local public meetings and regional events such as the 2019 Virginia beach municipal building school shooting demonstrate the increasing possibility of a security incident and third the office of emergency management and safety and security wide breadth of safety and security initiatives requires this additional staff to accomplish their mission and goals So what happens if these positions are not funded?

[01:20:42] There are significant impacts to the safety and security for all of us as county employees and you as all of our elected officials. First, the Office of Emergency Management and Safety and Security would be unable to conduct our annual safety and security assessments and even our emergency action plan updates for each county worksite.

[01:21:00] Second, OEM safety and security would be unable to meet its obligation to provide security and training for county employees. For example, a focus on the property manager training program would likely consume most available time of the current staff, procuring many of the other things we spoke about earlier as far as training.

[01:21:19] If the request is not funded, the county and community would have to have a desire to a lower level of service, especially considering an increasing threat landscape, which often I've heard many of the board members speak about. The primary function of government is the protection of its citizens.

[01:21:36] Delayed security assessments and lapsed facility emergency plans place our employees, citizens, and the community at risk. So in closing, I once again want to thank you for your continued support of Always with Public Safety, as well as the Office of Emergency Management and Safety and Security.

[01:21:52] It's the first time that I can ever remember that this office has been fully staffed now. We recently went through and hired quite a few employees, and I'm really excited, the work that Jacob has brought as a new program administrator and the work of his staff. I'm very excited about what they're bringing.

[01:22:08] I'm seeing a lot of benefits just in the last several months of being fully staffed. So we're here to answer your questions. Thank you. Jacob, where are you from? I'm from Watertown, New York. Wow. Okay. Where do you live? I live in Warrington.

[01:22:28] Okay. I'll take that. So during our recent snow, I asked him, how much snow would he have had at home? And he said, four feet. And he's happy to be here. That's how I met you. That's how I met you.

Shuffling snow. and and tell me the staff behind you who are here with you I know who Kevin is but the other staff who's here with you so the safety program manager Tony Sharland is joining us tonight Tony will you raise your hand hi how are you do you live in Loudon do you live in Loudon okay good answer good answer thank you thank you for what you all do we're gonna go to questions but

[01:23:05] seriously thank you okay I'm calling the vice chair mr. Turner thank you madam Chair. In 2025, there are only two states in the country that have gubernatorial elections, New Jersey and Virginia. New Jersey is a single-party state. This is going to be a bellwether election for the Trump administration, and everybody in the world is going to be watching this election. Is this sufficient security for this election, this unique election, or do we have something in your budget that can plus us up in security personnel as we get closer to the election within your current budget?

[01:23:40] I think the safety and security specialists, well, I think they've demonstrated to me, and I think they've demonstrated the work that they did with this election, which, you know, obviously had a lot of focus on it. We work, they work very closely with our local police, right, whether it's Leesburg PD here for this area or the sheriff's office.

[01:23:57] We don't do it alone. They obviously work very closely. Jacob, do you have anything to add with that? Yeah, we also have the contract with allied security too, which we would be able to grab some additional personnel if we needed to at the last minute. Thank you. So, first of all, I want to say that my experience with Allied Security, the Allied Security personnel, has been incredible.

[01:24:19] They are helpful. They are kind. They are there for me when I need them to be. They have been phenomenal. And so, to all the Allied Security personnel, thank you. Do you all offer, or would this be maybe something through the Sheriff's Department, Is there any type of trainings that staff can have on things like how to be aware?

[01:24:46] Just like aware when you're just walking. Is there any kind of personal protection training? Is there any type of, you know, I don't know if I want to say self-defense because that's a whole different word. But sometimes what people will learn is that self-awareness, when you're tooting around, is just as important as self-defense.

[01:25:09] Do you have any of those trainings that you have offered, that you can offer, that you plan to offer for county employees? So right now, one of our specialists, Brian Patterson, is working on a situational awareness course. He's putting together a training program for the employees to use.

[01:25:25] Good. Very good, because that's really, really important. And I do know that there is a gentleman in the, or I should say a deputy in the sheriff's department that does like a more of a self-defense course. But I also think that, not I think, I know situation awareness can save your life.

[01:25:42] Absolutely. That could be the first thing that actually saved your life. So I think you all, I mean, it is unfortunate that we need more people in the office, but this is where we're at today for so many reasons. And so I cannot tell you how much I appreciate what you do, what you will do, because I will tell you, I have not always felt safe in this position, and I feel safer.

[01:26:10] I don't know if I say I feel safe, but I feel safer today than I did even a couple of years ago. So thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. Supervisors, is there a motion on the dais? Seeing none, thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. All right, we're going to do one more before we take a break.

[01:26:27] We're going to do equity and inclusion, which is on page 69, which we're already there. I'm sorry. Good evening, Mr. Rush.

[01:26:55] Good evening, Chair Randall, members of the board. How are you doing, everyone? Mr. Rush, we're ready when you are. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the needs of the Office of Equity and Inclusion in the upcoming FY26 budget year. The information pertaining to our budget request can be found on page 69 of your budget book.

[01:27:14] Before proceeding, I'd like to express my gratitude to the board for its continued support. In our previous years, I'm pleased to report that all full-time positions requested in previous fiscal years have been successfully hired and filled, enabling us to make significant progress in advancing equity across the county.

[01:27:34] And currently, right now, within our office, we have three full-time staff members within our office. The primary objective of the Office of Equity and Inclusion is to strategically align and coordinate the county's efforts to enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility across all county departments and operations.

[01:27:52] Since its inception, the office has overseen several strategic initiatives, including the county's first-ever DEIA assessment. This assessment provided an in-depth analysis of the county's current DEIA landscape, including workforce perception, benchmarking against comparators' jurisdictions, best practice analysis, and demographic data review.

[01:28:12] The findings of this assessment were presented to the board on February 6, 2024. Additionally, the Office of Equity and Inclusion successfully drafted an equity resolution, which the board approved in January 17, 2023, formally establishing social and racial equity as the fundamental values of the county.

[01:28:28] During the February 4th, 2025 meeting, the Board of Supervisors approved key goals and initiatives and objectives for the county's first ever Loudoun Equity Action Plan. This plan marks significant milestone towards implementing a board strategic focus area dedicated to improving diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging.

[01:28:48] The LEAP has a three-year strategic plan designed to guide the county's efforts towards DEI principles. It encompasses six distinct goals that were directly aligned with the findings and recommendations of the DEI assessment and the equity resolution. These goals included equitable recruiting and onboarding, workforce readiness, a welcoming and people-centered culture, equitable access to services, leading with data and inclusive community engagement.

[01:29:14] In addition to leading these strategic initiatives, the Office of Equity Inclusion provides a comprehensive suite of services to all county departments and offices. These services include professional development an equity lens analysis, consultations, collaborations, and referrals.

[01:29:30] All of these efforts align with the board's equity resolution and specifically goal number five, which focuses on developing an equity framework to address and eliminate disparities. Furthermore, the Office of Equity and Inclusion is committed to implementing the board's directive number two, which calls for a framework and equity plan that identifies clear goals and objectives to assess progress in dismantling inequities.

[01:29:52] And directive number three, which also emphasizes development and the implementation of a plan to build capacity and embed principles of equity throughout the county operations. The budget request that we're putting forward aligns directly with the board's fourth strategic focus area of the 2024-2027 term which was improving diversity equity inclusion and belonging. This is a core mission of the office of equity inclusion. The requested positions are essential for advancing the LEAP's goals particularly in enhancing workforce readiness and building an inclusive organizational culture. To fulfill the board's strategic initiatives and to continue state scaling the office appropriately enhancing its efficiency

[01:30:30] and providing high quality service to the county and the community the office of equity inclusion presents its top priority of the fy26 the addition of two additional equity specialists this request aims to expand the off the office's capacity to meet and to grow with the demand of learning prof the learning professional learning uh development and our consulting services across county departments. Feedback during the LEAP sessions highlighted the need for dedicated support to enhance these initiatives and this request would serve as the, these requests would serve as dedicated liaisons to provide tailored support to our departments. The addition of the

[01:31:09] two equity specialists is critical to enhancing workforce readiness as outlined in the LEAP which emphasizes enhancing employee knowledge and application of our DEIA principles. These These positions will also improve our operational efficiency and effectiveness across equity programs and across each portfolio.

[01:31:27] This request also aligns with the leap in the following areas, as we mentioned, goal two, which was workforce readiness, goal three, which is welcoming and people-centered culture. The additional staff here will help to implement the countywide communications plan to highlight DEIA efforts and promote a sense of belonging.

[01:31:44] These specialists will also lead efforts to facilitate ongoing learning sessions roundtable discussions directly contributing to a more inclusive and psychologically safe work environment. It will also focus on goal four which is the equitable access to services. With the expanded capacity the office will be better positioned to conduct an equity readiness assessment for all county departments identifying potential service delivery barriers and expand the equity toolkits to include additional equity tool lens lens tools. The office is committed to making sure that all residents regardless of ability language income and location have fair access to county services information and opportunities and

[01:32:23] accessibility is a key part of our equity efforts which is aimed to reduce barriers and to that limit full participation within county services and civic life we're also looking at that aligning to goal number five which is leading with data these two equity specialists will also support our current equity specialists and development of demographic data governance standards and also developing an external facing dashboard to monitor our equity metrics. And finally with goal six the inclusive community engagement the requested positions will enable the office to expand its community outreach

[01:33:01] efforts enhancing our connections with culturally and linguistically diverse communities through our multicultural advisory committee and also looking at the development of our Human Rights Commission or office. In summary the addition of these two specialists is essential to advancing the LEAPS goals and ensuring that the county continues to progress to a more equitable and inclusive future.

[01:33:21] Through contributions, through their contributions, this will enhance the county's ability to implement the LEAPS action items effectively, promote accountability, and sustain the momentum of our

initiatives across all departments. In closing, our respectfully request that the board support these budget requests and ensure that the Office of Equity and Inclusion can continue to fulfill its mission and to meet the growing needs of the county.

[01:33:42] Thank you so much for your time and your continued support in working with our office, And I yield there, and I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you. Just give me one second. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Rush. Appreciate it.

[01:33:57] Supervisors, questions, put your lights on, please. Ms. Umstead. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Rush, thank you for all the good work you do. I really appreciate it. Have you been in your review of, and I know HR is also involved in this, but in your review of where we try to advertise and recruit for county employees, Do you think these two positions will in any way help support casting a wide net for job applicants?

[01:34:34] Absolutely. I think that casting that net in having a diverse workforce is really foundational to the belief in what our HR department does and what we think here within county government. And I think that is indicative to us winning on the Forbes list this year as well.

[01:34:54] And that was one of the points that was mentioned there, is having a diverse workforce. Great. Thank you so much. Good, good, good, good. Mr. Crony. Thank you, Chair Randall, and thank you, Mr. Rush. So do you anticipate having DEI staff in each department?

[01:35:14] Do you see that, or do you see your Office of Equity being more a liaison to provide that tailored support? So my office is more of a centralized office that provides supports to the departments.

[01:35:31] The way to naturally embed this is the departments will take on their own initiatives and will be in a supportive role and provide any tools that they need to launch within their respective departments. But as of currently right now, the idea of having people in every department has not been one that's been discussed.

[01:35:51] Okay. So you see, you said you have 50 requests are anticipated in FY26 and FY2027, and so you'll have five staff to handle those requests? Yes, we'll have five staff. Okay, thank you. Mr. Kirshner.

[01:36:09] Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Rush, good to see you. As always, a couple questions. Obviously, you know, I'm not a big fan of the DEI kind of initiative that this board's put forward. I'll probably have a motion to remove these. I probably will fail. But I do have a couple follow-up questions concerning your additional resource requests.

[01:36:29] And ultimately, it is an enhanced service level request, as I understand, from the booklet that we have here. And basically, it says to expand your office with two additional equity specialists. You have how many employees right now in your office?

[01:36:45] Two. You have two, and this would expand it to a total of four? Four, yes. Okay. So is that two include you as well, or two -- you have two equity specialists, is that right? Two equity specialists. What are those equity specialists working on -- have been working on in the last year, if you could give me a -- Yeah, so -- Like a 10-second synopsis.

[01:37:04] Yeah, so just as we mentioned here in the opening presentation that I had, that would be professional learning. We have our consulting services with our department supporting them,

collaborations. The things that come from the board, the initiatives that come here, we work on those as well, as well as working with the community.

[01:37:24] So ultimately, and this is, you know, obviously a lot of our departments are pretty clear. We have current service level requests and that sort of thing to fulfill. What I don't have a grasp on is your department at full build out, what are we looking at?

[01:37:42] Because it seems to me like it could grow significantly. I know you didn't make a request last year. um but we you did make a request the year before and received that and i think two years before that obviously so my question to you is in an organization as large as loudon county how many employees do you think ultimately to meet the goals of the board will or will not be needed yeah so i think that's a question that can't be answered i think that we can actually look at each presentation that's come forward as the organization grows there are resource requests

[01:38:19] that are put forth as the organization grows i don't think that it's any different for my office so i can't really look down into the future and tell you how many staff that would be um but currently right now we have identified that these two staff will help with the things that the board has already put forth which was establishing the strategic focus of improving um diversity equity inclusion and as well as the the passing of the leap just not too long ago um so that's that's that's what we're going on right now. Okay. So really, we don't have that sense. You just say you need these two resources. You would like to have these two resources at this point. Is that

[01:38:57] what I'm synopsisizing? No, I'm not saying I would just like to have these two resources. I'm saying based on the workload that we have and based on what the board has passed, this will actually help to make our office more efficient. All right. Thank you. Ms. Brooksman. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[01:39:15] So I was going to ask you how many presentations that the folks are asking for, but it's right here in my book. And also the number of staff, someone else asked that as well. What other measures are you using, like you say data-driven, what other measures are you using to kind of quantify success?

[01:39:36] And I do have a couple questions after that. Yeah, so we've established, you know, sort of KPIs on some of the goals that are, or all of the goals that are listed in the LEAP. So we'll be using those measures, which we have, you know, talked about in the presentation of the LEAP, as well as the equity resolution.

[01:39:56] They have directives and goals that are there, so we've measured based on that. We have our annual report, which we will be coming back in later in the spring. that will be our second annual report which will list all of those things that are there but it's not just really pertaining to our office because it's pertaining to diversity equity inclusion accessibility initiatives across county government so that is a collaboration with other departments as well. Okay excellent and the MEI and the segregated schools study are those both coming back in April? They'll be coming back sometime

[01:40:33] in the spring yeah in the spring okay not committing to april i hear okay okay uh listen i have had um conversations uh with folks that work with government contractors recently one ceo in loudon county uh recently and um they have said that they are wiping their websites clean of the terminology dei and anything related to it they're wiping their websites clean of climate initiatives because of the rhetoric that's been coming out of this administration and in fact

[01:41:09] actions coming out of this administration and even our governor who was you know celebrating UVA's changes recently. I see that as very much obeying in advance and I understand you know government contractors want to I really understand how government contractors want to keep their contracts having been fired for that reason. But I'm disappointed that a lot of our corporations and organizations and contractors are obeying in advance. And I'm extremely proud that Loudoun

[01:41:47] County is not obeying in advance. We are moving forward. We are bravely, in my opinion, moving forward as well as our school system is also moving forward despite what's going on at the national level. So I want to thank you for your work. I know it hasn't been easy. I know that you get criticized in letters to the editors and those sorts of things, comments on social media. So I just want to say thank you for all of your work. Really appreciate it. Mr. Turner. Thank you, Madam Chair. I anticipated when I saw this item was on the agenda tonight there'd be a move to

[01:42:23] trying to defund it. I was not disappointed and expected it. So I did a little bit of homework. Forbes magazine came out with an article two days ago that said despite all the vicious backlash against DEI programs all over the country, that 87% of America's companies have opted to keep their DEI programs, and 22% of America's companies have, despite all the things that are going on, are going to expand their DEI programs, which is very encouraging. The article goes on to say corporations that are savvy recognize that younger generations of consumers are drawn to companies that embody inclusive and equitable values. Workplaces

[01:43:03] develop initiatives and interventions designed to promote diversity, equity, inclusion will be better equipped to retain employees and remain sustainable in the future. So I think we will weather this ridiculous storm that we're going through right now. I mean, the most ridiculous one I heard was in the White House purge of all these terms. They purge pictures of the Enola Gay. The Enola Gay was the B-29 that dropped the atomic bomb and changed human history. They purged all the pictures out of the archives because it had the word gay in it.

[01:43:33] I mean, talk about stupid. That's beyond stupid. So I think this is all going to blow over. My question is, what you describe here in your performance metrics are outputs. What I'm asking and challenging you is, can we come up with outcomes from our DEI programs?

[01:43:52] One that comes right off the top of my head is a baseline survey before and after in the workplace on a regular annual survey to reflect DEI accomplishments. But my only suggestion and my question is, can you envision what outcomes measurement might look like?

[01:44:08] Yeah, so it's -- we've been very transparent about where we're going with this. we started off with the DEI assessment which really gave us a baseline of where we're at. The Loudoun County Equity Action Plan calls for an equity readiness assessment to look at our programs and our services and from that assessment then we'll be able to dictate or to to put forth the outcomes and to work with departments on which outcomes they're they're looking as well.

[01:44:35] I think when we we look at our efforts you know from my office it's a more centralized outcomes But these will also be customized to departments as well on what are some of the outcomes that they're looking for as well. So then we'll be able to bring that forth back in the annual reports. Very good. Thank you.

[01:44:52] Well, thank you, Mr. Rush. You know, I actually just think that this is just good business. I don't know that I need to – I think sometimes we get worked up. I mean, Mr. Eichelberg just came here and said that he would like some people to work who speak other languages so we can collect money.

[01:45:12] That's just good business, and so I don't get as kind of, I don't always understand why, you know, it's just good business. It just makes sense, to be honest. I do, though, and first of all, you know, all the things you're doing is great. I do want to talk about the A part of DEIA, which we, I think, don't talk about enough.

[01:45:31] And maybe there's some things you're doing that I don't know, but it doesn't feel like we're the most inclusive county in this way. For instance, if you have someone in a county building and they are deaf, if a fire alarm goes off, do they know that the fire alarm is going off?

[01:45:50] If they're blind, do they know how to get around the building if that happens? If the elevators go down, and if everyone who's been on these county elevators know that we take a little bit of a risk every time we get on these elevators and they're going to stop, can somebody in a wheelchair get downstairs?

[01:46:07] If somebody falls in one of our bathrooms, is there something there that you can pull on to say, like, I need help in the bathroom? We don't, I'm still not seeing our county buildings be buildings that are particularly friendly to people who have different abilities or different abilities or disabilities.

[01:46:28] I'm concerned about that. I've been talking about this now for I don't know three years and I've seen some changes some small changes but nothing that that convinces me that we are a county that is as far as our our employees a county that's really yet and I say yes I think we're going we want to go there if you're a supervisor and want to sit on this dais and you're blind if you're a chair how will you know someone's lights are on that's how I know somebody wants to talk next I don't I

[01:46:59] I don't see us being, we're not yet a county that is aware enough of people who have disabilities and that need help. Can you talk to me a little bit about the A of DEIA?

[01:47:17] So as you're aware, our ADA coordinator, we have an ADA coordinator, that person does not answer it to my office, they're not a part of my office, however, we work very closely with our ADA coordinator.

[01:47:33] We've had an ADA assessment or a study that was done, there are a lot of recommendations that have come from that, we're sorting our way through that from my understanding, but I would also -- I'm going to stop you just because my time is going to run out and you can talk as long as you want to, but I can't.

[01:47:50] You're right, but that's done some time ago and I've been waiting for some of these things that were assessed to come to fruition for a long time and help me understand when that's going to actually happen. Yeah, so I can't give an answer on when that will actually be complete, but no doubt there are ones that are here that can provide that answer as well.

[01:48:10] I would also say that when we're looking at accessibility, we have to look at it not just from a disability standpoint or an ability standpoint, because we are making sure, like, there's language access.

[01:48:26] Sure, sure. We just came out with our language access plan, which is, I think, is cutting edge for any government, local government, currently, right now. I think when we're looking at accessibility to

services and programs, that's something that my office works with, you know, departments to make sure that those things are accessible as well.

[01:48:46] I think the portion of what you're asking about specifically to how ones maneuver around facilities, I'm not the best person to answer that question right now, but I think I see Aaron. And I may have to call somebody back. Yes, ma'am, please.

[01:49:03] Madam Chair, I think one of the things you're referring to is our ADA self-evaluation. As an organization of our size, we're required to self-evaluate according to the ADA at least every 10 years. Now, the reason they're every 10 years is because usually you have a myriad of things.

[01:49:24] it's not unusual to have a myriad of things that you need to enhance or correct. And often those projects can cost money and take time. So it generally takes us five to seven even longer to actually get through most of the recommendations and then we self-evaluate again.

[01:49:42] So we just did that. We just received the report as staff. We are going through that now and looking at what we can go ahead and work on with our departments and what things are larger projects we need to take on. Some of the things that you mentioned are accessibility beyond the -- what we're required to do for ADA, which we've -- I know you've talked about quite a bit, Madam Chair, so those are things that as we discover more through our assessment, we would need to bring back likely as projects as part of either PAC's work where our accessibility coordinator is or as part part of Carl's team.

[01:50:20] So guys, can I have a point of privilege to ask one more question? When did we -- because I remember asking for this assessment or doing this assessment. When was that? Because it seems to me this has been a long time.

[01:50:36] And you're right. I've said that meeting the minimum qualifications for accessibility is not what a caring county does. Yes, ma'am. accessibility study can take at least a year just to get through the identification going through every building. As part of that study, we literally have to go through every single building and every single program to see if the delivery of programs are meeting the requirements as well. So that process in and of itself just to get an inventory takes a year, and we just went through that

[01:51:13] process so we're working through those results now okay all right well thank you thank you very much and thank you mr rush for all the work you're doing hey paul how are you doing cannot have a budget session without paul and bobby due to a required um supervisors are there any motions on the day as for this department i see one mr kirchner yes madam chair i would move to remove these two from the base budget these two um equity position fda equity specialists for the 288 thousand two hundred dollars so just

[01:51:51] point of clarification you're going to move you're going to take all the other positions you're talking about and move those to thursday but this you're going to do tonight well you just said that we should do either way so so well that was going to be a full motion to get to a particular okay that's a specific objective cool so that's that motion's been made and it's been and seconded by Mr. Letourneau. Discussion on the motion.

[01:52:10] Thank you, Madam Chair. So we can get up here. We've gone round and round on this argument. I will point out for Mr. Turner's benefit a couple of recent studies. In 2023 survey by the resume builder, they found that 48 percent of hiring managers admitted to prioritizing diversity over merit in some cases, which resulted in helping to fuel the perceptions of bias. I would also point out there was a --

from 2021 study by the American Enterprise Institute found no consistent correlation between DEI programs and improved financial outcomes, challenging claims that diversity inherently boosts profits.

[01:52:46] So obviously we can get into the debate. I wasn't trying to do that, but since Mr. Turner brought up some articles, I brought up a couple of studies to point out. My biggest concern here is my job is to help to operate Loudoun County. And a lot of our statements, such things as equitable recruiting and onboarding, equity lens analysis.

[01:53:05] And I know I brought this up to Mr. Rush. He denied that that would have ever happened, but I have spoken to employees who have been asked questions like, what do you think about our equity here in the county? And I am concerned on our equity program in the county. And there should just never be questions that are asked of new potential employees when they're being interviewed.

[01:53:23] My biggest concern, though, is kind of along the lines of one of those studies is, what are we, you know, we're getting away from a really a merit-based process. And I think that's really what we should be focusing on primarily. I think if you probably looked at our constitutional officers who are not under this whole guise in large part, they look at merit, they want to hire people based upon their merit and nothing else.

[01:53:47] And I do have some concerns that we, as we go down this line and we add to this department, we are going to get away from what I think makes an organization like ours run extremely, extremely well. And so for those reasons, and quite frankly, we're doubling the department by this resource request, I would ask that my colleagues vote no on these two FTEs.

[01:54:10] Thank you. Anybody that's going to speak on this item? So first of all, there's absolutely no evidence that merit is not being used. There's no evidence whatsoever that just because you hire somebody who is diverse, that person is not also highly and completely qualified to do the job.

[01:54:29] And this idea that you can't have somebody who is a diverse applicant and is hired on merit is absolutely ridiculous on its face. And if we're going to talk about facts, there is no facts beyond that. And so I strongly, strongly push back on that belief.

[01:54:48] There's also no evidence that we don't hire on merit in this county. We didn't just hit this Forbes list by hiring people who are not hired on their merits. If you are at all involved in other parts of or any other organizations that does county government, we are one of the most efficient, effective county governments they are.

[01:55:13] We are sitting here with a triple, triple A frickin' bond rating, for God's sake. We're the only county in northern Virginia that actually not only is going to fund everything but has a surplus that is absolutely, absolutely amazing. We're the only county that funds our own roads right now.

[01:55:31] What other county is actually building their own roads? You do not see any of the stuff that's happening in Loudoun County, Virginia, that's happening anywhere else. We are a merit-based county, and if we do things that are diverse and merit, it just makes us stronger. Speaking of the constitutional officers, by the way, we just had our treasurer sit here and say that they have to hire somebody who is diverse in their speaking.

[01:55:54] That is what diversity is. They're going to do that so we can bring more money into the county. Not having somebody that speaks a diverse language will actually have us losing money. How is that

anything but merit-based? We are a merit-based county. And one more thing.

[01:56:10] If you look at all the companies right now that are dropping their DEI, if you look at Target, if you look at Walmart, if you look at Amazon, Look at their stocks right now and compare those stocks to Costco, compare those stocks to Giants, compare those stocks to every other company that's keeping their DEI in place, and those stocks are going up, and the ones that have dropped their stocks are going down precipitously, and so none of that is true.

[01:56:33] The fact is it is a fallacy, a complete fallacy, and one that is quite insulting to say that people who are diverse are also not walking around here with the most credentials behind their names, with a whole daggone alphabet behind their names being both merit-based and diverse and completely qualified to do those jobs.

[01:56:56] And I know that that man sitting down at the end of this day has never hired anybody just based on diversity, because we wouldn't have the county we have if he did. Mr. Thurston, would you like a closing? Would you like a closing?

[01:57:11] It's your emotion. Would you like a closing? The only thing I would point out, because obviously I've touched a nerve, is that I'm not sure if we are hiring a merit base, why we need it. doing so well why and did prior to putting in this office of equity why we would actually need an office of equity and inclusion I've no again not seen as I've mentioned before I've not seen the evidence of why we need it so I know there are arguments that have been made but I would also point out we had AAA rating and all the things that was mentioned by the chair prior to that so thank you madam chair thank you mr. Kirchner motion was made and seconded by

[01:57:51] Mr. Letourneau, discussion on the motion is over. All the people who say aye. Opposed? Thank you very much. That motion will fail with Mr. Sains being off the dais, Mr. Kirshner, and Mr. Letourneau voting for the motion. Are there any motions on the dais?

[01:58:09] Seeing none, we're going to take a 15-minute break. Thank you very much.

[02:04:04] There we go.

[02:27:31] Okay, we are back, and now we are going to executive management, which is on page 70. Well, good evening, Chair Randall. members of the board. I'm here to present county administration's resource requests for a management analyst. Much like the rest of county government, county administration has grown exponentially over the last several years. In fact from FY 22 to now our head our head count has increased by 27 FTEs to a staff of 107 people across seven distinct offices with a budget of almost 20 million dollars. Additionally county administration provides

[02:28:10] budgetary support and analysis to the nine board offices that have a combined budget of \$5.6 million. Currently, all of the budgetary support for the department is performed by our administrative manager, who also provides support to the board offices. This resource request will provide county administration with a dedicated internal management analyst who will assume the day-to-day budgetary responsibilities to the various offices in county administration, as well as serve as a resource to the board offices in your respective budgetary needs. I'm happy to answer any questions. That was nice and wrapped up quickly. Thank you, sir. Very good. Supervisors,

[02:28:45] do we have any questions wow look at that i can actually say that i know how much we need these positions and how hard the management staff works um do we have any um motions on the dais seeing none thank you very much all right let's do um finance and procurement i'm sorry yes

[02:29:11] finance and procurement govan how are you sir you're back good chair chair randall and board members we're ready when you are all right so again good evening chair randall and board members to my left from the department of finance procurement are the assistant director for

[02:29:48] procurement miss cheryl middleton and also the grant internal audit and financial analysis division manager dr megan cox and to my immediate right is our office of management and budget partner mr dwight smith in the budget pages 86 through 88 you will find the department's three resource requests for a senior assistant purchasing agent an internal auditor and a financial analyst department staff continues to make significant achievements aligned to delivery of service in

[02:30:23] several of our business outlines of business such as accounting payroll audit procurement grant management and several other functions however there are still more improvements needed in procurement's government structure audit and compliance support to departments and office programs and financial analysis support for county fiscal sustainability and economic and asset management planning the senior assistant purchasing agent is needed to improve the governance and the procurement division through evaluation of the procurement governance structure it was observed that the assistant director is performing strategic, operational, and functional

[02:31:03] work activities to support all program areas in a division and not able to focus on division leadership as should be occurring. Accounting activities within procurement programs require almost daily monitoring and reporting due to volume and complexities, leaving little time for strategic development of the division. Contracting staff processes more than 500 contract awards, renewals and amendments annually in addition to approximately 70 formal solicitations being held all these actions require continuous coordination with suppliers departments and our county's

[02:31:37] attorney's office this level of supervisory and practical activity coupled with increasing service levels and demand for contracting services create a significant impediment for timeliness and not only day-to-day tasks but governance of the division additionally the division is incurring turnover of its most experienced managers coupled with few to no existing staff ready to fulfill the managerial and supervisory roles at the section level with more time and development next the internal auditor resource request is needed to support the continued establishment of an internal

[02:32:11] audit capability in the fiscal year 2025 budget cycle the department requested an internal audit position and the board graciously approved that position we have completed onboarding of an internal audit manager new hire last month and the additional internal auditor requests will support the need to build out the program and proactively address risks associated with performance compliance management and finance across the county a countywide risk assessment was completed last month and the results of the assessment include a fiscal year 2026 and fiscal year 2027

[02:32:49] audit plan that will be presented as an as a board item in April next month to the Finance Government Operations and Economic Development Committee. The request internal the requested internal audit auditor position coupled with the newly hired internal audit manager will be needed to complete those recommended internal audits. And then last the financial analyst position is needed to

address current gaps in financial analysis and reporting to respective departments in need of fiscal and planning support per department

[02:33:25] organizational and process study achieved in April 2004 the final report highlighted the need for a financial analysis capability to address this gap the report documented the need for financial analysis to support fiscal sustainability pertaining to things like standard cost and benefit comparisons time value of money analyses like lease versus buy determinations investment and property decision support additionally financial analysis was needed as a component of program planning to support several departments and offices operational efforts such as but not limited to providing decision support on

[02:34:04] economic risks or tracking economic performance and for asset management financial analysis can be used for asset preservation and support evaluation and identify an identification of economic order strategies and sourcing In December 2024, the department accomplished a restructure and a financial analysis section was created that currently includes a financial analysis manager for which the additional financial analyst position would support.

[02:34:33] So this concludes my comments and we look forward to the opportunity to address any questions. Thank you, Mr. Goban, and thank you, everyone. Appreciate you all being here. Supervisors, questions. Mr. Crony. Thank you, Chair Randall, and thank you for that presentation.

[02:34:51] So why the high turnover in the procurement division? Thank you for the question. As Mr. Grovan stated, a lot of the turnover has been related to eligible retirements.

[02:35:07] Procurement generally is an aging profession, and we don't have a lot of new people coming into it. So we're at that stage where we've had a lot of long-tenured employees retire, and I have more retiring coming up. Okay, and how many positions are vacant, would you say, in your division?

[02:35:24] I currently have one full-time position that is vacant. We have applications that are under review, and we have one temporary position that is currently in the interview stage. Okay. So with the internal auditor in the other position, will you still need to contract services out this year now that you have that staffed up?

[02:35:49] Yes. Actually, we have a phased approach that we are looking to implement over the next several years. We just entered into a new contract with SC&H Group, who is our internal audit contractor. Over the course of the next four years, we will look at phasing in additional audits into our internal audit program via our staff and decreasing the amount of augmentation through contracted services.

[02:36:15] Contracting. Okay, great. Okay, so I think that is it. Thank you very much. Yeah, that was kind of my question as well. So a couple things about the audit. So can you talk one more time, Mr. Govan, you told me this before, but can you one more time tell us when we have the contracted auditor, and I'm going to assume it's also going to be when we have the internal auditors are fully up, what part of that, is there a part of that that also looks at LCPS as a part of our budget?

[02:36:50] Because I do hear all the time, LCPS needs an audit, but is that not part of our audit as a part of our budget? So I'll start back to, yes, Chair Ron, you gave me the question before. So the external auditor has a requirement to look at the county to include the LCPS.

[02:37:12] These are separate audits. So the internal auditor, external auditor will look at LCPS independently, and then we'll look at the county independently, and then rear an opinion for both

separately. In contrast to the internal auditor, the internal auditor is for the county only, which is different than an external auditor.

[02:37:35] It does not, now LCPS can have or create their own internal audit capability. will we we will still have we will phase out the external auditor no so we're going to have an internal auditor and an external auditor with two different school two different scopes and the external auditor will have a part of that that is lcps but our internal auditor won't but lcps can have their own internal auditor correct bam got it very good okay um wonderful um i think that's

[02:38:10] it i think that's it thank you very much supervisors is there a motion on the table linnaeus nope you guys do a great job thanks so much appreciate you all right um so next is supposed to be general services which is on page 48 um to 45 to 48 and 92 to 95 but caleb did tell me to make ernie wait to the very very end i'm i'm not going to do that mr brown i'm going to let you come on down anyway because you know i'm a better person than caleb so i'll let you come on down anyway

[02:38:51] how you doing sir 48 to 45. mr brown we're ready when you are yes ma'am thank you madam chair members of the board uh you'll find our resource requests located on page 45 through 48 that is for

[02:39:29] the board priorities and page 95 92 through 95 for departmental priorities with us this evening i have our support services manager miss michelle monteith and behind me i have assistant director mark vini and assistant director scott gross that they will come up here and play hot seat here with any questions that may come up so they they're staying close for me all right so uh 2025 uh 2024 was a year of remarkable progress and transformation for the department we've maintained the essential infrastructure for loudon county government and achieved significant milestones

[02:40:05] in environmental sustainability and operational efficiency tonight it is my privilege to discuss the details of our 2026 budget proposal which builds upon our recent momentum and positions us very well for continued operational success by example our public works and environmental services programs continue to maintain more than 8 million square feet of county-owned asphalt drive surfaces and trails more than 1 000 miles of stormwater pipe and drainage systems and over 80,000 stormwater structures, ponds, and other BMPs.

[02:40:37] The stormwater team is currently managing 13 grant-funded capital construction projects and recently received an additional \$4.5 million in grant funding, which will offset the taxpayer costs for three additional stream restoration projects and nine other retrofit projects, which will create a more resilient community.

[02:40:57] Implementing the Environmental and Energy Work Plan is progressing well with defined results. Significant advancements continue with the 22-item board-approved plan, including the recent completion of the county's first-ever tree canopy study and the ongoing expansion of public-facing EV chargers strategically placed across the county.

[02:41:16] Additionally, the Environmental Commission is also taking up the Invasive Plant Species Initiative and applying their expertise and collaborative, balanced approach to solving countywide issues. Our facilities teams continue to steward your greatest capital investment, which is 4.6 million square feet in facility infrastructure through approximately 154 owned and 48 leased county facilities. In fiscal year 26, it is anticipated that fire rescue station number four out and around Hill will add an additional 22,000

square feet, as well as additional facilities coming online from the board's recent acquisitions. Facility operations is currently on track to

[02:41:54] address over 30,000 work orders in fiscal year 2025, with an average overall customer satisfaction rating of extremely satisfied. With this feedback, we know that our work makes a real difference in the experience of every county employee and resident who walks through our doors. Our commitment to a sustainable future is evident in our waste management and recycling efforts.

[02:42:16] Our public recycling centers, including the new One Loudon Glass Recycling Center, provide convenient access for residents to participate in reducing waste. The Clawmore Recycling Center is due to come back online late spring, and the design of the new Lovitzville Recycling Center is underway. By collecting over 2,000 tons of recyclables annually, we're not just diverting waste from landfills, we're also contributing to a cleaner and healthier environment here in Loudoun. The transit and commuter service operations are seeing an increase in paratransit ridership, and since the return to work directives, there has been a notable increase in commuter bus service ridership and metro ridership. This team is working diligently to promote the numerous modes

[02:42:55] of public transit that the board has invested into over the years, specifically Metrorail, ridership, rideshare, and others. Our management services team is projected to process over 1,800 purchase orders with an average turnaround time of less than a day and a half, while simultaneously managing over 5,100 purchase car transactions. This team is truly the machine behind our operations. Similarly, our surplus division continues to grow our sales transactions and recently received the Public Surplus Excellence Award as one of the top online public surplus auction providers in the country.

[02:43:32] Now, these are just a few of the incredible highlights of our work in DGS and that our team in DGS does every day. As DGS continues implementing the recommendations from the recent organizational assessment, we have seen significant progress.

[02:43:47] Staff are actively contributing to key areas such as employee engagement, fostering a culture of learning, refining policies and procedures, and rebranding General Services' mission, vision, values, and goals. By the end of fiscal year 2026, pending the Board's approval of our resources requests, DGS will complete the implementation of the consultant's recommendations for proper staffing and streamlining operational efficiency to meet the service expectations of the Board, all county department operations, and the public.

[02:44:14] To accomplish this, General Services has eight resource requests within the proposed budget. All of these address the Board's and the County Administrator's budget priorities with a focus on maintaining the current service level and the pathway to stabilization. I want to express my sincere appreciation for the entire General Services team for their tireless effort to serve all County operations and the public through excellent environmental and infrastructure stewardship and promoting resilience in all operations.

[02:44:42] their unwavering commitment to integrity service and innovation is truly commendable and it is my honor to serve you mr. Hempstreet and the department as Loudoun County's director of general services thank you for this opportunity this evening and we are available to answer any questions that you may have regarding the resource requests thank you thank you mr. Brown we appreciate you very much supervisors uh questions mr. Letourneau thank you let me dive into the transit side of this a little bit first a

few additional data points you all might find interesting as well um metro is reporting a 17 increase in ridership at ashburn since mid-february

[02:45:18] we're running 34 above february of 2024 but before 10 a.m trips are up 52 percent at ashburn at loud and gateway before 10 a.m trips are up 41 percent uh over last year and overall 20 increase just since uh february um so we're seeing increased riders on metro the questions that i ask responses that your department gave indicate significantly higher ridership um on commuter bus in particular um i don't know i don't know if i asked and i'm not sure we got answers on the silver line service specifically and whether that's seen any increase um and maybe mr gross

[02:45:56] can can get there so i guess you know the question is um it's hard to tell we were down so much that the answers that i received at least in writing seem to indicate that staff feels there's still a lot of capacity a lot more room on the system but in the event that there wasn't or in a particular scenario involving a certain route or something like that would you bring that to us for a discussion around adding service we would in consultation with mr hemstreet if there seemed to be an emergent or persistent

[02:46:33] emergent and persistent problem with being able to provide adequate transit services we would bring that to the board for your consideration. Mr. Gross can certainly explain the details of how that process works. We need to really take some time to let this settle in. There's a lot of the first couple months of people's transit or commute decisions, there's a lot of decisions that come into play. So I'll give you a case in point. If we were to react too quickly and bring another commuter bus on, it takes, what did you say, about two months, 45 days to get it?

[02:47:06] to get it. And by then it may have mitigated itself and we've made that commitment to an extra bus that is no longer needed. Well, and then unfortunately we have competing pressure. We have return to work mandates, but then we have the potential for federal layoffs that may impact the contractor community. So how those net out, you know, I don't know. I think they're going to net out probably still to an increased demand, but whether it's enough of a demand. But okay, you know, the main thing I wanted to get reassurance of is that you will bring it to us. We have gotten questions from constituents who are now having to go back and

[02:47:44] look at the options. We put something out with a lot of our options to help explain it to people but in my area, but you know, I don't necessarily feel comfortable telling people we're going to wait till next budget year before we do anything, which is a message they've gotten when they've had some direct, you know, I'd like to be able to tell them if there's a problem, we will be able to discuss it and potentially address it yes sir and again the key to that is a persistent known problem we would need to make sure that it's real before the county makes any further before we ask the county to make additional investments into that thank you I have this the first time I've seen almost

[02:48:19] every light in this day is on it's all for you mr. Brown miss glass thank you madam chair I may maybe expound on what supervisor Letourneau was saying because I've been receiving emails from constituents as well saying that the buses are full in Ashburn that there's now standing room and on the bus to get to DC up to in Arlington in that area so you're saying

[02:48:52] it takes about two months in order for us to see how it is in order for us to to get to, you know, increase the number of buses that we have? And what is the number that would, you know, take it to the next level?

[02:49:13] I'm going to take the first two parts of that question, and I have to defer to Scott on the second one. This is my training session with Scott. He has to see how I do on these questions. So the biggest challenge that we have is the commuter patterns and behaviors are still very uncertain.

[02:49:29] So they're deciding, do I take my car, do I take the metro, do I ride share, or do I take the commuter bus? There's a lot of uncertainty in the commuter's patterns right now. And so it takes some time for those to settle in.

[02:49:46] As Supervisor Letourneau mentioned, there's a lot of things in play with employment in the D.C. area. So we're recommending caution and kind of a prudent approach to that before we make any hard decisions.

[02:50:03] If we do bring to you a persistent issue that we believe needs to be mitigated through the addition of routes, it takes, I think we said, 45 days to two months to actually get that bus, primarily the driver, in and fully operational before we can actually satisfy that.

[02:50:25] So it takes some time to get a new bus, particularly the rider or the bus driver back online. That's the key is the driver, is getting drivers hired and trained and back in line and ready to serve. I've also been hearing from constituents where they would like to take the bus into Homeland Security, which is in my district, but there's not enough parking.

[02:50:54] So they're saying that for our buses, there's one route to the Loudoun Station, then there's another route to the Ashburn Metro Station, but there's not that connectivity that they would have to walk about a mile to get to that spot.

[02:51:19] So is there a way that we can look at the possibility of connecting, or do we need to wait and see how many people actually ride the buses in order for that to occur? So I'd like to dig a little bit more into detail of that particular scenario with you, if that would be okay, maybe, you know, soon.

[02:51:38] Are you talking about local fixed route? Yes. Okay, yeah, so that's, we would like to sit down with you and maybe work with that constituent to see if there is some connectability there. I'd hate to try to explain that or even try to make that transit planning solution right here on the dais.

[02:51:55] So, yeah. Thank you. Mr. Crony. Thank you, Chair Randall, and thank you, Ernie. I appreciate that, all that you gave, your information. So why do we need -- I noticed in your phase three reorganization, why do we need a separate DEI coordinator in the Department of General Services when we are adding two equity and inclusion specialists in our office of equity so i did ask that question to mr rush and he said he did not anticipate needing dei specialists in the different departments so this isn't the emphasis

[02:52:34] on it is the learning coordinator and it is a learning and dei coordinator and i'm going to read it as as i as i wrote it just so i can make sure i say it properly so uh this coordinator will will design inclusive training programs that will address a diverse learning need and perspectives while fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional growth.

[02:52:58] Fancy words, we need a training coordinator, right? Oh, so it's a training coordinator. Right, but here's the catch with this. We have a very diverse line of business and a very diverse workforce in general services. And I say that in the context of we have very different needs between our fleet team that needs driver and vehicle training to our waste management that needs heavy equipment and outdoor safety to

our facilities that need bucket truck training. A hugely diverse needs of training. And our challenge that we've experienced and we've identified in our organization is this has been inequitably

[02:53:33] delivered for as far as we can tell. So we want to make it, we want to ensure that there are opportunities to everybody in our department to get the training they need for professional growth and also personal growth, uh, without having these pockets of, um, of training, um, gaps. Okay. So, well, I understand now I understand it's a training position. Okay. That makes sense.

[02:53:57] And then the second question I had is the stewardship management plan costs. Why did they increase from 40,000 to 150,000 per plan? So a lot of that has to do with, um, I think our original expectations when we were working with the heritage commission, uh, several years ago, the Heritage Commission presented a budget of the estimated \$40,000 per stewardship management plan. As we got into building them, there's a lot of data that has to be collected to build that plan. And so we were having to aggregate some of the funds to be able to focus in on a particular stewardship management plan and have to aggregate funds from other sources to be able to build that

[02:54:37] historical information. I cannot remember the exact name of it. How many plans do we have to do at that price do you know how many plans how many plans left do we have well management plan i mean how many plans you said it went up to 150 per plan do you know how many plans were we have to do uh how many we have left so we're we're down to the last three or four i have to pull back on the heritage plan the heritage commission's report we're down to the last couple for this round they're going to be bringing back to the board a recommendation to continue uh the developing the stewardship management plans for the rest of our our historical uh sites okay thank you thank you

[02:55:16] mr groney miss um brixman thank you madam chair um i i would agree with the philosophy of of of waiting and and watching what happens with the commuters um i mean we've had people fired and then hired back again and then fired again and let go and probationary people let go and then said that they could come back so you know and and also i mean they're apparently trying to sell a bunch of office buildings so who knows if they're even gonna have somewhere to go uh when they're you know mandated to go back to the office the idiots tried to sell the cia last

[02:55:53] week apparently so i like the idea of waiting to see how things stabilize with that workforce if they ever do in the next four years um did we already hire a few folks um for your reorganization effort? And are things feeling better? Yes, ma'am. In fact, it has proven itself out to be exactly what was needed. When we first initiated this with Mr. Hemstreet, there was a clear gap identified. I won't go into the details. But we spent an enormous amount of energy focusing on the front line. And we quickly realized, actually, I was slow to realize that Mr. Hemstreet was quick

[02:56:29] to point it out, that we were not positioned or structured to support the workers getting the job done. So we've already seen that relief. This is the last step to finish that off. And then we will have completed the recommendations. Okay, great. And then I did have one question. I was curious about the senior stormwater engineer. And with that project in my district, I've been fascinated with the stormwater management stuff now. But it says that there's going to be a revenue resource, a revenue source that will offset the, I guess, the salary for this position. So the total from the county is only \$34,000.

[02:57:05] Can you tell me why that is? So it's actually CIP. So it's funded out of the CIP, just like we do with many of the DTCI positions or some of the DTCI positions. That is paid for through the projects that

they're managing as part of the CIP project, and then there are, I think there's 30-some-odd thousand that is not associated with it.

[02:57:27] 34. It was 34. Yeah. Did I say that right, Amber? I get a gold star. Yes. So it's not coming out of your operating fund, which is what you're looking at now. It's actually being funded through the cost of the CIP, which in many other cases, that would be cost from hiring a consultant to manage a project, things of that nature.

[02:57:52] Okay. All right. Well, I think that you've justified the positions you're asking for this year. I'm happy to support. Thank you. Mr. Kirshner. Thank you, Madam Chair. Not really anything about your budget, but something Mr. Letourneau brought up, I wanted draw your attention to since i had you as an audience um i have had similar concerns complaints from constituents for the hamilton bus apparently um recently because of the back to work mandates by the federal government um there have been folks in percival and brown hill and those sorts of places who have not been able to get on the bus and they've had to jump on another bus and

[02:58:30] ride to another station or wait for the next bus to come around so it's obviously the ridership because of the go to work federal mandate has gone significantly so i just wanted to draw your attention to that but ernie thank you for all the work you do yes sir and i appreciate that and we are seeing very uh we're seeing trends and patterns of uh the the crowding in the but in particular routes and our team under scott's leadership is looking at those very closely to see if they're going to be sustainable trends or if this is just a um you know a temporary thing and other opportunities for us to help them move and adjust things to try to mitigate that pain thank you sir

[02:59:06] mr turner thank you madam chair just really quick to clarify do commuter buses go places that metro does not go is that one of their principal functions because i always got the impression they supplemented each other they do both they are dropping off in areas in dc that are within a quarter mile of the metro rail stations but they're also dropping off in dc that are about a mile away from Metro Race.

[02:59:32] Can you characterize even subjectively the percentage of riders that are specifically taking the buses because they're going someplace the metro doesn't go? I can't do that in this conversation right now, but I have the data to do that so I can get it back to you. If it's easy.

[02:59:47] Yes, it is. It is. Mr. Brown, the flood mitigation program and the flood mitigation program manager, How do they relate to the no-rise engineering studies pool of money that we put together? Are they related at all?

[03:00:04] Will that somehow facilitate the no-rise engineering studies that we have to have every time somebody wants to do something in a floodplain? So this is a voluntary program that is unrelated to regulatory construct. But this is really something that the board has looked at for several years with the increased vulnerability that our older communities are dealing with as related to incidental and or perpetual flooding.

[03:00:30] And so this position is designed to work with the community to assist them doing flood assessments and to evaluate what can be done to help their situation. So it is different that the No Rise, we're working with the Soil and Water Conservation District is to meet a regulatory criteria.

[03:00:46] And then of course, everybody else in the community that has that potential risk has to do the same. Okay. Thank you very much. You're welcome, sir. All right. Let me first say that you have a very large

department, very large, diverse department and your department kind of touches every other part of the county.

[03:01:03] I have never had a person in your department not be just the most helpful, the most accommodating, the most kind, just incredible every single time. So, I mean, no matter who it is, every time, just fantastic.

[03:01:20] And I do think, as much as I give you a hard time, leadership does come from the top down, and you just do a fantastic job. I'll never say those things again, just so you know. You got it that time. A couple questions. The Lovettsville Recycling Center, it was paid for by the plastic bag tax, was it not?

[03:01:38] It is currently budgeted in a project with plastic bag tax. Plastic bag tax. So everyone in Lovettsville who gets to not travel further to do their recycling, the plastic bag tax is how that happened. Just wanted to have that on the record.

[03:01:57] The tree canopy question. The tree canopy study, you know, it showed that we've had increased tree canopies. Is that all in Western Loudoun County and is that all due to conservation easement? And that might be a question for you, Mark. Is that something that is kind of spread throughout the county?

[03:02:15] Because we really want tree cover to be also in Eastville and Loudoun County. Yes, and it's a combination. I'm stalling a little bit. Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, it is a combination, but what we're seeing is the period of that tree canopy study was 10 years.

[03:02:32] And so a lot of areas where there weren't trees that were mature in subdivisions and so forth are now being counted. So that certainly helped with that. And then there's also areas that were not forested and are now considered forested. So during that 10-year period that the canopy study was done, there was an overall increase in tree canopy for those reasons.

[03:02:53] So then, say Aspirin Village. Aspirin Village has the trees that are now kind of fully adult trees and there's lots of tree can. So 10 years ago, those would not have been counted. They are today because they've grown up. That doesn't mean any new trees have been planted in those areas. It just means the ones that are there have grown up.

[03:03:10] is that correct? Correct. Okay, don't we want to have new trees planted? We absolutely do, and the study captures trees above a certain size, so if we were to do the study again in another couple years, new developments that also planted trees, we're assuming that those would be counted at that time. But then we push those against the developments, like where you might see a development that is completely clear-cut at all the trees, which we have seen those as well. Yes, possibly. Okay, but in Western Loudoun County we're seeing just a lot of just new tree canopy period.

[03:03:38] Correct. Okay. And then you mentioned 4.5 million in grant funding what was that for? So what they call a SLAF grant it's actually for they funded several projects. It's a state funded program. It's a state funded program. Yes ma'am. They fund 50% of the projects so you the board funds half of the projects. Okay. And the state pays for half of them. Okay. All right. All right. Thank you very much. Thank you.

[03:04:02] um supervisors do you have any motions on the dais for general services seeing none thank you very much thank you all very much that doesn't exist um all right human resources is next and that's on page 101 i'm literally looking for miss green she is in sunny california she is she is but i'm sure you all are going to do just fabulous so thank you for thank you for coming in we're

[03:04:42] ready when you are very good good evening madam chair and members of the board michael drager acting or serving as acting director with the department of human resources i do have some brief introductory comments for this evening so the department of hr has one resource request in the fy 2026 proposed budget that request is a human resource information system specialist or hris specialist ultimately this position is requested to accomplish two goals in the department the first is to further support the creation management and control of positions and organization structure within the county's human capital management system oracle and two to address a

[03:05:21] single point of failure and workload issue in our current staffing model for this work activity as the county workforce continues to grow so does the amount of positions and organization structure data that is maintained in our human resource information system this resource will help maintain the current service level as the county transitions to the updated oracle cloud human capital management system and as part of this transition work is also underway to switch the position structure approach from a hybrid hybrid model of both single incumbent and shared positions to a single incumbent model which will improve the management of position data and workforce reporting however with this change more than this change will more than double the

[03:06:01] number of positions to be managed in the system from approximately 2500 to over 5000 and so this resource will help with the management of that increased work activity and with that i'm happy to answer any questions thank you sir thank you very much supervisors do you have any um questions for hr very good you guys did a great job do you have the other any motion on the dais for this department seeing none thanks so much appreciate you guys being here thanks um public affairs and

[03:06:35] communications pages 72 and 73 there he is and we have glenn barber the one person who spends every bit as much time in this board room well i guess besides mr hemstreet and mr rogers as the board does hello hello how are you good evening madam chair members of the board i'm glenn barber public affairs and communications officer i'm joined tonight by the deputy public affairs and communications

[03:07:12] Officer Mary Frances Forcier. Last year the Board of Supervisors approved communications specialists for the Health and Human Services departments in general county government. All positions are filled. Public Affairs and Communications currently has no vacancies and with the exception of one customer service representative who recently took a promotional opportunity in county administration, we've had no turnover in public affairs in a number of years, which I'd like to think is one more piece of evidence supporting Forbes inclusion of Loudoun on its list of best large employers in 2025.

[03:07:48] This year we're requesting a communications manager who's intended to focus on the communication needs of the Department of Planning and Zoning. This year's request was identified last year as a priority following the ZOR project and it's been brought back this year as our number one priority.

[03:08:04] As you would suspect, the demand for communications support and TPZ has increased in recent years and now exceeds our capacity to meet all of the department's needs in an optimal manner. Moreover, as with most departments, the complexity of communication services that we provide, such as developing and implementing long-term public engagement campaigns over many months or even years, has also increased in recent years as we have strived to deliver better support to departments to meet the requirements of an organization of our size and scope as well as the needs and expectations of the public.

[03:08:40] This request also continues the successful model that the county administrator introduced and the board supported starting in FY 2019 when two communication managers were added to our office, one to support DTCI and one to support the health and human services departments.

[03:08:56] Just like the departments of information technology, human resources, and finance and procurement, my office provides some level of support to all county departments. This centralized model with key supports deployed to select departments works best for now, while our organization's communication staffing levels remain relatively low.

[03:09:17] Currently, there are five departments in the county, such as the Sheriff's Office, Economic Development, and Library Services, for example, that have embedded communication teams that generally operate independently of my office, but they collaborate with us all the time. All other departments are dependent on my office for some or all of their communication support.

[03:09:38] This centralized model has worked in Loudoun County for several reasons. The model allows us to continue our efforts to professionalize communication across the organization by centralizing staff where they can be trained by professionals. As the county administrator first pointed out, public affairs and communication staff are better equipped to onboard and train the county's professional communicators, thereby relieving that burden from departmental staff such as Director Galindo, who are obviously subject matter experts in other professional fields.

[03:10:09] In addition, this model allows us to leverage our limited resources to the maximum benefit to the departments they serve, and to the organization as a whole, as we, with the board's support, continue to make incremental progress toward the recommended service level and right-sizing communication functions as we have grown over time.

[03:10:29] This model also focuses dedicated communication support to the departments that have the highest communication demands, such as DPZ, while other departments with lower requirements rely generally on the generalists within our central office.

[03:10:44] Our roadmap envisions additional communication support for DPZ in the future and for other departments, such as general services and housing and community development, which currently also require dedicated support. But for now, this resource request is intended to focus on the current needs of DPZ by supporting the communications and public engagement activities associated with the department's work plan that the board regularly reviews.

[03:11:11] The communications manager for DPZ will provide greater efficiency and effectiveness by coordinating all communication work for the department, which is currently being accomplished by multiple staff within my office, including myself, who each support various projects within the department.

[03:11:27] Through our centralized model, the communications manager will work with DPZ staff and the specialists in our public affairs office, such as the graphic artists, the video content producer, and outreach coordinator to deliver high quality services to DPZ and the community.

[03:11:44] The second resource request included in the proposed budget is for an administrative manager. Currently, county administration's offices management and budget and emergency management and safety and security which are similar in size to public affairs already have this position and not to steal anybody's thunder but in a couple of minutes you're going to hear about a similar request from the new

rpamp office over the past years we've noticed that this position has increasingly become necessary in our office and is one of our priority requests this year to the untenable number of administrative tasks that have fallen on senior leadership in the office of public affairs and communications as

[03:12:24] we have grown services the services we provide to the organization have increased in number and complexity for example public affairs now administers more than 25 contracts and service agreements that support county-wide services and require hundreds of ongoing procurement transactions throughout the year the most of any office within county administration this resource request continues the theme discussed last year during the fy25 budget process regarding the need for internally focused positions as the organization grows which you may recall were described as the backbone of the organization these tasks should be managed by an

[03:13:01] administrative position with specific skills to better handle the high volume of complex and time-consuming tasks that are currently before us which will relieve a significant burden from public affairs senior staff including me thereby adding much needed capacity for us to focus on the direct services that we provide to the board and executive management the strategic oversight of our office and supporting public affairs staff who are delivering thousands of communication services throughout the organization each year i hope this overview of our resource requests is provide some helpful context to our priorities this year that concludes my remarks and we're

[03:13:39] happy to answer any questions thank you madam chair wow wow that was great thank you supervisors you have questions miss brixman thank you thank you madam chair and thanks for all the great work you guys do um when i'm looking at this chart on page 72 the key measure number of communication services provided to all departments so it was like 26 000 in fy25 does that include like when in my office asks you to help with like a press release or something like that or are those bigger projects can you maybe put some context around what the 26,000 are yes um a communication service

[03:14:18] is any type of service that we provide to the organization so it could be something as small as a website edit and something as large as the western loudon public engagement campaign okay okay that then that kind of leads to my next question the position the first position priority one um is that is related to those sorts of um community engagement events such as this i think we did small area plans we're doing one for route 50 coming up is that what you're talking about yes this position would handle or coordinate any communications activities for the department of

[03:14:57] planning and zoning. While these positions report to me, they effectively report to the director of those departments who prescribes the priorities for that department. The priorities for planning and zoning are pretty obvious based on the work plan and based on everything that's before us. So this position is intended to sort of be the coordinator in chief and then work with all the players to try to execute that work over time. So are they going to be sitting in your office or will they be down in DPZ? Have you done this before? We have. Okay. So it depends on

[03:15:31] available seating. I do believe that it would be beneficial in this instance for this position to sit in planning and zoning so that they can increase the rate at which they beef up their knowledge of that subject matter. For example, the DTCL positions do sit over at DTCL, but the health and human services positions sit here in this building because there's so many you know they're serving five or six departments i see i see and i know that you were i think you were fairly happy when you consolidated

everyone up there on the fifth floor but i can see the case for putting some folks in other departments okay thank you happy to support your request

[03:16:11] mr crony yeah thank you chair randall and thank you glenn and mary francis so um you mentioned uh planning and zoning they don't have anybody right now then so this would be a first a first hire right that's correct they have no professional communicators on their staff okay and then um general services and housing and community development you mentioned those departments are they going to be the next high volume department needing a liaison or unless something changes in the next year they're on our roadmap as um departments if you know resources were

[03:16:47] available we'd obviously be requesting all the staff we need all at one time but we're being practical with what we're able to onboard and train and you guys do an excellent job centralized you know i think i think you guys do provide an excellent service um so it's good to have liaisons too i think in departments so i'll be supporting thank you very much you do an excellent job and i'm not sure who's keeping your social media page your facebook page it is incredible There are so many things all of us share off of your page, off of the county social media page.

[03:17:19] It is, it's so good. It's the social media manager that he gave us in a previous cycle. Social media manager is doing a very good job. Ms. Attorney, do you remember when DTCI asked for this position a long time ago and we gave it to them, a PA person, and we had our first ribbon cutting, and it was that ribbon cutting where we took out that light on Route 7, and we had announced it, and that man came out and joined us, and he said that this was, quote, the best day of his life, that we took out that light on Route 7.

[03:17:49] And I said, are you married? And he goes, yes, I am. And I said, do you have children? He goes, yes, I do. And I'm like, and taking out this light is the best day of your life? He goes, yes, it is. So you guys advertised, and then it cost that man to get a divorce. That's what you did.

[03:18:05] I have a couple of questions. One question, really. A couple of days ago, or maybe last night, somebody put up on your social media site the information that a confirmed measles case was confirmed at Dallas Airport.

[03:18:26] Is there a person who, do you have a PA person who was attached to the health department? I ask that only because I am a little concerned that we could start seeing more health concerns now than we've seen previously.

[03:18:43] I know how busy you were during COVID, and at that point, the health department was not a county agency. It is now a county agency, and so, so much of what's going to be pushed out, it comes from us, and I am concerned that last night's information, and if you've seen that post and how many times, I've never seen a post that's been shared that much or had that much interaction on it before than that post.

[03:19:11] So, is there somebody who is working with the health department to push out the public information that we need to have as it relates to health issues? So we have one communications manager, which is the one that we got in FY 2019, that basically works for the health and human services portfolio.

[03:19:32] Because housing used to be in DFS, we started providing support to housing at that time. it came into County Administration and then it became its own department so we still that in manager still provides quite a bit of support to housing because there's a lot of crossover even though it's technically not in the HHS portfolio we last year the board gave us two more communication specialists for the health and

human services portfolio so there's now three individuals who are working as a team to support primarily the health department got mental health and family services but also provide services as needed to like community

[03:20:12] Corrections and the other departments got it in Miss Bell's portfolio okay all right that's really very very helpful thank you supervisors is there a motion on the day is very good thank you very much thank you everybody and then our last one for tonight is the real property asset management and planning which is Jackie Marsh hello good evening good evening I'm sorry you have to go we make you wait to this late night although you've had later nights with us

[03:20:47] before. No apologies necessary very very happy to be here. Again I'm Jackie Marsh with the Office of Real Property Asset Management and Planning and we have submitted four resource requests. We are asking for two land acquisition managers these positions would provide support to land acquisition activities relating to capital improvements projects, board member initiatives relating to land acquisition or disposition easement and license requests on county property and lease negotiations we're also asking for one land acquisition planner planner

[03:21:24] who can provide staffing support relating to transition or I'm sorry transportation legislative and land development reviews as well as providing mapping and data analysis this long-range this planner is more of a long-range planner as opposed to a day-to-day planner and we are also asking for one administrative manager for the office to provide HR support requests for FOIA and management of board items and with that I'd be happy to answer any questions thank you very much thank you very much supervisors do you

[03:21:57] have any questions for miss Marsh no I just can't say something no look mr. corner you cannot say anything I just want to say I'm so excited to have you doing land banking so thank you so much for what you do I think I think land banking's been a priority of this board so and i will support these positions thank you thank you it definitely has been a priority and so that's good yep um are there any motions on the dais tonight for this department seeing none thank you very much thank you very much okay supervisors

[03:22:33] before we leave let's kind of just talk through um uh thursday just a little bit um I know that not everyone comes to a last session, but I think it would be helpful for people to come on Thursday, to be honest.

[03:22:51] Mr. Kirshner, you and I just want to kind of talk after this to talk about how you want, because that right there would take hours and hours to do that. So let's figure something else out, okay? Okay, we can adjourn and then chat. Is there anything else for the good of the body?

[03:23:11] Seeing none, please know that I do plan on bringing, well, I plan on asking the Cumulative Attorney to come talk to us. I have no idea if I'm going to do anything with that motion or a motion from his office. I will be making another motion, Mr. Crony knows this, already on the issue of fireworks.

[03:23:31] I told her I was going to make that motion, so I'm going to make that motion on Thursday, and so I will get those to you all in writing in advance. And then we have these two that we will address at the wrap-up session.

[03:23:47] We have the last two motions that we'll address at the wrap-up session. In the meantime, I am going to ask Mr. Rogers or somebody from his office or somebody to research whether or not other

counties are able to supplement people in the probation and parole department who are not probation and parole officers because of that.

[03:24:07] So we should probably figure out what's going on there. And then the motion to add the \$189,750, because we only have -- we only said yes to two of the early voting locations will also be added back to the budget at this time.

[03:24:26] I'm going to keep all of these until we get to the wrap-up budget, because I think it would just be easier to do all that at one time. Any questions? Any issues? We are adjourned.



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