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[00:00:00] I'm calling the city council budget work session to order.

[00:01:07] Mr. Smith, please call over. Mayor Davis Younger. Present. Vice Mayor Wolfe. Here. Council Member Ellis. Here. Council Member Smith. Council Member Alcina. Here. Council Member Vasquez Luna. Council Member Hudson.

[00:01:23] Here. Thank you very much. Everybody's all here. So we will dive right in. Are you see y'all hands on our way? I understand she is. Do you have any opening remarks? Mr. No, sir. We just look forward to the discussion of a tax rate.

[00:01:40] We're going to dive right into it, Mayor, unless members of council want to go a different direction. As you look on your calendar, the only thing listed tonight is setting the advertised, keyword is advertised, tax rate.

[00:01:58] So we're prepared to begin that discussion in any manner you want. You've been provided with lots of information the past week with additional documents, including the staff recommended of the unassigned 2.1 with some other documents over the past week.

[00:02:18] How did you want to begin this discussion? I want to chime in. I'll start. I've taken a poll of all the members. I think it's fair to say, again, to clarify for those in the audience and those listening, This is an advertised rate which is merely a not-to-exceed number.

[00:02:38] This is not setting the tax rate. But in pulling the members, I think there's a consensus between the current rate and adding maybe a penny or two in terms of just margin as we go through this process and with the uncertainty with the federal space.

[00:03:01] And, again, no determination as to what our rate would be. So it's more than I would probably do by myself. I will throw out to the idea of the high end of an advertised rate total of \$1.28 and see if that would get four people to say yes to.

[00:03:21] I don't hope that I would do that, Mr. Osina. Sorry to interrupt. I'm done. But before weighing in on that, so I did, as staff knows, I did look up in the budget book and saw what our shared services are that are on page, start on 146, which in the past has sometimes bedeviled us along the way here.

[00:03:52] But I was curious if we know what OmniRide and VRE are proposing as rates that we need to take into consideration.

[00:04:12] You got me. I'm sorry. Yeah. Okay. I'm just clarification. You mean the amount that they're expecting? Yeah. Is it more money? If so, how much more money? Because I have the answer. So I'm going to go back just a little bit. Mr. Asina had sent an email to Mr. Burke and staff to answer some questions.

[00:04:47] We are working on through that list of questions. Our intent is to provide it to you in the Friday update, but we do have specifics. We didn't have them all. That's the reason we didn't give them out. But for your question, the OmniRod VRE is paid for out of your gas tax, and we supplement \$300,000 in addition to the gas tax.

[00:05:11] So they sent us that budget, and we have added that in with \$300,000. We've got that fair budget covered. And that is the usual amount, isn't it? 300, you know, gas tax and whatever the gas tax...

[00:05:26] Last year you voted for \$300,000 in addition as well. And that has covered things in the past? Yes, sir. Okay. Well, the new WAWA have an effect on this one. For sure. No, and the sense that, you know, if it is a higher, I believe that could help.

[00:05:47] That's the only reason why I'm bringing it up. It could help in two ways. Either it could help reduce your \$300,000, or if their costs continue to go up, hopefully it would capture that delta so we don't have to go above the \$300,000 supplement, is our hope as well. And they do quite a bit of business.

[00:06:12] And I know I already asked and I already has been taken into consideration, but it's just a reminder that, you know, to remind our residents that we do have not only some of the lowest gas rates, but the gas rates of states and the locality with liquid gas.

[00:06:33] So it just, you know, it takes a little bit extra, but I recall our former Vice Mayor Sebaski always talking about how important it is. Because if we had enough, we wouldn't have to, you know, supplement that. So, but I believe we are ready.

[00:06:49] Yeah, we agree. We encourage our residents, just like you do, fill your car up with gas in the city of Manassas and on the city side of Liberia, not the county side of Liberia. Yeah, thank you. I was just going to do the head nod on the what's on the floor.

[00:07:11] Oh, okay. So, Mr. Wolf had mentioned 128, head nods for an advertised rate of 128. Ms. Ellis. I would like to send it at 126. I don't know if I'll have to. The advertised rate? Yeah, the advertised rate, just because I just don't want it to go above that.

[00:07:31] I know that doesn't mean it is or isn't, but I'd still say it sends a message to the voters, the residents, you know, that we are, they always get nervous when we go above, and I understand why we do, but it's still, that is the ceiling.

[00:07:51] I think it says that and a message to them. I would like to see it set at 126 for the advertised tax rate. So we have 128. How many hit-nots for 128 again?

[00:08:07] I'm sorry. Three, four, I think 128. Ms. Elisar. That's okay, I tried. You did, you did. Met it to the madness, though, so hang on, hang on in there. Sophie, do you mind? Yep. To be clear, we have five head nods for an advertised tax rate of \$1.28.

[00:08:29] Again, for our listeners behind us, that is, or behind me, that is an advertised tax rate only. It's not to exceed, as the vice mayor said. We have many discussions over the next month of where the budget will fall out.

[00:08:47] That will be the final right when you vote on the budget. Thanks, Luna. It's more of a comment than, well, I do have a question at the end. I got my notice of the assessment this week, and I'm sure the public got it to our residents.

[00:09:07] Bless you. Bless you. I believe in the last, including this one, is showing, you know, the same rates. And, of course, you know, the increase has been on, not in the land, but in the building side.

[00:09:23] But also our, you know, notice talks about the elderly. And I was thinking, you know, I know we have discussed it. I know it might be coming back. But I would like to dig a little bit more because I know we're getting close to, like, a couple of things.

[00:09:40] But one, it will be how many get and how much is the limit, knowing that somebody can come back for many years and get that relief. And the other one is when the Social Security benefits increases, I think.

[00:09:59] That's what it was. They have been, yeah. Yeah, so when that, if we have kept up with that and how much, Then how much that means, and if there is any change in the future, I'm really looking into a conversation, whether it's this budget or next budget, but I do believe that we have to look into that based on the current, what do I call it, liability, that we have to go back, and we have to cover some, regardless of how many years back.

[00:10:37] Does that make sense? I'm not sure it's retroactive. I know that the Commissioner of Revenue has discussed the potential for increasing the limit for the senior relief, and I think we will be able to provide you more information about that for your consideration at a future work session.

[00:10:59] And I think I can make it better. So I believe we have the obligation for the disabled, but this, because it has increased, our elderly relief has increased. So I'm looking into whether this budget or next budget to see how options or to see, you know, what is happening, what can it be done.

[00:11:21] I believe what you'll hear from your elected commissioner of revenue, this is an item he does want to bring before you, and he is going to ask you to consider that ceiling on that one as well for the reason you explained. I'm good. Thank you so much.

[00:11:37] So, if you go to our agenda for the retreat, you will see the Commissioner of the Revenue's PowerPoint presentation on this topic. under 2.2 financial conditions slash budget planning, and he had a

Section 07-tax relief for the elderly and disabled FY25, and, you know, discussed exactly what Councilwoman Vasquez Luna is talking about here along the way,

[00:12:13] where we are, what the rates, not the rates, but the highest level of this sort here, And for both disabled as well as for senior citizens along the way here. For property tax and license fee.

[00:12:30] So if you wanted to see that ahead of time. Just a reminder, we did go, Tim did present it to us. And that's where you can see the actual numbers. And I'm looking for staff to provide information on how to change it.

[00:12:47] Whether, you know, I don't know if we're going to be able to do it on this budget. I will have the support. I would like to make sure that we take care of as many as possible within our means. We will get your commissioner before you go to work session for him to walk us back through that.

[00:13:09] And again, at that point, it will just be an estimated what that cost will be, because you're never going to have any people that actually qualify. But that was our intent to get him back in front of you and present it. So as you try to work with your final budget number, you will need to know what that cost is.

[00:13:30] I'm good. Thank you. Anyone else? Madam Mayor, that was the only thing that was on your agenda. We are prepared to continue now with other discussions if you want to try to get ahead of this and keep having those.

[00:13:49] We have one person shaking his head over here. At least continue with the conversations that will help you in future work sessions to arrive at your final number. So we'll be prepared to answer questions or jump in on any topics that you desire that will help you get there.

[00:14:07] Mr. Ossina, did you have? Did I have topics? Well, I did share some along the way here. As a reminder, ACM Keene, what are we planning on talking about next Wednesday?

[00:14:33] And the reason I mention that is next Wednesday I will be out of town again. So obviously my motivation is I'm here and I'd love to talk in person if possible. But I recognize it. So if there were things, what was the point?

[00:14:51] I could look it up. No, no, no. March 12th, next Wednesday, is your non-tax supported and you're operating in CIP. So that's all your funds. So we have two things we have to go through that we can't do tonight. one is you're trying to organize and confirm the airports and aft ports coming in on one of these nights that'll be one night and then we have our utilities department that's going to walk you through their cip they're not here tonight so right now we have flexibility on what night we

[00:15:28] can bring them in we're just trying to confirm with aft ports right now and work around their of course i remember you mentioning that thank you i would say the apports just information i've gotten maybe more challenging because of uh the events that the federal government have impacted faa we that's the reason we want you as a body to hear directly from appports what their planning process is for some of the cuts and what they're still willing to

[00:16:07] um partner on moving forward in preparation for that so you need to hear directly from them because there are things um as mr ocena has supplementals that were not granted the airport is an example of that they put in for some items that we did not approve in our opinion we need to hear directly from that ports that they're still bought in all in on the planning process uh and are willing to supplement that so it's not the taxpayers other than that we still have again we

[00:16:43] we've begun those discussions of the um unassigned funds we had several discussions we can if you want to start there we can start with that that will help with you uh with your planning for your your final rate as well um for the unfunded requests which total three million five hundred and sixty thousand if we did not we did not fund any of them we could drop three cents off the tax

[00:17:22] rate you know you're talking about two different things there okay we're talking about on this unassigned funds or the supplementals that were not approved the unfunded request potential enhancements which is remove vehicle license fee more solar programs is that what you're looking at yes 2.1 that's talking about this okay the the 3.5 is the total of things that are not funded

[00:17:52] so the unassigned funds total one of the unfunded 2.15 okay okay so if we do not fund THE UNFUNDED REQUEST, THERE WOULD BE A REDUCTION IN RISK.

[00:18:10] SO IT WOULD BE A REDUCTION OF 2.150, WHICH IS ALMOST THREE PENNIES. OKAY. THIS ONE, HOW DO YOU WANT TO NOTE THAT? OFF THE 1.26.

[00:18:28] BACK IN THE FLIP SIDE, IF WE WERE TO TAKE IT TO 1.24, TWO CENTS DOWN, AND WE COULD DO-- we could play around with the unassigned funds still do everything just squish some with the 215 you could reduce two pennies and still have about 610 000 left if you wanted to allocate

[00:19:06] towards any of these unbundled or anything else the way that it is written right now the way that the budget is balanced right now the 2.15 yes we could do this as is the unassigned i mean and i'm pointing to that and you can't see sorry you could take the unassigned reduce two pennies and still have about six hundred ten thousand to spend on something else that you might want unfunded or anything else that you want okay and that would be uh at the 124. that would be the rate

[00:19:42] 124 yes just for clarity um dying correct me if i'm wrong so as an example if we did what you said uh on our list we have um federal state and federal reserves you could say we're going to hold that 610 for those reserves to wait to see what the impacts are that's what i one item that we're going to hold for. Me personally, that's what I, I know I don't vote again, but again, when I started, when we started these discussions, I said our people are hurting, only going to get

[00:20:19] worse. We have to try to find a way to help them as best we can and still do what we want, need to do. To me, it's just simple, but being, and I know Sonia, Councilman Vesquez Luna had asked for an INCREASE 4-HMI, I THINK YOU HAD SAID 50, TAKE IT TO 50?

[00:20:41] THE RECOMMENDATION THERE WAS 30, AND YOU WANTED IT TO BE 50. MY HOPE WAS THAT WE COULD DO, I'M SORRY, NO, IF WE ARE DOING THE REDUCTION, YOU KNOW, IF WE CAN DO AT LEAST 30,000, THAT'S RIGHT. SO IF WE DO THE 2 CENTS, YOU'RE SAYING YOU'RE OKAY WITH THE 30?

[00:21:00] YEAH. OKAY. But I would like to see the Marstella with the two positions. Is it three added or two added? It's three added. We have one full-time now. We want to hire three part-time.

[00:21:17] Three unfunded part-time positions in the staffing. So off the top of my head, if you did what she just said, I'm going to round up. That would be \$130,000 off of that. \$610,000.

[00:21:33] We can get an example. I'm just throwing this out. I'll put you on. very good um and i i would i would make you already know what my priority is and i think somewhat premature to to until we hear

from the school board on march the 26th to hear their presentation about their budget here and then to hear from them directly about the seven percent

[00:22:03] school races that they're requesting at this point yep go ahead when i requested i was looking into a reduction of whether it's two pennies or three pennies, which is part of the unassigned.

[00:22:22] And, you know, for me, it's like how much will impact the bill. So, I believe right now the 1.26, the current bill is for the residential, I think it's

[00:22:48] I'll go with the increase I think right now the total residential change it's 428 and then when when Miss Diane provided me the I'm sorry you don't have that but I will email it to you yeah when she provided me what I requested it was if we were to do a 22 I'm sorry two

[00:23:28] cents reduction it will bring it down to 337 if we were to do a three penny reduction it will bring it down to 291 so I you know I do feel like there is so much right now and that's why I'm thankful that you know we do have room as the tax gets advertised.

[00:24:01] But I understand we have a lot of work to do. But, you know, I'm looking into at least two pennies, if possible, reduction. Anybody else want to try more? No, I'd like to let the conversation be here.

[00:24:22] As the obvious, that still contemplates removing the \$25 vehicle license types also.

[00:24:31] No, that's not that that that's on the unassigned list. So what am I not understanding the two point one million that you have you have a list of up to three point six million dollars of options to use for those. Yes, sir. So the nine hundred and some odd thousand for the vehicle was one of the options. So if you proceed with the production in real estate rate, you will have to probably delay the vehicle until a future.

[00:25:02] it's an either or sorry it's an either or you're gonna reduce the rate either or oh you said either either either or either or either or when i uh when i was doing the three it's uh thinking none of them when i was doing the two even though it's less um but i do you know that was the part when i asked last time, like, where can we go to see that, you know, that this happened?

[00:25:34] So I believe that, you know, we can work within, you know, what we have to try to do the two and try to do the 20, the 25. And I know it's a lot, but it's, how much it was, 130, 120 plus the nine, which is one million some and and the two cents reduction and I know it's you know it takes from the budget presented but I don't you know I feel like you know we

[00:26:10] can find ways to compromise and that's why I was asking last time where can I look to see and you know it might have to be a staff recommendation I'm sorry, what makes up the 3, you said 3.6?

[00:26:29] Yes, sir, on page 5 of the budget document. Well, no, I'm talking, I'm looking at the undersigned sheet that you gave up. Okay. That started with undersigned 2.1. I'm sorry, Mr. Warren. I believe what you're talking about this sheet, sir?

[00:26:45] The one that says 2.1 at the top, and it has one, two, three, four, five items. That does not add up to 3.6. No, it does not. That adds up to the \$2.1. That is your staff recommendation of how to spend that \$2.1. Then I go back to my regular.

[00:27:01] When I asked about the vehicle license tax, \$9.50, on the sheet, you said that would come off the \$3,600. Well, on page 5 of the budget that was presented, there is an unfunded request that totals up to

about \$3.6, which includes the vehicle licensing fee.

[00:27:24] So this 3.6, of this 3.56, there's 2.1 that's unassigned? Yes, sir, 2.1, and what the chief provided to you was the staff recommendation of how to use the 2.1. Forgive me for misunderstanding how the taxes could be in this, and it shows unassigned on this sheet.

[00:27:47] And again, with what on that sheet is what staff would recommend, But what is being discussed tonight is deviating from that recommendation and going to a real estate tax reduction, which then adds a lot of share of that available \$2.1 million.

[00:28:06] \$1.6 million, \$1.5 million for the two cents? Two cents. Two cents is \$1.7 million. \$1.5 million. So if you proceed with a reduction of the real estate tax rate of \$2 cents, that would pull \$1.5, \$1.6 million from the \$2.1.

[00:28:27] So that's where there isn't sufficient funding just with that \$2.1 to proceed with the vehicles. Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. When do we vote on the tax rate?

[00:28:50] I'm looking at our calendar. Is it after the second reading, June 9th? No. May 12th. May 12th. Oh, okay, May 12th. Two months. Why do we have a June 9th as the second reading?

[00:29:07] Because you make a determination, then you have two votes. Okay, so May 12th we vote. You determine tax rate at markup. So it can change for the second reading. I'm just remembering, Tim, saying that April 15th we are open.

[00:29:25] We get some data center, some idea of what we're going to be collecting from the data centers, which is, no, we'll be okay. We'll know something then. Hopefully. Okay.

[00:29:44] I'm sorry, we've done. Now that I've put it together, what I'm bringing to the table for review is like, regardless of what we have at the, whenever we get the numbers for the data centers, we can always make a decision.

[00:30:10] But let's remember, you know, that, you know, I'm so worried about that because we can no fund, you know, positions, you know, we can no, you know, have a continuous liability with the money that might not be, you know, steady.

[00:30:27] That's my biggest concern. So my, you know, view, and I know it's early, I'm just sharing because I had requested the two cents and then do two cents reduction, but I still do \$1.08, \$1,080,000, which is the stuff that I had, which is the...

[00:30:51] The more stellar and the... Understanding that there will be, you know, extra income that I don't want to take a position on right now because, you know, it is like, you know, hoping something when we don't have any information right now.

[00:31:13] So that's where I'm at. And my hope is that any other income that we have, you know, because for the school. Can I clarify one thing? Ms. Ellis, if you'll remember one of the earlier conversations, we tried to be as transparent as we could.

[00:31:38] We as staff did not include any potential data center money in what I'm going to call your base budget. Our recommendation was whatever that number is, don't put it in your base budget.

[00:31:55] Reserve it because none of us really know what's happening over the next six months or year. And if things settled down, so to speak, you could always come back mid-year and do something that did

not get approved that you wanted to do.

[00:32:13] Right. That was my best. So that hopefully makes sense. Another question, comment. If there's nothing else on the tax-supported side or the unassigned funds, Your next work sessions will begin the non-tax supported funds in CIP.

[00:32:51] More than likely, we'll move right into a utility CIP, unless we hear something different from the airport. We're at that point.

[00:33:07] That's a comment. Just kind of listening to what Councilwoman Vasquez Luna shared. I'm definitely interested in waiting until we hear from the schools before we finalize some of this stuff. But I hesitate to invest the data center money in something that we need to continuously fund, which I think is what Councilman Vasquez-Luna said as well, that we just don't know how exactly consistent that's going to be.

[00:33:41] So, I mean, if at all possible, if we can get the schools what they need and maybe, you know, data center monies as reserves or as, you know, a different pocket. Just, you know, recognizing that the residents want to see investment in the schools.

[00:33:58] I just want to make sure that what we, where we choose, and I don't know if it even really matters if it's all the same bottom line, but where we choose to get that funding from stays someplace that's going to continue to be consistent for years, you know, years moving forward. This is a thought.

[00:34:14] And just to pick up on that, Mr. Burke and I both communicated to the schools to try to prepare them for questions you may have. One of the two things we've asked them for is if they could be clear and provide at least what we believe the state is saying.

[00:34:35] They're giving additional funding so they could tell you that Delta, how much more revenue they got coming in at the state level, so you're aware of that, potential reductions if there were any from the federal side, and then if they could lay out their priorities and CIPs of things that we hadn't heard of before.

[00:35:00] Thank you, Mr. Osina. So I agree with Councilwoman Hudson that, first of all, you know, you've heard me. I'm going to be a broken record about it. You've heard what we have it even in this book here about citizen satisfaction survey here along the way.

[00:35:20] We heard it last year about the schools along the way here. And to certainly, I think, would be good for them to be able to present until we hear and ask our questions along the way.

[00:35:38] Related to that list of things, I would certainly like to hear from them what items that they are prepared, meaning the school board are prepared to pay for, that may be on their list of things that they want to do along the way here.

[00:35:55] So that we have an idea what they are thinking about using their reserve funds for. So we have kind of a fuller picture in that regard on that sense here.

[00:36:09] You know, I just look at this and I go, if we're not educating our kids, one of our top three things, I'm just wondering what we're about along the way here in that regard.

[00:36:37] I would just say that we have the data center money and we know that whatever we get in the following year will be less along the way. And that's obviously, you know, I'm sure things will in the fall will

have other ideas of how that money ought to be used or it could do this.

[00:37:05] I mean, I could make the argument that let's wait on Marsteller. Let's let's use let's see what the data center money is going to be, you know, and then if we think, you know, having one, two or three positions there along the way.

[00:37:20] Same thing with HMI on that. So, you know, we hear those of us who run businesses, those of us who work in a non-profit world, poor profit world, your budget is really your guiding document of what your priorities are.

[00:37:41] That's what it comes down to, what you say is important along the way here. So, with the schools, we've given them 3% increases, except this is the year we're in right now, but I could make the argument 3% is arbitrary.

[00:38:01] Why not two? Why not four along the way here on that sort of thing? So I'm willing to join Councilwoman Hudson in waiting until the 26th along the way in that regard to hear from the schools and also to just, you know, see what the lay of the land is along the way here on that sort of thing.

[00:38:38] So just like fire, just like police, you've got to have them. You've got to have your schools. You've got to have these services along the way. Things can be good, economically good.

[00:38:55] Things can be economically challenging. You've still got to have them. And all I will say is that I'm moving forward if we're not going to address what the schools are saying that they see as their number one need.

[00:39:17] We'll hear more about that, I'm sure, that I hope that when we do the next survey, we look our residents in the eye and say, yeah, we heard what you said, but, you know, this is what our priority was to do X, Y, or Z, but not the schools.

[00:39:39] I just, it troubles me a lot. This is the time to stand up and after survey, after survey, where we've heard that our residents are saying they've had great dissatisfaction. But let's let's hear what they have to say moving in. Thank you Budget shows a 5% increase for schools, right? Not three It's the 1.5 million that we added. It was a total from the previous year. Did you do the math on that in FY 2025?

[00:40:19] Yes, the proposed budget for FY 26 is three three percent It was five percent this current year because of the additional 1.5 Okay, so this budget, is this showing a 5% increase?

[00:40:36] It's only showing a 3%. For 20 cents, correct.

[00:40:48] We're good on our side until the end. That's when we'll be getting the calculators out.

[00:41:05] So our next question is... Your next meeting is the 12th. And we are trying to get out of the works and utilities to come in. Utilities will definitely be here next week.

[00:41:23] I just don't know the order of which one it is. As soon as we lock it down, we'll communicate to council which one is coming in that night. Thanks, ma'am.

[00:41:38] Thank you. So I'll call on Mr. Brown, I guess, to certify the resolution for item 2 on the agenda, authorizing our closed meeting, resolution R-2025-515.

[00:41:57] Mayor, members of council, we do have a closed session scheduled for one item, which is the discussion and consideration of terms and conditions for the sale of city-owned real property. That

discussion is eligible for a closed meeting under state law.

[00:42:14] If it's being a closed session, I would recommend your adoption of resolution number R-2025-515, resolution authorizing a closed meeting of city council. As a mayor, move the adoption of Resolution 2025-515.

[00:42:31] We have the motion by Vice Mayor Wolfe, seconded by Councilwoman Vasquez-Luna, to approve Resolution No. R-2025-515, authorizing a closed meeting. Any discussion? Hearing and seeing no, Ms. Garcia, please call the roll. Vice Mayor Wolfe? Yes.

[00:42:49] Councilwoman Vasquez-Luna? Yes. Councilwoman Ellis? Yes. Councilwoman Smith? Yes. Councilwoman Rosina? Yes. The motion carries. To the room over here. Immediately following a closed session, state law requires you to certify the general matters you discuss for those that were identified in the motion convening the closed session, any which are exempt from open meeting requirements under state law.

[00:43:23] That certification is included in resolution number R-2025-516, Resolution certifying a closed meeting of city council, which I recommend for your adoption. Thank you, Mr. Whitman. Vice Mayor.

[00:43:39] Madam Mayor, I move adoption of the certification of the meeting. Second. With a motion by Vice Mayor Wolfe, seconded by Councilwoman Hudson to approve. Resolution number R-2025-0516, certifying a closed meeting. Any discussion? Hearing and seeing them, Ms. Garcia, please call the roll.

[00:43:56] Mr. Mayor Wolfe? Yes. Council Member Hudson? Yes. Council Member Ellis? Yes. Council Member Smith? Yes. Councilmember Osina? Yes. Councilmember Vasquez-Luna? Yes. The motion carries. Okay, thank you. Anything else to come before the council? If not, we are adjourned. Thank you, everybody.

[00:44:13] Thank you.



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