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[00:00:00] order. Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Mayor Davis Younger. Present. Vice Mayor Wolfe. Here. Councilmember Ellis. Here. Councilmember Smith. Here. Councilmember Osina. Here. Councilmember Vasquez Luna. Present. Councilmember Hudson. Here. McCormish present. Thank you so much for that.

[00:00:26] Continuing with our new format, I am going to ask you to stand if you're able to for a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance. Join me in the Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America to do with all of it.

[00:00:59] Thank you. First on the agenda is council time and I will call on Vice Mayor Mark Woolf first, please.

[00:01:21] It's going to be late. I will shut up and move on. All right, no comment. No comment. All right. Councilwoman Ellis. Thank you, Mayor. I'll try to be brief. I do want to send just my deepest sympathy throughout the country for residents and businesses and everyone that's been impacted by some of the natural disasters and wildfires out there.

[00:01:51] It's been devastating watching on the news. And we can't forget the people down south in North Carolina and also in Virginia and the parts of the states that were impacted by the hurricane. They're still struggling. I do know that we have had some residents continuing to fly down supplies down south.

[00:02:12] So out at the airport, Compassion Airlift, they still are sending things down. And if you are interested in donating things, let me know. Just reach out on Facebook. And congratulations to everyone who's elected, reelected, and let's get to work.

[00:02:29] Mr. Smith. Okay, thank you. Mr. Osina. Thank you, Mayor. Just three items. One, first of all, the fourth anniversary of our Monassau City Library is coming up.

[00:02:47] I believe it will be the beginning of February, and there's going to be a celebration taking place at the library, so I hope you'll take advantage of that.

[00:03:02] Related to that, last year I announced that the library administrator had left, but I'm happy to report that a new person has been appointed and is coming in. Lina Gonzalez Berrios is the new library administrator, and Jennifer Hendricks has been appointed senior librarian.

[00:03:25] So when you go over there to check out your books or do story time with kids or go there for bingo, Yes, they're planning on doing bingo again as a fundraiser, the Friends of the Manassas City Library. You should feel free to introduce yourself to them.

[00:03:44] Secondly, if you were here earlier for the swearing-in and when we took a break and you saw all the lovely food and drink there along the way, earlier today, two of our residents reached out to me and were unable to attend but had put together, had baked some brownies and asked me to come pick them up before I came out tonight.

[00:04:09] And so I wanted to publicly thank Margaret and Alan Shatler over on Barnett Street for their kind gesture. If they're watching or they see the recording, I hope they hear this along the way. It was very, very generous of them to do something like that.

[00:04:26] There's a nice little card for us to read over there, so do make a point. And the brownies are pretty good. I snagged one already, so I can attest to that. And then lastly, I do want to thank the voters in the city of Manassas for my re-election here.

[00:04:44] I often tell people, as I did over the years here, I've learned that about, for me, about 70% of my job as a city councilor is constituent service. That's listening to people, going out, talking, hearing from them, emailing, visiting with them, trying to connect them with the right city people or resources whenever possible, sitting in their living rooms or at their HOA meetings along the way here, on that sort of thing.

[00:05:11] And so one of my guiding principles has been, and I plan on continuing here, is that every day is a good time to make a difference in our city. And I hope to continue to do that and live up to your trust. Thank you, Mayor. Thank you. Ms. Vasquez-Muna.

[00:05:28] Thank you, Madam Mayor. Happy New Year to everyone. It's great to see so many people here, so many residents and staff. You know, I join our mayor's words on saying thank you for everything you do, especially with the snow that we had, with the storm.

[00:05:51] I believe we haven't had it like that for a few years, so it was quite difficult. but everybody worked so hard not only to keep us safe but also to make sure that the streets were clean and the information was being pushed out. So I really want to thank you for that.

[00:06:09] I will have some questions later, but I just want to make sure that we appreciate the staff that showed up to work. They were working day and night to make sure that all the residents were safe and the

business could open.

[00:06:26] There is a link for you to report if you still, I do have snow in my street, but it is drivable, so it makes it, you know, difficult because some people would like to have their, some residents would like to have their street clean, but not all of them will be completely clean.

[00:06:46] But I, you know, I hope that we have, you know, some information down in the road, but I want to, you know, say thank you. Prayers for California and for everybody that is suffering through the wildfires. We have seen a lot of support from many different places.

[00:07:07] And even though we don't have here in the city, you know, high possibility or things like that, it still is a reminder, you know, how important are our first responders, how what they do every day being ready and doing what they need to do.

[00:07:25] It makes a difference for us. even if we don't need the services. But we can see leadership and how everybody's pouring out and trying to support. So if you haven't done anything, please look into it. There will be a lot of help and need there, whether it's now or later down in the road.

[00:07:46] So again, I'm thankful for our first responders and the city workers. Going to a couple of things, I want to highlight a post from the Economic Development. They were sharing information about the increase in the median family income, increase for 9.1%.

[00:08:07] And, you know, this information is important as we see how the job and the opportunities are changing and how also people is looking to move into Manassas and how it makes us different.

[00:08:23] We, they're, you know, government and technology jobs. So if you are not following them, please do so. They have great information. I hope in the future we see some bilingual information, too, for those businesses and residents that might don't fully understand English.

[00:08:46] I want to further move to a few things. If you haven't got your license, I know some people don't have all the information, but you can get your dog license. I got mine today, and just make sure you bring all your paperwork for your pet and your dog, and it is a \$10 fee, but you want to make sure that you get that done with our city treasurer, who's actually here, so thank you for making it really easy to make it happen.

[00:09:22] See, I believe we heard from Battery Heights, a reminder for the residents, if you have an issue, you can reach out. As a city, we can always resolve the problems, but I can tell you, everybody in the leadership goes out of their way.

[00:09:39] If they cannot resolve it because it's something that we can fix here from the local government, they will send you in the right direction. So you have the support that you need so you can get that result, or you can go to the correct agency or entity, whether it's in the state, in our state, or in the federal government.

[00:10:02] So we hear you. I appreciate the e-mails, calls, texts. I understand sometimes the frustration, but I want to hear you and figure out what really is happening to you so we can resolve the matter.

[00:10:18] And I want to close with, well, before that, you know, we are celebrating Martin Luther King coming up on January 18th. It's a day of service, so if you are able, you know, you can, you know, whether you donate, you give, or serve in the city, as a part of the appointments committee, I will say one thing that

you can do is look into our commissions, our different committees so you can join and you can give back to you, city,

[00:10:56] and also make a difference in being part of any of the boards. So please look into that every January. You are able to apply, and you will work with our city clerk so you can get an interview at the time that works for you.

[00:11:16] So I hope that whether you are helping or serving food or giving back, that you consider also volunteering right here in this city part of it. And I want to close, you know, with saying, you know, congratulations to everyone.

[00:11:33] Happy to have our new city councilwoman. Congratulations. And, you know, as a millennial, I'm looking forward and working with you. You know, really excited to see, you know, the change, but at the same time to see how we can come together.

[00:11:53] We are very different. I was talking to our former vice mayor, and I miss her, but I know that, you know, our residents have sent someone for this position to do a great job.

[00:12:10] So looking forward and working together with each one of you. Congratulations, and Madam Mayor, really proud congratulations and whatever I can do to support you, and I believe at the end of the day, we all love the city. That's why we step on these positions, because we want to make a difference, and you can always count me on to make a difference for Manassas. Thank you. Thank you, Councilwoman Hudson. I like saying that. Why, thank you, Madam Mayor.

[00:12:39] Thank you, everybody, for being here, for everyone who came out to the organizational meeting, as this is my first meeting, first opportunity to speak to you all. I would be remiss if I didn't say a few thank yous. Of course, first to the people of Manassas for voting us this way, but most importantly to all of the people that helped out this thing for myself, me get to this point. I'm very excited to serve the city of Manassas. This is a great city full of great people that are doing great things. Who wouldn't want to be a part of that? I'm really excited to bring another perspective to this board. I'm very honored to be the youngest woman

[00:13:16] to ever be elected to this council in its 150-plus year history. And really, one of my main goals is to show folks that government is for everyone and that government can be cool. So my hope is to get more young people involved in the city, more young people involved in our committees. But I'm not someone that is only ready to work with young people. My hope and what I'm striving to do is be a listening ear to the folks in our community.

[00:13:42] You know, like Tom said, go out and see the things that are bothering people and see what we can do to resolve those issues and really be a forward-thinking person when we're planning our budgets and our long-term plans and our developments, you know, making sure that this city is going to serve the people now but serve the people long into the future as well.

[00:13:59] So I'm very excited, Mayor, Council, and staff, to work with everybody in this term. And, again, I thank you all for the opportunity. Thank you. she gets clapped that's great for me again happy new year to everyone and and thank you all so much for being out here this evening um and congratulations again wish you all well in your terms looking forward to hearing what the young people have to say thank you ashley um last week we were fortunate to have our first of what i hope will be many ribbon cuttings um in the city we were at the meredith house sean porters renovated the meredith house down there absolutely

[00:14:38] beautiful. That is going to definitely take our social scene to the next level. So wish him all the best as he moves forward with that. Over the next two weeks, I'll be participating in the Innovation District meeting. The Chamber of Commerce has a business after hours at the Boys and Girls Club. And then we have another ribbon cutting for scaffolding solutions on the 16th, I believe. And then Friday, I head to the U.S. Conference of Mayors for their winter conference, representing the city there, coming back on late Saturday afternoon.

[00:15:09] Piggybacking on Councilwoman Vasquez Luna, the 20th, is Martin Luther King holiday. It is a day off, but it should be a day of service. Please give back to the community in honor of him. And it's also, as you may have heard earlier, my dad will be 91 years old on the 20th.

[00:15:26] And then the council heads out for their retreat. We go on our retreat the 23rd to the 25th in Montpelier. So we're looking forward to the many items that we'll be discussing to help us prioritize for the next year. And so with that, I will turn it over to Interim City Manager Keene.

[00:15:43] Thank you. Thank you, Mayor and Council. I'll make my remarks fairly quick. I do want to give Mr. Burke an opportunity to talk about snow removal. First, I want to introduce Mr. Jeremy Bill. Jeremy is our public relations slash communications manager.

[00:16:03] That is not a new position. It's a new title. It's the same communications manager that we had before, but we kind of changed some of the job duties and thought maybe public relations manager is more encompassing about what we are trying to accomplish.

[00:16:21] Jeremy comes to us from, started in Fairfax, ended up in Prince William, and now he has found a lifetime home with the city of Manassas. Welcome, Jeremy. I think those of you that have been in contact with our communications team will find Jeremy's demeanor very pleasant, very welcoming, very low-key.

[00:16:50] It's going to be a great fit for the city of Manassas. So, Jeremy, we're looking forward to a great future with you. Second is Mr. Mike Morgan. Mike, if you'll throw your hand up. Mike is currently our fleet manager, but he is going to become our acting public works director in place of Mr. Burke when he takes his place as city manager.

[00:17:13] Mike has been here. How many years have you been here, Mike? 29 years. Knows the city. Great department. Leads it great with great leadership, great management, great financial background with him. so we're looking forward to him filling in that role and continuing his career with the city at the same time. Mike, thank you for stepping up. This is what management does, is step up to these opportunities, and we're looking forward to working with you at the next level, my friend.

[00:17:46] And finally, I'm going to ask Mr. Burke to come up. As everybody knows, we had a snowstorm. yeah listen let's set the expectations 12 inches of snow is normally not that bad we can handle it 12 inches of snow with sub-freezing temperature causes a problem for everybody in the region with the materials and how we have to maintain our primary roads steve uh leave it to you to take this controversial item well i'd like to start with just an overview of how the city

[00:18:23] responds to any snow incident. Our crews will come out and then we will prioritize the primary roads, clearing them curb to curb. And we do that so that the drainage structures are exposed and so that we minimize the likelihood of any refreeze on the primary roads and then the secondary roads.

[00:18:44] Once we have a good toehold into all of those and the snow has subsided, then we are able to then start working on both our residential streets, as well as all of our public parking lots, the school parking lots, and all of the sidewalks associated with the city buildings, as well as the street frontage of all of the schools in the city. With the freezing temperatures, as

[00:19:14] the chief indicated, the snow did not stop until Tuesday morning, and it started Sunday night. So we had a significant amount of snow that did freeze. It got packed in over those few days by the residents getting in and out of their homes and their neighborhoods. So by the time that we were able to clear from the primary and secondary streets and get into the residential streets, we went through and plowed as best we could. Our policy is that we simply don't apply,

[00:19:50] typically apply either sand or salt to residential streets just due to the sheer volume of streets that we have with this snowstorm wednesday night i'm sorry thursday night we did get in and apply sand to the streets we weren't so effectively we did try and deviate from our normal standard to try and help with some of the packed snow we know that it's in most areas it has melted there are still some areas that are there's packed snow and and it's a little more difficult to get through

[00:20:29] but our crews are continuing to to drive through in any areas that we can push to to assist we do during this snow event we did receive a number of calls regarding the plows pushing the snow into driveways unfortunately that is just part of the snow removal process we were working with our social services department they are identifying groups that in future events if we have senior citizens or disabled residents that need assistance we will be able to put them in touch

[00:21:07] with groups and individuals that can provide that assistance and stand ready to answer any questions you might have if i can add a few things before we take questions mayor i i do i know some residents are unhappy but i do think our teams both public works and our communications uh and the police department went above and beyond public works was out around the clock the communications team was putting the information out on every app possible way trying to educate both in english and spanish about the process in the police department.

[00:21:47] I think the first night when we enacted this snow emergency, they personally tried to contact 81 residents to move their vehicles off the emergency routes. We don't have to do that. We could go in and tow them. But that team goes out and notifies them.

[00:22:04] We ended up towing 12 cars out of 81. That's pretty good about how we do things differently in Manassas. So I think they all put the effort in to try to make it as well-known as possible about what was coming and what was expected.

[00:22:22] Any comment, Ms. Vasquez-Luna? Yes, thank you, Madam Mayor. Some of the concerns were like there are small streets and if the small street is, forgive me if I don't say it right, tertiary, like number three on the map, you know, those are not going to be treated even though, you know, the other streets are clean and they are ready to go.

[00:22:47] And my ask is, is there any process if there is an elderly or if there is any other reason that those streets can be prioritized if they have a specific issue?

[00:23:06] How do people go about contacting your department? And I was reading the BDOT news and how, and I know that doesn't affect us, but the reason why I'm bringing it up is because people read this,

and sometimes, you know, the county, they contact us, or sometimes they really don't know where the areas are.

[00:23:33] But they were talking about how a street may have snow, it's not black, it's not clean, but it's drivable, and if you go slow, it's going to be safe. And my ask is, if you can tell me a little bit about the process, I thank you for the new link.

[00:23:52] Now people can go ahead and request the new link. I know many years ago I was asking in the Facebook, and everybody was, you know, very helpful to support. But how do we go about asking to be reviewed or how the streets are reviewed and reviewed from secondary, tertiary, or if they believe their street was missed and was never cleaned?

[00:24:20] Well, to your first question about trying to prioritize residential streets, that would be very complicated because once we get to the residential streets, the city is divided into 12 zones, and we have a driver assigned to each of those zones, And so they will go through and hit all of the streets in those zones.

[00:24:45] So prioritizing them is a little more complicated than that. However, I will let you and the public know that we are in constant contact with our police department and fire and rescue. If for any reason there was a need to get to an individual home in a residential street, we would definitely work with emergency services to get them to that location in a safe way.

[00:25:13] What we are looking at doing is we had a number of contractors that were working with our crews during that event. In review of it with our staff, we are looking at can we use those contractors to get into the residential streets a little earlier since they're supplementing our crews and our crews are focusing on the primaries and secondaries.

[00:25:40] Is there, when we have more significant snowfall, can we work with them to get into the residential streets, not clear them curb to curb, but at least get in and get an in and out so that when the snow event is over, there has at least been an attempt to get an ingress and ingress onto every one of our residential streets.

[00:26:03] So we are looking at that as a different protocol when we get into a significant snow event. Mr. Smith. Thank you. My question was going to be a little different, but I'm encouraged by your report just now and hope that that does get fully developed with regard to using contractors more expansively or specifically how you described it, getting them into the neighborhoods.

[00:26:34] That's very encouraging. So thank you on that. On a much smaller scale, we get this question whenever we close down Center Street for a parade and so forth. And it became much more prevalent during the snowstorm with regard to parking when parking is restricted, you know, if you live on a commercial, I mean, an emergency to Clare Street.

[00:27:02] What role is this? Oh, no, no. What is the process, if you will, for ensuring that people impacted have some idea of where to process and where they may park and what the parking rules will be?

[00:27:20] For example, and you may tell me that's already the case, but are people aware they could park? How can they park in the city parking building if they can't? Are there other places that's not downtown that are snowy emergency routes that people are well aware of where they can?

[00:27:40] That they can, that they must move their car, but that they can move it, and then they can move it to a place where it will not be towed. And just one other thing, I'm sorry, and if it's towed, are we prepared to provide assistance in that regard?

[00:27:56] Well, to your first question, our communications group notifies our residents where they shouldn't park. And then any side street that is not specifically on the snow emergency route, they can park there, or they can park in any of our public lots.

[00:28:16] Again, we encourage residents to, if they have any other location other than the street, to park there. That, again, it helps our crews get in and out of any street quicker. But, yes, sir, I think if, and we can work with communications next time to say, if you are displaced from your normal parking area, the VRE lot would be a recommended location.

[00:28:44] Yeah, that's where we were sending some people. Yeah, the other thing, that declaration does not waive the rules with regard to needing parking permits for certain neighborhoods, right? I don't know that we would be enforcing.

[00:29:00] I'll defer to the chief about that. We do not enforce those districts during that time. But it's not automatically waive. It's not automatically. We just choose not to do it. Okay. And then to your second question, I would have to defer to the chief as well, specifically to...

[00:29:19] Oh, the towing assistance? information. Yes, sir. I think they would contact the police department. If we tow your vehicle because you have parked on a snow emergency route, we do not subsidize that fee. You will work directly with the tow company to get your car released. That tow company has the vehicle information with the police department. We try to let you know it's going to be towed. And when you come out we'll send you to the proper tow company one other question related to that i'm

[00:29:52] not getting down into the weeds too much but with regard to that how are residents made aware or are they of who who and what are legitimate tow companies we are the ones they're on our contract so they have to be on our tow list of approved tow companies so when we we are the ones who call them. So if my vehicle was towed, I could call the police department and we could tell you exactly what tow company and their contact information is. So if a tow truck showed up under the guys...

[00:30:29] It's because we... That's right. If they show up, it's because we called them and they're on our approved list. And one that shows up that we didn't call is Violet Maid. Yes, sir. Okay. Thank you. A couple of comments and questions. I do want to thank the staff and volunteers, Public Works, the police, Anyone that helped with the snow removal or first snow or, you know, there's a lot of things that went well and some things that did not go so well, in my opinion.

[00:30:58] I think the snow map was very helpful. Communication was helpful, especially on social media. We still have the texting service. Do we report on what's happening with snow in the texting service for the residents? I would have to defer to Jeremy on that.

[00:31:18] If not, I think that would be helpful. because not everyone's on social media. So I did find out, I had a lot of people contact me about the ramps, the sidewalk ramps for ADA compliance.

[00:31:37] When the plows went by, of course, they got covered. And I guess I'm reminding residents and business owners, you do have to keep your sidewalks clear. The city does not clear sidewalks, correct,

unless it's on city property, which would be like City Hall, police, not the regular city streets, sidewalks, correct?

[00:31:58] Not as a priority. After an event, if there is a need, we can go to the primary streets to clear out the ramps, and we've done that a few times. But as a matter of course, we do look to the adjacent property owners. Yeah, and we also, like you said, we have contractors.

[00:32:15] It's not all city employees, and they all have their way of doing things. So, but that was a problem. I did find out the volunteer Prince William does go out and plow, not plow, they'll do the snow removal to help people that can't do their sidewalks.

[00:32:34] So that's a good resource just to contact them as well. The snow emergency signs are not consistent on the snow emergency routes, from what I'm hearing, especially on Portner Avenue. Did anyone check that?

[00:32:50] First I've heard it up. Okay. We can check it, but I know that we are fairly consistent, because I go to drive down Portner most every day. There are fairly frequent and consistent between wherever there's a new side street that comes in.

[00:33:09] But we can definitely check that again. Yeah, I think that's a good audit. I did notice during the snow event, because it was a more fluffy snow, some of the signs did have snow on them after the event, but they would have been visible prior to the event.

[00:33:24] Okay. Thank you for checking that. Mr. Osino. Thank you, Madam Mayor. Two questions. So, first of all, could you describe a little bit about how Public Works worked with Mr. Beal and the Public Affairs Department, Communications Department, to create the messaging that went out during this time period?

[00:33:48] Our Assistant Public Works Director, Steve Schrank, was our primary contact between communications and public works. He would alert them to where we were in what stage we were at as far as we were done with primaries, we're still working on primaries, done with secondaries.

[00:34:08] And then we would work between Jeremy and his staff and our staff to craft what needed to get out as far as what areas of issues we're experiencing and how we can better communicate that to the residents to be more aware of the challenges that we're facing and how they might be able to assist us as well as when we will be getting out to different areas.

[00:34:32] And I take it you saw areas for improvement, meaning either in terms of how sometimes a message is not interpreted the way you expected it to be or other information should have been included along the way, these kinds of things along.

[00:34:49] Yes, sir. Typically, we get a few small snow events prior to a big one that allow us to better communicate with the residences what to expect and how we proceed.

[00:35:10] Unfortunately, we had, as our first primary snowfall, a significant event followed by a deep freeze, which was just very challenging to perform any snow removal. So, but yes, sir, we will, we're planning to gather as a group to talk through any of the issues that all of, you know, the police department, fire department, communications, so that should we have another major event, we'll be in a better position to provide information timely.

[00:35:40] Lessons learned is always a good exercise to go through along the way here. Just make sure it gets passed to your successor, though, you know, along the way. Mr. Morgan was working throughout the night with his crews. I'm sure he was. And admirably, like any event, again, usually with the small events, we're putting all of the plows on, putting all the spreaders on.

[00:36:07] Invariably, once you get the equipment running, there's always something. Our crews were challenged because we had six straight days of 24-hour operations. Mr. Morgan and his staff were able to respond to any issues we had as far as anything hydraulic, anything mechanical.

[00:36:27] So the crews, both our snow removal and I say public works, but we were able to bring in electric and water and sewer staff to assist us in the snow removal process. And then Mr. Morgan and his staff keeping our equipment on the road. There were no water main breaks?

[00:36:44] There were a couple. Subsequent, the deep freeze, we've had a couple in the past few days. Thankfully, as I recall, both of them did not involve any outages to any of the customers. They were in locations that we were able to isolate them and not disrupt water service to any of our customers.

[00:37:06] And lastly, the city goes ahead and plows the parking lots for our nine public schools. Is that correct? That is correct. Who is responsible for cleaning the sidewalks, not only at the school, but let's take an example, Baldwin and Osborne along Main Street or Metz, which has a very large perimeter sidewalk out there.

[00:37:37] Who is responsible for cleaning the sidewalks there? Internal to the school, that is the school staff, they work within their internal. Our building and ground staff are responsible for all of the sidewalks that are adjacent to the public streets.

[00:37:55] So we work in concert with them to clear out and make it safe for kids to get into the schools. So, for instance, that large sidewalk on the perimeter of Mets, for instance. That would be a public works responsibility.

[00:38:11] But would handle the cleaning or snowblowing or whatever of that. Yes, sir. Very good. All right. Mayor, thank you so much. Councilman Hudson. I just wanted to echo something that you said was six straight days of 24-hour operations. That was only 12 inches of snow, but it required so much work, so much manpower, so much coordination.

[00:38:34] So while, yes, there were challenges and it wasn't perfect, I just wanted to say thank you to you and all of the staff who helped out with that. Thank you. I think we're good. Thank you, Mr. Burke. I'm done.

[00:38:53] Any questions for Chief? I do think I saw Jeremy and you guys were talking about the text piggybacking on what Ms. Ellis said. That is really good because that's the 888-777 text messaging that comes.

[00:39:10] Or is it okay? Oh, okay. Oh, okay.

[00:39:25] Okay. That's what I, yeah, because I was confused when she brought, I'm glad she brought it up because I was thinking it was the 888-777, but it's something totally different.

[00:39:43] Events, right, because I get those. Okay. You're talking about the emergency management alert, which is they have to go in and sign up for. That's one of the other things we're going to try to push out is getting residents to put their phone numbers in the system.

[00:40:02] So when we put these messages out, they will actually get it. And that's what's down there for people to grab. You were saying there's some information down there for that's what's down there. Okay. All right. Thank you, Holly. Okay.

[00:40:18] Thank you. Any questions for interim city manager Keene? Okay, I forgot where we were. All right, that was still yours because we're on presentations, item one on the agenda, presentation of 2024 community satisfaction survey.

[00:40:34] And Chief is gonna set this up and then we have a remote facilitator presenter who's gonna come on and go through it with us. Yeah, as Eric, the clerk, gets that set up for Jason from ETC, Just to remind council and our new council member Hudson, ETC has been doing these surveys for approximately 10 years.

[00:40:58] That way it gives them a historical data so you can compare. They come in every two years to do a community survey. Opposite years, they've done an employee survey. So this is our even year where they do the community survey.

[00:41:16] what these results do and gives you the rest of council and senior leadership an opportunity to set our priorities it will help you have better discussions at our retreat as you do your strategic planning so you hear directly from those community members of what they believe the condition of the city and what our priorities should be with that eric are you and jason ready

[00:41:43] maybe gotta love technology mayor there we go perfect hey jason how are you hello good evening

[00:42:48] how's everyone doing great doing well we're running behind so we're ready for you to jump right into it jason okay sounds great let me share my screen here okay um well good evening my name is jason morato i'm the director of community research at etc institute and we are marketing research firm that specializes in conducting community surveys for local governments and we just finished for the sixth time conducting a community survey for the city of Manassas.

[00:43:28] So today I'm going to walk through the key findings from the survey. I just have one slide about ETC Institute. We are a national leader in providing market research for local governments. We've been doing this type of work for over 40 years and in the last 10 years alone we've conducted surveys in more than a thousand communities across the country so this is really the type of work that we specialize in there are several reasons to conduct a survey like this one is to get an objective assessment of how satisfied residents are with major city

[00:44:07] services and to determine what residents feel are the top priorities for the community we're also able to measure trends from your previous surveys most of the questions this year are the same ones we've asked in previous years that way we can measure trends over time however each time we conduct the survey we do usually switch out a few questions um that are that are useful for for the current time the survey is being conducted and then we're also able to compare your results with other communities across the country on a regional international basis so as i mentioned

[00:44:44] this is the sixth community survey we've conducted for the city of monassas we've conducted this survey every other year starting in 2014 with the most recent one before this year being 2022. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and online to randomly selected residents throughout the city. We received a total of 407 completed surveys this year. The goal was to get to 400 so we

accomplished that and the results of the 407 surveys at the 95 percent level of confidence has a margin of error plus or minus 4.8 percent essentially that means that if we

[00:45:24] conducted this survey the same way a hundred times 95 times the results would be plus or minus 4.8 percent from what we're reporting so the results are never perfect even for a statistically valid survey like this but the margin of error is very small here we have a map of the city the red dots or households that completed a survey so we had a good distribution throughout the city so here's what we learned from the survey we found that residents have a positive perception of the city

[00:45:58] of manassas 79 percent rate manassas as an excellent or a good place to live we also found that satisfaction with city services is much higher in manassas than it is in other cities year rated above the u.s average in 52 out of the 61 areas that we compared and in most cases your ratings were significantly higher than the u.s average we'll look at this in more detail in a little bit but one of the areas that really stood out that i wanted to mention is that satisfaction with customer service provided by city employees right at 30 percentage points above the u.s average

[00:46:37] we also found that overall satisfaction ratings this year are similar to your previous survey in 2022 and that's a good thing for a couple of reasons one is that your satisfaction ratings were very high in 2022 um they're much higher than the national average in most areas in 2022 just like they are this year and then most cities that we've surveyed have had an overall decrease in satisfaction over the past couple of years so the fact that your ratings are similar to what they were in 2022 goes against the trend of what we've been seeing in a positive way we also found

[00:47:14] that the top overall priorities are traffic flow and ease of gain around the city, public education, public safety, and affordable housing. So first we'll look at some general perceptions that residents have of the city. Here we ask residents to rate their perceptions of Manassas on a five point scale. The dark blue are those who are very satisfied. The light blue is satisfied. The gray is neutral. And we interpret neutral as average or median expectations. It's a rating of a three on a five-point scale, so it's not a bad rating. And then the pink are those who are dissatisfied

[00:47:52] or very dissatisfied. So overall, the positive ratings far away to negative. If you look at the top of this chart, the majority of respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by the city, as well as the overall quality of life in the city, the overall image of the city, and the overall appearance of the city. There are only two areas that had more dissatisfied residents than satisfied, and that's the quality of public schools and availability of affordable housing. Now, affordable housing has had a big decrease in satisfaction overall

[00:48:28] over the past couple of years nationwide, so that's a trend we've been seeing all over the country. Here we ask residents about more perceptions of the city. Again, the blue are the positive ratings, with dark blue being excellent, light blue good, the gray are the neutral or average and then pink arrays of below average or poor so once again overall the positive ratings far away the negative if you look at the top of this chart 79 of respondents rate the city of manassas as an excellent or a good place to live that's compared to only 10 percent who rated

[00:49:05] it as below average or poor both respondents also gave high ratings to the overall quality of life in the city and the city is a place to visit this was the very first question on the survey here we're asking residents to rate major categories of city services so here we're asking residents to rate these areas at the big picture departmental level and then later on in the survey we asked about some more specific areas

within some of these categories so once again the blue are the positive ratings the pink the negative the gray are kind of average or median expectations

[00:49:42] you can see that overall once again the positive ratings far away the negative if you look at the top of the chart, the highest rated areas are fire and rescue services, electric utility services, trash recycling and yard waste, border registration, water and sewer utilities, and police services.

[00:50:02] There are only two areas that had more dissatisfied residents than satisfied. That's traffic flow and ease of gain around the city and public education. And then here we ask residents how safe they feel in various situations and you can see overall residents clearly feel safe in the city of manassas really in all situations most residents feel safe walking around their neighborhood during the day as well as at night if you look at the second row down 88 percent of respondents

[00:50:36] overall feel safe in the city we also found that satisfaction with city services is high in all areas of the city. Here we broke the results out by census block roof. So these are fairly small areas and this tells us if residents in different parts of the city have different perceptions of the city or are rating services differently. This map is for the overall quality of city services and you can see the entire map is blue. So this tells us that residents in all parts of the city

[00:51:11] are satisfied with the overall quality of city services. Sometimes what happens is even if the ratings are very positive overall. Once you break the results into these smaller geographic areas, you might see some pockets where residents are more dissatisfied with city services or have a different perception of the city. But here you can see that the city is doing a great job of providing services equally citywide. This map shows how residents feel about the city of Manassas as a place to live. You can see the entire map is blue. There's also one area in dark blue,

[00:51:48] which is the highest possible rating, so this tells us that residents in all parts of the city gave very high ratings to the city of Manassas as a place to live. So I mentioned earlier that satisfaction with city services is much higher in Manassas and other cities. Manassas rated above the U.S. average in 52 out of the 61 areas that we compared, and that includes 44 areas where you rate significantly higher than the U.S. average. By significantly higher, we mean 5% or more above the U.S. average. Manassas also rates above the regional average in 48 out of 61 areas,

[00:52:29] and that includes significantly higher in 42 of those areas. So as we go through these next few charts, the dark blue line are Manassas rate residents who are either very satisfied or satisfied. The light blue are the satisfaction ratings for residents in the Atlantic region.

[00:52:48] That includes Virginia as well as several surrounding states. And then the gray bar are the satisfaction ratings for residents from all across the country and this is based on a national survey that etc institute conducts with about 10 000 randomly selected residents all across the country and we update this survey every one to two years so it's always current information so this first charts for major categories of city services as we go through these i put blue arrows by the places where monasus rates significantly higher than both the regional and national average Red arrow means annual rate is significantly lower.

[00:53:25] So you can see in most cases, Manassas rates significantly above the U.S. average. That includes trash, recycling, and yard waste, maintenance of city buildings and facilities, parks and recreation programs, street sidewalks and infrastructure, communication, and enforcing codes and ordinances.

[00:53:46] And then one of the areas on the survey where you rate it the farthest above the U.S. average is this fourth row down, quality of customer service from city employees. You received a 69% satisfaction rating. You can see the regional average is only 36%.

[00:54:03] National average, or regional average is only 36%. National average, 39%. Here are more perceptions of the city. If you look at this top row, 68% of respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of city services.

[00:54:22] That's significantly higher than both the regional and national average which are right around 50 percent and that's one of the most important questions on the survey because here we're asking your residents to take into account all the services that the cities provide you also rate much higher than the regional national average when it comes to the acceptance of diversity and the value received for tax dollars and fees now you received a 42 satisfaction rating for value received for tax dollars and fees that might seem like a low rating but you can see the regional and national average are just a little over 30 percent

[00:54:58] so 42 percent satisfaction with value for taxes and fees is actually a very very good number the one area area you can see that does rate below the regional national average is quality of public schools and then we also had a question asked about satisfaction with different types of utilities and you can see in all six areas Manassas rates significantly above the regional and national average this includes the reliability of water services sewer services city electric and storm water services as well as the taste and odor of drinking water and then just the overall value

[00:55:36] that residents receive for water and sewer utility rates so i mentioned earlier that overall the satisfaction ratings this year are similar to your last survey in 2022 these next few charts the blue bar are the satisfaction ratings on this year's survey the gray bar are the satisfaction ratings for 2022. And I put blue arrows by the places where there's been a significant increase in satisfaction since your last survey. Red arrows by places that have had a significant decrease in satisfaction. So this is for the overall quality of city services. You can see

[00:56:15] for the most part, the ratings are very similar this year as they were in 2022, which again is a good thing because the ratings were very positive a couple of years ago, and they were far above the regional and national average in most areas a couple of years ago. The only area on this chart that's had a significant change in satisfaction is there's been a 6% increase in satisfaction when it comes to the quality of trash, recycling, and yard waste services.

[00:56:40] This is more comparisons for the overall major categories of city services. Again, the ratings overall this year are similar to 2022. One area that did have a 5% decrease in satisfaction It's the quality of landscaping, parks, meetings, and other areas.

[00:57:02] There has been a significant increase in satisfaction when it comes to enforcing city codes and ordinances and the quality of social services. This chart shows comparisons for overall perceptions of the city.

[00:57:18] You can see in most areas, the ratings are similar this year to 2022. The one area that's had a 10% decrease in satisfaction is the availability of affordable quality housing. That's been a trend we've seen all over the country over the past couple of years.

[00:57:34] So that's not a big surprise. So now we'll move on to top priorities. We saw earlier how satisfied residents are with major categories of city services. As a follow-up question, we asked, which of these services should receive the most emphasis from city leaders over the next two years?

[00:57:54] So you can see the top priorities are traffic flow and ease of getting around the city, public education, and economic development. The other most important are maintaining street sidewalks and infrastructure, enforcing codes and ordinances, and overall quality of police services.

[00:58:14] So this is something that we call the Important Satisfaction Rating. This analysis is based on two different types of data. First, we ask residents how satisfied they are with city services. Then we ask which of these services should receive the most emphasis from city leaders, or in other words, which are the most important.

[00:58:34] So the idea behind this is that those items that have a combination of low satisfaction ratings, but at the same time are rated as the most important, should be the highest overall priorities to focus on. So this first table is for major categories of city services.

[00:58:52] You can see that the top two priorities are traffic flow and public education. And this is similar to what we saw on your previous survey. The next highest priorities are quality and economic development and enforcing codes and ordinances. We also, we create an important satisfaction table for more specific areas as well.

[00:59:15] This one focuses on transportation and mobility services. You can see the top priorities are how traffic signal system provides traffic flow, the ease of getting around the city, the ease of traveling from your home to regional roadways, and the availability of public parking and especially downtown this is uh focuses specifically on public safety you can see the top overall priority is just overall efforts to prevent crime we saw earlier that residents gave high ratings to police services and feel safe in the city however overall efforts to prevent crime is still something that residents feel

[00:59:55] is important for the city to focus on the other top priorities for public safety are the visibility of police and neighborhoods efforts to enforce local traffic laws and the visibility of police and retail areas when it comes to planning and economic development the top overall priority is efforts to improve the existing commercial corridors the availability of quality housing and efforts to manage and plan for growth and development when it comes to health and human services the top priority is preserving and increasing affordable housing which again has

[01:00:32] been a nationwide trend over the last few years Other top priorities include the availability of services to seniors and supporting persons with disabilities and substance abuse issues. Then when it comes to community appearance, the top priorities are enforcing the cleanup of litter and debris, enforcing the removal of blighted and abandoned buildings, enforcing mowing and cutting of weeds and grass, and enforcing the maintenance of residential property.

[01:01:04] So just a quick recap of our key findings. We saw that residents have a positive perception of the city of Manassas. There's a lot of examples of that in the report, but one of the areas that really stood out is that about 8 out of every 10 residents rate Manassas as an excellent or good place to live.

[01:01:22] We also found that satisfaction with city services is much higher in Manassas than other cities. We saw how you rated above the U.S. average in 52 out of the 61 areas. There are a lot of areas where you

raise significantly above the U.S. average, but customer service from city employees is one of the areas that really stood out.

[01:01:42] We also saw that overall the satisfaction ratings this year are similar to what they were in 2022, which is a positive thing. And then the top overall priorities, and this is based on that important satisfaction table that we just looked at, were traffic flow, public education, public safety, and affordable housing.

[01:02:02] so with that if anyone has any uh comments or any questions i would be happy to answer them thank you jason um for that i really appreciate all the great data that you provided there council members any any questions for jason what was the time frame on this survey do we remember when it was actually sent out jason when did you send this out i'm sorry yeah it was in the fall

[01:02:35] primarily in september and october okay okay mayor council what i would ask you to do is you have this presentation this should be the building blocks for us for our strategic planning and retreat make sure you're well versed in this because it is going to be coming up as we have those discussions of how we plan for the future okay thank you so much jason great thanks everyone Thank you, Jason. Appreciate it.

[01:03:09] Yeah, absolutely. Thank you. Okay, next on the agenda we have item 1.2, the Department Annual Report from our Electoral Board. Ms. Kinchelow, come forward for that. Good evening, ma'am.

[01:03:30] Good evening, council members, Madam Mayor. I'm going to give you a brief synopsis of that election. You might remember it. It was back in November, and it's been a while, but I'm going to try and give you some information that we gathered so that you have an understanding as to what we're working with.

[01:03:49] I also want to introduce our two new electoral board members. We have Richard Hepburn and Harry Clark. Okay. Welcome. So it's true.

[01:04:05] The election did run from September 20th, that's the beginning of the 45 days, until November 20th, and that's when we did the audit. So we'll keep going. We looked at voter participation, and I want to thank DJ for these slides because there's no way I could do anything like this.

[01:04:21] And you can see the voter participation was actually down from 2020. And I have some specific numbers. In 2016, it was 66.7%, and 2020 was 72.6%, and this time it was 65.46%.

[01:04:40] So it's been down, and I was a little disappointed to see that. I don't know really why, but we did have a decreased number. The methods of voting are interesting as well. So you can see that we had usually people voting back in 2014, they're voting in person, basically.

[01:05:01] And then when we had 2020 come along, we had an increased, decreased number of people voting in person, and of course more people voting by mail, and also early voting. So early voting has actually come to life, and you can see early voting and the voting on the day of the election have sort of met in the middle, and they're the same.

[01:05:24] And then we still have people who are voting by mail. We had, let's see, 43.22% voting at the polls, 44.73%, so actually more people doing early voting, and 12.05% by mail.

[01:05:43] So the daily totals for early voting sort of vary. You can see at the beginning it's very popular, and then it sort of drops off, and then it sort of has a little spike. And then at the end, on the last day, there was 522 voters. Think about that in our current little voting office.

[01:06:02] 522 people trooped through there to vote. That's a lot. And on the first day, September 20th, there were 415 people who came to vote. So it does seem to be people want to get it early, and then people at the end say, oh, I better go up and vote because I can't make it on Election Day. So we did have study lines throughout the day.

[01:06:26] Same-day registration lines were there for sure, and we had a lot of same-day registration at Weems. And there were longer wait times, I think, because of this. What was tricky is we had people doing curbside voting who were also doing same-day registration, which sometimes takes quite a bit of time, and it takes people away from the main voting area.

[01:06:47] I was looking at the specific turnout for each, I wanted to look at this, for each one of the precincts. Dean was 61%, Weems was almost 63%, Metz 68%, Hayden 67%, Baldwin 64%, and Rand was 73.71%.

[01:07:14] And these are combined because, as you know, the ballots are according to the precinct. Even though we only have one ballot in Manassas, because of the law, we have to have separate ballots for each precinct. So we were able to tabulate the total number from each one of the precincts.

[01:07:34] So we really did not have any big events. It was pretty smooth. We didn't have to do anything remarkable. The unofficial results were posted on November 5th, which is good, the same day. We certified it on November 15th.

[01:07:51] And on the 20th, we had to do a risk-limiting audit. And what happens was, and the whole state did a risk-limiting audit for the U.S. Senate. We went over to the courthouse, got out the ballots, and we did the risk-limiting audit. There was also this, they have a random audit that they did.

[01:08:07] Thank God we weren't picked for that. But they did pick a random audit for some other jurisdiction. So there was a chance that we could have had to do two audits. We will be doing another audit, a random audit, perhaps, if we get one of the chosen people.

[01:08:25] But not a general audit as we had with this presidential election. The governor's election will just be the random audit. So Sunday voting, the controversial Sunday voting. Well, it's getting more popular. It started out with 46, 52, 70.

[01:08:42] We had 131 people show up on that Sunday for Sunday voting. So that was a good thing. I don't know why, but it seemed to be more popular this year. It's interesting because the number percentage went down, but the Sunday voters went up.

[01:09:00] Same-day registration. We had same-day registration, as interesting, was pretty popular. And of those people who we did do same-day registration, we couldn't cast ballots for all of them for several reasons.

[01:09:17] First of all, they were in the wrong precinct, and it wasn't picked up. Or they had maybe a felony, or they weren't qualified to vote. They weren't citizens. So their ballots weren't cast. You cast a provisional ballot when you are going to be doing same-day registration.

[01:09:36] and we do those on a separate day before we certify so that was the results those were the results and we looked at the community survey and of course we had an 80% satisfaction rate in the voter registration thanks to Susan Reed and her staff as number four among city services we served over 10,000

residents at the office but we do have a very small area that we're doing this and because we had to sort of reconfigure for safety reasons it even seems more to me

[01:10:13] claustrophobic so it's very small in there storing things down in the basement I think we had the our new electorate board members got to go down in the basement to see where we store things it's a lovely building but it's just way too small it's less than a thousand square feet so what we're going to probably have coming up in June are dual primaries that would be the The Republicans and Democrats may have primaries.

[01:10:38] We're not sure yet. If so, early voting will start in May. And then we have state and local elections in November. And this is, we're just listed, which you, of course, can't read, all the people who helped us during the election, just to give them credit.

[01:10:54] At each one of the precincts, we tried to populate the precincts with as many election workers as we could, and they were all happy. It went well. There were no complaints. So that's about all I got. Any questions?

[01:11:11] I do have one. Mr. Smith, go ahead. Thank you. I may have confused myself in the listening. I'm definitely trying to read it with these eyes. But if a person, with regard to same-day registrations, if a person shows up, say, at Dean, is told that you're not registered in discussions, they find that obviously you can register.

[01:11:37] but that person really should vote at Brown, Baldwin, and so forth, is that person allowed to vote at Dean? No. Is that person told to go to the right precinct? Yes. What they'd be told, if they came to the wrong precinct, not only would they not be allowed to do same-day registration at that precinct, but would be told to go to the next, to the precinct where they should be voting, do same-day registration there, and then they can vote there.

[01:12:02] That's the clarification I wanted, that they're not allowed to register there and then go to that new place. No. They need to be there. Thank you. One other thing. I'm sorry. It's not a question I have to my perennial or my twice a year.

[01:12:17] Whenever it happens, my heartfelt thank you to our wonderful. I think we have the best electoral team in definitely in Virginia, but I think in the nation. Hats off once again to a very successful year. Thank you. I appreciate it.

[01:12:36] Mr. Alcina and then Mr. Thank you, Mayor. I do want to echo that when I see the list of all the volunteers, though they do get a small stipend. Yes, they do. They put in a lot of time plus the training they have to go through.

[01:12:54] And I look at this list to have that many of our residents step forward and give their time so freely and so willingly is just amazing to me here that they do that. And their love for the city and for elections and for making sure that they work as well as they could here.

[01:13:16] So two things. One is, you know, when I saw the Sunday voting, you will recall a year ago, back in March, I believe, we, as a council, met with the electoral board.

[01:13:33] And I think we were, to a person, unanimous from here on the dais about wanting to see Sunday voting continue. And I'm glad to see that because the numbers certainly demonstrate that in 2024.

[01:13:50] And I hope that continues, even though on your second slide, when you look at voter participation per year, We know that next year, and then a subsequent year, and then three years out, it goes down until the next election year.

[01:14:07] But I hope that the number that's important is the fact that that is offered, because we want to make it available to as many of our residents. I know the electoral board members believe in that, but I wanted to reiterate that.

[01:14:28] That hopefully does not become a numbers game where we say, well, if it's, you know, we only had whatever the year before. As we can see, there are trends. There are going to be ups and downs along the way here. And then again, you never know what a race might get really hot and heavy and people suddenly get a lot more interested than they normally would in that particular year along the way.

[01:14:52] The last thing is on election night, there seemed to be, and I have to say seem because I'm on the receiving end. I'm waiting for the returns. Obviously, I was very motivated to hear what the returns were. And there seemed to be a delay in getting some of the precinct numbers, I'll say, out, published.

[01:15:16] Could you explain what occurred then, if that comes? In terms of late, they're really not late. It's just that some of the precincts take longer to get their numbers together. I mean, and we don't really do anything to, we don't want them to hurry.

[01:15:34] We want them to take their time. They could be having some difficulties getting the machine to work. There's lots of different reasons, but frankly, nobody gets their numbers out as quickly as we do. I don't mean to minimize your question, but it's pretty fast to get them out before, as quickly as we do.

[01:15:51] Well, what I mean is that several of the precinct numbers came out relatively soon, and then there was this wait. And the suspense was building, and I'm sorry, but I almost had a heart attack. That's all waiting. It's interesting because when we see the numbers coming, you think you see a trend and then you'll see the next precinct come and you say, oh, no, it's different.

[01:16:15] So they do vary precinct by precinct. So you should wait until the end to look at them, right? Believe me, I was waiting until the end. All right. Thank you very much for everything you do. And certainly to Mrs. Reed for her staff and her diligence in doing that and keeping me on file so I get my election reports in on time.

[01:16:39] Ms. Vasquez-Nuno. Thank you, Madam Mayor. And thank you for sharing those names. I mean, you know, this typing is small, but the work, it's hard, and they do a mighty work, so I appreciate it. I will say, you know, for those here and those watching, they have an opportunity to, you know, be part of this and sign up to become election officer and to make a difference in the election.

[01:17:08] I was looking at the, I couldn't find the total of registered voters. I know the 80% is 18,000. I think it's 24,000 registered. Yeah. 24,000. A little over 24,000. Great. And a couple of things that come to mind, I know that now that more people, I mean, 500 in one day, it's a lot of boaters.

[01:17:33] So I understand, you know, the need of space. But at the same time, I know the parades have made an impact, I think, on the Saturdays. But even though there might not be closed parking, I still believe there was plenty of people.

[01:17:52] I can't remember which one of them. So I want to ask you, do you see that to continue to be an issue, or I think that people might be more willing to come and vote right there? In one of them, it was like

a long line, so I just want to get your feedback.

[01:18:12] Well, we would like it if the parade was not on the same day, I will tell you that, because it does prove to be a problem, and we get a lot of questions about that. How do I get in there? Why can't I get in? And the parade has been an impediment to that voting. I can tell you that.

[01:18:29] We prefer that it wasn't on the same day. Okay. All right. Thank you so much. Anyone else? Questions? Comments? Thank you so much for all of you all, the hard work. I think I got on DJ's nerves the most, just texting him every day, what's the count, what's the count?

[01:18:45] So thank you for being so responsive for that. So you had two people come off, and Mr. Clark and Mr. Hepburn are replacing. Of course, Mr. Snyder, I didn't mean to. No, no, no, go ahead. When Mr. Snyder passed away, then he had to be replaced by Russ Harrison.

[01:19:01] Okay. And Rick was still on. But then Rick resigned. And now, let me see if I have this right. Mr. Clark replaced Rick. Okay. And Mr. Hepburn replaced Russ.

[01:19:17] Okay. And his term is just starting, so he has three years. I have two. Mr. Clark has one. Okay, okay. So do you have, is there a chair of the Electoral Board? Yes, Mr. Heffern has become the chair. Oh, okay. Well, congratulations. I didn't know that. So maybe I was the only one that didn't know.

[01:19:34] Okay, thank you. And I'm still the secretary. Okay. Very important role. But thank you all for everything you do. It's not unnoticed. It's hard work, and we do appreciate you and your diligence in making sure that we're good with everything in our election. So it's just so important.

[01:19:51] So we really appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you. All right. Next on the agenda is the Department of the Annual Report for the Commissioner of the Revenues Office, Mr. Tim DiMario. I think they saw that I have something to read here, and so I won't be riffing at all, so it might not be as much fun.

[01:20:18] Madam Mayor, Vice Mayor Wolfe, Council Members, and Chief Keene, I sent this in last week. I've done some changes to it, Vice Mayor Wolf, for one. So some of these might not exactly match what I've sent you already, but I'm going to try and read this now.

[01:20:40] You know how that goes. In the agreement we signed in June of 2024, it says that I will present an overview of the work being done in the city's Commissioner of the Revenues Office. It is my distinct honor, it really is, too, to talk in front of you all, to be here today to present a detailed overview of the continued success of my staff and I serving the people of Manassas in 2024 and since I took office in 2022. Before I go into more detail about the good work we are carrying out in helping the Manassas residents navigate their various tax obligations,

[01:21:20] I want to first highlight what our main duties are and identify the different divisions in our office. The commissioner's office has two essential responsibilities. First, we work to discover property and services that are lawfully taxable in the city. And second, we assess what is found for tax revenue purposes. Our office is involved in over \$109 million of general revenue funds.

[01:21:49] We have 11 full-time employees, and the state compensation board reimburses the city \$236,950 dollars for salaries while the content the city contributes seven hundred and eighty six thousand and eighty two dollars those numbers were requested in our MOU we signed our tax services division handles individually individual mostly car tax and business personal property machinery and tools business licensing meals and lodging tax cigarette tax bank French franchise tax and

[01:22:29] and public corporation taxes. Our office processes over 40,000 individual and business personal property returns each year. Our office issued 2,640 business licenses last year. Of those, over 300 remit food and beverage taxes, and what I sent you was 150, but it's over 300.

[01:22:56] Just under 200 are the number of brick and mortars we have. The rest are our food trucks, folks at the farmer's market, at the other events we have. But over 300 remit food and beverage taxes. Last year, the city billed over \$6.2 million in meals tax.

[01:23:15] For business equipment assessments, we use the original cost and then apply a depreciation schedule for various types of equipment. This is also the way we will assess the new data center's equipment and computers.

[01:23:34] Turning now to vehicles. For vehicle assessments, we use J.D. Powers, which is a recognized pricing guide and used by most localities in the Commonwealth. We have a few vehicles that are not in J.D. Powers, and for those, we use the depreciation method.

[01:23:51] What that means is that some of the cars are so new, they're not in J.D. Powers, or they're so old, they're not in J.D. Powers. So we have to use a depreciation method find out they're seeing here I am riffing so I'm going to go a little too long. Used cars and truck prices have come back to normal and are decreasing in value yearly from the increased values we saw during during and after the pandemic. Still the revenue from vehicle taxes continues to increase because people continue to trade in old cars on new or updated vehicles. When I first came into

[01:24:29] office in January of 2022 it had been the this office's practice to value cars in July after all of the information on vehicle changes was finally completed it takes a long time to get all of the information in a lot of it is from DMV and from dealers and from sales and so it takes a long time for that to get in in 2023 I implemented a new timeline where we value the cars that are in the system in March and continue to change the information as it becomes available until we are complete in July. This causes more work for our staff, but

[01:25:05] it also gives council and the city manager or the interim city manager a more accurate number while they are doing budgetary work in the spring. Our real estate division maintains property records, reassesses existing properties, assesses new construction, facilitates notices and appeals, and administers this council's real estate tax relief program for the elderly and disabled as well as the disabled veterans real estate exemption which is a state mandated program I've spoken to Chief Keene and

[01:25:41] hope to speak with you about your uh elderly and disabled program at your retreat our hike our team of highly qualified real estate assessors do an annual reassessment of real property I will now go into more detail of how this is done and what it means for the city. We use three methods to determine fair market value of property. There is the sales comparison which uses qualified sales in the open market, the cost method which determines the cost to replace the structure,

[01:26:17] and the income method which determines value using net income potential. For residential properties we mass appraise them and we mostly use the sales method most commercial properties are done by the income method with sales and cost used where appropriate the total taxable value of real estate taxable value of real estate in Manassas is 7.35 billion dollars with tax exempt

[01:26:53] properties valued at \$992 million. Those figures cover 12,911 taxable properties and 511 exempt properties in the city. Manassas is home to 11,675 residential properties, 5,557 single homes, 3,879

townhomes, and 2,239 condominiums. There are 1,236 commercial and industrial properties

[01:27:28] in the city. Your apartments are classified as commercial properties, so they're not in the residential there. As mentioned, it is the duty of our office to assess all these properties. Real estate assessments will be sent out around March 1st, 2025, with the new totals.

[01:27:49] The totals I just gave you were from January 1, 2024. Our office is available to conduct appeals of assessments for 30 days after the notices have been sent out. Property owners have the opportunity to appeal to the City Board of Equalization by May 1st, and they have a three-year period to appeal to the Circuit Court.

[01:28:11] My office also administers the state car tax relief program. Since the state capped the relief amount in 2005, the relief percentage has consistently dropped for our residents, and it now sits at 34.88%.

[01:28:32] I just threw out a bunch of numbers at you, but they don't tell a fraction of the story of the important work we do, because behind every number I just shared, there is an interaction. Oftentimes, multiple interactions between myself, my staff, and the good people of Manassas.

[01:28:56] And so much of what we do and so much of how we define success in my office comes down to the quality of that interaction. Customer service is the cornerstone of what we do. My staff and I realize we are not running a business where the goal is to make as much money as possible.

[01:29:15] Our goal is to assess property in a fair and equitable manner and to serve our customers with respect. We have many interactions with customers every day, and every day we want our customers to leave feeling they were heard and treated fairly.

[01:29:32] I have had countless comments from customers on how well they were treated by our employees. Of all of our accomplishments, and we have many, our stellar customer service is what I am most proud. The ongoing strength of our customer service has been helped by the vast improvement in staff training I've overseen since taking office.

[01:29:54] While the staff was highly efficient in their particular duties, we did not have enough cross-training or involvement with the Commissioner's Association and UVA for training and certification. When I arrived, we had three deputies participating in the Association's training program. We now have eight.

[01:30:13] At the beginning of my term, we had one Master Deputy, which means the Deputy completed her certification with UVA, the Association, and the State Compensation Board, which is not an easy task. If I am granted another term by the citizens of Manassas, I expect to have at least four Master Deputies at the end of that term.

[01:30:34] For my own professional development, through the Commissioner's Association and UVA, I have served as the Northern District's Chairman, Chairman of the Veterans Committee, and I serve on the Legislative Committee. Serving on these committees and being part of the executive committee has been extremely helpful to my understanding of my role as commissioner.

[01:30:57] My own training has been going well. To become a master commissioner, you need to have completed six classes. I have completed eight. You need to accumulate 100 points through continuing education, service to the association, or education and experience.

[01:31:13] As of now, I have 123. As of the end of 2024, I completed my third year as commissioner. Which is the minimum you need for certification last week?

[01:31:28] I completed the audit by the association which fulfilled my requirements to be certified as of last Friday I am a master commissioner certified by the compensation board the Commission Association and UVA. I stand ready to answer any questions Council members, any questions or comments for Mr. Demare?

[01:31:55] Ms. Ellis. Okay, I have a question about the data centers. Me too. I toured Iron Mountain and learned a lot about the different types that are out there.

[01:32:15] So the tax that we would collect, property tax, as well as business equipment. And real estate. Yeah, real estate. So, for example, there's like co-location where they have multiple customers. I'm hoping that you will know all this because they said they had a big problem with Prince William County collecting the revenue.

[01:32:37] We're well aware of that. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And so I'm curious how we're going to do that because I know the county was really struggling to find out who owns the equipment if it's like leased equipment. So the data center doesn't pay the business property tax.

[01:32:53] The leasing company would pay that. would be responsible for it. The data center is going to pay it through their lease, but we will be billing the leasing company. They are the ones that own the property, if that's the way it's going to be done. I have been in contact with the folks on Godwin Drive, and they have agreed to meet with us. They haven't come back to me with a date yet, but I'm working on that. I have been in contact with three or four of the individuals over there because you've got I think it's 168,000

[01:33:32] square feet in that building is half of that going to be offices and half of it computers I don't know it might be is it a third and two-thirds I don't know so I'm trying to come up with a number to give you all and to him first so that we can talk about the revenue that will be generated. We've had very good conversations with them over email, and I've had one good conversation with one of the, I don't know what her level is, over there as well. They seem to be

[01:34:10] very open to this, and even though I asked for a tour, they said they could do a conference call with us. I'm not sure they want us touring their facility quite yet, but we will be able to do that too if we audit them. So we are doing everything in our power to get it right. Not high, not low, just right, and to find out what they've got in there. Personal property tax reports are due in from businesses April 15th. April 15th, they will give me a self-reporting number of what's in there.

[01:34:49] My business license supervisor has told me that the vast majority of large businesses in the city get them in in february which would be really nice uh for everybody concerned it'll be even nicer if they will contact me again and and we can get a conference call to get some information on what they've got in that building and that's and they from what they've told me there is a single tenant in godwin so like you said of multiple businesses in there this one's not going to have it um and i'm not sure about the others yet yeah because it was turning over

[01:35:25] the owner of the equipment's information that that was the barrier right even though they're leasing if it's the federal government they're not always well if it's better government we're not we're not taxing them well okay that's like yeah that's true it's not the federal government and by law they have to tell us what's in there they have to tell us who the owner is yeah um and we will they have been very very helpful so far i mean they haven't gotten back to me yet but it's not like it's been

[01:35:59] you know three weeks um so i'm expecting to have good cooperation from them i i hope and if not yeah that that's important that because we you know when we're counting on that revenue coming in as we're doing our strategic planning well the real estate revenue is already done that we know right that's already been appraised last assessed last year so that will be somewhat similar this year but again i don't know what they're putting in there and uh you know and you have to realize that stuff that's attached to the uh building is part of real estate stuff that's sitting on the

[01:36:39] plates that they have to put down is part of personal property so i need to get as much information from them as i possibly can okay thank you and i'm working on it mr wolf yeah um the one One item with data centers that I've been conscious of, and I've mentioned this to Chief, and I think you and Ms. Bergeron and this council will spend a bunch of time at this retreat.

[01:37:04] It comes back to the machinery and tools and peripherals tax and depreciation schedules. Right. And equalizing the revenue flow to the city because of the risk that you take from sharp depreciation schedules. Right. where you could have to pick a number, \$20 million of assessed value one year and it depreciates at 50 or 33%.

[01:37:26] That number significantly drops, which, of course, complicates your cash flow situation for the city. So I'm just, I don't know what's been communicated, but I'm aware of this. I'm prepared to talk about that, you know, at the retreat. But the depreciation schedule that we're using will, unless you convince me otherwise, is going to stay the way it is because that's fair market value yeah oh no i'm not i'm not talking about changing depreciation schedules it is sort of straight lining or equalizing the cash flow to the city or the city the money is available to the city so we plan i mean we have a pretty

[01:38:04] constant cash flow in terms of revenue from taxes and fees and stuff you can't afford the spikes because then you're constantly going back to the citizens saying well your taxes go up now they go down right so back and forth we got it we got to find a mechanism for hopefully since the data centers are coming on in waves maybe that will help that out they may but also being new to all of us and there's going to be a learning curve on how it's going to go thank you yes sir thank you

[01:38:37] thank you mr vice mayor mr osina thank you mayor so mr demaria just so i'm clear and maybe everybody else here. We actually got the first payment of real estate taxes on what I'll call the Brickyard Data Center on Godwin Drive. Right. Last year that went into, you tell me, when did we get it? It was assessed January 1, 2024. Right. That assessment is for fiscal year

[01:39:16] 25 so we're living in that right now so that assessment which is public knowledge so I'm not afraid to say went from six million dollars to 76 million dollars and we are living in that right now okay and so for the fiscal year 26 budget that we will be right working on this winter spring retreat on and on we we've already gotten it there you're not going to be new new real estate money from from that property it'll just be continuing yeah it'll probably bumped a

[01:39:55] little bit just for of course area reasons all right to get fair market value but remember you've also the new debt data centers coming on will not bump it up a whole lot this year because they January 1 they didn't have a whole lot done and clearing the land doesn't bump it up a whole lot it does somewhat but not a whole lot so we'll have to see what our commercial assessor comes up with and I trust her wholeheartedly and she'll get the right number to us just to sort of measure

[01:40:28] expectations here among our residents and hopefully I'll have a preliminary estimate of what the commercial and residential numbers are going to go up for your retreat preliminary all right and and then lastly we get a quarterly vacancy report thank you Darla Hicks and human resources department for putting that together here and I see that the position a position entitled chief

[01:41:01] deputy commissioner of the revenue is being advertised correct at this point can you describe is this a new position is this a position that has been there and uh no this position is is a stake through my heart uh this is terry martin who has been with us for 30 years she's been the chief deputy for uh 11 years i believe 11 or 12. that's part of the reason that we are doing more

[01:41:35] cross-training uh terry is the cog that makes everything go and she is going to be a very very hard person to replace but we are all working on that because the new person that comes in is not going to be terry martin yeah and so we all have to join together to make up for her and we will be able to do that. The people in this office, you know, I talk about our customer service and how great we are. They were great the day I stepped into the office. I mean, they know how to handle

[01:42:12] people. They're very professional. And like I say, they know what's in their lane. And so we're okay that way. But when it all comes together, it all goes through Terry, or at least it used to. We have started to ease that off of her shoulders as much as possible, preparing for this.

[01:42:32] When I came in in November of 2021, or December, for a tour of the office, first thing my former schoolmate told me was, I'm retiring June 1st, 2025. And I said, great, right in the middle of an election. I appreciate that.

[01:42:48] But that's her time, and more power to her. She deserves everything she gets. To answer your question, I approved a advertising of that before the position was vacant. So hopefully you can hire somebody and they can work with Terry. Of course. Makes sense.

[01:43:04] Thank you, sir. Thank you so much. Thank you. Any other questions, comments from Mr. DeMaria? Thank you, sir. Oh, Ms. Vasquez-Luna. Can't leave me alone, can you? Thank you, Madam Mayor.

[01:43:20] No, I want to recall the presentation that we had about, you know, the survey, and all I want to say is, you know, your staff is part of the, you know, the good work and the good numbers, so I just want to make sure that I, you know, say please go back and thank them for their work.

[01:43:39] I'm sure that there are some interactions that are difficult, but at the same time, you know, like you were describing, you know, they're professional and they do their part, so. Yeah, you're 100% right. And I took great pride in that survey because I know that when they interact with us, that's part of that survey.

[01:43:59] And I've told them, you know, we are the face of the city, not just this office, but the whole city. Because when somebody comes in and you have a bad interaction, if you have a bad interaction, then that looks bad on you guys. That looks bad on me. That looks bad on all of us.

[01:44:15] And they are very, very good with it. If there is a difficult situation, if a taxpayer comes in and is very irate and can't be satisfied or before it ever gets to that point, I have instructed all of the people out front to call me.

[01:44:37] I don't want them to go back and forth with a citizen. That's my job. And so I go out and take care of it. And normally when the boss comes out, people understand and they are satisfied at that point.

But you're right.

[01:44:53] Customer service is huge in our office, and they do a great job. And they always have. It wasn't just me. Thank you. Anyone else? Okay. I think we're good. Thank you, Mr. Demerian. Thank you. All right. Next on the agenda, item 1.4, department annual report for our city treasurer.

[01:45:11] Madam Treasurer Patricia Ritchie-Folks will come forward. Good evening, ma'am. Good evening. Good evening. Good evening to you, Madam Mayor.

[01:45:30] to you, Vice Mayor Mark Wolf, and to all council members. It is a pleasure to be here, and as my colleague says, a great honor to be able to present you with the fiscal year 2024 treasurer's report.

[01:45:48] Now, it's gonna be short and sweet because everything that Tim says, I collect it, so there you have it. I'm here to answer any questions you might have. - Thank you. But do I click it?

[01:46:06] Let him click. He'll click for you. You click. Okay, that works. Okay, so first off, I want to say that I have enjoyed the eight years that I have been your treasurer.

[01:46:28] There have been a lot of changes that have come about since I've come into office. And, of course, I agree with my colleague that our staff really makes us. So I, too, am very proud of the survey showing the customer service and the quality of the customer service because we are the first thing offices that the customer sees.

[01:46:56] And just to see their smiling faces and the types of questions and all that they have to answer takes a lot. So I owe everything to my staff as well as my chief deputy. So under our budget highlights, as you can see, we've done quite a bit as far as with our earned interest from TD Bank.

[01:47:20] I believe we're at about 25 basis points now, which is a lot. And I'm really thankful that we chose TD Bank because they have been very good to us as far as helping us out of a lot of situations when it came to sending out the extra bills and all in 2023. So as a result also of the successful investments with the Virginia investment pool, as well as the local government investment pool, we call them respectively VIP and LGIP,

[01:47:58] the city has earned an average of 5.48 to 5.55 in our return on our investments, which is a lot. And it's been steady. I don't know. I'm sure it's going to go down.

[01:48:16] We don't know what's going to happen within the next year. But we do know that at this point, we've done very, very well. Some of the accomplishments for fiscal year 2024 has been, as you can see, I, as well as my colleague, have had my TEAD, Treasurer's Association Office Accreditation for 2024.

[01:48:42] I also have the treasurer's office has received that accreditation. The treasurer's office has also, the treasurer, I have been appointed to the DAV, TAV Board of Directors.

[01:48:58] Now, that happened in June, and what happens is the president, the incoming president of the Treasurer's Association of Virginia, appoints a board, and I was appointed to the Board of Directors. I also have received my recertification as MGT and have improved our tax collation rate, and we're still standing at 98%.

[01:49:24] Also, in our office, I have my goals for 2025, but I want to back up a little bit because I also have the certification and recertifications of my two deputies, One being my deputy of compliance and my master deputy treasurer, who is also my chief deputy treasurer, which is Andrea Evans.

[01:49:57] And she's doing an excellent, excellent, excellent, excellent job. So I want to continue with that, continue with their education so that we stay abreast of everything that's going on, so that we can help our customers and actually help our city even more.

[01:50:19] Again, I still want to reiterate the fact that, as you can see, the service to our internal as well as external customers, we give excellent customer service, and we would definitely be continuing that because that is far most important than anything.

[01:50:44] We are the door opening for customers. In other words, we are the first people that those people come and see when they come in to pay their taxes. So we want to make sure that we take care of them because we do not want anything to be a bad reflection on the city because then, you know, that will look at upon council.

[01:51:07] And we don't want that. And the mayor, so we don't want that to happen. So if you click to the next page for me. So, of course, these are our transactions that we process.

[01:51:24] We've done 13,478 bills that we've mailed, also 30,848 personal property tax, which is our car tax, and motor vehicle license fees. Also, the total number of transactions that we processed in the fiscal year was 116,612.

[01:51:44] Out of that, 16,396 have been done by process by credit cards. So as I said before, you know, one of the things that I brought into the office is you can now pay by phone with a credit card.

[01:51:59] We accept all credit cards except American Express, a little bit too expensive for us to pay those fees for our customer. So you can pay by Apple Pay, Google Pay, MasterCard, Visa, Discovery.

[01:52:18] So these are all, and plus pay by phone. Also, we have on our website, if you go there, you can register and have it to where when the bills go out, you receive notice that the bill goes out, and it will tell you either by text or email, which are the way you sign up.

[01:52:39] And one of the reasons I did this is because people have problems with the mail. Then they don't receive their bill. So this is a way of making sure that you receive your bill and you know how much it is and you can pay it from that. So that is another, I think, service that I bring for our taxpayers to make it easier for them because we're all very, very busy.

[01:53:04] So we want to make sure that you have all different types of ways to transact your tax business with us. Personal property tax supplementals, we sent out \$7,053. So these are your property tax bills if you purchase a new car or what have you.

[01:53:24] Those are the supplementals that we send out, as well as real estate supplementals. We send out \$28. so they are when you have when a house is being reconstructed or repaired or it's a new build the commissioner's office assesses it and then it may come back with the completion of that property or that building we sent out a supplemental bill for that so that's why we have the supplemental bills here now i'm going to go into your parking districts as well as you

[01:54:00] know we have zone one two three georgetown south so as you can see there it gives you the number of zone one cars decals as well as motorcycle detail detail of decals i'm sorry as where as as well as visitor parking passes so i think that's self-explanatory when you see the lottery For Georgetown South, they wanted a third parking pass.

[01:54:30] So council came up with saying to them, okay, you can have a lottery. You fill out information. You meet the criteria. And, therefore, you would be able to get that third parking pass. So 46 people within the fiscal year 24 signed up for that.

[01:54:50] And there were more, but it was in the, it start, you know, people were coming in in like July because it was due July 1st. But since only 46 people and we had 100 additional third parking passes that we were going to be given out, we opened it back up to the public at Georgetown South for them to come in and, you know, apply for the lottery third, the lottery third parking permit.

[01:55:23] Um, also now I would like to have the, that slide please. No. Yes.

[01:55:40] Okay. These are the delinquent tax collections by annual year comparison that you can see here. This is showing how much we've collected in delinquent tax fees for not only, um, personal property tax, real estate, as well as, um, business license tax and meals tax.

[01:55:57] So as you can see, each year it's going up, it's increased. And one of the reasons for that is because we are now doing business license tax as well as meals tax. But also, we're really shooting to collect those delinquent taxes to bring them in so that we're not carrying them over.

[01:56:21] And after five years for personal property tax, we have to write that off. So I don't want to write off anything if I can help it, but if I have to, I want to show that I've collected as much as I can within the five years. So that's the comparison for that.

[01:56:40] Next slide. So under the current salary funded and the source that we're funded by under resolution R2024-113, 113, I'm sorry, salary totals paid by the state, as you can see, is \$270,164.

[01:57:01] And salary totals paid by City of Manassas is \$621,870.81. So that's a breakdown of that. So that's the end of my report. I stand to answer any questions that you might have. And I thank you.

[01:57:17] Thank you so much for that. Council members, any questions? For our treasurer, Ms. Ellis. Thank you, Patricia, for that report. I have a couple questions. Did you give us the total amount of taxes collected?

[01:57:33] Did you give us that figure? I was looking no I did not okay I just gave you the total amount that the total tax bills that were mailed okay but that's usually in a financial department so do you have that figure by any chance because you have the delinquent I have the link delinquents what percent I guess I'm going to ask what so the percentage is um 2.10 percent okay so 2.10 percent is delinquent tax collection yes okay probably figure it out from that but if you'd like I can send that to you

[01:58:10] sure first thing in the morning I'll send you for that as well as personal property tax collected thank you and one other question it seems like the payment by credit card 16 the number of transactions 16,396 is really low compared to 100 over 116,000 transaction why is that You have a lot of people that come in that pay by cash.

[01:58:35] They do not use their bank or credit cards. Are they charged an extra fee to pay by credit cards? Yes, they are. What is that? And that's at 2.95%, and that's something that the city does not absorb.

[01:58:52] So that's passed on to the taxpayer. Okay. That's all. Thank you. You're welcome. Any other comments or questions? Okay. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you. Next on the agenda is item 1.5, the department's annual report for our finance department.

[01:59:12] Ms. Bergeron? Calm with the sinister laugh. Welcome, ma'am. Thank you. Good evening and happy new year, Madam Mayor, members of council.

[01:59:31] Can I just get away with saying I analyze what Tim and Patricia do and be done? Or no? Kidding. Welcome to the finance department's annual report. I have with me tonight our IT manager Sean Whitfield and our GIS manager Mark Montgomery so that I can give them an opportunity to speak with you as well this evening. We don't often get the opportunity to speak with counsel. I do. I have the pleasure of doing that. They do not.

[01:59:58] Okay. So as you know, our mission is sustaining excellence and supporting other departments and achieving their goal. We're largely a support department. We are trying to keep our finances and technology safe and secure and helping all of the departments achieve their goals because almost everything that we do at the city needs budget or a contract or a payment and some sort of technological intervention. The department consists of several function areas, including

[02:00:31] accounting, payroll purchasing, a warehouse that houses our utility inventory, GIS, the financial system, which we refer to as its name, often you'll hear, Munis, IT, cybersecurity, phones, budget, and debt management. We have a great staff. We have tons of degrees and certifications. We are all members of different professional organizations and stay on top of our training so that we can keep our skills current. We have 32 positions. Three of them

[02:01:06] are currently vacant and being actively or about to be actively recruited. A lot of what we do is self-explanatory. I won't read directly from these slides. You can read them at your leisure, but we're very busy complying with numerous rules, regulations, laws, policies, procedures practices and everything you can think of we have a lot of reporting requirements to various entities we do a lot of planning forecasting and analyzing the money coming in and money coming

[02:01:45] out and doing trend analysis and we are also conduct various trainings and put together training materials and best practices to keep our city employees in the know as well because they're not all finance people we are so we try to keep everybody current as in addition to ourselves we pay invoices weekly we pay employees bi-weekly we are we have very little error and we are primarily on time we also ensure that all purchases the city makes follow the public

[02:02:20] procurement act of virginia so all of our accomplishments are really i know they're on my finance page but they're accomplishments of all of the city departments the leadership of you the community as a whole it's really the result of everybody as a we couldn't possibly have these accomplishments without the inputs and outputs of everybody else so i know that they're on my page but they're really a city-wide accomplishment none of us single-handedly did any of these things but 2024 was a big year on the finance side with the issuing of bonds for the dean's school and the

[02:02:58] the encumbering of about \$41 million of ARPA funds by the deadline which was December 31st. Getting those encumbered which means on a contract, signed, ready, committed to go takes a lot of work and a lot of work by staff and a lot of work by my staff and everyone should be commended for getting that accomplished. I've talked about it a couple times but we We are now AAA rated by two credit rating agencies.

[02:03:27] And as you heard in December, we had a clean audit for the prior fiscal year. Again, our budget documents and our financial reports have won awards from what we consider like the, I don't even know

what the proper word is, like the best thing out there in the finance world, the Government Finance Officers Association, the GFOA, you'll hear me say.

[02:03:50] so we submit awards applications to them and win them. Coming up, we will continue for the next two years to have reporting and management of the ARPA funds that we received.

[02:04:09] So now that they're committed and encumbered, we still have two years spend, submit invoices, submit reports, and we do that on a quarterly basis. It is quite a hefty workload for everyone involved in that. Around which time at the two year mark we will have to start our compliance plan for some new federal reporting requirements.

[02:04:30] I'm working with GFOA and it's a big thing. It's the Federal Data Transparency Act. It's going to be a hefty lift for people and possibly cost money to buy a software to convert data into a specific way that needs to be reported uniformly through various entities of all sizes and makeups, so that's going to be difficult.

[02:04:55] Still more to come on that. We're also in the process of updating some internal procedures and developing some staff training programs to keep our staff educated as well. At this time, I will let Sean and Margaret tell you what great things they have going on and have accomplished this year, and then we can wrap up with any questions for any of us, if you don't mind.

[02:05:18] Sean, here you go. - Thank you, Diane. - Good evening, Madam Mayor and members of council. My name is Sean Whitfield, and this is the Information Technology Overview.

[02:05:33] We are building communications networks, safeguarding data and information, administering critical systems applications, helping to troubleshoot problems, and doing a range of other work to ensure the efficiency and security of business information, which includes metrics such as, Currently, we support over 100 servers and network devices with a 99% uptime.

[02:06:05] We provide services to over 15 buildings within the city. We've maintained over 600 desktops, laptops, and tablets for city staff. And we also maintain over 400 mobile and desktop phones for city staff as well.

[02:06:27] We prevent 10,000 unsuccessful attacks every week. This includes spam, phishing, firewalls, and other attacks that come in constantly.

[02:06:47] As part of that, we protect 540 of our cloud email accounts and over 150 remote user accounts as well. Our help desk processed 3,232 tickets for a variety of requests, everything from office, printers, security, laptops, mobile devices, the network, the Internet.

[02:07:22] There's a diverse variety of how that information comes into our help desk. And we also support events such as this, which is Peg Channel broadcasts and other events. Click, please.

[02:07:42] Our IT projects. One of the areas we focus on are the facility setups and upgrades. What that means is that for PSF, City Hall, and Museum, we completed the cabling, the network, the phone, the public Wi-Fi.

[02:08:08] and the security for each of those buildings and all of the staff that are now in them. We are preparing for two more buildings as part of this report for Marsteller and Piedmont, which will include all of these same items as well.

[02:08:30] For our infrastructure projects, we upgraded our Munis server hardware as part of the Munis upgrade. Margaret will talk about we upgraded our server backups to a new system to allow us to do off-site backups and we also do Annual disaster recovery testing and training for our staff and we upgraded parts of our network as well for our

[02:09:08] Police Department projects. We have the cat RMS mobile public safety software Replacement, that's a mouthful, that was started during this fiscal year. This is a cloud-based solution, and I'll talk a little bit more about this in just a moment.

[02:09:29] We also implemented our Case Cracker interview software and upgraded in-car camera systems for patrol. Our security projects were numerous. I'll touch on some of the highlights.

[02:09:47] We upgraded the intrusion detection, some of our managed detection response are the things that are on your desktop and go off and tell you when something bad is about to happen on your machine and they alert us ahead of time so that we can intercede.

[02:10:05] We completed annual audits for both elections and external. And, of course, we continue our cybersecurity awareness training program, which I believe at this point I think we've been doing now for five years.

[02:10:22] And then recently we also completed the upgrade of our VPN software, which was very timely because it helped us to get through the snow event not so long ago. Our upcoming IT projects complete the setup of Marsteller and Piedmont as I spoke earlier with the network and all the other pieces that need to be done. We're planning to go live with our CAD RMS mobile public safety software on February 25th of this year.

[02:10:57] We're going to continue upgrading our users with Microsoft Office and with Windows 11. Some people have mixed feelings about Windows 11, but that is the way that the technology is going, so we won't get behind, and we'll be upgrading that as well.

[02:11:20] We'll also be replacing our phone system citywide, which means the phone system in every building within the city will also be replaced by the time this project is completed we're going to continue to conduct those annual security audits and also to upgrade our security and camera visibility and as Diane said we're also continually increasing our technical knowledge and I will leave you with IT will continue to

[02:11:56] replace 500 computers and 50 server and network devices over the next five years. Thank you. Good evening, Madam Mayor, members of council. I'm Margaret Montgomery, and I'm here to give you the update on geospatial and enterprise systems in the city. So we manage a number of very large enterprise systems, and there are a lot of acronyms here, so I'll do my best to not throw

[02:12:31] too many acronyms, but namely we have the GIS system, which is our geospatial information systems, all of the mapping layers. Munis, which is our enterprise resource planning system. Energov, which is also called EPNL, which is enterprise permitting and licensing, so community development is the primary user of that system. And I didn't mention it here, and Tim's here. We also manage our CAMA system, so our computer-aided mass appraisal system

[02:13:04] vision. So in that, we also support all of the pieces that tack on to Munis and Tyler. So there's a number of third-party pieces and additional Tyler-Munis software that's required to keep everything

moving, and one of those is for cashiering, for example, for the treasurer's office.

[02:13:27] and Tyler Content Manager, which is the item that stores all of the invoices and the documents that are in the system and a variety of other pieces. We also provide additional support for databases and data services for nearly every department in the city. So I mentioned police and fire here, but we also have databases for public works, utilities, finance, the treasurer, for example, the parking permits and nearly every department in the city.

[02:13:54] So that's a big lift. You could change the next slide, thank you. I'm gonna flip back and forth here for a moment, but for GIS, we maintain and manage over 300 GIS data layers from address points to center line, to parcels, to locations of water mains underground, storm structures, you name it, airport runway layers, things like that.

[02:14:23] So that list continues to grow over time as data needs expand and as we discover new layers. I'll speak about this a little bit more on the next slide, but we also develop a number of mobile and desktop data solutions.

[02:14:40] We utilize our data connections to facilitate ingestion of data into critical business systems, such as Next Generation 911. So obviously if you call 911 and your point is not in the system, we might have an issue there.

[02:14:57] So we're responsible for ensuring that all of those address points as they're assigned by community development are uploaded into the system promptly. Our data makes its way into real estate to ensure that the parcels are there so that they can be assessed properly by the real estate office.

[02:15:16] And a number of other systems consume our data. If in GIS support, we support over 125 city staff users of two versions of our desktop software as well as a number of mobile solutions.

[02:15:36] On the next slide, I mentioned that we have a number of activities for Munis and Energov. We provide daily support to all city employees for all Munis, Energov, and in the associated modules. So as a reminder, the bulk of the timesheets come through Munis.

[02:15:55] So at a minimum, everybody is logging in every two weeks. So that's 540 however many email addresses we have in the city of people that we're having interactions with when, you know, maybe they can't get into the system or maybe they're having problems recording their time, as well as all of the interactions that the heavy users for finance or accounting or a number of other departments in the city.

[02:16:20] We manage four environments, so we have an environment, meaning our set of computer software that is facing to the employees. There's one primary environment, and then there's three others.

[02:16:35] So we are managing all four of those environments at the same time to ensure best performance. Since July 1, we have successfully performed a major software upgrade, a step upgrade, and migrated to the new servers that Sean mentioned. We have upgraded both Munis and Energov to 2024 versions, and we've deployed, actually, I just checked before this meeting, 275 patch updates to our production environment since July 1.

[02:17:03] So as a reminder, we have four environments. So every single one of those patches is also getting deployed to those four environments, and you can't just click a button and hope for the best, right? It has to be babysat. It has to be managed properly. We also deploy our monthly Windows updates for security purposes.

[02:17:22] Flipping back over to the GIS resources, I just wanted to mention that we also have developed over 25 public-facing web applications that are available at manassasva.gov slash maps. They are out there to help you find your parking district, find your parcel information, zoning information, find out more information about some of our exhibits at the museum.

[02:17:48] There is a search option there, so you can just put in what you're looking for, and the map list will pop up. We also develop and support over 30 department-specific mobile data collection applications. So these are applications that we have built using an Esri code base, and Esri is the software that we use for GIS, to streamline business processes for data collection in the field.

[02:18:11] So no longer do we have folks out in the field writing down their inspection report and then coming back into the office and having to type it. They're collecting it, capturing pictures, and uploading it. So that provides streamlining of the business processes, but also real-time visibility to the folks that are in the office so they can see inspection reports and maintenance progress.

[02:18:34] And it eliminates that paper, the redundant paper process. And looking forward, we love data, right? My group loves data. We love what we do, so we will continue to provide excellent support for all of these major systems throughout the city.

[02:18:51] We have created a timeline of all of our upgrades specifically for Munis, Energov, and GIS because you can't have one out of step with the other. So it takes six to 12 months of planning to plan ahead for every single upgrade that we need to manage.

[02:19:10] But we also want to make sure that we stay on a new supported version, just maybe not the one that got released last week, right? because we always are a little cautious with the versions that we're loading onto our systems. But we wanna make sure we leverage new functionality as it becomes available.

[02:19:26] We will continue to support GIS data collection and delivery of that content either to our internal departments or the public. And then we, because we have this visibility across all of these databases and the applications, we provide data validation so that we can see when things aren't necessarily gonna have a smooth transition into the applications that say NRGov or community development or the public might need. So we'll continue to perform that role. And I think that's everything that I had.

[02:20:00] So if there's any questions, we stand ready for your questions. Thank you. Vice Mayor Wohl. Not a question, but just a shout out and kudos. I have to confess the GIS application on the city website, I think is one of the best things we do. And it is miles ahead of what the county uses.

[02:20:21] They need to take lessons. But I can tell you, I use that at least every week in my city business, getting information, looking things up. It's just invaluable and it's easy. It's obviously 100% accurate and just a really great tool for the city, but for all the citizens as well. They really should take advantage of it. Thank you. Any other comments, questions from Ms. Bergeron and staff? Okay. Thank you all so much. Thank you for what you do. Thank you.

[02:20:56] Item two, the consent agenda. I will call on Vice Mayor Wolfe for the motion. Madam Mayor, I move that the consent agenda be approved and the reading of the ordinance dispensed with. I approve the motion by Vice Mayor Wolfe, seconded by Councilwoman Vasquez Luna, to approve our consent agenda. Any discussion? Hearing and seeing none, Mr. Smith, please call the roll.

[02:21:20] Vice Mayor Wolfe? Yes. Council Member Vasquez Luna? Yes. Council Member Ellis? Yes. Council Member Smith? Yes. Council Member Osina? Yes. Council Member Hudson? Yes. The motion carries. All right. Thank you for that. Item three, ordinances and resolutions. Item 3.1 is resolution number R-2025-466, approving a real estate purchase slash sale agreement between the city of Manassas and Manassas Ice and Fuel Company, also known as MIFCO. And ICM King. Mayor, thank you very much. This resolution brings before you the sale agreement between the city of Manassas and better known as

[02:22:00] MIFCO. As each of you know, we have discussed this for almost two years now, many times in closed sessions and negotiations with the ownership has been about a year we have finally come to an agreement that council and i have discussed prior to tonight it is pre-signed by the current owner of mifco that property equates to about 1.56 acres here in the downtown we believe it is vital to the future development of the downtown area so now that you and we control what

[02:22:39] will be built there or could be built there and i think that would be more discussions uh at our retreat the sale price is 3.1 million dollars the settlement is not until september of next year so this will be part of your fy26 budgeting process myself for mr brown will stand ready answer any questions you may have. Thank you. Any questions or comments on this? I do have a question.

[02:23:12] Okay, Ms. Ellis. That parcel is zone 1A, correct? I-2. It's I-2? Okay. That's not what the parcel map says. Which could put a warehouse, data center, and the height requirement that is allowed is how many? How high?

[02:23:41] Dean. Good evening, Madam Mayor, members of council for I2 zoning district. The maximum height limit is 75 feet under current zoning. 75 feet compared to the building across the street, Manassas. Messenger, I'm sorry. Height limits in the downtown generally for commercially zoned property range from 60 to 65 feet maximum. So that one's a lot higher. How many floors, stories? It would depend on the construction. We go by height. So 60 to 65 is generally the maximum we look at in the

[02:24:19] downtown. And that's by right. That means they, someone could, they don't need a special use permit to build something like a data center at that height. Yes, ma'am. Okay. And the ground, one other question. There's some environmental testing going on. Is that correct? There's been previous testing there that has been reported to the state and worked with the state. And as we do our due diligence prior to closing, there will be continued testing. If there's something there that comes up that we want to contest, then we can negate this contract.

[02:25:03] Okay. Any other comments? Ms. Vasquez? Thank you, Madam Mayor. I'm going to be supportive of this, but I do want to comment that, you know, there was a lot of questions when it comes to, you know, the environment.

[02:25:21] I feel comfortable that all the questions and all the discussions have, you know, made it, have helped me to be comfortable. So I'm sure that there will be the only reason why I mentioned it, and I'm careful because of, you know, how, you know, the closed sessions and everything.

[02:25:40] I just want to make sure the public is confident that we have done our due diligence when it comes to, you know, acquiring that and what can go there. and knowing that, well, what is there right now. Thank you. Mr. Wolf? Sure.

[02:25:56] First a comment, then I'll make the motion, if the mayor pleases. Building on what's been said, making this, this property is going to get sold. And the choice before the council was whether we purchase

it so that the government, frankly, and the citizens, through the input process, has a say in what's going to be built there.

[02:26:20] We will follow the process. we have at other lands we've purchased where we will engage the public and get feedback and try to come up with a solution that works best for the community. Brother Smith, I think, summarized it really well in a meeting where he talked about because of the by-ride zoning, this could be a U-Haul storage center tomorrow, which I don't think is something that, frankly, most people would want to see in the middle of Old Town Manassas.

[02:26:51] So that's, to me, a lot of the rationale behind this. I think it's a great step for the community. And it's something we have, we're in the councils, have been working on, again, frankly, for years and years and years. And with that, I'm very pleased to move the adoption of Resolution 2025-466.

[02:27:12] Second. We have a motion by Vice Mayor Wolfe, seconded by Councilman Osina, to approve Resolution No. R-2025-466. Any discussion? Ms. Ellis. I think what Vice Mayor Wolf said is my concern, too, about what could happen to that property.

[02:27:36] We do need a parking garage. It's in the CIP. We have been looking for a spot for a long time. I'm trusting that Council will do the right thing with that land to use it that would be the best for our community.

[02:27:57] I am going to support this because that is very valuable property, believe it or not. So I think if we have an opportunity to do something good with it that will benefit everyone, it's the right decision. Anyone else? Any other comments for discussion?

[02:28:15] If not, Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Vice Mayor Wolfe? Yes. Council Member Osina? Yes. Council Member Ellis? Yes. Council Member Smith? Yes. Council Member Vasquez Luna? Yes.

[02:28:33] Council Member Hudson? Yes. The motion carries. Thank you for that. That moves us forward to item 3.2, ordinance number 0-2025-468, an uncodified ordinance approving towing and related fees for the city of Manassas.

[02:28:52] Lieutenant Brooks is here to help us with that. Good evening, sir. Good evening, Madam Mayor, members of Council, Chief Keene. As Chief Keene mentioned a little earlier this evening, the police department contracts with five independent tow operators to tow on behalf of the police department. Last year, the police department directed or requested 1,007 vehicles to be towed over the entire calendar year.

[02:29:14] Primarily, that was due to vehicle accidents, traffic hazards, certain parking violations, impounding of vehicles for evidentiary purposes, and others. The last time that the city looked at any fee increases was more than five years ago.

[02:29:30] As we all know, over the last five years, costs have increased significantly. Namely, vehicles, automotive fuel, insurance, taxes, other things like that that directly affect our towing partners. The Tow Board of the city recently met and recommended increase of some of the tow rates due to a recent evaluation, noting that our tow rates are nearly 25% lower than other regional localities surrounding us.

[02:29:58] Again, that significantly affects the tow operators. In the meantime, they had come to us and brought some of these concerns to our attention. prompting us to review these fees. Now, these fees, like I said, have been reviewed by the City Tow Advisory Board as well as the City Attorney's Office.

[02:30:16] So therefore, the Police Department supports these fees as written in this proposed ordinance. I'll be happy to entertain any questions there may be. Lieutenant Brooks, this brings us in alignment with Prince William County fees as well. So the immediate region would all be the same. That's right. Any questions? Mr. Ossina.

[02:30:39] Thank you, man. So this has no effect whatsoever on hoeing fees charged or towing a vehicle from, let's say, HOA property.

[02:30:55] Is that correct? That's correct. This is only police requested tows. This does not affect any private tows. All right. Very good. And the makeup of the Towing Ordinance Advisory Board is? So it is a one citizen. It is a appointee of the police department.

[02:31:10] So it's currently a police sergeant. That is a tow operator who actually does business in this correct correct manassas. All right. Yes. Very good. Thank you. Any other comment? Mr. Smith. One question on history reports.

[02:31:27] We talked about the heavy-duty towing fees. I've just struck by the one that's going from \$475 to \$1,000.

[02:31:49] Can you put some? Yes, that's a good question. So that has not been increased in a number of years, And that has been way below the market value. So that's more than 75% below the regional rates, kind of like what Chief had mentioned about Prince William County. So I know some of our tow partners are here and they are willing to speak on that later during public comment, but that's for a heavy-duty tow.

[02:32:12] So think of a 18-wheeler crashing and rolling on its side. That's very time-intensive, requires a lot of specialized equipment, sometimes multiple vehicles, multiple people to operate at one time. So that's the reason for that increase in cost. So it's sort of bringing it in line with the market or the industry?

[02:32:30] Correct, yes, yes. Quite an increase. And I should mention, too, I know you had mentioned before about a police requested tow versus a private tow truck showing up. So we do have five partnering companies. They are very well vetted.

[02:32:46] So they have to submit to an annual inspection, which is very in-depth of each truck that they have. We have to verify that they're licensed appropriately. They have the correct licensing and vetting from the Department of Criminal Justice Services through the state. They have their correct insurance.

[02:33:02] They've paid all their taxes, all other things. And they also have to submit to any random inspections that we do throughout the year. So these companies are very well vetted through the police department. So when called, do our police stay at the scene until the truck shows up for the most part?

[02:33:19] Yes, so the police officer that requests the tow will wait for the tow truck to show up. As part of their contract, they have to be there within 20 minutes. They have to be available 24-7. They have to be available at their yard 24-7 to release the vehicle, release any private property, things like that.

[02:33:36] So it's not likely we call, please call, and then some other guy comes around the corner. No, not at all. No, so there's a rotation as well, so we'll have them in line. Whenever one company tows, they go to the bottom of that tow list, and the next one in line is called. Thank you very much.

[02:33:52] Thank you. Anyone else? Any other comments or questions? Thank you, Madam Mayor. My question is in regards to the policy, the extra fee cleanup. If you can speak a little into that and how much is the price.

[02:34:07] Yes. So the tow fee for an accident is higher, excuse me, naturally because there's usually more work involved. There is parts to clean up. They have to sweep off the roadway. Sometimes they have to throw some stay dry on the ground to take up any extra oil or leaking fluids that may be on the ground making it unsafe.

[02:34:28] So the extra cleanup fee is for that purpose specifically. So if there is a large vehicle that leaks a lot of fluid that requires more than the standard five gallons of dry, stay dry, then they're allowed to bill for that accordingly.

[02:34:44] And that's for their extra time. That's for the extra equipment. And the next one is bringing an example. I think Councilman Smith was talking in regard to the increase to \$1,000 provided below that.

[02:35:00] You have the non-accident towing, and I can think of 12 cars. They had to be towed because the people couldn't be contacted during the snow. So that fee is going from \$160 to \$800 when this happened? No, so the one you're referring to is the heavy-duty, so that's the 18-wheeler-type vehicle.

[02:35:20] We're referring to the light duty. It should be on attachment three, the proposed schedule fee, and it would be entitled light duty towing fees. It should be on page 191.

[02:35:38] So the one right below, the one he was talking, it was? The basic police non-accident? Yeah. Yes. So that is going from \$210 to \$250. Okay. Thank you. Any other questions? No, thank you so much.

[02:35:55] Thank you. We need a resolution. We need a vote. And I'm here, I'll approve adoption, move adoption resolution 2025-245.

[02:36:12] Second. I'm sorry, 248. 468, I can't read. 468. We have the motion by Vice Mayor Wolf, seconded by Councilman Vasquez-Luna approving ordinance number 0-2025-468.

[02:36:29] Any discussion? And seeing none, Mr. Smith, please call roll. Vice Mayor Wolf. Yes. Council Member Vasquez Luna. Yes. Council Member Ellis. Yes. Council Member Smith. Yes. Council Member Osina. Yes. Council Member Hudson. Yes. Motion carries. All right.

[02:36:46] Thank you. Now we can move to item 3.3. Resolution number R 2025-465 amending the FY 2025 budget by budgeting and appropriating \$166,095.76 of state grant funding for airport capital projects. Mr. Rivera is here. Good evening, Madam Mayor and members of council. The resolution you have before you is to accept or budget appropriate the five grants that we receive from the Department of Aviation. You can see on the slide that there's varied projects that we're working on. I would

[02:37:25] like to point out that this \$166,095.76 in state grant actually represents a total budget cost of \$202,646.80. So essentially for \$36,551.10 we're able to capture \$202,646 in project cost. One of the reasons these projects all of these projects have to do with our conversion to commercial

[02:38:01] service we've been relying heavily on the state and the Virginia aviation board just recently approved a higher level of grant participation they went from 80% or an 80/20 80% and 20% local to 90/10 for the months their next two meetings, which would be in February and May. So we are definitely going to be looking at what we can actually get money for. So we may be coming back in future meetings because we want to take advantage of this excellent funding opportunity through the Department of

[02:38:40] Aviation. So I stand ready to answer any questions you may have. Thank you, Mr. Overe. Any questions or comments it's wonderful good motion i may i move to approve the resolution r 2025 465 amending the fy 2025 budget and budgeting and appropriating 166 1095.76 and a motion by councilwoman

vasquez luna and seconded by councilwoman ellis to approve resolution number r 2025-465 any discussion Hearing and seeing none, Mr. Smith, please call and roll.

[02:39:20] Council Member Vasquez Luna? Yes. Council Member Ellis? Vice Mayor Wolfe? Yes. Council Member Smith? Yes. Council Member Osina? Yes. Council Member Hudson? Yes. The motion carries. Thank you. Thank you so much for being here.

[02:39:35] Next on the agenda is our public comment time. The public comment portion of the agenda is set aside for those residents who wish to address the council for less than three minutes each. Residents need not give prior notice to the city to speak during the public comment portion of the agenda.

[02:39:51] Residents may address the council for longer than three minutes if they ask the city manager for a place on the agenda at least four working days before the meeting. I do have a sign-up sheet here, but we will not miss anyone who wishes to speak. The first name I have on the list is Mr. Donald Ward.

[02:40:09] Come on up, sir. I was just here to represent the towing companies if they had any questions. and provided information for the other counties and cities. And if anyone has any questions, I'm here. Thank you for being here.

[02:40:26] All right, thank you, sir. Next is Mr. Zach Murphy. Appreciate it. I wrote something down so I can keep myself on task and on time.

[02:40:42] Good evening, Mayor, Members of Council, Chief Keene, fellow residents. My name is Zach Murphy. I live in Old Town. My wife and I own a business in town as well. I'm here this evening to express my concerns about the direction our city is heading, particularly regarding proposed purchase of another piece of property, MIFCO. I used to play for MIFCO and GMVO. Just a side note. Appreciate it, guys. Let me start with parking garage proposal.

[02:41:05] Where's the feasibility study that demonstrates that this is a sound investment for the city? Who determined that this is a priority, that this is the best location for this spot? Was it the same person who planned the roundabout? Have you informed the residents that live near the site of the potential traffic impacts? You didn't inform me or the residents of Main Street when we got the added traffic from the roundabout.

[02:41:26] Are you going to be good neighbors until then? Decisions like this need to be rooted in clear, measurable benefits, not vague promises of future development that ultimately don't adhere to proposed plans. If we can't clearly articulate the long-term goal value of such projects, why are we spending taxpayer dollars on them?

[02:41:45] Meanwhile, as I've been raising for years, the critical issues facing our city, safety and education remain underfunded and unaddressed. I've reported gang activity behind Baldwin Park multiple times, and every time the response from MCPD is the same. We don't have the funding. I've emailed city officials asking how we plan to address the governor's proposed withholding of funding for sanctuary cities.

[02:42:06] Yes, Manassas is listed as a sanctuary city, and if the governor's proposal passes, we will lose state funding. The only response I've received was to speak with the interim city manager. Chief Keene has graciously agreed to meet with me. I respect you more every day, and I appreciate it.

[02:42:22] However, I shouldn't have to waste more time meeting with people who could simply email me our plan. Do you have a plan? Is the plan in writing? If so, please answer tonight. How are we supposed to take on more debt or new expenditures when we can't fund basic public safety? Our schools are another glaring example.

[02:42:39] The Nassau City Public Schools remain unaccredited. My son is about to graduate from Osborne with a meaningless diploma. It's not a joke. I don't understand why you guys sit there and continue to buy buildings when our children are failing at the basics. Manassas City Public Schools remain unaccredited, yet we are spending resources on additional buildings instead of focusing on improving educational outcomes.

[02:43:05] What good is a new parking garage when our children are falling behind? What message are we sending to the residents when crime rises, schools fails, and we prioritize buildings over safety and the well-being of our community? That kind of brings me to the overall reason I'm here, I spent 22 years in the military defending the Constitution and the principles that define America.

[02:43:23] The idea, the social experiment that makes us, our nation unique, at its core, America is an idea, a promise of opportunity, fairness, and a better life, yet you've taken that promise and turned it into a very thing that many people came here to escape. Hypocrisy. I think there's a little something else going on, but I'll refrain from that.

[02:43:42] The hypocrisy of our priorities, our sister cities in China, a nation which we share little culturally and demographically with, while the majority of our immigrant population comes from Central and South America. How can we justify ignoring these communities that make up such a significant part of our city's identity? Decisions like this, including the purchase that inflate costs and drive up taxes, are pricing out the hardworking people who voted this council in.

[02:44:06] Many of these families are already struggling to afford to live here. In my view, it's just not unethical, it's discriminatory, and it needs to stop. The people of Manassas deserve transparency and the truth from their leaders, not policies that push them out of the very community they've helped to build. We cannot afford to keep wasting money on projects that have directly improved the lives of residents.

[02:44:23] These decisions feel tone deaf and to the needs of the people who live and work here. We need leadership that focuses on fixing our schools, addressing crime, and restoring the trust with our community, not leadership that keeps asking us to foot the bill for unnecessary projects. I urge this council to step back, see the forest for the trees, and prioritize what truly matters to the residents of Manassas, safety, education, and fiscal responsibility.

[02:44:47] We deserve better, appreciate your time. - Thank you, Mr. Murphy. Next, we have Father Ramon Dominguez. evening, sir. Good evening, council members. Congratulations to the new members of the board of the council. I wanted to speak about two things. Actually, I signed up for one, but I'm going to say two. I wanted to also agree with Councilman Mark Wolfe about the GIS system. It is tremendously user-friendly on the public side of things. I use it often. That's my nerdy side talking,

[02:45:25] and I find that it is better than the county system, and it's easier to find what I need. and so I commend them on that. On the point that I did want to speak to, I do want to commend and support the city and its efforts to continue to improve the resources that the young people of the city have, in particular with the Marsteller facility, to be able to afford an increased amount of recreational

opportunities. I know that my the kids in my Don Bosco Center program under the Light of Hope Alliance have been very happy to have been a part of the discussions, the dynamics of what that place could become for the city. It does

[02:46:05] represent an increase of rectangular field space that's a very very prized commodity in the city and with a lot of kids that like to play soccer that's a hard thing to come by and so I do want to support you for that. I enjoy very much the great work that's being done over at Dean Park. It's been coming along tremendously. The kids are looking at the field and when can we go play and and And finally, I do want to thank everyone for the opportunities to continue to work with the city on the comprehensive plan, with the planning commission and things like that.

[02:46:38] We've been very happy to engage them to make sure that the voices of the young people are heard so that their future is as bright as the one we would like it to be. Thank you very much. Thank you. Next, Mr. Robert Sharp. Members of the council, Madam Chairman, Chief Keene, my name is Robert Sharp.

[02:47:05] I'm here representing my small business and with my business partner Eric George we own finish line towing and I can't really add to what the lieutenant did said he had it made an outstanding presentation I will add I think we operate as a close partner with the police about 80 to 90 percent of our business comes from the police list that's our primary customer and our primary service for finish line towing we we started in the 90s our primary duty service that we consider ourselves that we operate very much like your fire department we have to answer that

[02:47:44] phone at all times a day and night whether it's a holiday or weekend we have so many minutes to respond the drivers have to be certified at many different levels the equipment has to pass the police list. The cost of the equipment has tripled since we started our business. We arrive and find ourselves in a hazardous environment. We have to work closely with fire and rescue to mitigate the hazard, clear the scene as quick as we can. We also have to continue to preserve the evidence for the police department and protect that vehicle or property until

[02:48:22] the owners or insurance companies retrieve it. So I do encourage you to support the increases. They're very reasonable. It is overdue. We're proud to be serving the city and to continue doing that. I always want to take an opportunity to commend the police department and Chief Keene. For all the years we've been working with the police department, never had a negative interaction. Very, very professional group of people and I think we can be very proud of our police officers. Thank you for your time. Thank you, Mr. Sean. Anyone else who

[02:48:58] wishes to address counsel for public comment time? Come forward. One of y'all. One of y'all. If you can give us your name and address. Vanslyn Augustus, and I come today. Thank you for having me, first of all. Happy New Year. I used to attend the meeting a long time ago. I'm a United States

[02:49:34] veteran go army and i come today because of our community and for your reconsideration of three things previously we had the different communities meeting with the mayor um at jenny dean so we had like mr station georgetown south um i think it was by quarterly and we would meet with the mayor

[02:50:08] The mayor gets to meet some of the residents who show up, and we get to see who the mayor is. Not seeing the mayor during election time, we get to know the mayor.

[02:50:26] The mayor gets to know the community. So I'm asking you to reconsider, because for one, the benefits of that is, for example, the city of Manassas has the Manassas tuition program, the Virginia G3 program.

[02:50:48] A lot of the communities don't know about that. My daughter was a recipient of that. She went to NOVA, and you guys partnered with the community college. She attended NOVA for medical assistance certificate, which, if a lot of the communities knew about these programs, it would benefit the students who graduate, who's looking for a job.

[02:51:25] Minimum wage don't cut it now. So that's another thing. Another thing also is the benefit of the Neighborhood Office. We had one was run by Keisha. The Neighborhood Office ensure that all the various communities are protecting the rights of the homeowners, of the citizens.

[02:51:52] There were a lot of programs that the neighborhood office facilitated. One of them is, I guess, collaborating with Lowe's, some of the builders here, and improve steps, improve or assist to improve fences.

[02:52:19] It's working together with the community. I'll be done. You're fine. Another thing of the neighborhood office is ensuring there are no predatory towing. The towing company comes in and they tow from reserve spots.

[02:52:44] The towing fee is the standard fee plus \$20 for fuel, \$30 for overnight. If they tow at 6 a.m., that's \$30 for overnight. That is predatory towing.

[02:53:02] We can't afford to, no offense to the towing company, give the towing company money out of our hard-earned pocket. Another thing also, reasonable housing.

[02:53:21] I'm telling you right now, I'm in good health now. I didn't before, thank God. And there is a requirement, and, you know, everybody campaign on reasonable housing. We're building, building, building.

[02:53:39] data center, beautiful condos, townhomes. It's reasonable for \$500,000. We can't afford \$500,000. So if you, my recommendation is collaborating with Prince William County. We have a lot of land.

[02:54:02] All I need is a quarter acre, less than a quarter acre. Let's start investing in our communities. I'm a veteran. I have my housing benefit. Hasn't gone anywhere because I can't afford that. But there are builders who can build reasonable for \$200,000.

[02:54:24] So I'm asking you to reconsider some of these, and I'll be at the next meeting. And, you know, on the MIFCO, yeah, if you look around Manassas City, apartment building, apartment building, apartment building, parking.

[02:54:46] we have I think we can put that to a better use for the community I think we can do that another benefit of the neighborhood Keisha used to have these surveys and would go out to the different neighborhood and if they wanted to the input we will meet at there was a restaurant that was right here but they moved on to across from the Catholic Church and we have the neighborhood

[02:55:20] input. Let's get back to a neighborhood. Let's get back to having the parents working with the schools, the students, the neighborhood. Let us go back to increasing, improving, and growing the relationship between officials and the citizens. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[02:55:50] Anyone else? Anyone else to address counsel? If that, I'll call on Ms. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Janet. Good evening. Welcome back to the new year.

[02:56:12] Good news, we got a stop sign at the corner of Weems and Cavalry across from Bird Park. Thank you, Steve. I'm going to start a side business of people that run it, get tickets, whatever, because my ring doorbell goes off constantly now as they run through it.

[02:56:31] I think it's going to help as people get used to it. Snow removal, I think you guys did a good job, wherever you are still. They did a pretty good job. It's hard to get all that done. The bills, the city tax bills and the personal property bills, talking about how few people use the credit card, the city charges a 3% or 3.5% fee on that.

[02:56:58] I run my own business. I charge that fee. I pay it because I can take it off on my taxes. does the city deduct that from their taxes is that fee deductible if it is how can you charge citizens for that there's people that's a lot of money on a lot of people i saw a gentleman in front of me came back he didn't realize there was a fee brought back a check and they said sorry we can't change it and it would cost them another couple hundred dollars so that's a problem for people that live in live here we don't have the money for that i'm going to bring mine in next time i said i was going to bring it in one dollar bills and stand there and count it you got to make it

[02:57:37] easier for people to live here and afford things. If you can deduct that fee from the taxes of the city, then you shouldn't charge the citizens for it. That's not right. It's really basically it's stealing. The schools, that survey that we just saw, we went down from two years ago. This, you know, Zach's son's going to graduate with a nothing diploma. My kids graduated from here and their diploma counted for something people won't move to this city when the schools are bad when they

[02:58:11] look for places to live the first thing they look for is the schools and i think our kids deserve good schools to go to um and then the mifco property this stuff that gets done in closed session you know some of the things being said tonight we weren't supposed to know there is oil under that land it's been known it's it's contaminated land so many people in the city know that. I just hope that there is transparency when it comes to these things being done. It's like, you know, decisions are made, and then we get to put our input in it. Nice to have

[02:58:50] the Marsteller Center. Why do the kids have a place to go play, but they don't have a school to go to that gives them an education that's worth the diploma, the paper the diploma is going to be printed on? If they're our future, we got young people on the board now. If you're looking out for young people, our school, our kids need to be educated properly. So we need to really look into that. It's a very serious problem. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Blavniak. Anyone else wish to address

[02:59:19] the council? Hello, Lynn Farkel-Green, Manassas City resident. I didn't sign up because I wasn't sure if I was going to speak this evening, but I do want to say a couple of things, especially about the MIFCO property. I do find it frustrating to know that you're buying things without a public caring. You guys have known that about me for a long time. I think cutting the residents out

[02:59:55] is pretty horrible part of this process. I appreciate the overwhelming transparency about the environmental impacts that we have to deal with and the fact that you have written something into the agreement. I am thankful that you address the height issues that are there. There were a large number of residents who put a lot of time and effort to discuss the height requirements in restrictions they wanted to

see in Old Town and this is an area that it could bypass that and I think that'd be unfair so I hope you really keep those things in consideration I hope you hold

[03:00:35] yourselves accountable to your word to make sure that the residents are a part of the process and not just cut out and then I'd like to congratulate Ashley to the council thank you all anyone else thank you Mr. Brown if not I'll call on Mr. Brown authorization of closed meeting resolution Madam Mayor, members of Council, you have one item listed tonight for a closed session.

[03:01:02] It's to discuss and consider the terms and conditions for selling city-owned real property located in the Godwin Technology Corridor under state law. Those discussions are allowed to take place in a duly convened closed meeting of City Council.

[03:01:17] To convene a closed meeting, I would recommend your adoption of resolution number R-2025-472, resolution authorizing a closed meeting of City Council. Thanks, Mayor. Madam Mayor, I move to adoption of resolution R-2025-472.

[03:01:37] Second. I have the motion by Vice Mayor Will seconded by Councilman Vasquez-Lunan to approve resolution number R-2025-472, authorizing a closed meeting. Any discussion? Hearing and seeing none, Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Vice Mayor Wolfe.

[03:01:54] Yes. Council Member Vasquez Luna. Yes. Council Member Ellis. Yes. Council Member Smith. Yes. Council Member Osina. Yes. Council Member Hudson. Yes. The motion carries. Thank you.

[03:02:06] I will not be...

[03:02:35] Second. With the motion by Council Member Wolfe, seconded by Council Member Vasquez Luna, approving resolution number R-2025-473, certifying the closed meeting.

[03:02:58] Any discussion? Hearing and seeing none. Mr. Smith please call the roll. Vice Mayor Wolfe. Council Member Vasquez-Luna. Yes. Council Member Ellis. Yes. Council Member Smith. Yes. Council Member Osina. Yes. Council Member Hudson. Yes. The motion carries. Thank you so much. Anything else to come before the council for the good of the city? If not we are adjourned.



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