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Manassas City Council Retreat 1/23/2025

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[00:00:00] do the roll call that I'll jump in right after. Mayor Davis Younger, Vice Mayor Wolf, Council Member Smith, Council Member Smith, Council Member Ellis, Council Member Alcina, Council Member Vasquez Luna, Council Member Hudson, here. Thank you Mayor. A couple of just before we get started this morning. To my right, to your left, or to your back, I guess I have to go all right.

[00:00:39] Most of you know Charles. He's interviewed you for the strategic planning. Our goal today is do some team building, do some exercises with Charles, then he will lead you through this strategic planning session so we can set our agendas for the next few years of how we're going to do things in Manassas.

[00:01:04] On site here, you can blame me for the remoteness of this. This is the locality place that I selected. I've been here 15 years ago, but I did think it was far enough out. It did give us some privacy, but still allowed community members if they wanted to drive down.

[00:01:25] We are still recording it, which is over to my left. Logistics for the grounds here at Mount Hillier, everyone has an envelope with your name, the house, and your room number one. City Council is all in one house that is directly up the hill.

[00:01:45] It would be the first yellow house you come to. Each room has its own bathroom. It's a lock, its own key. It does have some common area of the living room as well. staff members we are in the going up the hill greenhouse to your right everyone except for eric who we already told he still has a private bathroom is just out the door to the things to the left or across the hall so we are all settled with our

individual rooms we don't have to check in you have it so whenever we get a break or if you want to take an extra break at lunchtime to

[00:02:24] get your things up there we can do that tonight okay your agenda just to walk through a little bit today uh as i already mentioned charles and joe walking through the first part of the strategic planning uh when we conclude that today if we have enough time we'll jump right into the etc survey results that should be tied into your strategic planning but if we need some clarity on that. We'll go over that as well. Tomorrow is a big day. Tomorrow is really going to be

[00:03:00] the Diane show. We're going to go over a lot of financial information, where we're at today, what we know today financially, and then try to get some of your direction of where we go in the future. Part of that is also where we want to go from staff members of the things that we may consider road bumps in the upcoming budget and things for us and you to think about.

[00:03:32] And then we'll start into the economic prosperity. A couple of big things on there that we're going to need to cover, the events in and around Old Town. We know you've heard a lot about that.

[00:03:47] Matt and I will bring you up to speed with what our thoughts are there. Matt will cover Marcella Park in the community conversation. We have some GMVL stuff that we think is going to be very important. Tied into the GMVL will be the ball field discussion of what you do with that property as well.

[00:04:08] We have some updates to bring you up to speed with that. A very big one that you've heard about is the parking districts, really only focusing on Zone 1, which is your townhouse community. Again, you and I both have heard a lot about that the last year.

[00:04:26] We're going to need some direction of where you want us to go. We have some suggestions. And then I know housing is a big topic for us and you. Matt's going to put the position in there. Matt's going to bring you up to speed where we're at with that as well.

[00:04:46] Saturday, really going to continue on the capital improvement with some of the programs we already have, some of the things that we already know we're on your plate. That's going to be bringing up to speed with the Old Town Inn, the MIFCO property, City Hall Parking Garage, what to do with the old PD, Fire Station, Gateway, Mathis.

[00:05:09] This is all kind of a holistic and more of a priority of where you want us to begin at. A lot of things there, but we need some direction. I'm going to apologize ahead of time. Although it worked well last year, I pushed you hard to get head nods, right?

[00:05:27] We need four head nods in direction of where you want it to go. So I will push for that. As you can see, it's a very tight agenda. We're hopeful we can get through all of it. But if there's conversations, we are going to have to decide ahead of time if there's one council member that only wants to talk about it and there's no interest from the rest of the council, we're going to have to navigate that very gently so that that council member that wants to talk about that is not offended.

[00:06:01] Nobody else. Well, you know, why do we need to spend 45 minutes on a topic if no one else here has any desire to have that discussion? So I'm going to apologize ahead of time if I try to, if you're that council member and I try to move us on because we can't get three other members to have that discussion.

[00:06:19] similar to what we did last year. At the end of the day, I am confident that on Saturday afternoon there are going to be things that we didn't get covered that you're going to ask for special work

sessions on to get you up to speed. I listed a couple of them already. We know you need an update on the commercial air service at the airport. Mr. Burke and I have met with one. We're just, We weren't ready to give you that today.

[00:06:54] There's still some things going on behind the scenes, waiting on some FAA stuff. So once we get along a little further, we'll plug in that work session. Matt is also working on the 2025 comprehensive plan that he will update you later in February if we can find the time.

[00:07:18] We have a lot of meetings. i'm also pretty certain uh you already have a joint meeting with the school board we we probably will be leaving some things in the budget for you to have that discussion then that will help you make your decision um so we have we have a lot of hard work to do over the next three days two and a half days and really getting your your blessing your direction your head nods whatever we want to call of where you want us to go so that as we begin all of these work sessions and in the budget

[00:07:55] process we'll be able to have you the information and the data that you're asking for so you can make some good decisions i talk fast i mean fast so any questions about any of that okay uh with that i'm going to turn it right over to charles so uh he can begin his process forward thank you sir Good morning everyone. Thank you all so much for investing this much time in your community over

[00:08:29] the next two and a half days. I know it's rare for elected governing bodies to have this type of time to work on relationship building, but also making some good long-term decisions for your constituents in your community. So this is a great opportunity as we all have some change.

[00:08:49] I'll go through here in just a few minutes and talk about some of the things we're going to, a process we're going to use today and our goals and where we're going to end up this afternoon. Anytime I'll be sort of trying to read room as we go around and talk about breaks and all those things. Oh absolutely anything I need to accommodate. Make sure you speak very well. Thank you. So the mic can pick you up and we can all hear you back. Thank you sir. Anything I can do to accommodate y'all is y'all need to get your things in your room. We'll take breaks and do what we need to do.

[00:09:20] So I want y'all to be comfortable while you're here and not have to be worried about anything like that. We have obviously snacks and lunch out here, most of the kind of restrooms outside to their left, and we'll go from there. I'd like for this to be somewhat informal. I understand this is a council work session, but I want us to have some informal conversations as well. We will be doing some breakouts, some one-on-one discussions, and as we get later in the afternoon, we started digging into the treaty plan, and I absolutely do want to kind of survey some more context with the findings from EPC from your citizen survey. I think that's really important. When I spoke with

[00:09:57] you all one-on-one, I think just about every council member mentioned, you know, their curiosity you've seen the results and how that's going to inform your all's future decisions on how you make plans for your community. So again, my name's Charles Artgrove. I'm the Managing Director of Virginia Institute of Government. We are based at the Wilming Cooper Center for Public Service at UVA.

[00:10:18] I know that's a lot of words out there, but what we basically do at the Institute of Government is work with local governments around a commonwealth where the elected officials like yourself, staff, leadership teams, constitutional officers. A little bit about the Cooper Center. This is just sort of our vision and mission. And so these are the five business units of our organization.

[00:10:47] Some of you may be familiar with some of our partner entities. Demographics is one that most people are very familiar with. Our demographics team at the Cooper Center takes the census data from the American Community Survey, cleans that up, and presents that to the State Department of Education, which, as you all are very familiar, gives you the Composite Index, which informs the community of school time. So that's one of the things that the Cooper Center does for the Commonwealth. Sorenson Institute of Political Leadership. Some of you are familiar with that.

[00:11:15] I know we have at least one graduate, maybe more of our programs here. They work with us at Cooper Center. The Center for Survey Research, exactly what you think it is. And Center for Economic and Policy Studies. We have a team of economists looking at everything from fiscal impacts in communities to economic development issues around the commonwealth these are some of our partners that we work with consistently obviously we all work with virginia municipal league your management team are active in the virginia local government management association and icma international city county management association i had the pleasure a week or two

[00:11:52] ago of being the mc for the virginia municipal league newly elected officials conference i got to meet your newest council member and some of our colleagues from around the state so i enjoyed that and also talk about the council manager former government which we'll spend some time on today anytime y'all need to ask me any questions anything just raise your hand let me know and i'll let me have it to stop or do that or if we need to ask questions of staff or anything just let me know so again big the institute of government professional and technical support for governments we're sort of a warehouse of best practices and policies so your staff can contact us and say hey

[00:12:29] Our council has asked us for a policy on housing or workforce development. We sort of crowd-sourced that information from your peer localities across the state. We can give that back to your staff to give them some help on best practices and policies and other things.

[00:12:46] Folks like myself, consultants and trainers, we provide that working with councils and boards of supervisors. We just worked, one of my colleagues just worked with your neighbors to the east, the Fairfax City Council, last weekend. we've been working with several other communities around the commonwealth here to purchase this year doing similar work with this one of the important things we do is professional development for your senior executives we have programs for city managers county and town managers administrators deputies assistants and department heads the senior executive institute and the lead programs that we host in Charlottesville on grounds and then we have the constitutional officer

[00:13:24] education program we still take the training programs for treasurers and Commissioners of Revenue and their staff around the Commonwealth. So Eric, if you can help me with your questions. We're going to do a quick exercise here. We're going to pair off in one. Staff is going to participate in this as well. We can do that. Just a chance for us to start the day and get to know each other a little bit better. Things have nothing to do with local government and nothing to do with what you're going to be talking about, Red Staff Day, but I think it's important. Just put a little perspective in what we do as individuals and who we are when we

[00:14:01] show up at the council deus or in the community or whatever it may be so um i appreciate your patience as we sort of not through this what i like to do is to sort of do some pairing off so if i just get the two of you all two of you all two of you all two of you all you do and uh i'll i'll work with you mr attorney

you can get to know me how about that actually eric you can you can work with the city attorney about the best actually all right so just take a

[00:14:31] few minutes. Can everyone see the questions on here? And I will note that we did try and fix the, it's a little bit distorted so if you're having any problems seeing it or if it's giving a headache let me know. So your responsibility is to ask each other these questions and then you are going to report out on behalf of what you learn from your college. Everybody understand that? That you're going to make it so we're going to just breathe you know just take a few minutes uh and then we We will go from there.

[00:15:39] I don't know, I don't know how to learn this. Uh, recharge after a while. Sorry, I went here. Okay, okay.

[00:15:54] Stick around quite a bit. Oh, okay. Best assumptions. Oh, I see. and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

[00:16:11] Yeah, it's not easy, right? Yeah, it's easy, right? It's easy, it's easy, it's easy. No, it's easy, it's easy. No, it's easy, it's easy, no, it's easy. Oh, absolutely, that's cool, that's cool. So, I have a test. I can't believe it, that's pretty cool.

[00:16:27] It's an empty-pleasure TV show. Right, but do you have an empty-pleasure TV show? I can't believe it's going to see what it's going to see. I can't believe it's going to see what it's going to see. All right, far away, girl.

[00:17:06] I'm a big golfer. I'm a big golfer. Play with my dog. What is that cat play? I'm always cleaning up. I'm cutting grass. I'm staying in my house.

[00:17:21] Well, I'm sitting down at all my head. We're not judging here. Sorry, you've never done that. So it's like a devil. Yeah, it's like that. We went to the car this year, we can have a credit.

[00:17:39] We can use that for the restaurant, I guess. No, wine is - all your editors are just drinking. I said drinking as a Steve editor. Yeah, wine is good.

[00:18:00] The show about the Wyoming show. Tell me you're going to tell me about it. Oh my God. So we've been off deep in the latest recently. And that's what we've been off deep in the past. I would say that my guilty butt is a hard one.

[00:18:19] I hate to say that. I'm terrible too, but it's a hard one. I'm sweet. Oh yeah. um

[00:18:58] Conversation in person.

[00:19:28] I haven't done so much.

[00:19:58] I'm sorry.

[00:20:28] Yeah, I mean, that's gonna be good if you were a little bit better than mine. You're looking like, who has a lot of people eating that combination?

[00:20:59] I've never had him as a combo.

[00:21:29] Line 36.

[00:21:59] smaller than your typical.

[00:22:30] I like that also.

[00:23:00] A couple more minutes to wrap up, please.

[00:23:32] I don't know how to do that. Oh, really? I think those are still fine. No, I don't know. No, I don't know. I'm going to say this. I'm going to say this.

[00:23:50] We got out of it. I'm going to go in. I want you to go in. I was like, well, that's good to do this over the world. And I'm like, hey, she's like, oh, yeah. She was on the opinion. They were. I've got. I've got.

[00:24:05] I'm going to do it. Yeah. I'm going to do it. Yeah. I'm going to do it. I'm going to do it. Yeah. I'm going to do it. Yeah. I'm going to do it. Yeah. I'm going to do it. Yeah. Yeah. I'm going to do it. Yeah.

[00:24:21] I'm going to do it. I'm going to do it. Yeah. I'm going to do it. Yeah. We didn't put a lot of, you know, if I was there, they'd go first to three years, and we were going to be like another big, and we should have a bigger picture, so we're going to be close to this.

[00:24:43] I know.

[00:25:13] all right folks we'll uh go ahead and get started we'll get folks back in the room there is uh more hot coffee coming thanks for my new vat coming so yeah it's all means all right since we uh is everybody uh pretty good shape all right how about we start over here

[00:25:52] yeah report out on your apartment craig would like to go to kenya with his family um his favorite place to eat in our city is going to be battle street bistro we had battle street bistro last night very good choice for appointment first concert i don't know I don't know if anyone's heard of them, I haven't until I just did a Google survey, is Hermans Herbert, Hermans.

[00:26:16] Oh yes, Hermans Herbert. I'm the only one left out. I'm Henry VIII. Okay, we're aligned. This is when you have a lovely dog. That's right. How do you recharge after a long day? He just likes to watch a sporting event on TV. Any fun hobbies?

[00:26:32] Genealogy. Fun is questionable, but I like genealogy sometimes. Six, best school subject, history, that aligns with the fun hobbies. Seven, a very specific favorite meal on Amelia Island, off Florida, black and red fish, fried oysters, taco green sauce with pickled collard greens, and hop and jello.

[00:26:57] Now that is specific. Favorite guilty pleasure TV show is Big Bang Theory, and he connects well from face-to-face interaction. Excellent. Let's hear about the clerk.

[00:27:14] Our clerk. Dream Vacation, there were two. One of them was Madagascar. What was the other one? Zanzibar. Favorite place to be out in the city? Zandra's. Good choice. First concert, I think we had a real generational divide here.

[00:27:32] He had never heard of mine, and I had never heard of kids. Lupe Fiasco. I love how you said it. recharge after a long day video games fun hobby I certainly didn't know this about our clerk but he is a carpenter and enjoys building things favorite of best school subject math favorite meal interesting combination sushi and and lasagna. I got the emphasis on lasagna.

[00:28:13] Yielding pleasure TV show. Eric did not come up with a specific show, but enjoys watching YouTube videos of people getting arrested. All right. It's near and dear to the chief. Sorry. How do you best connect with others face-to-face over dreams?

[00:28:35] And I'll second that. All right. That's excellent. I appreciate that. Yeah, carpenter, I like it. So we're sort of, we're in the home of a cramer today, of the Constitution. So yeah, we'll talk about that a little

bit, yeah. All right, you're welcome.

[00:28:51] There'll be callbacks throughout the day. Stay with me. Thank you all. Matt's dream vacation is going to Hawaii. He too likes thunders. His first concert was fish. The recharging is with family.

[00:29:10] The fun hobbies are his children. Best school subject was history. The favorite meal is anything with pasta, favorite guilty TV show is anything reality-based, and then just talking with people is how we can.

[00:29:33] I don't remember my kid. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You remember the first concert. That's his part. Steve Mallon's. I can't remember what I found. Steve's Dream Vacation is a Mallon's pie time for restaurant.

[00:29:49] The first concert is N.A. I don't recall ever going to concerts. Mike is just the opposite. He spent weekends, huh? Or unless you count school things. Dog and dog are four and five, although dog and cutting his grass also falls in five. Math, favorite subject.

[00:30:13] Favorite meal is breakfast. Guilty TV player is Longmire with A&E, which I've never heard of. He likes playing cards. very good because there's no time to mow in the yard that's her area that's right and he has a small yard so right well i had five acres all right all right for ashley italy is the dream vacation uh katrina's katrina's excuse me for favorite place to eat uh concert was red hot chili

[00:30:53] Recharging is with wine, family and friends, and doomscrolling is how she recharges. Let's see, what else do we have?

[00:31:11] Spanish as their best school subject, favorite meal, nachos and margaritas, guilty pleasure TV show, Jersey Shore, and best way to connect with others is humor. All right, thank y'all.

[00:31:29] So Tom's dream vacation is to take a small jet around the world and, as he said, hit all the big stuff, like pyramids, within three weeks. So a two-time span to hit all the big stuff in one jet. So we love that. Tom's favorite spot to eat in the city is Tony.

[00:31:45] His first concert is Peter, Paul, and Mary. How he recharges is drinking heavily. His fun hobby is motorcycle. best subject history favorite meal is very cultured oysters and beignets and guilty show is yellowstone and best way to connect is conversation excellent legit i like that

[00:32:17] nice way to take it out and do that exactly okay icm keen um dream vacation is europe with his family. Favorite restaurant is Semi-Fredo, concert, Dick, 1982. The plane in Richmond is the New Antithetor in the summer, you're welcome.

[00:32:40] Recharging, he walks his dog and reads. His fun hobbies are outdoors, old cars, and reading. His favorite subject is skipping school. Or history. Favorite meal is breakfast.

[00:32:59] guilty pleasure tv show history channel and connects with others in a casual atmosphere one through nine is one but you're doing finance later i understand her green vacation is tahiti for boor boor favorite place to eat is katarina first concert was whitney houston I have a t-shirt that my friend Sarah bought me.

[00:33:38] How do you recharge after a long day? Wine and TV. What do you do for fun hobbies? Sports with her two boys. Sex is what is your best school subject? Surprise, mad. Seven, your favorite meal would be lobster.

[00:33:58] Eight, what is your guilty pleasure TV show? Soap operas. I would have never guessed that, Diane. That's what I do every night when my kids do it, both in the beautiful, the young, and the restless. Since I was little, my grandmother got me started. How do you best connect with the other generations?

[00:34:18] They can gather back together. They sure are. All right. My partner's green vacation is anywhere that has a beach and blue flower.

[00:34:35] I was probably in a while we were to get beachy, but this is what I should have written. Favorite restaurant in the city would be Sinecredo, her first concert was Luper Van Gogh's, and she recharges after a long day to fit after a long Luper concert in the client.

[00:34:58] What did you say? Do you have any fun hobby? Yes, she enjoys retail therapy. It's shocking. She enjoys wortel and connection. Her favorite school subject in England, and her favorite meal is steak and potato, and also brunch that meal, too.

[00:35:20] Favorite TV show, I think that's what they asked. We've got the pleasure TV show, the new Madlock, Everybody Loves Layman, the reruns, the tracker. And then the best to make with others.

[00:35:36] I'll put words in her mouth, but she also recognized that trait. She's best connected over with a smile, being open, and having an inviting person. Okay, my partner, Mr. Watt Smith. Dream Vacation is his front porch in Aruba.

[00:35:55] If you do that. Restaurant in the city is Semofredo. First concert, which he lovingly spoke of, is being Motown and View at the mosque in Richmond. Mosque? Mosque. And he got to, he said, he got to see Smokey Robinson, what is it, do it quick?

[00:36:16] He dropped all his stuff on his knees. He didn't remember that at all. The way he recharges is to sit and sit quietly and contemplate, and sometimes it's music. Hobbies are golf, crosswords, wordle, he got me on the wordle.

[00:36:35] and he said solitaire, whatever his name is, solitaire? - Solitaire, yeah, as we see, I've had to see, it's not gonna do that. - Okay, my favorite stuff is the social studies. Neil is bacon potatoes, he likes reruns of Amos and Andy and he's connected with others to being respectful, listening and being open.

[00:37:00] - Thank you, that's excellent. The mosque, the Altria Theater now, there's a lot of good musicians come through there, okay. That was the black one. Very good. That's going to be public records. I'll go back and write it down.

[00:37:20] Well, my classmate, my father. Oh, Mr. Here. Oh, thank you. He was very open, which, you know, I appreciate it. Question number one, what is your identification?

[00:37:37] He said, "Tricky, what is your favorite place to eat out in your city, in the Nathalie, which is Mariachi? What was your first concert? Beach Boys? Number four, how do you recharge after a long date?

[00:37:55] Not fries, tennis, and then whipping number five comes to tennis again for his fan hobby. Number six, what was your best post-office in your history?

[00:38:14] Number seven, what is your favorite meal? That is Tex-Mex. So it makes sense, Mariasi. Number eight, what is your guilty pleasure to show? I don't know. Lenten?

[00:38:29] Lenten. There you go. And the last one, how do you best connect with others when they are talking to them? And my partner, let's see, number one, Dream Vacation Anywhere New with her kit.

[00:38:47] Chick-fil-A is where she likes to eat. First concert was Venuto. She recharges by laying down, listening to music. A little bit of that. Favorite hobbies is Facebook and social media.

[00:39:05] No surprise there. School subject was math. Favorite meal is steak, mashed potatoes, and sparrows. Salvadoran steak. Guilty pleasure TV show is anything law enforcement or military.

[00:39:23] And she best connects with people by joking with them and getting into a good conversation. Excellent. Thank you. I got the pleasure of getting to know Teresa a little bit better.

[00:39:41] And for vacation, she said, in the mountains on a lake with family at a big fireplace but there has to be running water um favorite place to eat in the city was uh cj finn uh for the fresh seafood specifically the oysters um first concert was uh Fleetwood Mac and uh Steve Miller Band as part of a college

[00:40:14] road trip at the spectrum of Philly. How she recharges cooking meals for herself, for her family. Hobbies would include painting, specifically watercolor painting, gardening and writing, and occasionally interior decorating around the home. School subject, her best school subject

[00:40:44] was economics and history. Her favorite meal is meatloaf. Guilty pleasure for TV show was Yellowstone. And best way to connect with people is in person, preferably outside hiking. Jeremy's dream vacation is to go to Scotland or Ireland with his wife and golf. Favorite place to eat, Jandra's, the Buffalo's Chicken Taco. First concert with

[00:41:23] his wife at Diffie Woods, with Jason Albini, Jason Albini, Country. How do we charge after a long day? Couch time with his dog, his Yorkie, and also his border collie in St. Bernard Knit, with his wife watching TV. Fun hobby, golf. School subjects, engineering subjects, and writing.

[00:41:49] Favorite meal, filled up with sea steak, guilt to pleasure, TV, power raisers, and best way to connect, in person, playing board games. Excellent.

[00:42:05] What's your golf name again? Do you want to know? I like to stick. Okay. You're going to play in Scotland and Ireland. You're going to need to know what you're doing.

[00:42:29] I thought we could blind on the golf course and not do a sticks. I chose golfing properly for conversation. Thank you for indulging in that.

[00:42:45] I think it's important to have a little bit of time to sort of remind ourselves that we all have lives away from this. And this could be, as you all very well know, consuming, to say the least, right? Because you care. No one volunteers. i mean everyone volunteers to run province no one is you know forced into it just like your staff chose to enter public service uh to serve as your pleasure you know so time to think it's not still to take a few minutes away and remember what's important to you and and sort of who you are i think it's fast it's always fascinating uh to hear you know what people like to go to in their community but also it's not it's also surprising never surprising to hear about school subjects a

[00:43:23] lot of social studies a lot of history a lot of math and here we are in public service right can you get me back up to the screen thank you i will before i go on next i want since y'all were very intimate told me a lot about yourself i'll tell a little bit more about me i worked with some of you if you remember a couple years ago on a consulting engagement about five members of council that were on board then um but i'm happy to back here today so a little bit about me uh i was born in portsmouth i was raised in far southwest virginia in gate city

[00:44:00] in Boalsfield. That's where my family's originally from. Went to undergrad at UVA Wise, a small branch full of UVA in southwest Virginia, and then started working for a regional planning district commission and then was town manager of my hometown, Gate City, back in the late 90s. Then I moved because I couldn't, I was trying to figure out the most completely different place from Gate City Middleburg to be the town manager. Wow. Which going from central Appalachia to Loudoun County.

[00:44:29] A little bit of a difference in how people do things and have perceptions about things, right? And then I had the pleasure of finding, I had a great time in both those communities, but then I spent a very long time, over 13 years, as the town manager of Ashland, college town just north of Richmond.

[00:44:46] That was a wonderful place and a home for me and where I met my wife. And then was deputy city manager in Lynchburg, Central Virginia, for a couple of years. And then I had the pleasure of serving one of our governors as the chief deputy commissioner of everyone's favorite state agency, the Department of Taxation.

[00:45:04] You always get a warm welcome when you introduce yourself and say you're from Virginia Tax. But I joined the Cooper Center about five years ago. But as you can tell by my career, public service is in my heart and mind. And local governments is where I've spent most of my life, over 21 years, serving elected officials like yourselves and communities around the Commonwealth.

[00:45:25] And that's why I do this. I'm really fortunate to have the opportunity to work with local governments all around the Commonwealth. As I was telling your interim senior manager, I'm going down to WISE in Southwest Virginia. I worked for our town council last week. One of my colleagues, like I said, worked at Fairfax. And last week I had the pleasure of working with some of your neighbors in the town of Colonial Beach, Fairfax Town Council, and the King George County Board of Supervisors.

[00:45:48] So it's really a privilege and a pleasure to work with folks like you all on a regular basis, and I do appreciate that. So, you know, what did we do before today? Obviously, you know, your staff reached out to me a few months ago, We started to have some discussions about what was going to happen.

[00:46:07] Obviously, last year, like a lot of communities, we had an election, which brought in, again, a new member. We looked at a lot of your all's reports and plans. I know we're going to spend some time on one of the things that just came out, your information about the citizen survey.

[00:46:23] I always found out when I was a manager that was very informative for me to hear directly from the citizens. That's an excellent way to sort of help build the discussions you're going to have the next few days, right, on your capital improvement plan, big decisions with economic development, quality of life, all these things we care about, right?

[00:46:41] And I wanna thank all of y'all for making time with me one-on-one in the council interviews. I really do appreciate that. This gives me a chance to have a very candid conversation to get you to understand what's important. So thank you for making time for me and I do appreciate the clerk and his efforts to line all those things up.

[00:46:56] I know it takes a lot of time, so thank you. And then we're gonna have some facilitated conversations once we go through a few of these topics. again later this afternoon with your capital projects. We'll do a mixture of presenting some group discussions and breakout exercises through the day and this is really our priorities. You know we're going to lay the foundation for City Council effectiveness.

We're going to build consensus hopefully for some updates strategic plan and then some feedback and directions staff right as they enter into the budget season and we have those conversations as well. So

[00:47:35] roles and responsibilities of locally elected officials, policy setting, consensus on rules and norms and behavior. That's really going to be the first portion of our day and we'll just sort of spread that out the rest of this morning and as we go through lunch and then we'll spend the bulk of our time this afternoon with strategic planning. That's where we're going to do a lot of that work together. So this is a video portion. If it doesn't work, we'll skip right past it. If it does, it's fantastic. A lot of this in my first portion

[00:48:14] of the presentation is going to be maybe old hat for some of you that have been on the council for a while but it's never a bad idea to have a refresher you have a transition here with your new city manager coming on board next month so it's always a nice reminder i think of those things

[00:48:55] all right well i'll do my best to talk about it as we go through a little bit later so uh local governments in virginia quite a few right 322 uh 95 counties 38 cities and 189 towns used to be 323, but the town of Columbia in Central Virginia gave up its charter recently and a couple years before that, the town of St. Charles down in southwest Virginia gave up their charter. They had a couple elections in a row where people didn't even run for counts. This is not a surprise to any

[00:49:35] of y'all, but these are the things that we see in working with colleagues around the commonwealth of yours, your peers, whether it be elected officials or staff leadership. Everyone expects local governments do more or less. No one ever says, please raise my taxes so we can have these extra services. That's not what you hear typically from the public. They want you to make do with what you have a lot of the times, and that's very hard considering the fact that you have so many things that they expect of your local government, your city. This is one thing that you're going to see some of your peer communities struggle with, I think, is the outside of the pandemic one-time

[00:50:11] funding. Federal and state support is declining. As a former manager, when I would go to Virginia local government management association conferences one thing we always sort of joke is it's a local government support to the commonwealth the money that we give back to the commonwealth sometimes the unfunded mandate that local governments have to have that's sort of i think an important thing um citizens are demanding a more caring responsive government the pandemic has really changed your perception i think of what people expect of local government because you always step up in a way that you haven't before right so there's a lot more transparency that we see in public meetings. For example, this is being reported. Most smaller communities weren't

[00:50:49] even streaming a recording video pre-pandemic, but now they are. So everyone can see what's going on with our elected government body and they're paying attention. And we'll talk a little bit more about that later with some of our general local government topics. If anyone can't hear me, please let me know and I'll do my best to speak up. And I'll try to remember to face forward here as much as possible. Technology deployment. You know, originally it was, we were talking about early portion of the pandemic of people streaming meetings in rural areas broadband access was a critical piece of what's evolved in the commonwealth there's a lot better chances for even rural areas

[00:51:27] to have consistent high quality internet but we're still still working on that right but what's another thing uh that is a technology that is evolving how we have to work right now all over the news. Every day we're dealing with it. What is it? Artificial intelligence. Absolutely.

[00:51:48] How can local governments harness that technology in a way that makes government more efficient, more effective, right? Try to find the positives of that rather than some of the concerns you have to have because cybersecurity continues to be an issue. If you've ever talked to a council member or a staff member for a community that's gone through a ransomware situation or they've maybe stolen utility data.

[00:52:13] Those types of things that we see now more repetitively. You talk to any IT director of any sizable local government, they'll tell you multiple attacks today that you're seeing. So something to be thinking about when you look at investments and things like that. Now, as I was joking, if you're turning beforehand, I promise I won't be practicing law today, but I will talk a little bit about it and the impact on what you do.

[00:52:39] You know, Virginia, we'll talk more about this second part in a minute, but you know you guys have certain documents that define your authority as a local government as a political subdivision of the commonwealth as it says right so the constitution of virginia the code of virginia 15.2 is where a lot of the authority comes from there's obviously other chapters and code sections that deal with local government this is where it breaks out council manager form different forms of government all those things sorry about that city charter uh granted by virginia general assembly so all cities counties and towns have to have a charter you You have your municipal code for the city, and we have judicial review, which is constantly

[00:53:17] ongoing, right, where laws are challenged in the court system, and that affects what we do here in the Commonwealth. Speaking of judicial review, one that continues to plague us or support us, depending on your point of view, the Dillon Rule, right? I always find it fascinating that the Supreme Court, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Iowa's decision 150 years ago still impacts us today on how we do basic governance in Commonwealth. So basically the Dillon Rule, as most of you are probably well aware, if you don't have the authority given to you by the Commonwealth, you as the city council can't do it. It's got to

[00:53:53] be expressed someplace, whether it be the Code of Virginia, your charter, somewhere it's got to say the city of Manassas or cities may do this or that. Your colleagues and other states have a blended system some places and then pure home rule. So you've got some places where it's a blend of dylan rule and home rule and then there's places like new jersey and ohio full home rule now what that means is locality has a lot more autonomy uh to do what they what they think is in the best interest of our community that being said there's even still some restrictions in state legislatures on local governments in some of those places so virginia's been working with dylan rule for a long

[00:54:31] time i don't see that changing anytime soon i get that question a lot but this is pretty much the way we work so when you all want to do something and you probably have done this since especially for those you don't have to go to the general assembly and say mother may i right you got to get a delegate to the center to write up a legislation for us and take that through the process and see if we can get that i remember one time when i was town manager of ashland and i spent months of my life i will never get back get but successfully get an authorization uh to send people on to dilapidated homes and properties where the grass was up to your head and you

[00:55:05] couldn't do anything about it it was 10 property owners right but that's what we do unusual features of Virginia, we'll talk a little bit more about this now to affect you all, the statewide pattern of city-county separation. For those of you who didn't grow up in the Commonwealth and you probably moved

here, you're like, why in the world are cities independent not part of the counties that they live in, right? You go to any other state, that's the situation. Major cities are within the counties that surround them. There's only three exceptions outside the Commonwealth of independent cities. Baltimore, Carson City, Nevada, and St. Louis. Those are the three places that are not independent. We have 38 independent cities here in the Commonwealth. We also have fewer units of

[00:55:45] local government. You go to Texas and other places, you have a fire district, you have a school district. All those different entities are of our own taxation funding streams. So they have a fire tax, a school tax, a local government tax, a public safety tax. Here we don't do that. Everything is sort of combined into the political subdivisions. We do have a few regional entities that have some of those authorities, but very few. This is one that when I work with cities, you know, it's always important to understand what happened here. City annexation, the moratorium. It originally started out as a moratorium on cities with populations of 150,000 or more. This is back

[00:56:25] in the 70s, right? So it's only a handful of cities that met that threshold. In 1987, the moratorium annexation for cities was extended to all independent cities in the Commonwealth. This clearly impacts what you all can do, right? Lots of things you look at with economic development, housing, and everything else.

[00:56:42] Also, another challenge for cities is the percentage of nonprofits and government entities that own properties, right? That takes things off your tax roll. It makes it more challenging. The other thing I'll focus on that last little point, Virginia, because it is the home of the city manager of former government, originally created in Stanton.

[00:57:05] Charles Ashburner was the first city manager there. They brought him in as a professional engineer. city manager to help modernize the streets it was literally just muck in the streets to try to make public works function i know you appreciate that so that's why the council manager forum is very uh dominant in virginia we only have one strong mayor city the city of richmond obviously and as a resident of the city of richmond someone talked about making sure we have running water i this was played with that a couple couple weeks ago not having running water it's a it was a very big reminder for our citizens that the importance of what local government does and when things go

[00:57:40] the right, no one really notices that when things go bad, boy, do they pay attention. Policy development. I'm like council responsibilities. That is truly your focus as an elected governing body. It's your job to set the vision for the community to make policies and laws, and then it's your staff's job to implement those things once you've built consensus and voted on them.

[00:58:04] And we're going to talk some more about capital improvement plans, treaty plan later on, but there's one thing I want to talk about when it comes to the council manager relationship. As someone who has, again, worked for elected governing bodies myself, one thing that I always found at Horton is, again, y'all's responsibility is policy development, vision for community, making the laws, right?

[00:58:26] And then, obviously, you have certain members of staff that answer directly to you and work at your pleasure. One of the things I think is extraordinarily important in having these conversations and that relationship between the council and the manager is very simply what I call ask, don't task. As a former manager, when I wanted my council to have access to all of the information they needed.

[00:58:47] make the best decision possible for the community right you should be able to ask your subject matter experts questions about things that being said ask do not pass you want something done or something considered go to your manager um that's what the uh the cao is there for uh because they may know things about daily operations but you do not they may be able to give you some background information and contact just like you may know information about the community but they do not right it's a two-way street in that sense but just be respectful of those roles and i think that typically works

[00:59:20] out quite nicely for most communities old hat here for most of you uh approving the budget uh you're going to be doing that really soon i think that's one of the challenges i'm not saying i'm for or against uh elections being moved from may to november for all the localities in commonwealth but i think it does put elected officials in a really tight situation of being elected in november you show up in january oh by the way general assembly is in session making all sorts of rules that may constrict your authority and you've got to come up with a budget so it's a it's a really fast moving time for folks when they first take office as most of you've experienced

[00:59:58] so i think that's something we spend a lot of time on in the next couple days for you all obviously setting tax rates setting salaries for a governing body of course for some some of the guys you have to go to general assembly if you want to change the salaries of uh some of the elected officials right and then adopting local ordinances some more council responsibilities obviously uh filling those all the various boards committees commissions both in your city and regionally comprehensive plan you guys are going to hear more about that next month uh so that'll

[01:00:33] be exciting with everything else going on it's nice that you've got the citizen survey results you're in the middle of your budget you're talking about your capital improvement plan your capital projects and you're coming up and all these things are sort of happening at one the great opportunity to sort of align all these documents and making sure that they are addressing your all's vision as a council and who doesn't love deciding land use cases i mean you know never has there been a controversial end use case right um it's where a lot of elected officials whether they're you know elected on the town council or some of you maybe served on the planning commission in a previous life you know you know very well about this is where you spend a lot of your time

[01:01:12] and i spoke on this you know earlier but just a reminder um just making sure you've got an agreement on communication uh we want to make sure as staff we want to make sure the council has information you need to make good decisions we also want to respect the autonomy of staff to do what is in the best interest community on a day-to-day basis and the operations of the city talk a little bit about former government another just reminder you know city managers uh have a have a role to play as you all do as well i think that's the beauty of this system you have you know

[01:01:50] this strong political leadership of you all the council with the professional managerial experience and then the subject matter expertise of your staff of the appointed manager um you all get all of the authority to set policy. That being said, every community is different. Every charter is different. There's little nuances in there, so I try to make sure people understand that.

[01:02:14] There's different ways the charter is written in different communities on responsibilities of council and staff, but obviously you've got one here, but you've had quite some time, at least the charter, and then a reminder of who works for who. These are just some highlights. I'm not going to read through

these. This is again in section 15.2 of the Code of Virginia. Just highlights the responsibilities of your city manager or of his chief administrative officer in any locality.

[01:02:38] There's a former mayor of Lawrence, Kansas, who's also a professor at the University of Kansas' Master of Public Administration Program, John Nalbandian.

[01:03:09] He's a regular speaker at a lot of ICMA and other city manager, county administrator type conferences and programs. And he talks about bridging the gap between the elected governing body and the manager and staff. You know, you all have a political acceptability.

[01:03:26] It's what you all have to achieve, right? You've got to go in your community once you make a decision and live with that decision, whether you're at a grocery store or church, wherever it is, right? But hopefully you've made that decision based on administrative sustainability. We've got to make sure we can pay for it.

[01:03:41] We've got to make sure that we can staff it. We've got to make sure that we can enforce it. Whatever it is, we've got to make sure that those two things align ultimately. Again, you all have got to set the policy, but you have to be cognizant, though, a lot of realities of operational impact on that policy decision.

[01:03:58] And he calls that sort of a messy middle. And they're talking more about conflict resolution, but there's nothing wrong with disagreement, inherently. It's how we disagree with each other. It's how we respect each other. It's how we talk and listen to each other. And we'll spend some time on that today as well.

[01:04:19] Again, just aligning these things, 'cause staff has expectations, you have expectations, right? Before we move into a policy setting, Talk a little bit about that and then we'll take a very brief break and then we'll come back.

[01:04:45] So, are you a representative or are you a statesman? Let's look at these two words. We see these all the time when we look back through history, right? We talk about public servants.

[01:05:06] It makes sense. We call it the House of Representatives, right? So a person who stands in or acts for a constituency is a member of a legislative body. Who wants a statesman or a statesperson. A wise, skillful, and respected political leader.

[01:05:23] Who knows the principles of the art of government. Because this is an art, right? Governing is an art. It's not easy and it's not black and white. It takes a lot of flexibility. It takes a lot of communication. When are you a representative and when are you a statesman?

[01:05:43] And which style is most likely to cause more conflict? Would you all, I'll call out on it, but if I'd like to offer any examples of when you as elected official have sort of been in that role of more of representative or statesman.

[01:05:59] Give me an example of when you've had to fill these different roles. - Steve, I'll jump there. long time before most of these people were in the room we had those regarding the status of family care so he said before you went there's land use and uh very obviously controversial

[01:06:30] issues within the community and made a popular vote a lot of people a lot of people would vote for it so well you do much right for the community it's a decision especially we have to see everybody on a regular basis. Unlike our federal and state elected officials who rarely get to see their constituency, that is

not a luxury that you all have. You were right there with everybody every day. 200 people in the room. That's right. Letting you know you did the wrong

[01:07:06] thing. Public hearings can be daunting. Public comment can be daunting, as we see around the commonwealth in the last few years. Look no further than probably any school board in the last five years and how interesting their meetings have been. Same thing for you all, right? Any other examples where you all sort of seen this where you've had to be not just representative but a statesman? Purchasing with properties that you all have. You have a lot of folks that don't see the benefit of it, but you've got the vision of where the city needs to be going.

[01:07:42] But Properties 3, which I heard from every single person here when we talked, there was economic development, right? The investment you all made in the community. We'll talk about that more later. we've added a fourth oh yeah you've added a fourth last week man i'm out of date all right well we'll talk about that some more man i'm excited to hear about it well we don't worry about this video we'll just skip on past that probably as well i don't think it's going to

[01:08:15] work on it you think in 2025 talking about evolving technology we'll be able to figure this out but oh well charles are those videos available like on youtube or something they are i'm going to send every every member of council will get a copy of this presentation so you can go back to it refer to it if you've got questions staff has things and you should be able to easily then watch some of these videos i i do i would i would humbly ask that you take a moment to watch them particularly the one on former government council manager relations i think that's really helpful um again nothing that not all you are familiar with but it's always good to have a You have a question? Absolutely.

[01:08:52] I just wanted to make sure it was okay for us. Thank you. I appreciate that. Can conflict be positive?

[01:09:13] Tell me an example of when conflict has been positive for this community. Maybe it didn't happen immediately, but what did it evolve into? well i i would say i can't give it necessarily a real specific but what i see is we will have residents who come forward and say you should be doing this or why did you do this or and then when

[01:09:48] you have the opportunity to talk to them several things happen one you you begin to find out the basis of the information they're operating on you know in many ways we on on council and staff have a lot more information and then than our residents and so they're making decisions maybe not with all all the facts that are available so knowing that so a resident who who has an objection to something the city might be considering learns that oh well this this is going on this

[01:10:26] is an additional thing i didn't realize that formed away but secondly the flip side is you You know, everybody, including us, operates, you know, first us, those concentric circles, there's us, and there's our family, and then we move out.

[01:10:42] And so we live in different neighborhoods and different parts of the city, just like our residents do, and so forth. And sometimes we all come in somewhat myopic, and then you realize that, well, this is a situation that may need to be addressed that I was not aware of, or I did not know about that when you're serving on council or even as staff people. And so it's sort of a communication thing, but that conflict, which I think you're trying to point out is beneficial, is an example

[01:11:16] of how if you're open to those sorts of things, always there are situations where people become very entrenched already for whatever reasons. And sometimes we do and already entrenched. And sometimes we're so far along as a governing body to having made decisions or making a series of decisions that it's really hard to change force necessarily to make residents or certain communities happy along the way here.

[01:11:50] And that, unfortunately, is the case. And that's a good point because how many times have y'all been accused of well, you know, you didn't share all the information with us or we didn't know everything or, you know, you talk about it.

[01:12:05] How many times in work sessions and council meetings beforehand it's been in your newsletter, it's been shot out in emails, but still I didn't know about it, right? None of y'all have ever heard that, I'm sure. Will you hear a member, I'm sorry. I'll come to Ralph in a second, go ahead.

[01:12:20] I'm going to say, whether you're a staff member or an elected leader, the biggest, building on what Mr. Luceno was talking about, the biggest conflict that we appear to deal with is people who have made their opinion up with misinformation.

[01:12:42] So the opportunity to bring it together is for all of us to be that, we'll call it the bigger person, to be that representative or that statesman, to look them in the face, to have their one-on-one conversation, to see if we can bridge that gap to get them to a different place.

[01:13:03] It's not easy because most of them come in loaded for bear or email or get their information from Facebook and they've already made their mind up. Then it takes so much emotional and physical energy for us, any of us, to be the better person.

[01:13:27] Let me reach out to them. Let me go meet with them so they get the facts. You may not agree at the end of the day, but you bring the temperature down. - Being heard is important. - Yeah, absolutely.

[01:13:43] - Being heard is important. Yes, sir. - I don't necessarily have any problem with the statement from conflict to conflict, but in effect, people who hold that position, that point, tend to use that as their tool and their motivation.

[01:14:04] I will really agree that positive effects can come out of a conflict, but there are those whose style is, I'll cause a conflict and then get what I want. And there is a difference.

[01:14:20] I've got kind of an example. My colleagues, something related to this. And one of my employment situations as a manager, I had a senior manager, executive, who would fire or penalize managers who never had employee businesses filed against them.

[01:14:46] Now, I challenge that because there can be very effective managers even more so than for those who remember they are poor employees and they don't and employees don't see a basis for filing agreements but that concept she had was just like that it must rap you must do something to cause a conflict otherwise you're not a good manager if your people aren't filing agreements against you that's awkward but i do see it in government that there are those who feel like it must be we've got to find something i've got to

[01:15:24] poke at this and then we can put it all out and dust them all of those that can be positive that comes out of things but the motivation should not be to cause conflict conflict can turn into chaos very quickly right it can also return to turn into uh it's not getting things done not making decision I think one

instance where the city had a had conflict but turned it into a positive was with the outcry around first Friday you know the people feeling like there was no rules or there was you know through that conflict

[01:16:03] business owners came together our chief our city managers and you know came together to lay out a you know set of standards for what our first Friday should look like, and then disseminated that to the public. So in my view, that conflict turned out to be really positive for the growth of the city. Well, I can say, over the years, I've come to realization that 40 or 45 percent of people are going to disagree with anything. It's the sunrise

[01:16:41] and the east or west. And that's just the human nature of the political reality of the environment. and at the end of the day i i'm elected to make decisions and i cannot allow the conflict to delay from the gate making those decisions um and just have to realize there's going to be excellent you know i can talk to them i can share information at the end of the day am i going to really convert

[01:17:15] that 40 or 45 percent and you know it's 55 percent i'm charged with making decisions i think you're right the other thing i think that really gins up a lot of the conflict is frankly a difference in time perspective most of the issues and i will say people that have a very short-term view of an issue it's my street it's now it's my taxes whereas i think the council

[01:17:53] is charged with taking a long-term view and that's sometimes very very difficult to get across to citizens you are concerned about i can't afford my car tax or this or that or why i went to my street cloud last night well you know it's not very little of it is to hear that and that's a really good point and that came up in a couple of our individual conversations when you all talked about specific issues let's say for example the airport someone had to have a vision for that at

[01:18:30] some point decades ago some of the decisions that councils before you made have helped you some of them have hurt you right but really what what your ultimate goal is as a counselor should be is not only make decisions for the current times you're in but to set the table for a future you're making policies that said they were going to impact your community for decades um and so just keep that in mind as we're going through these big big picture issues i know you do that but uh i think it's really important what i'd like to do now is just take a let's take a quick 10 minute break uh get more snacks coffee bathroom break wherever you need we'll come back and we'll continue rolling

[01:19:05] okay thank you all very much all right so we've talked about conflict i was supposed to spend a

[01:19:46] little bit of time before we break for lunch you know talking about listening um i know this may sound simple but clearly one of the most important things we do as public service is listening you know um i think this says it all i think i'm a great listener right but what do we do we're humans are we are we already formulating our response while the other person's talking i have to catch myself doing that occasionally it's tough uh because you know sometimes i tell a program

[01:20:21] because our personalities too right so three phases of active listening proactive or preactive so you're you're setting yourself up mentally and physically to be a listener to be engaged and be paying attention to what that person's saying before you start the conversation you know it's going to be up here when they're actually talking to you you're actively paying attention listening to them right and then we'll talk about that so what are some things we see i mean i've and i've seen all sorts of stuff from medeas in my life you know and you get the you have a public comment you know someone you're going to you know someone's attacking you know council or elect

[01:20:58] official or staff all those things uh or if you're just having a conversation at the supermarket you know with one of your constituents one of your citizens uh what's important well you want to build trust you want to be you want to you want to show that you're receptive to that person sometimes it's just just facing them and just open stance neutral you're there to listen they can tell that you're there to listen right people can tell you can tell when people are listening to you make eye contact not just the content of what you're saying but what's going on for facial expression are they emotional are they very emotional about this topic are they angry are they sad

[01:21:36] are they happy you know all these things matter faith is interesting uh emotional intelligence is a huge part of understanding what people are trying to communicate to and why you know respect for the speaker this first one we have these things glued to our hands now because uh that's what they were designed to do um you know put your phone down when you're in a conversation stuff. Just put it away if you can for a few minutes. If you're having a long conversation with your colleagues on council or a citizen or a business owner or your staff, whoever it is, just be respectful, you know? I don't know how many times I've had this. I've been

[01:22:14] on the receiving end of this when I've talked to someone and it's really tough. There we are. Yeah. But yeah, cross your arms. What are you doing? You're combative. You're not really open to listening, right? And as a manager who's worked at the pleasure of folks like you, I don't know how many conversations I have. I've had a couple of mayors in my lot of time. Please, Mr. Mayor or Madam Mayor, I just want you to be aware that you rolled your eyes three times in the last meeting. People are paying attention to that. I just want you to be aware

[01:22:52] that's going on. Because guess what? We talked about transparency earlier. Everyone is watching what you all are doing in public. Everyone's paying attention to that. And not just the people who are watching your meetings because they're citizens and they're impacted by the decisions you made. One of the things that I think is really important to think about is the people who are watching you but you don't even know about yet and who are some of those people that we care about not just our important citizens and business owners and institutions our community give an example someone who's watching you but

[01:23:23] you may not even know is watching y'all how do you work yeah elaborate on that talk about site selection what are these people doing they're evaluating right well from my experience the folks that when they're looking at locating in your community, they come to your community, and their best source of information, they'll go in and talk to the local businesses and say, how's business? And if your local businesses

[01:23:56] are saying, oh, wonderful, except for, they take note of that. They watch us so that they know how receptive we are to either a different form of a business or a different industry or just whether or not it's worth their time building that manassas.

[01:24:18] And it's not just the businesses and institutions you're trying to bring to your community to fulfill your needs, whether it be through a comprehensive plan or capital improvements, but it's your existing businesses, your existing citizens.

[01:24:33] They go over for a feat, right? In your survey, you've got some fairly positive results based on your peer communities about what people think about manassas. You know, they like living there for quality of life, safety, public safety, all those things.

[01:24:50] Are they safe when they're in parks? You know, all those types of details that we'll talk more about this afternoon. But if your existing businesses are looking to expand or make an investment, they're going to pay attention to what's going on at the local city council and just the city in general. That's something that's going to be out there.

[01:25:06] And a site selection consultant, if they see conflict or drama that they don't want to put their client through, you're just going to move it off the list. They're going to go right on to the communities that you're competing against. And man, is competition important these days, especially with some of the things you all are trying to do with your capital investments.

[01:25:26] So just a helpful reminder. Please know I'm not trying to be preachy to you, but I just want to give you some concepts of things I've seen through the years. You know, when you respond to people, you can set the tone for having received what you're going to tell them.

[01:25:44] Because what do you all have to do on a regular basis? tell people no and that's that's not that's not easy for folks sometimes especially when it's something that they're very emotional about it's very impactful to them um you have to tell them no so you know thank them for taking the time to talk to you i know it's frustrating you're at the grocery store trying to shop trying to get home get done or you're trying to run your personal errands you run to somebody post office whatever it is but you got to take a moment you got to acknowledge them uh because you know a lot of times that was a big deal for maybe someone to approach you as an elected official and you know not everyone's used to that right uh because when they see you all on their computer or on tv you're at the dais it's very formal meeting right if they

[01:26:22] don't know you personally they may think well is this person even going to you know listen to me are they going to be you know all those sorts of things not everyone's used to talking to an elected official uh you're in a smaller city it doesn't matter it's just making a new experience so make them feel welcome about even if they're you know you know i'm not telling you to take an attack someone's coming at you you know you'll be respectful of yourself as well but you know and And let's drill down on what they're saying.

[01:26:47] Because sometimes, as we were talking about earlier, I can't remember if it was Steve or Doug was talking about who they used. They come into the conversation load of information that they got from a source. It may not be the accurate source, but it is a source. Social media, we don't get into that.

[01:27:06] That's another day of conversation of the impacts of that on public service. But, you know, and reading back to me, I'm sort of telling them back, this is what I heard. I'm confirming that I listened to you. I heard what you said. Now, I may disagree with you or I may agree with you, but I've heard you. So thank you.

[01:27:23] It's amazing how I don't have any upset citizens or business owners constituents come to the office through the years, but just to sit down and talk to them one-on-one as a person goes a long way in gaining respect and trust. And they may disagree with you on that issue, but at least they'll know the next time I can go to them and talk, and they'll listen to you.

[01:27:45] Again, this one's pretty funny. If you need a light laugh later this evening, check out this little video. very quick uh it's good so what happens we talked about this i heard a lot of wine remember when we were talking those uh conversations earlier or watching you know reality tv or playing golf uh you know listening to a history podcast whatever it is we all do to try to knock some of the edge off as i tell

them a lot i just got to go in the other room and turn the volume down in my head a little bit just give me a few minutes and then i can come in and be a good partner to you you know

[01:28:22] Find that is what works for you, because you all have a very stressful job, you have very important decisions to make, there's eyes on you and high expectations all the time. That being said, we're all humans, this is just our society, it's what we're going to do. Find time for yourself, especially if you've had that rough council meeting or public hearing or, you know, it's just been a month maybe of multiple things that you've had to deal with. I would imagine the mayor of Richmond he's probably trying to find fresh air and peace and quiet after the the turmoil that he's been managing in his first three weeks in office so take care of yourself that's really the thing

[01:29:00] take care of yourself this is a simon senate video if you're familiar with you know leaders eat last great great author great speaker anyway check this out power teams i do want to talk about this a little bit i wish i had the video's background but let's talk about the origin of how teams are formed you all are a team you're a team as a city you're a team as city council but how are most teams formed give me an example in our society how are teams formed typically say that again recruitment like sports for example or maybe uh work you know you go right

[01:29:39] what else volunteer yeah volunteer for a non-profit or an entity right

[01:30:01] It could be something like a hobby, like a meetup group, right? You've got some sort of thing in common. Yeah, you're trying to figure out some folks that have things in common. What's different about your all-seeing? Someone else. I think someone else wanted it. Yeah, you didn't have a whole lot of ownership in where you ended up.

[01:30:19] You had a decision to make of, oh, I'm going to run for county, right? Or I'm going to run for mayor, right? You had to make those decisions. But that's another part of our society that's really tough, is we don't teach local government and civics.

[01:30:36] Any of y'all, when you're in fourth or fifth grade or sixth grade, I'm not sure when they do civics anymore, did y'all learn what a city manager was when you were in elementary school? Did they talk about the mayor or city council or board of supervisors?

[01:30:54] Did they talk about a water treatment plant? Not in detail, but the other thoughts I've got here. Well, in the Scott County Public Health, I'm sorry, go ahead. most people have we just don't talk about it and in our schooling as we're preparing people to be citizens in our society yeah you know you talk about the three branches of federal government and if you take the history of Virginia we talked about the House of Burgesses in 1619 and the oldest elected assembly in

[01:31:33] the new world you know we talked about the governors you learn a little bit of types of things we don't spend any time on the level of government that affects you the most and that's the bottom line i will argue that all day long with anybody there's nothing more important than impact on your life as a resident wherever you live where the rural place a city or a suburb and the local government serves you that's where decisions are made that truly impact you whether it be tax rates whether it be services whether it be a life or death scenario you know we've got counties in rural virginia that have hundreds of square hundreds of thousands of square

[01:32:10] miles they don't have professional fire and rescue uh departments and you know they have volunteer squads that are uh getting smaller and smaller each year but they've still got to provide those

services but that's a life and death scenario for those people living those communities right so be mindful of that too when we're talking about our public um we don't do a good job as a society of preparing people to be involved in local government how many people understand the budget process you were good at math you knew but no seriously how many people understand that the

[01:32:47] public hearing the comments the fact that y'all been talking about it for months and months beforehand probably you're having this event right and people just show up public hearing and they're like they're not aware of all the thought and time and process and research and reading all of you've done and all the work that staff has done look at trends over the last few years. Charles, you do this a lot. What are the answers you've gotten back to the reason as society we focus on that big picture of government instead of really the local government that impacts people

[01:33:25] daily? Originally, I guess there's pre-testing and post-testing. Let's talk about, you know, we have testing requirements now that are very rigorous in public schools, right? A lot of us that have been in the management profession or have worked with elected officials like yourselves have spent years trying to get into public schools and say, you know, go to the superintendent, go to the principal.

[01:33:49] Can we have 30 minutes of, you know, whatever class, whatever group, class grouping that's taking the test on civics this year, can we come in and talk about local government to fifth grade, sixth grade, whatever it is? Some localities have been successful at that and getting, you know, the mayor or the manager or whomever it is to come in and speak to them and just gives the kids just a very basic entree in the local government.

[01:34:13] Testing's been a big part of that. People just aren't willing to carve out time anymore for having guest speakers in public school classes, probably. It's just a reality of the situation. I think that's what we've seen some places being good. BLGMA, the professional organization I mentioned earlier for, you know, city, county, and town managers, we even did a book a few years ago, tried to get it in the little children's book about local government, you know, trying to get that in the libraries and places.

[01:34:36] But also the other part is, too, what do we see in news and media, and what has died in news and media, local newspapers. So that's why everything is on where? Facebook, Instagram, social media in general.

[01:34:55] I think that's part of it. There's no coverage of local government. When I had the interviews with you all, and I know Virginia is a little bit of an exception, obviously, compared to maybe some rural county in far southwest or southside Virginia, but the lack of local journalism has definitely been impactful and not be able to educate the public about what's going on i think a lot of localities and this was something we talked about i think some of our one-on-one issues with communications right how are we going to how can we get this information out accurate information not just information but this is these are facts right we have a comprehensive plan it has to be updated every five years that's a

[01:35:32] fact that's in the code we have to do this right um those things aren't always there so i think a lot of it is localities local media um i can't tell you why it's never been a critical feature of public schools in virginia if i had any input whatsoever if anybody cared what i said i would i would hope it would be but um i think it should be um anyway one thing i've seen other communities do you know a lot of people have citizens academies i've seen other other ways of trying to get youth into that whether it be through uh you know scouting organization whatever you can do get in front of kids who talk about local government there's nothing more impactful because even if they never

[01:36:12] work in public service a day in their life to be a good citizen at least you got to know the basics of what's going on in your community and why y'all make the decision to do and when you make the decisions you do so we talked a little bit about this earlier um like you know for example i was looking you know through y'all's website at your organizational meeting you just updated you know your your uh code conduct your uh or at least your your rules of procedure you did that earlier in january you know a lot of folks have a code of conduct which y'all do i think their last one was

[01:36:51] maybe updated i could be wrong maybe four years ago uh maybe maybe you did it at the january meeting i don't know but make sure that you do look at these every time you all organize as a council because another part of this too is even if you just have one new member this is a completely different dynamic to your group right it's a new council after every election uh could be a new new mayor, new vice mayor, or an individual member of council.

[01:37:15] So take time to have those conversations because what's the most important word in a relationship? Expectation. Expectation. You'll have to set expectations for each other. I mean, you are making really, really important decisions for your community in a public, transparent setting.

[01:37:39] There's lots of opportunity for people to give you feedback before, during, and after those decisions. So, you know, set expectations for yourselves as a council. And same thing with those communication lines I talked about earlier. We're talking about the political acceptability versus the administrative sustainability, the things that SAP is coming to you and saying, hey, council, we hear you on this policy idea.

[01:38:02] Here are some of the things that we would need to do to make that happen for you. Or here's what we've learned from other communities that are already doing this. So expectations. Let's take a break. Are we close to 12?

[01:38:19] Yeah, lunch, if I may, sir. Yeah, please do. Lunch is ready. Today's lunch is a taco bar. It's in the building next door. Any other logistics, Eric, that we need to give them? They said food is ready. It's buffet style, so you just walk through the lawn, come and serve yourself.

[01:38:37] There's drinks in the refrigerator. They've also had water and fruit out here. Do we go through the front door or the side door? I'll walk you over there. You go through that front door. Front door is straight through the credit. Okay. We'll do lunch, and then we'll come out, and we'll do maybe some breakout sessions and talk about this important part of it, of y'all working together.

[01:38:59] All right? Thank you very much. You're just welcome. Well, the good news is I won't make you sit here and listen to me talk right after you ate lunch.

[01:39:19] So that's good, right? You know, we talked a little bit about norms and expectations and relationships among council members, So I want to take a little bit of time to do a breakout session with you all with some of these questions. These are really important.

[01:39:35] You know, we're beginning of the beginning of the year. You just had your organizational meeting. We're really going to get into the details of things for you all the next few days, especially with your planning later. So I want to break this out into three different groups. And this is just for the members of council, since we're talking about norms for you all as a group, right?

[01:39:52] So staff can sort of take a back seat here and hang out. So if I can mix it up a little bit, since we have odd numbers, bear with me, but I have to try to make sure we get some different conversations going. We had earlier when y'all did the partner exercise at the beginning. So I'd ask Ashley Treatment-Rount to be in one group, Tom and Mark to be in a breakout group, and Sonia and Michelle to be in a breakout group.

[01:40:16] And what you're going to do is work together on answering these questions, and you're going to report out as a group on some of these conversations y'all have and how y'all can work together. and set expectations for each other thereby uh understand the mission oh yeah just with your breakout group you know go through these questions of each other you know one of you will be a reporter reporting out and of course the other the other members if you want to chime in by all means council exercise i want to hear from everybody but yeah just go through these talk about you know expectations y'all like to have for each other that's really what we're doing there we're just

[01:40:51] trying to set expectations because not everything's in a rule book right we can have some verbal discussion about what we find to be accessible as a elected governing body so uh get with your partners and uh we'll come back in a few minutes and talk about this more

[01:41:13] wherever's comfortable folks you can step out of the room whatever you want to do all right let's uh let's start our report out let's go with you all first okay so how do we develop and find consensus on our norms one at a time folks one person at a time please thank you walk over back in the day okay uh how do we develop and find consensus um walking

[01:41:49] actively listening are key parts of of that along the way i'm going to leave space for other groups to submit stuff so moving on to how do we evolve those norms well clearly when circumstances change or they're not working well how do we communicate our norms to new members here

[01:42:20] communication expectations coaching having things in writing such as our code of conduct procedures along the way our actions what do we do if the norm is violated unintentionally feedback and I'm assuming these are sort of what what you were expecting okay and then five but what should we do if a member needs to violate a norm and we were just talking about then the fact that again we all

[01:42:59] are going to approach these things a little bit differently here and so we We have to recognize that we're going to be getting information, as an example, differently here. We all, for instance, liaisons to various committees, whether they're regional or city committees, things of that sort.

[01:43:17] And that means to know intentionally, but we're going to hear information that other counselors won't along the way. So it's our job to try to filter through what we know, what we believe.

[01:43:35] the first to know and what needs to be conveyed to the rest of council work sessions at meetings you know privately when we see people you know we're able to talk one-on-one and going to go along the way with it. Anything you can get out of that from your old group or are you good to go?

[01:43:58] No that's very helpful. I mean that is important I think this is this is when you've got to have a relationship built first when these things happen right because that's if you don't have those relationships when these tough conversations tough issues or disagreements come up that's when sometimes you see the dysfunction kick in people get defensive you know or or people you know decide I'm just not gonna talk to that person yeah I'm talking generically you see this all the time with the elected governing bodies it's a challenging dynamic to navigate at times so thank you to our next report out here

[01:44:37] All right, how do we develop and find concerns and norms, talk about it, understanding everyone's position and how everybody's doing or where they stand and finding a common ground.

[01:44:55] How do we evolve with norms, finding a common ground and meeting one-to-one to understand the position and, you know, the new norm.

[01:45:11] uh the uh next one how do we communicate our norms to new members uh in personal in person verbal writing and meetings so all the different steps um the next one what do we do if a norm is violated unintentionally so you bring it back to the person in a one-to-one uh then i have i have more of it i have uh you don't do close sessions um you don't do

[01:45:48] public recordings but they're not and uh uh you uh and uh you re you respectfully bring it to them because you know it was unintentional i think that one from the other one is 30. the next one uh the last one what should we do if a member needs if a member needs or maybe Maybe I didn't understand what you would do, if I'm in the room, I'll let it come along.

[01:46:18] Like, that's intentionally. You know, you guys, you folks deal with different situations. Some things are very planned. Some processes, you know how it's going to go, right? There's things that come in front of you all occasionally that are once-in-a-lifetime.

[01:46:33] Or, you know, the only time you may deal with it. Or if it's something that's just so controversial, you know, people are just sort of scrambling to try to get information on what's going on. you know maybe there is a need to violate the norm but what do you do when that happens how do you how do you come back from something like that for a Monday evening you find your information and then you find your law and you understand everybody's perspective you talk to them you know why and understand the circumstances and put yourself in the same position we have our own perspective. So it is hard to understand the others, even putting yourself in that

[01:47:11] proficient or condition. And don't know witching. Excellent. No, and that's not a derogatory language to witches everywhere, so we just want to say no. No witch hunts, go ahead.

[01:47:38] I, you know, like for me, you know, if I want to tell someone it's going to be inspired, I apologize if everybody feels like that, but I, you know, I didn't mean it like that. I meant it more in like the legal way, I don't know.

[01:47:54] No, no, you've got, I got you. Yeah. We treat each other with respect, really. That's, that's ultimately the goal. That's what we, that's what we aspire to be, right? We're all human, we're not perfect. We do the best we can. It's hard sometimes to disagree with people and you're so passionate about it.

[01:48:09] Thank you. Can we hear from the next group, please? Yeah. So in discussion about norms, we kind of said that they're somewhat already established because we follow a charter as well as a code of conduct. that helps set our limitations in discussion about how to communicate norms to new members you being someone that is new you know setting a meeting with every department head meeting having a meeting with all the managers and it was also shared the communications department is very

[01:48:46] helpful and understanding a lot of the different processes and just what's going on in the city currently. What do we do if a norm is violated unintentionally? A cordial and respectful conversation. I liked how Ralph said expect to respect each other and then again on that on that vein is just you know

open communication. What should a member need to violate a norm? We talked about if you need to violate a norm at least getting support before

[01:49:23] doing that whether that means communicating with the city manager or the city attorney before violating the norm but that consensus and support is important in that I think we we you know the other I guess key takeaways is that we all agree that we are we're here to focus on what's best for the city not on our personal goals or ego and we also believe it would be a good idea for the entire group to review the code of conduct thoroughly to ensure that

[01:49:58] everybody is interpreting it basically like a similar level. Say that last one again for me. We think it would be a good idea for the entire group to review the

[01:50:25] code of conduct to ensure that we all have this similar. I'll also share that I have not yet signed the code of conduct. I wanted to confirm that today because I mentioned the code of conduct earlier and I think I've said the last time that it was officially, unless I'm incorrect, Please correct me, Mr. Clark, Mr. Managing Attorney.

[01:50:48] So not just the rules of procedure, but the code of conduct. So that was re-approved by this council? Okay. But there was not a discussion? Because I'm confused about what I'm hearing on, like, she's not signed it or, you know.

[01:51:04] Anyway, sir. Correct me if I'm wrong, but we have one ready to go to be signed. There were some conversations with the court that there may be some discussion, other edits needed to be major so if there are no edits offered we have it ready to go for monday night and and it should be even if you want to discuss it later i believe before monday we need to have at least one sign if it's the old one and then if you want to make edits later on and changes

[01:51:41] you could do that and re-adopt it at that point but we need again my opinion we need something in So in our office we have the two live coffees, the last one that we find was like in June we divide because we have changes so I don't, I believe that unless we have anyone in the place that is still continuing, I don't believe it's fired and I'm looking forward to have

[01:52:12] No, I don't have changes. Oh, okay.

[01:52:28] But I think, you know, if you have changes that you want to find, I feel like I felt like it was a problem that you could have it, it has made a sense of sense. I think a lot of it is because we have a good member who's not, so you have to have it.

[01:52:47] I'll show you. Yeah. Okay. So this is on the agenda for you all. This is Monday? Is that correct? Right here? Yeah. Okay. I think part of the discussion down here, my silly way of, we need the head nods.

[01:53:04] If we're good to go with it, we're going to put it on for Monday night. We need to discuss it. need to discuss it so we know what direction now the one that was adopted i believe you last 2023 was approved during the organization but if there was any change then you could put it back on for monday night because it hasn't already been there are no changes it's already been approved it's approved last year well i'll just say this what a better time to have this conversation we need to

[01:53:40] have it i mean you know is there is there some you only need to take a minute and and read through that particular document you already know the issues uh related to it is anything you want to discuss this is this is why i'm here to try to help navigate that conversation

[01:54:04] very good all right well these are helpful and just so you have an idea and this will be more for this and uh our conversation on uh the strategic plan this afternoon what i will be doing is working with your leadership team and putting together a very brief summary of an after-action report of what we do here and some conversations we have. Obviously, you've got a recording of it. So, this would be a nice bullet point document you can look back to, you know, nothing more than two or three pages. They should have some highlights of what we discussed here today and as you make your decisions in the future. So, if I don't hear any other

[01:54:41] comments about code of conduct or anything else, I'll be happy to move on to my presentation when to do the conversation. Press on. Thank you all so much for taking the time to do that. I felt like it was important based on the conversations I had with y'all before you. So we talked a little bit about this as a group, you know, unintended versus intended breaches. I think your all's responses were perfect. You'd have one-on-one conversations. You need to listen to each other. You need respect.

[01:55:13] You can disagree. Y'all can disagree all day long. I encourage it. That is democracy. Just be respectful when you do it, right? And listen to your partner. Y'all may not agree on policy or other issues in the community but ultimately what i found in talking to y'all individually most of you have the same you have the same goals ultimately for your your community from the city it's just how you get there it's how you get there all y'all want a thriving successful city that's has a great quality of life for the people who live and work there you know these are some of the things obviously i know y'all do this already maybe you do maybe you don't a lot of

[01:55:51] places a lot of councils a lot of boards do take those time those one-on-one meetings i know you're you're busy. I know you've got up team board meetings, regional meetings, things you have to do, nonprofit boards, your personal businesses, your day jobs. I understand that this is not, you know, this is something you put 60 hours a week into, but try to carve out those time to build those relationships. And I really encourage you to do these things when you're not having a hard conversation. Do these things when you're, when things are going well, build those relationships when things are going well. That way, when they go bad, you can look back to that. Okay. I really

[01:56:27] really encourage that i've seen that with councils i've worked with that did not work well together but once they started working outside of the chambers in a legal manner transparent and legal manner one-on-one i think good things can happen all right here we are strategic planning um before we delve into this i just want to ask councils uh thoughts on a couple of things you are at the end of your five-year plan 2020 to 2025 you're going to start the process of updating that

[01:57:05] while going to the budget, conference plan, everything else. Before we get into this portion of the conversation, really my question to you is, is there anything that you'd like staff to present to you briefly or anything you want to look at, whether it be regarding the previous strategic plan or the citizen survey information? I know you just heard a brief, excuse me, a link presentation from a recent meeting about the survey results, but if there's anything y'all want to hear again or if you have any questions we have, while you have staff here i want to give you that opportunity before we get into you know the conversation about the future plan update and the five

[01:57:42] bubbles i think as i've heard nicole today uh thank you i think um for me my concern is uh you know making the future plan the future positions um i'm not worried about the house as far as you know i know we're going to talk about it i'm just saying how i feel um uh you know like we have a great

opportunity but i just don't want You know, that is, I don't want to go in here with that great opportunity without having seen what other people are doing.

[01:58:19] I know that we don't have that many, we do have like post-church and other people that are doing popular things, so everybody works differently. I just want to make sure that when it comes to that, that I have enough information on what is possible to do, even though it will be, you know, specific for the place and what it is.

[01:58:40] But I do want to know if there is something that really doesn't work, you know, I want to know another time. So, I know we get a lot of options for when we make decisions or recommendations and stuff.

[01:58:56] I'm just, you know, really I want to do what's right for the city and even if it's a process that's why I want to bring it up to that. I know we can expect affordable homes, but we can work on making it better and not making it attainable.

[01:59:14] It's just canceled until I can talk about it, but we need to narrow down what we really want. So I feel we are so far away from coming to our decision, but it could be my perception.

[01:59:31] Yes. To me, the biggest takeaway was the fact that the three items cited in the survey that has been top priority. Education, education, affordable housing and transportation are items that are frankly, we can influence to some small degree, varying degrees, but we certainly have no control of it.

[02:00:00] And there is an inherent likelihood of frustration, both within the government and within the citizen, because, again, all this for transportation, the biggest thing we can do to improve transportation is about 28 bypass, we have an exact reviewer book in the process to make the influence of people, but we can't control it at all, it's the same thing for the other. So I think the

[02:00:37] setting of expectations becomes really, really important, even more important, because at the end of the day, I and we can't make something happen on those two times.

[02:00:57] Any other questions or comments from council? Mayor? Okay. So, looking at the citizen satisfaction survey, and to Mark's point here, so near the end.

[02:01:17] So, very high priority things to be worked on, in other words. Flow of traffic, number one, ease of getting around the city, you know, and does that mean, As you said, there are things we can't control, like the 28 bypass.

[02:01:37] Does that mean, Matt, that we need to be looking at the timing of lights again, as an example? Though, in fairness, what we've also heard verbally, and this is where the contradiction comes a long way, we've heard citizens at our last town hall meeting saying that there's too much ease of getting around.

[02:01:58] Their neighborhoods are now becoming pass-throughs along the way here. Now, are those pass-throughs because other roads are congested along the way? I mean, there's only so much road we can do and so much widening we can do.

[02:02:15] And in some ways we are doing, like Liberia, we're adding a third lane. Suddenly, we're adding a third lane on one side there. So we are doing some things to ease traffic there along the way. But it takes a certain amount of time just to go.

[02:02:31] I mean, to go a distance from your house to, let's say, Old Town, it's just going to be what it is. Quality of public education, since we're not the school board, we would be dealing with another body here.

[02:02:48] There are probably some things that we can do to influence that along the way here. So, you know, that's, I guess, to be at least looked at. And then the next two, well, that's one and two.

[02:03:04] Three was the quality of economic development, and I don't know that in the last two satisfaction surveys that I sent through that I ever understood exactly what they meant was by essentially dissatisfaction with the quality of economic development.

[02:03:23] What is it that we should be capturing that we aren't capturing or recruiting or building upon and what have you. So I, again, and while number four was maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure, and I would like to think that we do a very good job.

[02:03:45] You know, the example certainly used last year was when was the last time you saw a pothole? And if you saw the pothole, how long did it take to get fixed? I think it gets done pretty quickly.

[02:04:00] You know, I've been to other places where potholes sit around, and they sit around, and they get bigger and bigger and bigger along the way here. And then number five was enforcement of city codes and ordinances there. And we did hear some of that at the town hall meeting, you know, quality of life issues along the way.

[02:04:20] And so those were the ones that are basically in pink and yellow, color-coded, which is why I mentioned those along the way on that. So at Mark's point, there are some nuances. I think there's some where, at least for me, such as the economic development, I don't understand.

[02:04:40] know, there I need more information. And then there's some that we play a role in, but we have partners that play a role as well. And so to me, part of that process is figuring out, are there better ways for us to partner with those partners, to work with those partners that we're not doing at this particular thing, because you're talking about a separately elected body that the citizens pick the leadership up and you know we were talking at the very beginning of

[02:05:15] this whole exercise is how did we get chosen as this team well it was chosen by the residents the voters really chose these teams and we're trying to figure out you know so any guidance or any thoughts of how we can kind of not overcome but how we can work on those for me would certainly be a be of help along the way. On that. He's watching the video now. All right. That's up. Yes, sir. Go ahead.

[02:05:54] Please. I was going to have staff. Yeah. So I don't know. I don't know. Right. But if we look at the survey where it says if you have the full survey, largest decrease since 2022 is economic development efforts to continue the revitalization of downtown.

[02:06:21] So that's economic development. So that's the largest decrease in the survey. So is that what they're referencing? Excuse me just for a moment. Largest decrease was efforts to continue the revitalization of downtown. It was a 6% decrease.

[02:06:42] Right. Now let me jump in another thing for council to consider. If you go further into the presentation, look at the breakdowns of these specific categories. So if you go into transportation, you get a further breakdown. The top priority is the single line. So I think Tom mentioned that. There's a similar

thing for housing. For economic development, very high priority that you're getting from the survey is efforts to improve existing commercial quarters.

[02:07:07] I think on some of these you need to just go a little bit deeper into the survey because transportation, number three, is regional roadways to Council Member Wolfe's point, but signal timing, Council has a program in place that can influence that. Public parking downtown is number four.

[02:07:24] We're going to be discussing a deck center. So, you know, there's I would also just concur when you have some time, go a little bit deeper because I think that's going to what strategies you're going to want to hopefully end up with in your digital action. Yeah, and then how, if I may, sir?

[02:07:42] Please. And then how we tie these into our budget of making it our priority. So I know I'm going to get up in front of myself a little bit, so I apologize, but we've already begun our internal budget meetings.

[02:07:57] So some of the things that we've done as your leadership team, knowing what the results of the survey were, Knowing what was on, or predicting what was on council's list, what should be the city manager's priorities in the budget.

[02:08:15] A new program for signals is in there. That's a new enhancement, costs more money, but we tied it right back to your strategic plan and the community survey of justifying the expense. So all this is kind of tied together as we finish out this work session by Saturday of even some of the decisions we have to make on a larger CIP, how that's tied into the survey, economic development.

[02:08:50] What are we going to do with some of the properties that we have purchased, how quickly we want to develop that's tied into the economic development question. You know, you're already, I don't want us to lose focus as well when we hear these things on the transportation that I think it was Matt or maybe you Tom mentioned.

[02:09:13] We're already doing things, there's already big projects in the works that are addressing that. As Mr. Wolf said, that we can control in the city. Third lane on Dudley Road. You're already adding a third lane.

[02:09:28] You just redid Grant Avenue. Whether people like our traffic circle, the ease of traffic on grid is much better. I'm there almost daily. So traffic moves through there quicker. You have other ones already in the budget ready to go.

[02:09:46] So you're already addressing some of those. But I do believe that we've had this bigger discussion at the staff level of exactly what the vice mayor said. They want us to address 28. It impacts us every day.

[02:10:03] We have no decision making there. people come to us and complain they do the same with data centers they don't like the economic development of data centers ones they're talking about are in Prince William County they're not they're not ours as Mr. Encina said at this point school you know we've had community members come up and say defund the school they get too much money they're not accredited properly that the schools make up that we give them the funding but they're the ones who

[02:10:41] decide that decision your elected body there so again the top things we have just a little bit of influence of what changes can be made and we I don't want us to leave focus on that I'm not sure we collect conflict I mean I won't put the blame on any group or person in particular but no matter if I

thought it going to be a if anybody was going to set up conflict the virginia way of elected school boards and elected councils and boards of supervisors you cannot dream of a better

[02:11:20] scenario to inside conflict by having one elected body to have no control over their revenue screen but yet be responsible for one of the critical most critical functions of our society right yeah that's a good example i've been with the mayor in some of her one-on-one just for in and even at council meetings where residents come after either her and her small group settings for council as a whole over the performance of the school why aren't you

[02:11:51] changing the performance of the school mayor why don't you do it I don't know you know like I get it maybe you don't see it but once I feel like that you know my my what I wanted to say is we have the different meetings there was a survey and this survey I think you summarize

[02:12:31] all the points. Before you start, I summarize all the points that we have been expecting, all the goals that we have achieved. And even though it feels like, you know, right now we are in the middle, but we have achieved so many great things in the last few years. Since I've been here, there's so many things that you have dreamt of, that you had, you had it in the plan and you had work on it, but you cannot get it done. So talk about the airport, like so many things

[02:13:06] that have been done. So I would say right now, I'm not surprised those big things are the priority because we have worked on everything else. You have delivered. And even though not everybody was in agreement, you have delivered all these things. I mean, the other big thing we used to talk about it was at school i think most of us have run on trying to make sure that we replace dignity and prior council made a decision on that same year plan so i think these three or these top items are because we have been so successful in the last few years

[02:13:44] and even if the residents can not see the results for everything like you know they saw the hotel and so on and they don't see you know the vision and how long it's going to take us. I'm frustrated with how how long the transportation plan takes for you to have the money they are already applying in 23rd so what I want you know my point is that we have gone really good in the past two years not only with the money the investments that we have made they're going to

[02:14:20] They even changed our vision, because now we have planned all these things. So the dreams that others have, now they have been fulfilled, or they are in the way to get fulfilled. And now the stages are more regional and bigger, and we still will make plans for that.

[02:14:40] But I want to say, make sure you remember that. Make sure in the last two years you remember all that you have accomplished. And that's why I wanted to bring up, I don't know much if it was something that was male or if it was this one, but it had all the pointers, everything that we have done.

[02:14:57] And it's a lot. So we are on and on and mixing, but we forget everything that happened. Now I think one thing that we forget to do in local government, because we are so busy in the churn, because there's always something new to discuss or new to evaluate or consider, If you don't celebrate the successes very well, and I heard this in talking to you all individually, I think there is a need for you all to celebrate the successes in your community.

[02:15:30] One of the things, and I can't speak for Manassas because this is your office community, so please know when I give these examples, I'm talking about generically throughout the Commonwealth, other communities I've worked in, so I never want to infer that I know your community better than you, so

please know that's where I come from. But I have seen elected government bodies be able to pull the community with them when it comes to things like this.

[02:15:52] The mood, the way that things are celebrated, successes are, you know, put out there and shown to people. Hey, this is, remember we talked about this for years and years and years? And it took all this work to get there. These are results. And economic development is a great example of that.

[02:16:08] Things happen in the background sometimes for months and years before we get to the council, you know. Much less what the public sees, right? Yes, sir. Yeah, I think it's an excellent point, but I pulled the strategic plan up.

[02:16:24] So under the transformative mobility, success measures that you've already accomplished, increase the ratio of total bicycle network mileage to total road network. MATA has given you that, we've done that. Percentage to decrease the number of residents commuting by signal occupancy vehicle. And that's a struggle for us all, but the opportunities are there whether it's bus service or the we increase the amount available parking in the downtown and in the neighborhood so again it's been published for

[02:17:00] five years you're going to have that conversation before we leave here this weekend of how you address that achieving bronze level recognition within five years i'm not sure i know what that matter somebody did you know so those were the success measures in the last strategic plan I think we did a pretty daggone good job so for our residents this was the published strategic plan that you were part of and we put out

[02:17:38] there and now we're taking them off right of the things we were able to accomplish and it's those investments that the council has made some pretty hard decisions the last year the investments of getting and securing property and programs for the next strategic plan to focus on. We know if you don't own it you're not going to be able to control it or make those decision. No, I get excited about this stuff. No, I encourage that. We love that for you.

[02:18:15] Encourage that. All right. Any other questions? Yes, ma'am. Yeah, we're trying to think outside the box on education. I've actually brought stuff up before. We can't control the quality of public schools. We can fund it. You know, we can give suggestions. We can have strategic meetings.

[02:18:36] we can offer our ideas but they are the school board that's their job you know um and we're in a holding pattern i think um they're trying to do uh an alternate school that was the i think we voted on for alternative schools yeah um there's many people in the community that don't see that as that they see that as solving some one of the problems but not really showing an increase in performance, if that makes any sense. Because it's like

[02:19:15] 150 kids out of our whole school system, I would call. Is that correct? I would say the mayor and vice mayor and I had a meeting with the school and your vice mayor asked that exact question. How did that change performance?

[02:19:33] They currently have, correct me if I'm wrong, actually about 40 to 60 kids in all terms of education. schools feel if funding and programming were available there are as many as 400 kids who can be targeted and those are students that have been suspended during the year and part

[02:20:05] of the rationale is a those students almost by definition require additional in-person instruction and handling and by giving them that and getting them out of the normal classroom setting,

you are raising the level and removing distractions in that classroom.

[02:20:33] There's not a lot of empirical data that's been provided, so as I've said, one-on-one conversations, we all use this sort of element of faith or common sense, depending on how. But the program, the size of any program would be dependent upon the level of funding, both short-term and then long-term could be sufficient.

[02:21:01] And Madam Mayor, I know my understanding is, talking to some of the school boards individually, is when you're talking about truancy and you're talking about accreditation, which are statistics and so forth that are put on by having the alternative schools.

[02:21:27] And having students that are not working well in the traditional classroom system, but have them in that, that if they're successful in the alternative school, that goes to when the statistics are collected by the state for truancy, reducing, and for graduation, increasing, because they're graduating, is one of the, or two of the additional benefits.

[02:22:02] that they go on so you know - to the point because I hear the same thing here where residents want to see an increase in performances you mentioned that earlier and I wrote it down so those those kind of strike me as one of the things they're addressing and as you say they're perhaps reelected why don't I close the other school to make they had a school at one time and they closed it does anyone know why are you talking about the Johnson Center Johnson said well okay so the

[02:22:36] Johnson Center the history of the Johnson Center building was required it set vacant and the schools made a determination that as the student populations changed that the Johnson Center with it being adjacent to Osborne made the best possible case to be able to have specialized instruction, English as the second language, in a small classroom setting.

[02:23:16] So that's where the job at the center ended up being utilized for that. The other thing in building what Tom said is the opinion expressed Michelle on that was that the two factors that are driving down accreditation are graduation rate and attendance.

[02:23:39] These targeted students have an outsized negative impact on those scores, and that this is, again, the best, you know, I'm sounding like the salesman from the school, and I don't in their view, this is the best way to significantly impact, positively impact those scores by targeting the students that would cause the scores to get down special attention.

[02:24:13] Yes. Thank you, Johnny. and it's the same, the comments they made before the motion, and these, even though it sounds like it's a comment so that he brings up a bigger number, you know, from his feedback, which is, you know, a more comprehensive one, but the point is that B is that the number one is what's going to make the bigger impact, so at the end, you know, we still are in a place that we can make a difference

[02:24:51] But I want to make sure that, you know, if you go back and listen to the last school board meeting, what he said, right before the motion, they were making things that, and it also affects their attendance, I believe.

[02:25:11] And this is going to bring it on and change. So, Adrienne, I feel like they are, you know, trying to make a big change for the political target. So as an elected body, our priority is the public school.

[02:25:30] So when you're looking at the perception of education to the public, this is where Jeremy might have a forked cut out for him, sometimes you have to highlight the education opportunities that we have in our city that are not public schools, not going against public schools.

[02:25:54] But there are people that move to the city because of our home school population, but because of our private school population. We're not supporting them, but they are very high rated. And I don't know if we can, and I'm not trying to drive people out of public school to put them into their situations at all, but it is a big driving factor to why some families are moving closer to Monastery because we have such a good support of home school population and private schools.

[02:26:29] It is part of our education community, if that makes any sense. I think all that stuff is shoved under a rug. But it is a plus for the city that we have these institutions here.

[02:26:49] And I don't know if Marsteller is half of its mothball. For us, if that's what I heard, we don't know what we're doing with it. So I think that's an opportunity for us offer to public schools as well this is how i think you know bring people back to our school system that can also help raise the performance as well what was the thing you mentioned i'm sorry but marstelle i don't know what that what is the building that we bought that was a school

[02:27:22] okay that one okay got it got it all right yeah i mean we're you know it's a business teaching is a business i'll say it is a business you know the home school population is a non-profit probably the way they run it when they have their their um learning but i'm just trying to see how we can juggle some of the resources that we have in our city as the public schools are getting better we need to balance that perception i mean i think you know stating that there are options there's

[02:27:57] nothing wrong with that um i am excited about the investment in alternative education because otherwise you know if there's 400 kids and we're putting them on computers all day of course these kids are dropping out they're not attending they're not making it to the next grade and that's negatively impacting impacting our school system you know so that to have them get the in-person attention and get the extra instruction that will help them get on a path to success I think is really crucial I mean if we you know since we don't have that or you know what we have in Prince William is so limited, I think it's important that, and I think it's

[02:28:34] a good move for the school to want to do that in order to, you know, enhance our numbers, but also just to serve our students that need us, you know, I think the investment in alternative education will be good, you know, and I guess I'm understanding that Johnson Center is like the CTE wing of Osborne, is that? No, it's the ESL. It's just the ESL program just in general, Okay, which is also serving a large population in our community.

[02:29:01] I think that that's valid and important as well. So I think, you know, just as we look at our schools, I think it's important to just think about the different communities that are within them and their unique needs. You know, that was what went into the ESOL program, you know.

[02:29:19] And now if we have this whole large group of students that needs extra attention and needs this alternative option, that should be listed within our option as well, you know. I mean, I think that it will be a very good investment for us to have a place, especially, you know, finding out that the number is higher than I think any of us really thought that it was.

[02:29:42] It's going to be important to serve those students for the collective goal. Yeah, my concern is, you know, how we're going to reach that, because at the end, you know, I do want to address Councilwoman everything because, you know, to me, the Marcella is a warming center.

[02:30:08] It's no a business. The investment, it was part of the mission. They need that we have a green space. I mean, we are one of the biggest to have this green space than other places.

[02:30:23] I'm very small and I get it, but not only the outside, the inside we're talking about, we all know, I mean, maybe I was at a different meeting, but I remember talking about programming, there is open space for genes, there is so many opportunities in the future and that it fits, but it continues to be the warming center, especially if you go outside now, it's so, so important.

[02:30:50] And back in my vision and why I'm here, one of the things it was like, oh, Managua Park has a, you know, it's smaller, but they have a community center. And my vision was, you know, finding that community center a place, not only an installation, but something that serves for everybody.

[02:31:14] And I always thought about the police stations, and we're not talking about it. I'm not giving it up, I'm just saying, we're not before Marcella. And Marcella is like the perfect installation, especially for the green bar. Again, it's a vision of many of us, but my, you know, my concern is that we, you know, statements like that make it seem like we got this and we had no plan when the vision had open plan there.

[02:31:43] The priority for many of us is there for that to happen. But regardless of, let's say we were not even using it, let's say it's standalone by itself with no use. It's the number one place, the Wawa was the number one place to do a fire station.

[02:32:03] So I think the best place right now, today, that is the place for the fire station. So even though you don't see it, like time is going by, but the plants are there and the vision is there. So, you know, I feel very, you know, touched by that because I don't want to come to thinking that, you know, we don't have planning, we haven't talked about planning, and I'm trying to get involved with programming.

[02:32:31] I'm trying to get involved with what we can do, but I think, you know, we had a vision, we know why we did it, and right now, if we want to do something different, you know, like you said, we have to have a consensus, We all need to know how we see the city because at the end we got elected and we bring to the table not only our unique perspective whether you know you are new or you have been here for a long time we all have a new perspective we live in different places to see the stuff

[02:33:05] differently but I you know we are doing so much I want we had a conversation with our new council member and it was in regards to the boys on Dirt Club but we all been there we were there we know the conditions inside and you know we can talk about it so like I had said before to me it's not a community center like Marcella is and then we have to look at the conditions where the kids are we were there celebrating our 150th anniversary but look at the pictures it looks

[02:33:42] cultures it looks you know it looks difficult so you know this is a better place but i'm sorry for the rent but i i really feel you know uh touched by this because you know this this is really important and it's strategic and it is you know for so many things only degrees and we were you know trying to make more diamond in our field and things that we are lacking of no even that we want we want we have dreams but this is like we are fulfilling what we need and you still know there we still

[02:34:19] we still are sure of what we need just correction on the number and the mayor and vice mayor correct me if i'm wrong dr newman in our meeting corrected the number of 400 he said it's not 400 there may have been 400 that were reviewed but a little over 200 met the threshold that were qualified for all that so they may have removed 400 a little over 200 you had to correct some things that day

[02:34:57] that were being said i don't remember the exact number over 200 but it wasn't 400 so i think that's an important number for us to remember there is a threshold um and qualifications to go to all feds not the whole point let me ask a question please remind me of an estimate of your total cancer control population i love an estimate And that's like, if it was every grade, that's 16 people per grade, which is a classroom.

[02:35:37] I just wanted to correct my number. Yeah, either way, whether it's 200 or 400, it's still a classroom. And I'm going to get ahead of myself because this is not scheduled until Saturday. So if we are sitting here, one would assume, and I know what that does to you, that the priority is all F.

[02:35:57] I've gotten to the list. There's only two things on the school's list prioritized that they would like outside of their 3% increase. Number one, more money for raises for all staff. That's priority one. That would be the tune of about 1.7 million. Again, all staff, not just teachers.

[02:36:27] Second priority would have been Alt-Ed. It was only to ask outside of what you've already committed. And pay was number one. The school or the funding or...

[02:36:44] To pursue an Alt-Ed school option, whatever that is. Was there a number of numbers? We know a number that they put 2.2... 2 million is a request. And that's for a pilot.

[02:37:00] But that's for a pilot. Yeah, that was a request made through Cinderone Estate for a one-year contract. That is not secret contract. And they're going to have to, I'm sorry, if I remember correctly, they are paying that, but they won't have to pay any more to the county if they're going to be.

[02:37:26] Not what we were told at our meeting. Dr. Newman clarified that, that no, that that money would still be spent with Prince William County because they are the only one that can meet the needs of some of the kids.

[02:37:45] There are, I would say, the kids are in a continuum of need and there are some, they're trying to address the bulk to make a positive impact on accreditation scores, but there There are some kids that have EIDs that are very challenging and extremely expensive.

[02:38:21] For example, we have one in the social service realm that by itself is \$300,000 a year. That is going to be an increase in your budget. One kid is going to cost you an additional \$300,000 that we're paying for in the budget.

[02:38:40] because you don't have a choice, you have to do it. That was one of the points that I was going to bring up. The other thing is we know from recent history and even longer that it's a valid concern for the school board with regard to this competition in high, and do they yet have a feel for it?

[02:39:04] That's out of New Year. Do they have a feel for what they're going to go up, right? over two years that is approximately 13 percent a little over 7 percent for this year and again that is i've had a conversation with the school that's not just their request is for across the board all positions get the same pay rate um yeah that's that we can't ignore that factor um we kind

[02:39:42] I had part of it made the comment, I think, after the threat this morning, you said about you won't find any president, Sam, please raise my time, but in reality, as we address surveys, that's exactly what they're, if we try to meet their complaints or whatever they'd like to see, that's exactly what they're asking.

[02:40:03] Our challenge, obviously, is to double or change or prioritize where we set the money. We seem to be in general consensus that the school is a very high, if not the highest priority. We just need to keep that in mind that despite globalization, yes, they are asking us to raise the tax because they're asking for these services and we all know that these services must be addressed.

[02:40:31] So this is not a plea to intentionally raise any rates or anything at all. But in reality, we have to steal ourselves and steady ourselves in our preparation that it's not just mere words or just things we can hear a year.

[02:40:54] What services do you want us to accept or not accept? And you convinced us, we convinced ourselves that it's education and housing, but more

[02:41:10] So I just want that out there, that's not mentally going in at it, where we're going to have to do all these things, but my God, we've got to have you to think about making a touch up, because it's easy, none of us want to repeatedly be labeled tax and spend, or whatever that city has commented.

[02:41:37] But if we are here for the health of safety and welfare of our residents and of our city, we have to also protect the city. that we have to have a mindset that we're open-minded about those needs.

[02:41:53] I'm trying to, getting back to the economic development expectations, and this is for Charles and Jeremy and counsel, is how do we craft a way of communicating to our citizens that the fact that we announce we have a hotel deal out at the Gateway, way you're not going to see a hotel there for another year and a half two to three years because just once we sell the property then they've got to do their their design then they've got to do their construction so I part of the

[02:42:33] survey is kind of an and I don't know if it's an unreal expectation that the initiatives that city has taken don't result in a you know brick and mortar tomorrow and it's one of those that while the city is making the investment It is something that won't be realized for a number of years and that's difficult to communicate to residents.

[02:43:00] That's one of the things of how do we better communicate that to folks that we're making these investments for years down the road. As much as we want to hurry and put in a parking facility at the Micheco site, it's not going to be realized for two years.

[02:43:21] But there's an expectation there that, okay, we've spent that money, we want to get a tangible benefit from it. So I don't know if you've got anything to offer or Jeremy might have, but that's something that we need to craft when we make these investments is that it's not a, it's something that we're doing for the future.

[02:43:41] Well, if you're paying good attention because in my one-on-one interviews that was articulated by just about everybody in this room, that we need to do a really good job of communicating how we're going to develop these properties or how these properties are going to be developed that the city's invested in to our folks. They need to understand what that means because again, why would you know the intricacies of all of these if you're a layperson?

[02:44:01] So yeah, I think that's an excellent point and definitely one of the goals for you I'm sure going to be as you continue to get situated within the organization. I think one of the things that we hear from residents pretty frequently is, you know, is there even a plan?

[02:44:18] you know which is wild um but maybe like a social media campaign could be like strategic plan saturday you know and just post like i mean i'm just not working on saturday schedule it but uh you know like a bullet point here's the origin of this idea and it's been you know alive for how many years and this is the way the council is trying to do that i don't know just a you know really like highlighting the strategic plan like screenshot that part of the book or whatever you know and include it in a post just so that you know and then link the strategic plan to that post just so that people are you know constantly

[02:44:58] reminded weekly reminders we have a strategic plan and we're living that out you know might be a good try to work on it. It takes at least seven times to hear something before it really sets in for most people right so you can't just say it once and expect someone to understand the complicated problem.

[02:45:15] One of the things we did, going back to the comments of doing a good job, we did a very good job of developing a one-page talking point that encompassed everything that you just said.

[02:45:33] We did that for Marcella, we did that for Manassas Shopping Center, we're in the works of doing that with MIFCO, which tied it back into our strategic plan on every one of those. We've done that. We're in the process of doing it for MIFCO, but it did exactly what you said.

[02:45:50] So we are all talking from the same sheet of music of why we bought it, this is the future, this is what we're pursuing, this is how it's tied into our strategic plan. So, but if they don't like it, no matter what we say.

[02:46:10] Oh yeah, that should not prevent us because in reality, that is a minority. I mean, look at your community meeting. Again, I tried to focus on the positive. Your more stellar community meeting was very positive. Great outcome. Those are things we've got to focus on.

[02:46:28] I think Jeremy had a question for you. It wasn't necessarily a question but more of a comment is that when we look at these projects and I'm just kind of pulling information from other municipalities that I've worked with is that it's very important when we have these projects become a communication mindset where things are more strategic and pulled together.

[02:47:02] And when I say that, I mean that if we have projects that are existing, we are creating an integrated approach where the information is not only living and communicated through social media as a means to engage with the community, but we're also putting information into presentations that people get.

[02:47:24] So that could be anything ranging from QR codes that are in PDFs that link back to a project page or having a project page or project portal where these projects live and information is consistently updated across the board.

[02:47:41] A lot of that collaboration, if you will, typically comes hand in hand with communications or public relations teams in addition to subject matter experts that are communicating. So as you have a project manager that is getting updates, and I've already seen that process kind of occur within the city where they're updating these pages, that as those updates are going onto the page, we are also sharing that information on social, or we are finding

[02:48:20] avenues to publish that information or communicate that information into targeted groups where that information can be shared, whether that's mailers, whether that's like scheduling some impromptu outreach kind of meeting, we are communicating these things to continue to solicit public involvement into the conversation. So these are things that kind of have been circling in my brain a little bit of how can we keep conversations alive, but also come from a strategic integrated

[02:48:57] approach where we're not just posting information once and then hoping that people somehow get back to the information. It's looking at outreach, boots on the ground, publishing those things to the digital, getting people to come to meetings, and really kind of building and keeping that conversation alive. So definitely things that I'm thinking and I encourage that input from Council and also as our staff members as we start to think strategically about how we want to better communicate

[02:49:36] with the community about these projects of what tools do we have at our disposal and what schools don't and might want to try to venture into for example something like a more specific project management environment where information can live and people can kind of engage with it maybe in a like a public input kind of form for that.

[02:50:07] So, if I go to, if I just, I'm on the street and I see somebody and they say what's happening with WIC, and I can tell them go to our website and you go to the website and get on the landing page, I want to be able to see what's going on with Smith Coast.

[02:50:22] Right. I want to be able to click on what's happening with Old Town Man and I get the latest information. I don't want to have to search, I don't have to hunt, I want to be able to go right there and get what I want. right so like you're talking about uh putting information on the landing page of a website where people can access it quickly i think that that is actually something that we definitely need to work into is and we are we've had conversations about the website and what updates could look like

[02:50:54] there and working with our existing contractor to fulfill those but i would say part of that is keeping the news up to date having quick points that specifically target projects for example and making that very clear but also if we're talking about someone on the street trying to access information and they're passing through where this code is or the n is for example probably not this code because you don't technically have the property just yet but you have some signage

[02:51:30] maybe around the city where someone scans the qr code and they're directly at that site where the information but the other caveat to that is making sure that this information has at least been updated for the month that someone's looking at it which is hand-in-hand collaboration with project manager who has the information and the communication uh team who updates

[02:52:08] I just want to compliment us. You know, I voted for Marcella. I agree. We need the field. I never would want to take this away. I'm just looking at the size of the building, you know, because it's twice the size of me, and I don't know what we're – I'm anxious to hear what we're doing with the building when it comes to tomorrow.

[02:52:31] That we have – I think we have a presentation, what programs are already going to happen, because I haven't heard that. You know, if we can utilize that entire building, it's gigantic. I'd be interested to see, you know, what we're going to do with it. It's not that I'm opposed to what we're trying to do there.

[02:52:49] I just see a lot more space that we might be able to offer to get back with me or incorporate in the park. I remember, a large part of that building is going to go away. Yeah, yeah. That is a personal

matter. My daughter went to the preschool though, so like, I know how I look, I've been to meetings and still community groups, they still do things. I think it is a great opportunity and it will be better, but I, my, my comment was, not, but I, thank you, and I'm sure we're going to work on it on Saturday.

[02:53:29] My comment was about what you were bringing up. Thank you for saying it. We have that, and it's just in a different perspective. Clerk and Steve working with our chair for the appointments committee. They have been doing great things, innovative things about posting our open positions.

[02:53:51] So, you know, part of what you were saying is like, yeah, you know, he's doing it. So the other thing I wanted to say is based on my community, my community, the HOA has a great working relationship to the police department.

[02:54:07] The community, they have their special information sent to us, and I believe a couple of us are in that community, you get the information from the police. so thinking about that it wouldn't be difficult if we had a our mayor had an innovative meeting where you had if we HPA uh they enjoyed coming together so that would be another you know another uh place so we have most of what we need we just gotta come together and say it and when you were talking this is the first thing I saw you know it might and it might not be everybody interested it

[02:54:46] It might be just the people like when you do the planning, the people around there, and the people across there, or it might be just, you know, a sign, you know, there. So, I am loving this, you know, it is innovating, and I take, you know, new ideas, but I want to take it there to provide more information.

[02:55:06] But I do believe there's people out there that feel like we share too much, and since we share too much, they put information that comes diluted, it doesn't seem like it is so just be mindful that you have both i i can't tell you which one is stronger because i have no idea like how many people feel like that i mean we share some of us i believe we're doing great i mean we could do that any other questions or comments about this

[02:55:42] this is not a comprehensive list nor is it in any order so let me be very clear about that these are just some themes that i've consistently heard from you all in the preliminary interviews i have with each other so this one looks you know you were heard and we've already talked about it it's very obvious in this conversation we're already starting that these are the things and i've got to change this four four investment projects not three so my apologies there but you know community survey results obviously you've gotten that uh the kind of development stuff overall housing which is such a complicated issue when you talk about housing no matter

[02:56:20] what community in the commonwealth everyone is struggling with this doesn't matter if you're in northern virginia hampton roads where you've got significantly more robust economies and people moving in all the time or far southwest virginia and south side virginia where you have a deficit of housing that is not easy the gap is not easily achieved in places where you have the contractors and the building economy that you all have in northern virginia right so housing is critical in every part of the commonwealth everyone is struggling with this whether it be attainable affordable or just lack of actual physical structures for people to live in the infrastructure

[02:56:55] obviously critical um i know that we don't always as communities or cities have the ability to control everything you all talked about that you know relationship county vdot regional entities all those good things k through 12 and workforce development i always find it interesting that somehow or another

even though we we all understand the inherent obvious connection when these do we sort of talk around them in separate issues that they're not right this really just ties right back into not only quality of life but economic development all the things in your community are driven by quality of education and workforce development right so clearly important community engagement communications loud and clear this was you know

[02:57:35] uh you've got got a new uh firm director here so that's excellent regional partnerships and impacts um you know after one um i know that sometimes regionalism can be very challenging you've got different sets of values in different communities different boards different councils but obviously regionalism is a way that we have to go occasionally a great example like i said earlier our friends in richmond uh all the citizens of hanover county and henrico county and cheshireville got a very quick education on what regional water systems are when the water went out in richmond they understood now oh oh so we have to actually care about our neighbors you know it's in all of our

[02:58:14] best interests to invest and make sure that things are done appropriately legally and safely for our citizens to have potable drinking water um quality life and we talked about this you know it's a nebulous metric but it's what people hear it's what you talk about in surveys is what people want to hear what is the quality of life in your community that makes it attractive is there parks are the green spaces is it easy to get around obviously traffic is a challenge for you all because of where you're situated because things are beyond your control but still it's part of of quality of life and then council members interpersonal dynamics and we talked about that

[02:58:49] earlier as well so what i'd like to do now is give you all about a 10 minute break get situated uh and we'll get the existing uh strategic plan up on the board we're gonna have some robust conversations about those five areas get some feedback from y'all and some direction and staff and hopefully set the table for y'all to have a successful rest of this retreat because i'm only with you today so take we'll be in staff's hands as y'all navigate through everything else does that sound good everyone thank you so much the camera and the mics are on when you're having

[02:59:22] your conversation yep so you're thank you sir all right you're on the home stretch for me i know you've got a couple more days here but so what we're going to do is just go through a couple exercises here before i leave you for the evening for you all to have some time together outside of this so council goals for the student planning process we're going to do that first all right then i've got the five bubbles the five areas which y'all have previously identified in these in the past and we'll just sort of walk through those make sure there's nothing missing if there's

[02:59:59] any direction for staff or questions for staff on these particular issues we'll go through those as well okay all right so let me get this down to uh if y'all want to follow along on your your uh ipads or whatever in front of you that's fine it's easier to see i totally understand that So this is your 2020 to 2025 strategic plan.

[03:00:23] It gives a summary. And then, you know, the first thing we can sort of talk about is the council goals for strategic planning process. Previous council, the key bullet points here were be inclusive with input from citizens and partners, develop a language for collaboration, problem solving, and creative thinking, result in easily communicated outcomes that are far-seeking and revolutionary.

[03:00:46] Is there thoughts on these goals for the strategic planning process as you embark on 2025 to 2030? Is this council in alignment with these, or are there some modifications we need to make on these

council goals?

[03:01:06] I don't necessarily have a goal modification, but I think throughout our and everything that we might say, I have really tried to say that was all over and try to do that with all of our documents I think a lot of localities are shifting matter to that as well so I think y'all are in the majority of doing so I'll put that down just to be sure but that's clarified but

[03:01:39] staff looks like they're already on top of it anything else can I push the just really quick on the word revolutionary so I was part of the development of the previous strategic plan and while this was the goal that was given to the citizen committee and staff coming up with revolutionary goals the to be blunt the actions we came up with were definitely good policy things we

[03:02:19] need to look at they were far from revolutionary I don't know if that word and that's for council discussion but if that word really that your is that your intention that we come up with a brand new never thought of before policy as a staff in the community or is there a better word I'm not even really a fan of far teaching my guy suggests visionary and the reason reason is that for me

[03:02:57] several of the purchases were just in my mind were designed to be far-reaching visionary to be creating a different manassas that, you know, I hate to be trite, and I wouldn't want to use it in here, you know, that's going to be ready for the mid-21st century, you know, to foster, to continue, you know, prosperity for residents and businesses.

[03:03:33] Because I do want, to me, several of these purchases are going to lend themselves to things we never thought of as they they get developed over time sorry I think I think there's a like a communications tool kit that has buzzwords that the

[03:04:09] that we typically like to utilize and document on the website. Another word to feature focus on a sort of far-seeking feature focus.

[03:04:26] Can I also raise that, I think the second bullet point, develop a language. Sounds a little goofy. Develop a communication style or, you know, emphasize collaboration, but develop a language, just down in your-- - Yeah, that's all I meant.

[03:04:54] - Well, number two, starting with develop a language, like as if we're not smoothly using English or Spanish. - I have one of three. For me, instead of a revolutionary, we'll be innovative, 'cause innovative is more like, it can be any futuristic, a new visionary, that's just all of it.

[03:05:17] I mean, for, I don't have a solution, but I do think that, you know, language is not. And flying, like, you know, front station, then maybe you're always trying to command it. - The second floor, thank you.

[03:05:37] - Oh, um, that's one of the things that future focus. - Thank you. - It gets word salad-y, doesn't it, sometimes when you're trying to do this?

[03:06:01] - Is there anything else that council like clarity on or like staff considering the modifications when they're going back through this? - Develop an approach. - Approach for collaboration, problem solving, creative thinking approach.

[03:06:19] - Approach as a possible alternative for language. - Yeah, maybe not even develop. I mean, I think that we've done, we do collaborate, solve problems, and think creatively.

[03:06:36] Like, I'm also gonna say, like, maintain the approach for it or something. - Or increase, you know, elevate, enhance, yeah. - 'Cause you wanna sound like you're just now starting. - Yeah. - Being innovative and thoughtful and right? - Yeah, it doesn't sound very obvious.

[03:06:51] - Got it. and end the sentence with effort sort of strategy or not.

[03:07:17] Anything else about those goals for the planning process that's important to council? All right.

[03:07:55] What's the plan that can I just, perhaps, is covered here? I would, first of all, kind of mimic the three because it's a space or it doesn't mean. These are council goals, so they can be, yeah. What I'm trying to get at is our goal is to prioritize the well-being and the quality of life of our reverence.

[03:08:23] I was just wondering, and perhaps is divided in what we have? Yeah, that's exactly what we have.

[03:08:54] Well, I've heard from the city back in '781 Mark, which is in the town, And when we do switch, what was the emphasis that was placed on being concerned about the health and safety of both. So that's kind of a play on that.

[03:09:13] I approach my goal as that being my priority, that is the well-being of our residents and the well-being and quality of life. In my mind, I also see the city as having a quality of life as well as the...

[03:09:35] I think I'm coming back to like we are trying to maintain or improve the quality of life because at the end everything goes in here, the food, you know, everything we do is part of it.

[03:10:04] But I want to say it's already somewhere else. I feel like, you know, I have read that, but, you know, being up there, I believe that his point should be by itself and it might be one or two. Our goal here, not one of these goals, our goal with the exercise, we'll use the words people up there so staff can take the notes, come back, make edits, get a draft out to council.

[03:10:35] Right, so keep it going, we'll get it, then we'll get a draft, clarifying that might enable you to move forward a little quicker. I appreciate that. Any input on these items? It's really more of just a process.

[03:10:59] I think, you know, I don't know if there's any significant changes, but I want to make sure the council has a brief chance to weigh on us. So, will we be doing, I know we're doing a survey right now, right? Have we started? I know we're doing something online, right?

[03:11:16] But that's tied back to the comprehensive plan of the facility, not the strategic plan, so they are two different documents. You're right, you're right, thank you. Will we be doing a community, any kind of community conversation about the strategic plan, or was this envisioned to be strictly council?

[03:11:36] I'm going to answer from my viewpoint, Mr. Burke, as your incoming city manager may change that, and to me, the community conversations are your community conversations that you're having, whether that's Marcella or Mathis Avenue, those are the community conversations that tie in here.

[03:11:56] Maybe I'm short-sighted when I say it that way. The community conversations that are referenced in this document are actually the ones that created a comprehensive plan. that was three years of effort before he wrote the 2020 conference plan. They're referencing here just because we spend a lot of time on them, but they weren't. I think that the work groups were the actual product. We used to develop really the five items that are before you and then flesh out some of the actions that came out of them. As far as the strategic plan, it is

[03:12:34] typically a council document, but does council want to receive or ask for resident input. Maybe I have to flush out some action. I mean you may get some good input but ultimately it's your document as far as the vision you have for the community and then how we how can you sort of future project you have a graph

[03:13:13] for the community to reflect upon thank you to help focus the guy's conversations and then you can come back to council or review an adoption with that you have a meeting on that what do you think um um essentially what the planning commission has done is they've worked on the comp plan update for about a year they've hit pause they're now out seeing how the community feels about what they've worked about and then they

[03:13:51] come back they look at that commentary then they'll ultimately pass the plan on you we're talking you do want to have probably more flesh than just what we're going to get to today i would day before you were putting out for any sort of questions. I think that, I'm sorry, go ahead, madam.

[03:14:06] Thank you, but you know we're not taking 10 years, huh? No, that was, that was, that was the process of developing the previous comprehensive plan. That's helpful background, just to understand how this was developed and what was going on at the time, because that really helps me answer questions. I'm happy to move on to the five areas and let's counsel has other questions or concerns.

[03:14:34] all right great community vitality transformative mobility sustaining excellence economic prosperity educational attainment you basically got aspirational goals here you know below these five these five topics um i'm happy to take some feedback on that existing there also and in accordance what sort of doug said if there's just some high level feedback you want to give the staff so they can come back and make any all you know changes altercations to bring back to you all. I think that's very good as well. I think what we're looking for is some direction

[03:15:11] to say out if there's anything that y'all want to change. Okay, here we are. So, vision and values.

[03:15:38] We've got a strategic platform. We have a vision, and then we have values that are listed here as part of this document. Really, just looking for some feedback from council on either affirming or if there is some modifications. You know, this would be a great time to give that input to staff.

[03:15:54] So I'll read through, but I know you've got this in front of you. A strategic platform for those who appreciate independence and access to the historic city of Manassas enjoys a strategic location in Northern Virginia, where historic charm combines with new city spirit, so you experience a sense of place, a sense of community, and a sense of opportunity.

[03:16:17] Vision, a community that takes pride in our authentic history, livable neighborhoods, quality schools, healthy economy, and outstanding quality of life. Anything there? I'm not going to read all the values, the narrative goes with it, but we have customer service.

[03:16:37] Oh, sorry. Yes, ma'am.

[03:17:09] and i think it makes us unique and it makes us better um but it's you know my opinion that that is my message you know we are diverse i would like to see it doesn't have to say that but i would like to see you know uh if we can do a change and and and uh uh something like that it's a good catch because that diversity of the city has pointed out in the survey

[03:17:42] but it's a good catch ties it all in next all right anything else on vision anything on values

[03:18:18] we honestly charles on the values it is actually something that we really just started pushing out publicly the mayor began thanking him at council meetings so i'm not even sure a lot of our resident public or even engaged in because we really just started internally in the organization we got outside i'm not sure that you didn't pay attention other than when she started saying

[03:18:58] It's just out of order, so it's not like that, you can't have to wear shirts. I know, I know, but y'all know we can. It's just crying. Yeah, no, I mean, I'm like, I think, yeah, I know.

[03:19:16] You had something to say. I think that we both fit in our human resources, every single position that we have, other than, you know, But I believe, you know, you have to think about this and I thought that's not, I try to think because it has been put forth and everybody, even if they don't acknowledge, everybody has seen it or has had it.

[03:19:46] Yeah, you do a good job internally, outside of the employee. After our conversation a couple of weeks ago, Charles, I wrote a statement to keep talking to you and do some thinking. But there's one thing I think it's built into our overall, and one of the things you do that for what I'd like to see, how it works.

[03:20:09] We have a strategic outcome-based approach and that they're aligned with the leadership with all of the departments and there is a big strategy that can consist of.

[03:20:37] Let me just read it. We should have consistent strategies and funding approaches that allow And I think we do that, but that's because you gave me the assignment, I wrote it down. I'm passing it on.

[03:20:53] Let me make sure I get it. That we follow an outcomes-based approach and that we align across the leadership in the department. And that we have consistent strategies and funding approaches.

[03:21:11] That language is kind of funny because they probably don't fund themselves, we fund them. But anyway, our approach to funding, our goal is to let Manassas reach its core potential for the last part of that.

[03:21:28] Can you please articulate that part again about the consistent approach? A consistent approach that allows Manassas, approaches that allow Manassas to reach its core potential. again it's it is back to the idea about have the being that we get our approach to the outcomes

[03:21:57] inclusive of economic focus and environment the whole deal and if i still have 10 seconds and i'm there um i've been to promote social cohesion diversity and equal opportunity for all residents and work fostering a sense of belonging and a sense of communication did you just come up with that or did you read that from him? No, when I went on the phone with him, I started.

[03:22:32] Oh, wow. That sounds brilliant. Some of that was in my background. Should I repeat it? Yes, please. In addition, our region should promote social cohesion, diversity, and equal opportunities for all residents and work fostering a sense of belonging and community. I emphasize all workers don't get in the city so we can still be mindful of our workers who are really our

[03:23:09] residents. I'm going to come over and write it down when we're done and make sure I get it articulated. I want to make sure it gets into our narrative. Yes sir thank you for that I appreciate that. We're pretty close to the end of the road unless you guys are telling me you know There's something missing, or we've not talked about it here.

[03:24:05] Anything else?

[03:24:18] Air Council, anything else? Last call. We're good and well there. Nice call. Great. Are you, with the, are you going through each one of the five? I am. Yep. I just want to make sure there's nothing else on that mission vision and the values.

[03:24:36] All right. Community vitality. We will be a city that celebrates and promotes the safety, diversity, and character of our community, working together to build pride in our neighborhoods.

[03:25:15] Any changes, any concerns about that language? I guess my concern is to build pride in our neighborhood. What does that mean?

[03:25:31] What does that mean? It could mean that I'm going to look after my neighbor, it could be I'm going to keep things clean, I'm going to put my simple trash barrel away when I'm supposed to, I'm going to shovel the sidewalk when it snows.

[03:25:51] Is Maine Kane a better word to build? just wasn't sure i guess i wasn't sure what we meant by pride i mean i guess i see what tom's saying i mean yeah yeah it was the idea at the time was to give a to get a piece of buy-in from the residents as to their community neighborhoods and by pride if you're prideful in something you

[03:26:28] taking ownership uh and yeah take care of it and wanting to you know maintain slash approved and the word maintain was was passed on because it implies a status quo whereas the thought was you want to maintain the character of the neighborhoods but at the same time you want want to continue to improve their parents, their upbeat, and part of that is city directed

[03:27:06] through zone enforcement and things like that, and paved streets and sidewalks and all that. But part of it is people mowing their grass and taking care of the yards and mowing their houses, their places don't go to paint with them. I mean, I think the critical part of all of these sentences is, what do I start with?

[03:27:28] will so we're either aspiring or planning for evolution right are you as a body okay even if we can't identify today okay with us giving you some options on some angle about switching word numbers, 'cause the weed.

[03:28:01] - Sonia. - I love it when I'm playing together. - Oh, that's great. - What are you? - I would like to see, I mean, if you're talking about, if you're talking about community childhood, and the goal is for people to be proud of the neighborhood, I'm not saying for, you know, a big sign of one neighborhood, But the picture is as important as what you're saying.

[03:28:32] I would like to see if there is a better option of what you stated, because you stated it stated to the picture. So I will have to go read the Liberty Street. And I'm speaking from a community that even though I love Victoria and I try to be involved, but the meaning might not be the same for me, the pictures, and for everybody else, so on that front, but if you have something, no, you know, that's all.

[03:29:09] Yeah, well, no, but I, just the context, I don't disagree, but Liberty Street was deliberately chosen. I figure. because because of the if you think what liberty street was a few years ago and what it evolved to and and where it was five years ago and certainly it's yeah i would say significantly better than that may sound bad to some people but um yeah i mean to me to me liberty street

[03:29:46] I could point to and say, no, no, no, we've done good work here. We've enabled, you know, success. The discussion at the time was to basically knock down the neighborhood and turn the

townhouse. The community spoke up and said we want to preserve the homes.

[03:30:02] There was a whole, including an ARB, there was a whole, and now the homes have mostly been restored. We have a new home on the block. So it was, at the time, a neighborhood success. So that's the background. But I remember coming to the council meeting as a resident and quoted our historic Park City and Sutton, and asked if they applied that delivery, because the leaning at that time was not, it was exactly just right about that.

[03:30:32] Yeah, it was a project to put 40 or 50 downloads in the morning. So my answer is if that is the best today or tomorrow, if that is the best place it will be, because this is a living document for five years.

[03:30:48] if you know if you can look at the pictures and if that picture is still different than the familiar it's still it's the best you know just leave it i'm just giving you a different perspective and i think they all all that is here bring a bit something different to the place well based on the conversation the direction you gave the interim city manager i'm just going to say any other high level very high level changes is not what's going to happen is what we just said agreed to your consensus of that's going to bring back you know based on the overall conversation based recommendations on language and changes that maybe update the things that align with y'all been doing

[03:31:26] uh anything else that needs to be discussed along those lines high level with that understanding that's coming back i feel like councils we got consensus council here right all right we have four of them let's go ahead is there staff is there anything else you would like direct from council today on these topics that we're talking about in this this setting i know

[03:32:05] you'll have a lot to do over the next couple of days so anything else regarding what we're talking about well with that like i said i'll be working with your staff uh on summary report of what we talked about these on this portion i'm sure i'll incorporate that into the larger three-day event that y'all are hosting. I just want to say that I personally thank you for taking the time to meet me beforehand, for taking time to do this today. I can assure you that a lot of localities

[03:32:44] do not carve this out for their council and their board. It's not something they do on a regular basis, so the fact that this is more of a tradition for you all, I think it's very good to set the table nicely for your budget conversations, giving staff clear direction, which as a former staff member, I know I appreciate, and hopefully that'll give you the best product to do what y'all want to do.

[03:33:03] Is there anything else I can yell to us today? Before you go, I know we just went through community vitality. Unless I'm missing it, the next three, mobility, sustaining excellence, economic prosperity, I think we have a pretty good understanding of where they are at and what they would like to see.

[03:33:35] If you have a few moments, the last one, the educational attainment, If you could see if you could lead us through some discussion on that one, because I think that one in itself means a lot of different things to everybody around the table, which we already had some conversation about, but I think we need a little bit more in depth from the majority for me and staff to redirect that one a little bit more.

[03:34:02] I think that's very reasonable, and you all have me, and please tell me to leave. So please know that. I'm here as long as you want to be. educational attainment then so we did have a couple of council members talk about this earlier and in general we will be a city that partners with the education and business community to create an innovative engaging inspiring and challenging learning environment for

all students and adult learners that fuel the workforce of tomorrow my initial question is what programs
Oh, I'm sorry, is it okay?

[03:34:39] I don't know. - I didn't see the mayor, I apologize. - Okay, sorry, sorry. My initial question is, what programs are we actually offering adult learning? And how are we inspiring and engaging in that?

[03:34:55] - Good. - Okay. - I'd love to count on it. - All right, I would like for that to be treated. I don't know if it will be too much, but I would say that's number two on my own survey. Those that know, I mean, everybody should know, they send the postcard to our house.

[03:35:18] They do, I believe, even from the services advertising, everybody has a plan that you have. You can do the UGD, the CED, if they all have paid for the graduation. We can give them a gift card for them if they graduate from their UGD.

[03:35:38] But there is so much more to it. I don't want to break it too much, they look like it's all about education, but I do believe that, you know, it is, we do so much, and it is so little that it is, I believe it may, you know, it works for us tomorrow, but the work for us today is already, you know, we are already trying to make sure that our partnership,

[03:36:12] our alignment, our output, or the schools provide a workforce that our city businesses can hire. And I know that it's obviously a lot of times, you know, the schools, you know, focusing in, you know, and with the area, a lot of kids, they just want to go to college and get them there also.

[03:36:35] I think if we speed it, it might look like we are too focused on education, BUT I DO BELIEVE THAT WE NEED TO SAY A LITTLE BIT MORE WHEN IT COMES TO WHAT WE'RE DOING BECAUSE WE'RE DOING MORE INVESTMENTS, WE INVESTED ON STAY, WE INVESTED ON INFRASTRUCTURE, WE'RE TRYING TO DO A WHOLE LOT FOR THEM TO MAKE A DECISION, AND TO ME THAT WOULD BE THE FIRST ONE, AND THE SECOND IS WHAT WE'RE DOING FOR THOSE, WE DON'T HAVE THAT MANY RESIDENTS, they have nothing in high school.

[03:37:11] We do have them, but we know it's overwhelming like in other places. But I believe these programs with NOVA or the other programs, yeah, they are there and people are taking advantage, even the high schools are sending kids to NOVA too.

[03:37:30] My concern is when those funds are going to expire And then after that, if the GED or those programs are being non-successful if they are used or not.

[03:37:50] But I believe the NOVA, it's better if we don't even say so much because we already have a lot of applicants in the little town. So, that's not only open it here, but remind us that if we're going to put it here and we'll break it down and it is part of a priority, you know, that will become a money issue and an investment issue.

[03:38:18] The Educate and Graduate programs are directly -- that term adult learners is where the Educate and Graduate programs came from. The idea at the time that I staffed this goal was to look beyond the public schools and look at all of our educational opportunities.

[03:38:35] So that's why adult work was in there, but we did, and that's how the plan works. We actually developed programs which are -- they're funded last year. Council basically incorporated those programs, moving them from pandemic funding, Diane, to -- they're in the economic development budget now.

[03:38:51] So the funding won't run out unless council changes priorities. One last comment on that. There is more that you do and that you really account for. So if you look at the investment in the non-profit, if you are putting money on the English as a second language, even though you're not applying it, but that is investment that you're making back to reach these goals.

[03:39:19] And the thing is that those are used in that, I'm very successful. And my data is successful with these great phrases. So, this got me to thinking here on this one, though it may not be the appropriate place.

[03:39:43] But, you know, now that we center view, and more importantly, the Mason Small Business Development Program that we have, I think in some way ought to get some recognition, not named specifically, but, you know, helping people as adults to learn to be, run a business, to start a business, I should say, is what that program is all about, and, you know, that's why I wonder if it should be an economic prosperity or an educational entertainment, or does it cross over, and we somehow make

[03:40:23] reference to that all along the way because we do spend not only a lot of money well but we spend money but we also you know the million cups and what takes place at center views mean is kind of a stellar you know kind of feather in our cap it's unique it is an incubator along the way in terms of helping businesses and in some fashion it ought to now be included again to the earlier point wanted this which we get developed it and we checked it off and we should now you know

[03:40:58] highlight it along the way come to manassas you can we're going to help you learn how to properly start a business so that you too can be you know an entrepreneur we grow as you grow that's right

[03:41:22] even if you go to goal number one under education develop multiple pathways to success allowing all students to reach their full potential but then if you look at the objectives and success measures it's not just students it's what tom and they were talking about adults so just in my mind allowing us to tweak some of the words to come up with something different would be more encompassing as an example again i'm not the expert allowing all residents to reach their full potential

[03:41:59] now we're talking off residents including businesses our students and our adults so um that's the reason i wanted to bring their point in but we needed to have more conversation

[03:42:20] more than anybody in the state right that's important The state, the governor sent people here to look at our CTEs. But stylistically, again, here we're addressing in a nutshell form of judicial priority.

[03:42:38] And I think the points that some of you and how many are accurate. They are better in goals and objective means to accomplish the priority for the GTE. Because there are action steps, you know, funding the George Mason Institute or, you know, Whatever it is, because those are the action items that staff go check, check, check, check, they come back to the overall priority, because if you put them all in the priority, then you get priority at the home.

[03:43:16] That's not the norm. Yeah. You got a thought on education, high level? Staff?

[03:43:32] I'm sorry, go ahead. The only thing, I will go back to the city survey, and I'm going to say this, and I'm not pushing for this. There is a segment of the community that thinks the council needs to be more engaged.

[03:43:56] Is there any, is this a place or time to show that as a strategic priority for making conversation?

[03:44:15] I don't, I'm just making this up as a staff person. That was a reason why I wanted to see that, because it's a part of it. Yeah. So that was why I was thinking, maybe want to work for us, or something different, that we can build one more right there, and we can actually, will they just meet it?

[03:44:43] Or, and maybe on the first one, talk about the how to think about animals and the possibilities. Innovating, how do you already have the law? If the educational is more reflective of our wisdom to be learning away with someone, and I want to be able to say, I want to maintain that and then try to move forward, or innovate and try to, you know, bring other things up. I know it's

[03:45:16] Is there something that says workforce development is a separate item from education and a workforce development is reference to that concept?

[03:45:41] That's one, the workforce development, and then no one's allowed to throw anything at me.

[03:45:47] Based upon your question, is there a desire to kickstart this joint council school board task force, two members from each body that last all year long to help council and the school board start developing programs and some conversations so you are not getting it.

[03:46:23] only time you're hearing about it is budget time and all these programs are where they want to go is there a desire to explore that that's more engagement yes yes um i'm stalling for time no the school system has shown it extensively to do what i'm going to And along those lines, I'm not a gift that they call us open.

[03:47:00] And that is because they have, you need to know that. They have modified . We want to enhance their building and enhance and modify their curriculum in their teaching methods to match their learning needs and practices of learning.

[03:47:18] So to the extent that in support of an institution like payment, I still think what we can do in the institution really is funding. I don't want to fall into a trap of the City Council co-partnering the education of the students.

[03:47:46] I don't want to go in and tell them you must teach this, you must teach that, and so forth. I just want to, if they recognize or do that as a need to modify the curriculum to meet to meet the learning needs of our students that they are funded appropriately and that they're funded using appropriately.

[03:48:03] In other words, stay in our lane, but I'm okay with -- I don't want to -- a monthly request on either side, tell us what you've done to satisfy our expectations and that kind of thing.

[03:48:20] I don't think that's a role for us in the proper education. we have a role, and to the extent we stand in the role 12 months, 3 times a year, whatever, I'm okay with that. As long as we're not going in and not coming cold.

[03:48:37] We're good with it, as long as roles responsibilities are clear and expectations from both sides are understood going into this. Yes, and if I might be, and I think it's the first thing that's very important about this in there, I share with y'all. i think the ongoing meetings where they're monthly or for later or whatever they're involved allow for a level of dialogue it's not the one-on-one you know playing telephone so it's

[03:49:07] the chair and the vice chair and the mayor and and it would enable some concreteness of conversations oh no you know and and i will be honest i you know i'm in there and the show here we're

representing the council were not fine and i'll say i'm cautious to say in my opinion this is what i think the council will do but to give them a sense of where we as a body they're at whether issues or concerns

[03:49:43] or you know we want extra 10 minutes guess what they ain't going to happen to be anybody device and i frankly at one point i don't see a universe where the stealthy this year votes to increase the tax rate so there's a cap that's the money that's available so if you're asking for anything outside that it's just i don't see that happening and you need to plan it for you um yeah and i and i think they appreciated having that directness of feedback that is very helpful

[03:50:21] to them in their planning process and their management of expectations so it's not you get all these one-off conversations that we have um and uh it is at times i'm going to say sharp but it is direct and you know i'm very honest yeah and and received as such on both sides and with one of the better best meetings i've had how many years ago a lot of you know here's

[03:51:00] the reality of the situation on the ground and we gotta do it and get a new board uh and no i'm not trying to get us into this issue you know we provide the money that's what the law says can't tell the schools how to send them the money and i propose i'm in the green room with them but And I will say proactively, that's really what did happen.

[03:51:31] When I was part of that, you know, we were no more speaking for counsel. I think it was more trying to make sure that when we meet, we are successful. And I am all about it. I don't think we're telling them what they know and everybody knows their line and they say it. I would love to see that communication.

[03:51:56] I couldn't believe that everything that happened between that board and our board has made the residents feel like this. I'm not saying that the only reason, but if we have a better working relationship with them, and we understand that it doesn't mean that we don't, because they will be tough decisions like, ah, and they need to do what they have to do at their bodies. I believe this will be helpful and these will show our priorities, our education, because whoever is there, or

[03:52:36] if both of them are there, they put in time, and not only money, but time, and they govern everything. I really like to tell them a little bit. Okay, thank you, Mayor. This is a question for our city attorney.

[03:52:51] Would these meetings be subject to public notice, the public could attend, they would be there would be when I say an agenda even something as simple as you know call the order of discussion you know dispensal that sort of thing that and so with public notice is there a certain amount of time ahead of time that the notice has to be published three days before so that's word is there a

[03:53:23] requirement that any minutes or notes are taken must be taken um yeah I don't I'll look at you on it. There are certain types of meetings that are excluded from the farm to take minutes. I don't think that would be one of them better.

[03:53:44] Okay, so that would require like the attendance of the clerk on IRF for their clerk or something like that. I just, for procedural things. When I heard about the meeting that was recently held, I thought it was a great idea. uh now the participants are talking uh with the idea that should be continued is a big move we certainly know what we got when we weren't talking on a regular basis regular however you want to define more than even with our three scheduled joint meetings one of which is about

[03:54:24] the budget but even so that this this could be helpful in those regards so i would say um yeah councilman i will mention workforce development and how maybe that's something the council can show to the public we're trying to um navigate or promote um i just have a couple questions i don't even know this school board do they still have like the cte advisory board

[03:55:00] somewhere now do they have any kind of community like that they do have a perkins grant committee WHICH I THINK IS SOMETHING RELATED TO TPE I SERVE ON THAT COMMUNICATION. THE TPE ADVISORY BOARD WAS A GROUP OF BUSINESS OWNERS THAT USED TO ADVISE THE SCHOOL ON WHAT PROGRAMS THEY WERE LOOKING FOR.

[03:55:22] I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THAT SO I WONDER IF THAT'S NOT AROUND ANYWHERE. BUT WE DO HAVE LIKE OUR BUSINESS COUNCIL. HAS OUR BUSINESS COUNCIL EVER MET WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD? LIKE THEY HAVE? OKAY. HAS IT BEEN RECENT? Well, I would say, I think, I believe they did so within the last year that they, I think it even, and Chris Taylor, who heads up the CTE, if I may name it, we appointed her, the council appointed her as a member of the Manassas Business Council.

[03:55:55] That's great. That's great. I mean, that's showing something that we're trying to do, you know, as Mark, when you were saying the public wants us to do more help schools. you know, we're bringing our side of the our volunteers that are experts try to help the schools. I mean, that's one way. I'm glad to hear that. I don't know, maybe they could be involved with the council in the conversations with the mayor and vice mayor and the chair and vice chair, you know, if we're gonna try to, well, okay.

[03:56:26] No, give me people in the room. Or a chair. Who is the chair? Okay. And the next is, you can tell them, aren't they presenting on Monday? Yes. Oh, Patrick is doing the presentation. Okay.

[03:56:44] Do you think from anybody else, Madam Mayor? I'm related. I just can't. I'm related. I haven't found a way, but I just feel like some of the reports are super important, and we have them all in the same meeting.

[03:57:08] I don't know if we were doing it differently back the first year, but I-- - For example, yeah. - Yeah, they want to come and they present the annual report. I just feel like, it's like, are you trying to hit a deadline, or are you just trying for us to-- I mean, no, I have no point-- - The intent was to try and get the information of what each of the departments and each of the groups did prior to the presentation of the budget so that you had some understanding of where any of the individual funding needs for

[03:57:47] a department or one of one of their council's committees was was being directed and from the benefits that were received yeah it used to be they were more spread out over the course of the year and then the feedback was you know just too careful so you hear from there one in june and but then it became budget time and it was like oh we need to hear from the major departments and mr pay his desires of getting you know department heads in front so that's where

[03:58:25] this sort of concept you know change that and sort of sliding them all from mid-december through February is something to try and do it. I'm saying why wrong or indifferent is just why they've changed the process.

[03:58:42] So the goal for the year was to get all boards committed commissions to report out in the fall, and then the department leading up to the budget to report to groups really in January and February, we

were having too many boards committed commissions going the same night as departments and muddling departments and boards and commissions, so we didn't succeed.

[03:59:00] some of the board and commissions like under our plans our original series like manassas business council eda hmi they should have been reporting out in the fall and economic development should have gone a different night but it didn't quite work out this year because we're asking boards and commissions to produce reports when they want to so it's a work in progress so wanted off so and then the weather the weather didn't help so stuff got slid with the weather we ended up just backing up that's why we have so many really on monday night was not our goal

[03:59:32] just to me you know like i figured like i wanted to do my full attention and uh and i felt you know i feel like well at first i didn't know you know the whole relationship and uh and it was a change and now i feel like it's so important and i'm so rushed to it and i don't know you know maybe i'm alone on that but i you know to me like if you have the police and fire and economic development and the same night as well you know it's you know all the you know all the departments and everything

[04:00:11] that is done and all the commissions or or committees you know are very important to me but when you're making a decision and what you need before the budget and all of that it has a I want to have pressure in my mind, you know, the economic development, the fire, or the police.

[04:00:34] I just had to find a place to stay because I've been feeling like that, and I don't know how to fix it. My bed, I was not going to make an appointment, but I just feel like it is alive.

[04:00:51] And I just hope not only me, but the residents are able to see it digested and, you know, I know that I can come back enough, but it is, you know, the opportunity has been missed, the department is not coming anymore to the presentation.

[04:01:09] I think it's more difficult, you know, like I will do what I have to do, that's what I sign up for, but I just feel that it's too important in one. It sounds like I stepped out every one time.

[04:01:38] We have a legal issue. No, I understand. With that, any other feedback from anyone else? Staff, anything else from the department council? We don't disagree with Sonia.

[04:01:54] That was not our goal for Monday night. It just weather didn't help and other scheduling issues. I'll say congratulations, I don't want to tell you about the evening. Good evening.

[04:02:09] I'm glad to hear it, yeah, yeah, if I told my boss if the council fell asleep in the afternoon, that probably would be good, so, yeah. All right. Thank you. Well, thank you all very much. Again, I do appreciate you all and the time you put into this. It's clear that you all care. I work with collective officials all over the state, and I've enjoyed working with you the second time.

[04:02:27] If I can ever be assistance to you in the future, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Thank you. Thank you all very much. Thank you. And good luck. while charles is wrapping up we just have a quick issue we need to brief you on so let's talk about the planning of this retreat and how it came about we were very clear with mouth failure that this is a public meeting it needs to be open to the public department gate needs to be open the

[04:03:03] entire time. It has been apparently open and shut at different times today by staff members. Alan Gould has tried to get in this afternoon. The staff member had locked the gate when they saw that it was open so he could not get in. That was at roughly 3:30, 3:30 ish. He sent an email. We're in contact with

Mount Hilliard. The gate must remain open the entire time was here until our meeting is complete. So we have documentation of that of that request so we can say that's

[04:03:39] not the agreement we had with Mount Fillier. We're working to get it back open even though we're completing for the remainder of the day up for tomorrow and Saturday. We got to make sure that Mount Fillier will keep that gate open as they agreed to and then we will respond back to Mr. Goss with answering his questions. So that's a little bit of an issue for you. Any questions about it?

[04:04:11] Thank you, Joyce. Thank you all. Enjoy your dinners. Eric, did you have an update on your dinner? Just again logistics. Dinner is over in the same room. It is scheduled at 6 o'clock. If they bring it early, we'll send you a text and let you know. The The dinner menu tonight is Caesar salad, Creamy Tuscan chicken, garlic mashed potatoes, green beans, and cheese cake.

[04:04:48] Six o'clock, if they change the time and they show up a little early, we'll make sure we send a text. We had a couple more things that I was going to cover this afternoon. I think we'll be able to make that time up over the next few days.

[04:05:06] I prefer not to cover anything else since we have found the gate close. Fair enough. Craig, legally, do they just recess and then pick it back up tomorrow morning? Thank you, Mayor.



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