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[00:00:01] Good evening. Hello. Hello. Is this the one? Thank you. Good evening, everyone. Calling the council meeting of April the 28th to order. Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Mayor Davis Younger. Present. Vice Mayor Wolfe. Here. Council Member Ellis. Here. Council Member Smith. Here. Council Member Osina. Present. Council Member Vasquez Luna. Present. Council Member Hudson. Here. McCormish, present.

[00:00:29] Thank you very much, if you are able to please stand with us for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Dear God, we come thankful for another opportunity to provide governance and guidance for the residents of the city of Manassas.

[00:00:45] We are grateful for the beautiful weather we are having and the many opportunities to gather as a community that are upon us as we move closer to summer. Please help us be kind to one another as you never know what the person right next to you is going through and every word matters and counts as well as our actions toward one another.

[00:01:03] Please continue to protect our staff, our men and women in uniform, and especially this council as they have some hard decisions ahead with this upcoming budget to balance our community needs and resources we have as best they can. Thank you for these council members who were elected to this space to serve our residents and not themselves for personal gains.

[00:01:23] Help us all remember the reason why we do what we do. It is about our residents and our community. We are also thankful for the residents who truly care about our city and provide honest,

constructive feedback and who show up not because of personal gain and looking to disrupt and to cause chaos, but to actually be a help to us in moving things forward.

[00:01:43] We remain thankful for all things. Please join me in welcoming, amen, please join me in welcoming Luke Hertz from Troop 670. He is a 7th grade student at Mayfield Intermediate and attends troop meetings at Grace United Methodist Church, where he is a first class scout.

[00:02:03] He will now lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Take it away, Luke. To the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:02:29] Thank you very much, Luke. Thank you. Before we get to Council Time, I want to remind everyone here that we do have sign-up sheets down here. We do have public hearings on the agenda, as well as public comment sheets. They are separate, so if you are here to sign up and speak for the public hearings, make sure you're signing up down front there, and public comment sheet as well.

[00:02:52] So we'll move forward in the agenda with Council Time. I'll call on Vice Mayor Wolfe first. And I know it's going to be a long night, so I will pass my time. Thank you. Okay, thank you. Councilwoman Ellis? She said, oh, geez. I know. Gee, I thought I was going to have a minute. I just want to welcome everyone that's here tonight to talk about the budget and the tax rates.

[00:03:13] We are really anxious to hear from you. And just getting ready for spring and getting out there planning and having a good time. And enjoy. Bee Festival. Okay. Next, Councilman Smith. In the interest of moving on with the business meeting, I pass.

[00:03:32] Councilman Osina. Oh, boy. I, too, will pass. Thank you, Madam Mayor, I'm happy to see you always, you know, so many people come here but also I hear that you listen to the recordings or you listen live and thank you, everybody that has been sending emails and reaching out, we're getting very close to the budget decision.

[00:04:07] So it is all the information that you have provided, all the requests, this is now the most important time. So I just want to make sure that you know that at least I'm trying to read all your emails and all the input. I'm looking forward tonight to hear from the crime solvers.

[00:04:26] I have been sharing their information a lot lately. And I'm also happy about the bike to work day. At the last meeting, I reminded you that's something that we participate, and it will be May 15th.

[00:04:43] And we do have so much going on. I don't remember if it's already closed, but just remember that, you know, you can always tell us whether it's the 20, 45, or different projects. You know, the website is the best source of information.

[00:04:59] Or sometimes, you know, when you come here, there's a lot of information out there. Like everybody said, we have a lot of things going on. Don't forget to check your connection newsletter.

[00:05:15] It's in English and Spanish. Then I think the staff are always putting out the information in English and Spanish, which, you know, for me, it's very important that we communicate with all the residents. But, yes, I believe that tonight is your night, and I'm looking forward to hearing from you, whether it's for the hearing or the residents' time.

[00:05:37] So again, welcome and really happy to see you here. Thank you, Councilwoman Hudson. I'd like to echo Councilwoman Vasquez Luna's comments in welcoming you all to join us this evening. This is

an important part of our decision-making and governing to decide to listen to you all, to receive your feedback before we make our decision.

[00:05:58] So we have been receiving a number of emails that I think all of us are reading and taking account of, but certainly looking forward to listening to you all tonight and thank you for your participation in advance and that is it thank you thank you i want to um recognize dignitaries who are here we have the commissioner of the revenue is here tim demerry is in the back there and our madam treasurer is also here patricia ritchie folks and we have yessi amaya from manassas park council as well thank you for being here um i won't go into and put oh oh i'm sorry you're sitting right next to yes i apologize diane is here and then who else keep going oh hey hey

[00:06:35] dana y'all just stand up and take a bow i mean and suzanne yeah school board people are here yay thank y'all for being here sorry i get to see one person and just get focused so thank you all for being here tonight appreciate it um we have our small business breakfast coming up which is we're very excited about that i just want to highlight that and then on the third um some of you may remember I did the mayor's pick at the market where I go twice a month out to the farmers market and help a selected vendor help them sell their items whatever that is I pick them out of a bag and I go to their booth which hopefully helps the sales and not hurt them but work with them for like a half

[00:07:13] an hour to sell their items so and they get a certificate this year I'm doing certificates instead of shirts so the third I'm going to be out there from 9 to 9:30 at whatever vendor I pick that's who gets stuck with me for half an hour so looking forward to starting that back up. I want to remind council members that Monica Backman the CEO of NVTa will be presenting on at our meeting on the 12th of May to catch us up on NVTa items as well so I have a whole other list but I won't carry on with that so I'll turn it over to the city manager for your time. Thank you. Thank you madam mayor. At approximately

[00:07:48] 5:30 p.m. on Friday April 25th the Point of Woods substation experienced an outage that affected about 900 customers due to an underground cable fault. Power was restored to most of the customers by about six o'clock with most with with all the customers restored by 9:30. We are assessing the condition of the cable in that area and replacing as necessary. If you experience an outage, please contact 703-257-8353. That is our 24-hour...

[00:08:21] That is not what will happen if you call. That is our 24-hour man phone number that if you call with an outage or question, they will be able to either direct you or if there is a known outage, you'll receive a message to that line that says we know about the outage.

[00:08:40] And depending upon the extent of the outage, the city will also use social media or we can also use our reverse 411 phone system to alert customers of significant outages in their areas You can also visit the city's website. We have an electric outage map.

[00:08:57] If you go to our website and simply search electric outage map, or for those that are more directly inclined, it's [http forward slash forward slash manassasutilities.org](http://forward slash forward slash manassasutilities.org) colon 7576.

[00:09:13] We'd like to also recognize our water treatment plant staff. They were awarded the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Drinking Water Gold Award for the third year in a row. This is a recognition for the highest level of treatment quality for water plants, and they achieved this due to high water quality that goes above and beyond the regulatory standards. This week, the city will be recognizing

our volunteers for their continued service to our community. The city has many opportunities for you to help the community and help our residents. Please visit our website, go to the How Do I,

[00:09:53] and then visit the volunteer, and you'll see all the opportunities that are available to serve the cities. The city has completed the installation of a red light camera at Liberia Avenue and Richmond Avenue. Beginning May 1st, we will be establishing a 30-day warning period for motorists that run that red light.

[00:10:14] And beginning June 1st, active enforcement will begin and citations will be issued through the mail. As part of our business appreciation efforts, the city is hosting our business appreciation breakfast this Thursday. Our EDA has invited those businesses licensed in the city so that we can thank them for choosing Manassas.

[00:10:32] The city would also like to thank the Heavy Construction Contractors Association for constructing a pathway and a fishing deck at the Cannon Branch Fort Pond off of Gateway Boulevard. The city has also been notified by Dominion Power that the power cost adjustment for our wholesale purchase of electric power will result in an increase in electric bills each month.

[00:10:56] The city purchases electric power from Dominion through a contract that allows Dominion to adjust the cost to reflect changes in their production costs. This adjustment is related to changes in the price for natural gas and other power generation sources due to market conditions.

[00:11:15] Thank you to the over 200 residents who visited the Annenberg Art Show this past weekend. Several pieces of art were sold, with a portion of each sale being donated back towards the renovation efforts at Annenberg. And the city will be hosting our May Household Hazardous Waste and Shredding event on Saturday, May 3rd, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

[00:11:40] You can visit manassasva.gov forward slash hhw for more information. And finally, milling and paving is continuing on Liberia Avenue at night. Please be aware of this work, and we hope to be done by the end of May.

[00:11:57] And that's all I have, Mayor. Thank you. Any questions for City Manager? Ms. Vesquez-Lona. Thank you. More than a question is the mobility. I don't think I heard, but I know there is a meeting coming up with all the mobility plan.

[00:12:15] There is a meeting on the 22nd. It's kind of early, but I just want to make sure that if you can say something about it. I was going to talk about that at the May meeting. Okay, thank you. But it is coming up. Yes, ma'am. Okay. Any other questions?

[00:12:31] We're good. Okay. We'll move on in the agenda to item one presentations. We have item 1.1, which is the Manassas City Crime Solvers here to present to us tonight. If you want to come forward with that. Welcome. Superman changing into his other shirt.

[00:12:50] Changes before I even look at it. Okay, right. Thank you, Honorable Mayor, Honorable Vice Mayor, and Council members. Thank you for allowing us to come out tonight and tell you a little bit about what we do. So, Manassas City Crime Solvers.

[00:13:08] What is the Crime Solvers? It's a group of people who help through anonymous calls from people in the community, help our policemen go ahead and solve crimes in the city of Manassas and Manassas Park.

[00:13:25] Okay, the way it works, well, let's go back to history first. Back in 1976, a detective out in New Mexico was having trouble solving a crime, so he decided to get together with the community, local media, and set up an anonymous tip line.

[00:13:47] It worked out very well, and it went on and on different places. Back in 1978, Fairfax County was the first town to become a crime solver's unit there.

[00:14:07] If you look at this picture that's up there, you may notice a gentleman on the right with the white hair by the name of Harry Parrish and a gentleman on the left by the name of Chuck Cogan. And then in the back there with the glasses was a gentleman by the name of Mark Wolverton.

[00:14:24] He's a city police officer, or you're tired now, but he was one of the instrumental founders of the Manassas City crime solvers. These guys, these congressmen, legislators, have put together a lot of different legislation relating to crime solvers.

[00:14:48] And what it does is protects the people that are making these tips to us. It protects the program itself from being summonsed into court. And it protects our board here from being summonsed into court.

[00:15:07] We can never be questioned or have any of our tips brought into court. It protects them totally. What it does do is it provides tools for people anonymously to give us tips about crimes that are occurring in the community, about property that has been stolen, about local fugitives hiding out, and many other different things.

[00:15:38] How does it work? Well, the media, we present crimes from, the police department tells us of a crime. We go ahead and put it out on the social media of the Crime Stoppers website and also upon our Facebook page.

[00:15:57] At the end of each one of these Facebook page or websites, you'll see the Crime Solvers tip and the P3 portal. What that is, is that's how people actually go ahead and report a crime to us.

[00:16:17] So they call up and they have to fill out the crime-solver people at P3 and the tip line will fill out a form. That citizen is given a number, A123, whatever, and the tip is forwarded on to the law enforcement.

[00:16:37] Now, if an arrest is made from that, law enforcement informs us that the arrest has been made and what crimes have been charged. That tipster is then contacted. We tell the tipster to keep contact with us. And based on the crime, the board will go ahead and give them a reward.

[00:16:57] All rewards are paid in cash. No questions asked. We have no idea what their name is. And it can get up to \$1,000. So why do we not? We're not a law enforcement agency of any type.

[00:17:13] We do not prevent crime. We're not a crime prevention program. And we do not solve crimes. The program name goes under a number of different names. Crime Solvers, Crime Stoppers, Silent Witness, and it's all over the world, actually.

[00:17:29] And this one particular picture here shows something in Scotland. And the window, it's got a Crime Solvers. And of course, old Sherlock Holmes, he's our logo. Everybody knows the old Sherlock Holmes, the mythical consulting detective.

[00:17:48] And that's our logo. You'll see it on a lot of our brochures and on our pins that we wear. I think it's on our shirt, too. A little bit about our Crime Solvers. Manassas City started in 1987 with the Crime Solvers.

[00:18:05] Manassas Park had a Crime Solvers long about then too, and Prince William County had one. Prince William County had since deceased, having their Crime Solvers board. Manassas Park, back in 2012, voted to come with us, and we're now the Manassas Crime Solvers, I'm sorry, Manassas City, Manassas Park Crime Solvers.

[00:18:28] We are a group of volunteers, of people that live or work in the cities of Manassas or Manassas Park. And we are a community-based 501C3 corporation. We operate entirely on contributions from individuals, organizations, and businesses.

[00:18:45] We are not supported in any way, shape, or form by you people, unfortunately. Only get our donations from individuals and organizations, businesses. What does the Board of Directors do? The Board of Directors administers and manages the program.

[00:19:02] We create the policies, decide on the tips, on the amount of money that's going to be paid for tips and the program in general, and we do fundraising. We do also have a lot to do with the publicity of the program. You may have seen our tents at the Fall Jubilee or First Night, different places around Manassas, Manassas Park, different functions that are going on.

[00:19:30] We try to get out there and pass out information, encouraging people to go ahead and turn people in that are breaking the law. We also have signs, some of them by the 7-Eleven, other places where people hang out, metal signs, kind of like a street sign that is attached to the buildings.

[00:19:51] We have 30 or 40 of them around the cities. So we try to get the word out. How can you help? Well, you can help by advertising for us. We want to get the word out.

[00:20:08] I know Chief has put the logo on the back of all the squad cars. We'd like to get it on all the vehicles in the city of Manassas. It's just a little sticker on the back and has the tip line on it, just to encourage people.

[00:20:26] You can consider making a donation. I'm talking to you folks now. People that have a business in town or just an individual, we will gladly take donations. Of course, that's the only way we get our profit. We get our monies to pay out.

[00:20:44] And that's it. Any questions? Thank you. Council members, any questions? No? Okay. Thank you so much for being here and bringing us up to date.

[00:21:03] Oh, we have the members stand up. Oh, okay. Take the gifts. Love the gifts. Gifts, gifts. Free gifts. Yes. Thank you very much.

[00:21:23] Thank you, Peter. Thank you, Mr. Alton. The swag.

[00:21:59] Something like that. You need it. Something like that. You might get in jail free. Thank you. Someone tells us about your past. you. Thank you so much. Thank you for the giving. Thank you guys. Next on the agenda is the proclamation for Bike to Work Day and I'm going to go down front to do that and whoever needs to

[00:22:27] come up. Chloe, is it you? Okay. Hello, hello. Look forward to doing this every year for being here and accepting this. I'll read the proclamation. Whereas Bike to Work Day began in 1956 and has grown into a widespread event in an effort to get commuters to try bicycling to work as a healthy and safe alternative to driving alone and whereas bicycle commuting benefits

[00:23:06] the national capital region including the city of manassas by improving air quality reducing noise and encouraging energy conservation and whereas bicycle commuting benefits the national capital capital region including the city of manassas by enhancing the quality of life for residents and by creating healthy and vibrant communities and whereas bicycle commuting benefits both employees and employers through better health and fitness lower costs and reduced parking spaces and whereas back to work day supports the city of manassas comprehensive plan mobility vision

[00:23:42] which seeks to provide a sustainable multimodal transportation system throughout the city and And whereas in June 2023, the city of Manassas was awarded the Bronze Level Bicycle-Friendly Community Award by the League of American Bicyclists, and whereas the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board proclaimed Thursday, May 15, 2025, as Bike to Work Day throughout the Washington Metropolitan Region, and whereas the city of Manassas is celebrating Bike Month with numerous events throughout the month of May.

[00:24:16] Now therefore, I'm Michelle Davis Younger, Mayor of the City of Manassas, Virginia, and on behalf of the Manassas City Council hereby proclaim Thursday, May 15, 2025 as Bike to Work Day in the City of Manassas and encourage all citizens to participate on May 15th by visiting www.biketoworkmetrodc.org and also to use and explore the City's growing bicycle network throughout the year.

[00:24:42] Thank you very much. And Chloe is here with some remarks. Thank you. So May is Bike Month, and Manasseh is celebrating with many events for all age and abilities. May 3rd, city staff will be there at the farmer's market to promote biking in the city.

[00:24:58] May 7th is Bike to School Day. May 10th is there will be a class held by Waba for adults to learn to ride a bike from 2 to 5 on the Prince William Lot. May 15th is Bike to Work Day. The pit stop will be at the VIA station from 6 to 9 a.m. May 16, there'll be a bike rodeo for kids at the Boys and Girls Club hosted by the Manassas City Police. May 17, there'll be a Manassas family bike ride

[00:25:29] 2.5 miles with the Manassas City Police as well. We'll meet at 9.30 at Dean Park. May 22nd is the annual Bike and Pastry and Improvement meeting at 7 p.m. And May 24th, there'll be a community bike ride of 12 miles throughout the city so please check out the website or grab one of those postcard here and make sure to sign up and we'll hope to see you there well thank you madam mayor and and the loan for your wonderful work

[00:26:05] and for promoting a bike to work day and bike month the city has been an HMI over the years and the Prince William County DOT have done a tremendous job over the supporting this event there are nine pit stops in Greater Prince William including Manassas Park and it's free you get a free t-shirt you get get free snacks get to meet fellow bicyclists and in our case it's on the VRE platform so there'll be plenty of people there but it's it's a wonderful event and remember that you don't have to bike all the way to work if you work in DC or in

[00:26:42] Alexandria or whatever you can just bike to the VRE station and we'd like to see

[00:26:47] more of that. We have item 1.3, the Monassau City Public Schools presentation from Baldwin Elementary.

[00:27:31] I guess Chair Seberg is going to tee it up for us and introduce Mr. Rupert. Good evening. Good evening, Madam Mayor, Vice Mayor Wolfe, members of the council, and Mr. Burke. This evening you're getting to hear from Baldwin Elementary and its very own principal, Mr. Dave Rupert. Mr. Rupert has been with Monassau City Public Schools for 22-plus years and as a principal for us for 13 years. And here he is, Mr. Dave Rupert.

[00:28:04] Come on down. Thank you and good evening, Mayor Davis Younger, Vice Mayor Wolfe, members of City Council. It's an honor to be here. Again, my name is Dave Rupert, the proud principal at Baldwin Elementary School, right here in the heart of Manassas.

[00:28:26] We're right here by the train tracks. We get to live the city every day. So it's an honor to be a leader here Baldwin Elementary is a pre-k through four building and we have approximately 700 students about 695 and I'm here to tell you a little bit about a project that has been going on and it grew as a really it started as a small thing and it kind of sprouted up just like a garden so and it is ironically called Baldwin Gardens hopefully you guys will get down to see it it was a partnership between Leadership Prince William as a group that pushes through projects

[00:29:02] I'm sure some of you are aware, but Leadership Prince William leads projects throughout the county and the city, and we're all one team. And we got to work with those members and also a big supporter of Manassas City Public Schools and the city itself, Micron.

[00:29:18] So to get started, why Baldwin Gardens was approached? We have a beautiful facility, obviously, inside the building and outside the building. And I think we're about seven years in, seven or eight years in, and we had a garden that's kind of started out probably back before COVID and it came through and it just needed a little bit of love.

[00:29:42] So some of our family liaisons in partnership with leadership, Prince William got an eye on that and they asked us, you know, what could we do to kind of help support your students in the school and the community? And we say, wow, let's clean this up so we can get out there and make it actionable for our kids and go from there.

[00:30:01] So it started as just taking the garden and taking a look about how we can connect it to our students. So if you know anything about Baldwin Elementary, we are a Project Lead the Way school. So we're fortunate enough from our kids from kindergarten through fourth grade, we're able to connect two project lead-to-way modules that drive in hands-on learning, inquiry, different types of things inside the building.

[00:30:27] So the idea was, okay, we have that connection inside the building, and our students get a special experience. Let's see how we can expand that outside the building. So lots of plants were strategically put out there.

[00:30:46] just to help the city and our school. In terms of the indigenous plants, we have milkweeds that are popping up like crazy. And as we know, those are really good for the environment and butterflies and attracting different types of things. And many pollinators were also put out.

[00:31:03] So basically the outside piece, if you see in the rear part of Baldwin Elementary, where you can see right across adjacent from the farmer's market, you'll be able to see this growing garden and you'll be able to hopefully come and enjoy it. But these are the things that are going to help. It will help our community in general, but it's also going to help our students because they're going to be able to come outside and make learning become, you know, become alive.

[00:31:25] So just examples, all of this presentation will be posted. I just have a few minutes, but you can nerd out on all the pollination and all of the indigenous stuff that you want. And it's great. It's also an extension, not only outside the building, but on our second floor outside classroom.

[00:31:42] We're going to be growing different types of basil, thyme, an herb garden, so our students will be able to see that inside the building, too. They'll be able to walk through the building, see it every day growing, and we'll also be connecting that with Mets Middle School's food pantry and their development with food.

[00:31:58] So it's all kind of connected and a sustainable thing that Prince William leadership, Micron, and our schools have put together. So it really promotes our community building, the hands-on learning, health and nutrition, and emotional well-being. It's just been a fun ride over the last couple of months.

[00:32:17] So the ceremony was on Saturday. A few of you were there. Mayor, Councilman Osinom, if anybody else was there, thank you. Thank you for coming by. You know, it rained all morning, perfect for a garden, and the sun came out for the ceremony.

[00:32:32] So it was perfect. So just, again, I'd like to thank everybody for their support. throughout the city. You guys, you know, support us all the time, and we appreciate that, and I hope that you get out to see Baldwin Gardens. I didn't, I tried to squeeze some pictures in, but this was, this was beforehand, but I had to turn this in last week, and then, so I didn't know if I could submit some more, but you're just going to have to see it for yourself, and it's growing, it's continuing, and if any of you want to support or have ideas to continue the extension of the start of the gardens, this is a start. We planted the seed, and we're going to hope that it grows, but

[00:33:06] This is beforehand and this is the start with many, many people like Site One who donated all of the materials and here's the layout that it's going to be and there was the event.

[00:33:22] Our CTE students from Osborne helped us, donated an entire day and again the indigenous and the herbs and everything that we have going on. So thank you for the time to just share a small little part of Baldwin Elementary and a project that we have. We have a great school. We encourage you guys to come see us at any time.

[00:33:39] We're right down the road. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Rupert. That's awesome. Thank you. Any questions, even though he left the podium? Any questions, any comments? Ms. Ellis.

[00:33:57] Thank you for that. Thank you for doing the garden. And I just have to give a fun fact about Baldwin Elementary. 2021, there was a swarm of bees, honeybees, on Baldwin Elementary's playground. the local beekeepers came out and they got the swarm and they took it to the Liberia House Apiary.

[00:34:21] And that was the first hive there that has now been split to eight hives, which are extremely healthy and strong and contributing to, you know, keeping our pollinators going and healthy. So Baldwin's got it going on.

[00:34:39] I appreciate that. So thank you very much. Thank you. Ms. Vasquez. Yes, thank you. It looks great. can't wait to see the sunflowers and the other nice flowers. But I think this is just the tip of the iceberg. I believe the community event and having all, you know, police and all the other cars. I saw some of you in the cars. It looked great. So I think it was a great time for the whole family. And of course, you know, the highlights. It's great, but I appreciate how

[00:35:13] It was a full community event, and, you know, this is just a flower on the whole event. So, yeah, great. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Osino. Thank you so much, Mayor. So I'm not going to talk about the Baldwin Gardens because I was there and saw firsthand what they are and, more importantly, what the potential and how the community came together along the way, which is a great learning process.

[00:35:44] I'd rather ask you a few questions about Baldwin in general, if I may. And so, first of all, in this academic year that started in August till now, have you presented to us before any period, or is this the first time you've presented?

[00:36:07] I should present to you one time per year. This is my first presentation this academic year. All right. I wanted to be sure that what I asked wasn't repetitious in that sense. Could you tell us, first of all, how many students are enrolled at Baldwin? Give or take 695.

[00:36:25] Okay, very good here. And I know that truancy has been a major goal to be worked upon by the school system at all of its schools. What could you share with us now that we're in the sort of the final month of the school year, What truancy numbers have looked like for your school?

[00:36:51] Sure. Yeah, no, we're very proud of our efforts. I'm back from COVID around the entire state. The governor has made it a focus for everyone. We want to get kids back in school. They were out for a while. And we were always on the better cusp of truancy.

[00:37:09] But I think that we were at 20% at one year, and we cut that in half last year. And we're very proud of that, even actually a little bit more than in half. so um we're in the green red team go you know status for um you know the expectation for attendance and we're along the same lines this year but um chair seaberg who's here and um mr gefeller and their team we have a great plan and we follow the plan and we communicate i think the biggest thing for us was when that came in when when it came in in terms of the 18 absences the

[00:37:45] The 18 absences were excused or unexcused absences where nobody was reporting to the school. And now it's whether you're sick or not, excused or unexcused. So communicating that, educating parents has been the key, and our parents in the city are great.

[00:38:03] Whenever they're educated and they know, the more they know, the better that we are together. So that's where I attribute that cut in half in the continuation there. Could you describe a little bit about how you're able to, what you've been doing to involve our parents of the kids in your school through the PTO, through multicultural nights or anything else like that.

[00:38:26] Some of the efforts you've took to bring the parents in to actually be in the school, see their teachers, and understand a little bit about what's involved in their kids' education. Yeah, absolutely. We have a Parents' Educational Partners program that we run each year.

[00:38:42] And, you know, that works with the community as well where we get different cohorts of parents and we teach them and we encourage them to come out and speak out and do different things. But

if you're ever around on a Friday night in the fall, we have our Boonanza. That's pretty cool.

[00:38:58] I think I presented on that last year where we have carriage rides that go through the city. Just a very special time. Our kids take great pride and our parents take great pride, but they get to get in and just experience and have fun in the school. We have our movie night. But, you know, parents are always welcome.

[00:39:15] You know, they are our partners, and we encourage them to play a part. And one thing that I always say, people say, how in your schools in Manassas City has parent involvement? And my answer is, it is what you put into it.

[00:39:31] If you put effort into it, parents will be here. We have great, as you know, we have great parents, we have great students, we have a great city. And you're still doing Friday popcorn? Friday popcorn, yes. All right. Well, I've missed my Friday so far.

[00:39:48] We really need some popcorn. It's available for our kids on most Fridays. That's great. And lastly, so answer as you see fit, but what's keeping you awake at night as an educator? You know, just striving to be the best.

[00:40:04] I think that's what, you know, just like anybody else, especially in education, every day is different. So my awakesness at night is probably usually about ideas. You know, driving my family and my wife crazy and sticky notes about different types of things we can do.

[00:40:20] We can't do it all. We all know that we can't do it all, but we can do what we can do, and we work as a team. So that's why for 20-plus years, 22 years, that's why I love working in Manassas. And I've been here for a lot of boards and superintendents and councils and board.

[00:40:36] It's just we're always working together, and we're always one team, and that's why the city is a great place to be. Well, thank you, Mr. Rupert. All right. Mayor, thank you so much for the time. Anyone else? Any questions? Okay. All right, thank you so much for being here for the presentation. Next on the agenda is item two for our consent agenda.

[00:41:01] I'll call on Vice Mayor Wolfe for that motion. Madam Mayor, I move the adoption of the consent agenda and the dispensing with reading of the ordinances. Second. Second. We have a motion by Vice Mayor Wolfe and seconded by Councilwoman Hudson, I believe I heard down there, to approve our consent agenda.

[00:41:19] Any discussion? Hearing and seeing none, Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Vice Mayor Wolfe? Yes. Councilmember Hudson? Yes. Councilmember Ellis? Yes. Councilmember Smith? Yes. Councilmember Osina? Yes. Councilmember Vasquez Luna? Yes.

[00:41:36] The motion carries. Thank you for that. That moves us forward to item 3 on the agenda, our public hearing. We have sign-up sheets, which I have up here, but we won't miss anyone. If you did not get a chance to sign up, we will still like to hear from you.

[00:41:52] And we have the public comment sheet and the public hearing, So just make sure that you sign up on the right sheet. I'll go over the procedures for the public hearings. I'll read the newspaper ad certification for the public hearings. Then staff will present the issue for consideration. And the council then has the opportunity to ask questions.

[00:42:09] I will open the public hearing for public comment. We will make sure not to miss anyone who wishes to speak regarding a public hearing item. And then the public hearing will be either closed, which requires a motion or vote, or continue to be taken up the next regularly scheduled council meeting. That's a normal public hearing. So with that, I will read the certification newspaper certification statement, which says as the mayor, I certify that newspaper advertisements for the public hearings listed on tonight's agenda were published in conformance with the requirements of general law and city ordinances.

[00:42:40] As a mayor, I further certify that an affidavit of publication is before me, which is signed by an authorized representative of the Prince William Times newspaper, which states that the advertisements appeared on the required dates. And with that, item 3.1, the public hearing for proposed fiscal year 2026, real property tax increase.

[00:43:05] I don't know, Diane, if you want to intro anything or just move right into it. Okay. Okay. No. Okay. You don't have anything to add. So now I'll open up the public hearing. I have, looks like three people signed up for this item, but again, we won't miss anyone.

[00:43:22] The first name, as I read, it looks like Brady Merriweather. Is it Brady here? Okay. Ray Brady. Come on. Thank you. I just have a very, it's sort of combining all of the tax increases that are being considered for the new budget.

[00:43:52] And it's going to be very succinct. The way I'm figuring it, from what I've understood, we are going to be increasing in four different places. not to mention federal tax, which may or may not be going up again.

[00:44:13] I have a limited monthly pension. It does not change for 30 to 31 days a month. It doesn't go up because we are growing a city. If it does go up, it gets taxed first anyway.

[00:44:34] So I'm already behind the eight ball. Nothing seems to be going down. So in a very simplistic way of thinking about it, I'm losing money again. I've lived in this city for 40-plus years.

[00:44:51] Do we have to raise every one of these taxes at the same time and for the amount that we're raising them? I don't understand. Just when we were getting ready to think about the fact that the electric from the city standpoint, the water from the city standpoint, and our assessments for our real estate property had gone up. We then find out that someone else is going to raise it to you anyway. So now we have

[00:45:24] been double raised on taxes potentially for just one thing. And when you add it all up, not to mention the outside here, we've got food taxes, we've got local taxes, you name it, we're being taxed on it. And I just have to say that this has been the first time in the 40 plus years I've lived here that I'm concerned, extra concerned about living here. I don't want to go anywhere

[00:45:59] else, but you keep raising it. And I almost have to decide on something else. And where else can you go? I mean, everything has gone up. I get it. But the whole idea is that I don't want to have to? Why do we have to raise every single thing up at the same time? And I'm going to throw something out that people are going to be upset about, but if we're going to be real estate brokers,

[00:46:33] as obviously we have started being in the last year plus, I don't want to pay for that. I'm sorry. I do not want to pay for some of the things that have been decided upon to be bought by the city, to just sit

there. Thank you. Thank you, ma'am. Next we have Andrew Smith signed up. Is Andrew

[00:47:00] here? Good evening, sir. Thank you. Yeah, I believe this is around the property taxes in general. I don't have a whole lot to add on this item, to be honest, but I do agree a little bit. I think most of the increases make sense to me. It is unfortunate that things increase, and I don't think any of us like that, but I do just want to call out that as we're going through the budget process and everything also keep in mind the potential you know economic

[00:47:40] uncertainties I think over the next year I think that's all I would ask is that we also consider that and take that into great consideration that that may hit a lot of our residents as well so that's all thank you sir is there anyone else that wishes to speak on item 3.1 can come down at this time hi Lynn for Calgary, Manasseh City resident. I didn't get a chance to sign up because there was a little bit

[00:48:13] of a line. I just want to say that I too disagree with continuing to raise our taxes to not raise our taxes circa 2000. I don't know. What was that? 18 or 19 when Ken Elston said it and it got picked up in the paper. We've been told that you're going to raise our taxes to stop raising our taxes and you never stop raising our taxes. Period. The end. So you put yourself in our shoes because you live here, but then you chastise us when we disagree with you. If I give you a reason of what I want you to cut or what I want you to say, if you tell me I don't know what I'm talking about, or you make false claims about me having misinformation or getting my information

[00:48:50] from the wrong source. So let me just make it very clear. Our city would like you to hear them. You have been elected. Thank you for running for office. If at this juncture, for as long have you been there, you could actually do what we're asking you to do, that's part of the partnership of getting elected. It's not just to do it for whatever you're doing it for.

[00:49:14] I don't know if you have been elected for personal gain or not. You get paid a salary to do this job that you asked to do. You asked to hear from us even when we disagree with you. You invite us here to tell you how we feel, only to chastise us when we do. It becomes very hard to continue talking to my neighbors, to my friends, and ask them to come and say it to you. Do you know how many emails, text messages, phone calls, pick a social media platform where I get a DM asking me to help get

[00:49:48] this under control. And I say, they need to hear from you, not Lynn Forkel Green. And here's what they say. They don't listen to me. Do they listen to me? I mean, are you listening to me? I know it's hard. I always say I know it's hard. I've tried to be passionate. I've tried to be aggressive.

[00:50:11] I've tried to be nice. I've tried to play your political game. What do you want from us? You have a surplus you're buying everything in town which means things are coming off the rolls which means you need more money from us because you are taking in less money because you own it now all of a sudden you don't really want to hear from us when we disagree with you because we might disagree with you differently than you want to hear from us please just try to not raise every single tax at the same time and say that you care about affordable housing green space families or

[00:50:50] children. Thank you. Thank you. Anyone else that wishes to come forward on item 3.1? Come on down. Let's sign up. Hi guys. My name is Allie Forkel. Many of you know me from a lot of different things.

[00:51:17] I'm here to talk about our tax increases in almost everything as part of your budget proposal. Let me tell you a little story. I grew up here. I graduated here. It's your class of 2010. I bought a house here

and wanted to raise my family here. I also worked for Manassas City Public Schools. During my tenure at those schools. You guys get help to give us a raise because you get more money to the school board, which was awesome. We appreciate when you empower educators. However, you know what happened to my raise that I got? I lost \$40 a paycheck because my city taxes increased so much, it counterbalanced my raise. Do you know how many public servants we have that live in the city

[00:51:56] and work in the city? Probably a good handful. Do you know how many veterans we have or fixed income for our elderly population? Probably a good handful. None of those are considered when we make these raises yet. Part of what you guys ran on was more affordable housing. The houses can't be affordable if you're going to tax everything they have to pay for. We have blended families. We have single homes. We have educators who live here, police officers who live here.

[00:52:23] We're important. Do you know how important it is to see one of our students, a giant, might be having a bad day? I'm able to build those connections and maybe not get that kid to school. I just dropped your absenteeism rate. Now the state's off our back. But you can't give our teachers raises and say you're poor education if you're going to tax us out of the behind and every other part of our life here. We have a \$2.1 million surplus. I highly doubt any of that's going back into our pockets as citizens, but your teachers and your staff and your schools are fighting for more money. Why not give it to them for the raises to maybe offset the balance of your

[00:52:56] higher tax rate? But one thing that I did notice in the CIP was that none of the taxes really goes down. We're only increasing our taxes, but you did cut preservation language by about 70%. you dropped your smart growth principles you make the schools have smart growth goals why aren't we having smart growth goals with budgeting it weakens environmental protection and I didn't see any mention of ongoing citizen engagement citizens already fed up with how you deal with engagement I was very excited for the opening of Marsteller and to have community discussions and we got to

[00:53:34] put stickers on a board that's not a discussion I didn't get to talk to you I didn't get to interact with anybody I didn't get to have that discussion that's important we didn't get to build ideas off each other our schools and our teachers and our police officers thinking to build ideas with you about what we need for that building it was a sticker on a chart i'm urging you guys to consider these points when we talk about and look at budgets these are very real you live here you're my neighbors i know you feel the burdens too please help us especially our public servants

[00:54:03] our veterans and our elderly who live here thank you thank you anyone else welcome sir if i can My name is Brady Merriweather. You called me earlier, but I froze.

[00:54:20] Okay. So it was my first time. You're welcome. This is my way of relating to the taxes themselves, and I understand it's not just a city issue. It's with the state of Virginia and nationally. The cost of living is really expensive. I guess the thing is I've got some documents here, some books and some stories and stuff I've read before I came here.

[00:54:44] I was looking to see what forms of revenue that the city has, Um, and I see that we, you know, there are, uh, programs for teachers for paying for like in the city of Fairfax, I guess, I have a program to help teachers put a down payment on a home, but it was like \$8,000, but a new home was like 70,000, 20%.

[00:55:07] It's a lot. And I didn't think, I can't even think two incomes pay for that. And I have, uh, coworkers of mine, I work in IT and they're paying about 7,500 a month and they're right out of college.

And I know they're still paying loans. And I know some of the teachers as well, they probably are like, is my loan been deferred or do I have to pay the school loans still?

[00:55:31] And I know that there's always encouragement for teachers to go back to school and, you know, stay up on the latest education so it can be expensive. So my suggestion is maybe some ideas. And some of them is with current economic situation in the part of the recycling program, I don't know if you guys defer that to the county or not, but aluminum is going to get expensive.

[00:56:01] Maybe a form of revenue as an option, maybe for local canneries for, you know, Coca-Cola or something like that. The second one is mulch. You know, we have, you know, city, you guys, we have a program that invests all that stuff with mulch and such.

[00:56:18] I know the county takes it. Why not resell it in the city? Maybe to some of the local places like the Home Depot or at the, you know, something like that. some revenue off that stuff and you know take off some of the stuff because i also know that a lot of the budget you guys are probably concerned about too and maybe you want to hold on to that surplus because you guys may have lose some of that federal funding for schools and programs that you guys have probably expecting that but need to be there but we don't know about that right now so and i understand where you guys coming from so i'm just here to put my two cents in i have

[00:56:58] five children who've gone through these schools and i understand um after reading today you got what you guys are doing what you're doing every day and i'm hoping i can give this information to you there's one book you're all gonna have to group up but uh it may be some information maybe you could guys share amongst each other stuff a lot of the other stuff here you probably already know so um you maybe give you guys some better ideas and that's the reason why i came here today thank you thank you sir thank you you can leave us with the clerk there and he can make sure we

[00:57:31] get it thank you sir give us your name please it's uh mark hempen um i've been a city resident since 1981. in 1981 when we told our friends we were moving to manassas everybody said why are you moving there. There is nothing there. But there's a lot here now. I mean, when we bought our house,

[00:58:10] it was \$68,000 in 1981. And of course, the interest rate was 15%. But anyway, that's a whole different thing. But people are saying all the things that the city's buying and what the city's doing with their money, but you're maintaining a triple A bond, which is keeping the interest rates low, which means that you are looking out for the community, that you're not just willy-nilly spending money. I don't hear anybody coming up here and complaining that their

[00:58:43] house is worth too much. And there's a reason why the house is too much, because of what the city's doing because people want to move here. We have industry, we have Micron, and we have some major industry here in the city that wouldn't want to be here if we didn't provide services. But it's like people don't, people look at that one little bill, but the fact is they're not looking what they're

[00:59:14] getting. And I know that it's at a time now when the people in charge of our national government seemed to be blowing everything up. And who knows how much, the prices are already going up, even though they were promised to go down. And it is scary. I'm a small business owner. I have felt it already, you know, what's going on on the national level. But to complain that your

[00:59:47] properties is too much is like, seems counterproductive. Instead of coming up here and saying, I know my taxes are high. I know what my taxes are. And I know how much we have to pay every year. But

I also know what my house is worth. I also know how I've invested in that house to make it worth more. And I also know that it's worth more by being in Manassas City. And people

[01:00:23] tend to forget where they live and how come these taxes are so high. It's because their property is valued at such a great rate because this is a great place to live. And instead of taking all the time and energy to say, well, the city's buying too much, the city's doing this, the city's doing that, maybe look around, look at just go down Grand Avenue and see what's going on down there.

[01:00:51] I mean, that has been a really run-down area ever since we moved here, and it's going to be beautiful. And if you don't think that's going to help your assessments and your value of being in the city, then you really need to, is this one for me, really?

[01:01:11] All right, thank you. Thank you, Ms. Hampton. Anyone else that wishes to speak on item 3.1? Come on down. Give us your name, please. Hi, good evening. My name is Jill Cronin. I have lived here in the city of Manassas for 21 years.

[01:01:28] I bought a home back in 2019. Wasn't really a person who we think would buy a home, would be able to buy one, and was fortunate to buy one. First, before I go, I do want to say a couple things.

[01:01:45] When you spoke earlier about your words matter, they really do. How you present yourself, the things you say to the public is really important. I'm going to reference an Inside Innova article that was published on April 14th where Douglas Keene stated, Well, we should think of the utility expenses, that tax, or that increase, as every time you flush your toilet, it's going to cost you.

[01:02:16] And when you flush your toilet so many times, it's going to cost you that much more. We should be charging what it costs to flush that toilet. I was pretty offended by that, considering, as everybody has stated, we're all feeling it.

[01:02:35] All the tariffs, all the increases on everything. And to have those prices be compared to flushing your toilet is pretty insulting. So that's that. So your words do matter.

[01:02:51] They're important to us. The money that we put into our homes and the families we take care of, it matters. So that's that. I want to thank, I had reached out before this because there's so much information I don't have that I wanted to have to educate myself on what's going on with the city and the budget.

[01:03:18] And so there were a few people. Matthew R. Siri, he's the assistant city manager. He was actually out of the office when I reached out to him, and he reached out to me on his day off to provide me somebody to talk to, and that person was Anna Davis.

[01:03:35] She was a utility finance manager here at the city. She called me that day on her day off as well to have a conversation with me to discuss the utility revenue and everything that's going on with the utilities in the city. And I do want to thank them for that, especially on your days off, to reach out to constituents to say, hey, I hear you. I want to explain to you. I want to educate you. I truly appreciate that.

[01:04:07] My property taxes, since I've moved here, have increased 13%. My condo fee has gone up 33%. I understand you have a big job in front of you. I understand everything is increasing in costs.

[01:04:26] But in my own family, there are things that we have to cut. We have to make sure that, hey, we're paying what we need to pay. And then the other things, well, do we really need that or do we not

really need that? And so with the budget going forward, I really implore you to use that just common sense.

[01:04:45] Is this something we can delay? Can we hold off on this? Do we have to give such a big increase here? I mean, does the flat rate, can we take that down a little bit? Something. Because in our households, we have to do that to make sure that we can balance our budget.

[01:05:01] Thank you, ma'am. Thank you. Anyone else wish to speak on item 3.1, the property tax increase? Come on down. Good evening.

[01:05:17] I'm Helen Zarita, 16-year resident here in the city. Wasn't planning on speaking tonight, but I want to congratulate every one of you guys sitting up there tonight for sitting here listening to everyone that wants to try to navigate how to mix this budget.

[01:05:37] I have sat in the budget meetings, and I have seen everyone working together, and I will tell you I am so glad that I am not sitting where you are tonight. But I want to tell you something. We don't want to cut our police, Chief Keene.

[01:05:55] We don't want to cut our 911 services, our teachers' pay. I'm a renter here in the city, and this is affecting me. All these tax rates going up is affecting me as a renter.

[01:06:12] Imagine my rent now is \$2,300, but this is the cheapest place to live. I have looked out of the localities, and there is nothing cheaper than what I can afford right here in the city. So as you're sitting there listening to tax rates and all these property taxes going up, I understand it.

[01:06:34] But I also understand our city needs services. Our teachers need pay. And I understand that we all don't have a magic wand to make money come available to us to make sure that everything goes lower. I will tell you as a food service person that works in a food pantry, I have seen the reality of what's coming out of Washington.

[01:06:58] This past Friday, I had 100 families in one hour, in one hour, come through my food pantry. By the end of the day, I had 168 families come through, and today alone, 50 more families came through.

[01:07:14] So this is not about, it is about taxes going up, it is about the cost of living, but I understand that you all aren't dealing with a budget that is coming from Washington that is being cut.

[01:07:29] So I envy you for sitting here listening, understanding what's going on to the residents, especially with me as a renter in the city. But I understand where you're coming from, and I understand it's a hard job. And I'm not here to yell at anyone. I'm here to say, please, just look at everything, negotiate between each other, and make something work.

[01:07:50] And if we can't lower something down today, maybe in the next year. So thank you for your time and your, you know, I know you're doing dual diligence on this. budget. I've seen you in the meetings even though I haven't been present, I've been watching. So thank you. Thank you. Anyone else on item 3.1 before we close the public hearing?

[01:08:13] Madam Mayor, move to close the public hearing. Second. Second. We have the motion by Vice Mayor Wolfe, seconded by Councilman Smith to close the public hearing on item 3.1. Any discussion? Hearing and seeing on Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Vice Mayor Wolfe? Yes.

[01:08:33] Councilmember Smith. Yes. Councilmember Ellis. Yes. Councilmember Osina. Yes. Councilmember Vasquez Luna. Yes. Councilmember Hudson. Yes. The motion carries. Thank you. That item 3.2 is the public hearing for a proposed fiscal year 2026 real property tax rate increases in personal property tax rates and sewer, water, and electric utility rates. And we don't have anything else additional to add, Diane, so we'll just move forward.

[01:09:01] Yeah. If I might, Madam Mayor, because I think this is a little bit unusual, and I think we had sort of the epiphany moment at a budget work session. The city has and has maintained two things.

[01:09:17] Number one, great service, but number two, the lowest rates in northern Virginia, both in water and electricity. But it turned out, and we went through the exercise, that in what was it, the last six years, electric rates had raised 2%.

[01:09:34] And we all know that's just not the reality of the marketplace that we live in, and that is not sustainable. And what has happened is that we are now charging less than it costs to provide the service, and we have to make that whole because, obviously, that's not a sustainable model, and to do so invites the demise of that system.

[01:10:02] So I can sit here and tell you before we listen to you, the council takes this extremely seriously, and we're not pleased, thrilled, any positive adjective you could throw at this, about this. But this is, we have an obligation to maintain the financial integrity of our services because without that, to your point, the toilets won't flush and the lights won't come on.

[01:10:30] And that is not an acceptable situation. So with that, I just wanted to provide that point of context that has come to light to the council before we hear from you. Ms. Veskis. And if I may add, it's just a comment, and I know there's different places, but I think at the work session it was very successful.

[01:10:51] And as you see the presentation in regards to the utility rates, the ask was to go up 8.5% each year for a few years. So the reason why I want to bring it up is because the advertised rate for one is less, and I just want to make sure that, you know, that we have in the work session tried to go so far the lowest possible.

[01:11:21] And I just want to make sure that if you miss that work session, that you're able to see that we have been working on it. There were great questions from everybody to making sure that we don't want to hurt it, but we can try to delay as much as possible.

[01:11:37] And one we were able to, the other one we have no. But this is, again, to continue to provide the services that we have. Thank you. Any other comments? Okay. I'll now open the public hearing for item 3.2. I do have the sign-up sheet here, and I'll go down the list.

[01:11:55] The first name I have is... Sorry, make sure I got the right sheet here. Bill Bacchus? I apologize, I sent it twice online here.

[01:12:15] My name is Bill Bacchus. I am a resident citizen and taxpayer in the city of Manassas. The proposed budget for 2026, my tax rate is approximately 10%, a little bit higher than the proposed estimate for the tax rate for general city residents. I have no problem paying my fair share of taxes.

[01:12:32] What I'm concerned about with this proposed budget is an industry that is not paying its fair share. That is the data center industry. The proposed tax rate of \$2.60 is too low for our city and our

community. As you hear it, the tax rates, or the electrical rates are going up fundamentally by this industry.

[01:12:52] Not only has it erased all green energy initiatives in the Commonwealth of Virginia, but it is causing the tax rate or the hike rate for all utility payers in the Commonwealth to subsidize this industry, an industry that is run by companies that have a market cap in the trillions of dollars, who pay millions of dollars for an acre of land and pour millions of dollars into these buildings.

[01:13:13] They should be able to pay their fair share. the two dollars and sixty cents is too low uh the uh adjacent community of prince william county had a tax rate lower they brought it up to three dollars and seventy cents they actually just approved a tax rate increase of four dollars and fifteen cents i bring up prince william's tax rate because godwin drive separates the city and the county data centers are on both sides of that drive one county or excuse me one data center is paying a tax rate forty percent less than the other one that one is the City of Manassas. So in an ideal world, the tax rate for data centers would be

[01:13:49] increased to \$4.15 to be on par with the communities adjacent to Manassas so that the industry has something that they can plan on. But we have now proven that the industry can pay a tax rate of \$3.70 without any criticism. And so I urge the City Council to raise that tax rate from two dollars and sixty cents to at least three dollars and seventy cents if not four dollars and

[01:14:14] fifteen cents thank you thank you sir next on the list i have alan muchnick good evening members of the council um and madam mayor i'm alan muchnick and i live in the city uh i certainly appreciate the council's recent investments in our city's future including the acquisition of the old town in manassas avenue shopping center the marcella park and mifco parcels the preparations for

[01:14:50] for commercial flights at the regional airport and the renovation of Dean Parton and the construction of the new Dean Elementary School. These investments will improve the livability of our city and reduce the residential tax burden going forward. However, I do urge the city staff and council to explore ways to reduce the rates for the real property and personal property taxes for the coming fiscal year.

[01:15:13] While the increased staffing for public safety personnel may be warranted, it may also be feasible to identify corresponding cuts in other city positions. For example, Manassas doesn't really need to have four cycles of leak collection in the fall when we can have two or three. The council should also explore modest tax increases or maybe not so modest tax increases for the commercial and industrial properties such as the data center tax, the communal peripherals tax, and I certainly agree that a rate of 360 or 370 is warranted there.

[01:15:47] And explore initiating the real property tax surcharge on commercial and industrial properties that Northern Virginia localities can assess for dedicated transportation improvements. Regarding possible uses of the contingency fund, I support hiring the part-time staff to kickstart recreational programs at Morris Hill Community Center.

[01:16:08] Every livable community in Northern Virginia, Vienna, Falls Church, they have community centers. The counties have multiple community centers. It's something that the city has missed. However, rather than eliminating the local vehicle license fee, I think that a corresponding reduction in the dreaded car tax rate would be in order.

[01:16:29] And Prince William County recently did that. It's modest, but it really helps. I don't think \$25 a year to keep your junk car in the city streets is not too much. Finally, I'm concerned about proposals to reduce the net metering reimbursement or credit for solar energy customers.

[01:16:51] As a solar energy customer, I have accounts with Dominion as well. And Dominion charges a much lower monthly fee and a much higher kilowatt hour charge that you would get credit for net metering than the city does. And the people who are generating almost all their electricity or all their electricity are still paying.

[01:17:09] It was \$15 a month going up to \$22 a month just for being connected to the grid. And they're not really putting burdens on that. And to reduce the rate from \$0.09 to \$0.03 a kilowatt hour for what we're being the peak of the day, the energy that we're generating, if it's not going out into the grid, is going into our homes and it's not being drawn from the grid.

[01:17:31] So I think that we should have maintained net metering in the city. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Marshney. Gretchen Almstead. Good evening.

[01:17:49] As a 39 year old, not year old, 39 year resident, I wish, I would like to thank the councils for the past several decades for their vision and their long term planning in making our city safer and more attractive and thriving on so many different levels.

[01:18:12] The city manager, staff, and council have slogged through several budget sessions. I've only looked at a little bit of it to try to balance the competing needs of all the various stakeholders, the residents, the businesses, and the schools.

[01:18:28] And they need to decide which services are most important to maintain, such as public service, emergency services, and infrastructure. And they have to prioritize those essential services. Tough budget decisions have to be made, and thoughtful long-term fiscal planning that looks beyond political expedience and short-term convenience is definitely required in that process.

[01:18:56] I would guess that everybody wants to feel safe in their home, safe on the streets, to be able to have dependable utilities. Everybody wants students to learn, businesses to thrive, opportunities for residents of all ages to have cultural enrichment experiences and recreation.

[01:19:15] But it's also true that nobody likes to pay for things and that we will always complain when prices go up. All of us are feeling a pinch. Prices have been going up steadily on everything from groceries to insurance premiums to streaming services.

[01:19:34] And with all the economic uncertainty and job losses that are continuing to trickle through our community, all of us are kind of starting to consider contingency plans if we hadn't been doing that before. As a regular volunteer at my church food pantry, I can assure you that there are a lot of people living on the edge.

[01:19:55] I know that's been already mentioned, but just this last week, we found a person sleeping next to the trash cans by our church. And as our community continues to feel the impact of these job cuts and reduced work hours, we're going to need some increased community support to handle that.

[01:20:16] So I encourage the council to support an increase for our teachers, to attract and retain them for our school system, to increase the social service reserve, and to reserve funds to be prepared for the impact of reduced federal funding.

[01:20:33] Thank you. Thank you. That's all I've said. Mike Freeland. Good evening, Mayor and Council. Mike Freeland, 26-year resident, 9002 Peabody Street.

[01:20:52] I'm speaking tonight in favor of the \$1.26 real estate tax rate. From a personal point of view, with this city's good governance, my home has doubled in value in 15 years.

[01:21:08] I love that. I approve of the 3% increase for the public schools and the cost of living and merit pay for our city employees as we need to do everything we can to retain our great city staff.

[01:21:24] I'm also glad we have, as Gretchen just mentioned, we have contingency funds in this uncertain economic climate, as I'm sure there's going to be some unknowns in the future we're going to have to take care of. And as a member of the Parks and Recs Committee, I'm glad to see the possibility of some part-time staff for the community center.

[01:21:47] I recently volunteered at the extravaganza and saw the excitement of the possibility of this gold mine that we're sitting on. I love it. So, in conclusion, I know you all have a tough job to do every year, balancing act with trying to get the budget just right.

[01:22:07] And I appreciate what you all do to keep this city moving forward. So, thank you. Thank you. Ms. Brady, you were listed again. Did you want to come back up for this item? You're good. Okay. Okay. And Mr. Hempen was listed again as well.

[01:22:22] I don't know if you want to come back for this item. I'd like to start off by saying that, first of all, I know Chief Dean, I've known him for a long time.

[01:22:46] And I think if he made a comment that offended the other lady, I think what he was basically stating was when you use water, you have to pay for it. And he could have said when you do a load of wash or, you know, when you take a bath.

[01:23:03] But he used something that apparently this lady was offended by, but I don't think that was his intention. His intention was just to say the costs. Every time you use electricity, you turn on a light. Anytime you use the water, that's the water in the sewer.

[01:23:24] For the electricity, we have a small business, and in that small business, we have a house, and then we have a little cottage. And the cottage has its own meter, and it reads it, as far as, from what I understand, every 15 minutes.

[01:23:42] And if it hits 10 kilowatt hours, or 10 kilowatts, then the rate goes up. So even after you only hit it once for 15 minutes, you have to wait another whole year for it to go down.

[01:24:03] When we first opened it, it was in the summertime, it was like \$50. This last billing cycle, our house, which is 2,700 square feet, water, sewer, and electric was \$176 total.

[01:24:22] Just the electric for a 450-square-foot building was \$220. And in Dominion, these rates have been taken to court by major corporations, but it's the legislature that has to make the changes for that.

[01:24:49] And so there's not much the city can do about some of this. Because I remember I got that first bill, and I was like, what's going on? And there's other small businesses that I've talked about this to in the city.

[01:25:06] And it's a crunch to the small businesses that we're getting hit with such an exorbitant fee. And by our house, you can see all the wires that they're doing. You know, they're adding a third to the poles.

[01:25:24] They're adding all this. You know, it's just an amazing construction that's going on. And as the one gentleman said, we're going to pay for that. That's not something that the data centers are going to pay for. They're going to pay for what they use, but they're not paying for the infrastructure.

[01:25:44] So our electric bills are all going to go up significantly, and we can't blame the city for that. So that's all I have to say about that. Thank you, sir. Anyone else who wishes to address counsel on this item, Item 3.2?

[01:26:03] Come on down. Hi, I'm Diane Lane, a Manassas resident since 1990. I want to also endorse the \$1.26 tax rate for real estate and also echo the gentleman's concern about what appears to be an out-of-balance with our, face-it, competitor, Prince William County, for the data center rate.

[01:26:29] I encourage the city to reevaluate that and take a look to make it a more on-par rate with our competitors. In terms of the contingency funds, I'm a program manager by training. Contingency planning is part of what I have to do. I am concerned that the 1.7 million dollars for this for this schools Should not go to the schools as much as that hurts my heart I believe that that should be held for social services for federal impacts I think those two funds are grossly undervalued and

[01:27:08] That is something that can't really hurt the city in multiple ways if we don't take a look at that now. I would love to say yes to the three part-time positions at Marstella as a member of the Parks and Rec Committee.

[01:27:23] That's near and dear to my heart. I've attended the the listening sessions, supported the listening sessions, and there's a lot that the community wants to do with that and the the slow opening that we're doing shows that the people are there to use those services and are enjoying the uses the use of those services.

[01:27:43] Finally, in the utility rates, the council has said that they believe a five-year build-back period is a reasonable time period. I encourage you to look at that as either eight or ten years. Let's spread it out more. Let's still get to the same end result, but let's lessen the impact on the day-to-day and give people relief while still accomplishing the end goal.

[01:28:09] Thank you very much. Thank you. Anyone else wants to speak on item 3.2? You're hearing none move to close the public hearing? Sorry, sorry. You're quicker on the court.

[01:28:27] Before I get started, I just want to say thank you, Mark, for always open to listening, discussing stuff, you know, quality of life or tennis. Tom, same thing, always open to discussions, hard discussions too.

[01:28:44] And also, Terry, every time I brought something to you, you've taken action on it, so thank you for that. And Ms. Luna and Ms. Hudson, I know you're new to this forum, but I want to openly say thank you for acknowledging the immigrant community.

[01:29:00] It does not get spoken enough in this room. And I just want to say thank you. And Madam Mayor, I think I can speak for a lot of residents that feel the same way. I feel like I have an open door policy with you. Any issues come up, you pick up.

[01:29:18] And thank you. All right. With that, I have a prepared statement. So I think everybody's aware our city has incredible resources. We have our own water supply. We have our own airport. We have our own electrical grid. We have major Fortune 50 companies right here on our borders, right?

[01:29:36] Cities like Falls Church, Fairfax, Alexandria, Leesburg would love to have what we have. And yet, despite all these advantages, we have the second highest tax rate in Virginia, at last I heard. I don't know what this will do. And meanwhile, our schools underperform.

[01:29:53] Our infrastructure struggles, as we've heard tonight. And our quality of life suffers and declines. The math simply doesn't add up. I ask why. I don't know. I got to call somebody.

[01:30:11] Sorry, brother. All right. I ask why. You know, the math doesn't add up. One of the major reasons is what growing needs, right, as we're speaking about here tonight. Our schools need more money. Utilities, fire, safety, trash, sewer, water, all outpacing the ability to fund them and our ability to tax our residents and our businesses, right?

[01:30:33] At every budget discussion, I hear the same statement. I never hear residents ask for fewer services, fewer police, fewer parks, right? Of course not. You're never going to hear that. We're always going to want more. Everybody's going to want more, right?

[01:30:49] But that's not logical, right? Who's going to ask for less services? But what I don't hear the city council ever talk about is the hard questions, right? How do we make the math work, right? And with all our resources, why do we have the best schools in the state, in northern Virginia?

[01:31:08] with what you know with all our resources why don't we have the best quality of life in northern virginia in the state of virginia it doesn't make sense one root cause and hear me out on this is the lack of zoning enforcement especially with illegal boarding homes we are still following a nearly nearly 20 year old department of justice settlement that makes it difficult if not impossible to enforce zoning as a result manassas has become a magnet for investors turning single family homes into multi-tenant rental rooms sheds garages often unsafe and overcrowded okay Many hardworking residents are exploited in these conditions,

[01:31:47] and these properties often bring crime, instability, and fear on neighborhoods. It's easy to live in a bubble and think everything is fine. I live in a nice neighborhood. I know my neighbors. I know where most of you guys live. You know your neighbors. You know you live in a nice neighborhood, right?

[01:32:04] Can I have a minute? Please? 30 seconds, please. But I invite you to take a ride along with me to show you some of these unforgotten neighborhoods, right, that you'll see egregious violations, right? open invitation to any one of you. I speak Spanish, by the way. New growth, new residents, new demographic doesn't mean our declining standards. We shouldn't have declining standards and lesser quality of life. I'm asking you to take action. I'm asking you to listen to our community here. Form a community focus group, all right, with staff, with you guys involved to see

[01:32:40] how we can cut costs and efficiency. Work with residents and staff and legal, right, to see how address overcrowding and enforce zoning. Other cities have done it successfully. Rebuild trust, right? Rebuild trust, showing residents that their voices are being heard, not ignored. Thank you.

[01:33:02] Thank you, Mr. Arias. Thank you. Anyone else that wishes to speak on item 3.2? Come on down. Hello, everyone. My name is Deion Schamburger. I'm actually running for Commissioner of Revenue.

[01:33:21] I did hear a lot of things that were already echoed that I'm going to say anyway. Somebody had said that the data center does not pay for X, Y, and Z, but they are taxed. And that information we get from

their tax pays for our amenities as well. It gives us our surpluses that can go more. When you have a data center that is under-assessed, which a lot of things are under-assessed. I am an insurance agent. I have rewritten policies for people because they say they have garages and basements in their homes and they're on a crawl space. That's an under-assessment that pops up on

[01:33:56] are public records so i got audited for that so that made me look around me looking around finding out through an aerial view of a data center that has five caterpillar units on the outside and what we are actually assessing them at or was way under and we get rid of that and fix that problem we wouldn't have to beg for teachers with raises we shouldn't be having to do this if we have the right revenue coming back to the city that's all i have to say thank you sir anyone else thank you

[01:34:36] mayor and council and for Calgrim and as a city resident I'll make this quick I know it's a long night um I just want to say a few points yes our home values are up but that doesn't mean that we are cash rich for many of us it means we're stuck interest rates are now triple what they were selling and moving is no longer a practical option to be quite honest um instead of helping residents stay rooted you're proposing to make living here more expensive instead of actually working with us with regards to our quality of life. I want to let all of you know something. I'm an empty nester. You know that because most of you worked with me before in

[01:35:14] some capacity or another. I am blessed. I'm blessed. I worked hard as a young person. I had my child young. I made all the sacrifices when everyone told me I was too young to make those sacrifices. I can go to happy hour every day. But you know what I can't do? I don't want to leave my grandchildren. So I fight for the single mom who can't afford these taxes because I was that single mom who could not afford these taxes. I was the renter. I wasn't a homeowner. So I'm not up here because I can't afford to live here. I can afford to live here. I fight for those who cannot,

[01:35:53] for those who want to stay here, for those who want to age in place, for those who want to raise their children here and want to raise their children with the amenities that they have grown accustomed like parks and ball fields in areas that are green and open and not just data centers. Data centers that may bring other problems to our environment that most of you feel the same as me. You want to protect our environment, the very home that I get to call my hometown. That is why I come to these meetings. That is why I ran for office when I never planned to run for office.

[01:36:27] I don't really have any other reason to be here, except I want Manassas City to be the best it can be. We have small businesses who are struggling. Without First Fridays, they might not pay their rent, and they might close their doors.

[01:36:42] You know that. You're friends with some of the owners, just like I am. You can go in there on any given day and see that they're not as full as they used to be, and if anyone tells you they are, they are wrong. They got one day that might be a drinking day. Great. We're all there.

[01:36:58] It's fun. But on a regular day, those shifts are hard, and there's not that many people there. Our dollars tax 15 different ways, and we need your help. We need you to make hard decisions. Our budget has doubled since the time I started paying attention.

[01:37:18] Thank you for doing the hard work of having the conversation, but I'd like to have the hard work of you making the math work like other people talked about. I'd like to say that I'm not against police officers, you know that. Not against first responders, you know that. not against paying a fair wage, you

know that, but I am against continuously using taxpayers as an ATM to get to where you wanna be instead of taking a pause and letting us figure it out together.

[01:37:44] And I'm against getting rid of green space to make all this work too. Thank you. - Thank you. Anyone else for item 3.2, anyone? - Madam Mayor, move to close the public hearing. - Second.

[01:37:59] - And a motion by Vice Mayor Wolf, seconded by Councilwoman Vasquez-Linical to close the public hearing on item 3.2. Any discussion, hearing, and seeing, Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Vice Mayor Wolfe? Yes. Council Member Vasquez-Luna? Yes.

[01:38:15] Council Member Ellis? Yes. Council Member Smith? Yes. Council Member Osina? Yes. Council Member Hudson? Yes. The motion carries. All right. Thank you for that. Item 3.3 is the public hearing for a proposed fiscal year 2026 annual operating budget and five-year capital improvement plan and i do have some people signed up here i'll go down the list the first name i have is ashley logan thank you um on friday i received a letter

[01:38:54] from al raffer she's the communication director of mass city public schools explaining the budget increase of three three percent which i do a little bit closer to the mic i'm sorry i work at monassa city public schools i'm a bookkeeper at weems elementary school i've had the privilege of working with several people who are actually sitting here tonight. Hi, Dr. Joe.

[01:39:15] But I am a bookkeeper, so I do feel like this is kind of interesting because I work with budget on the school grounds. I know on a very smaller level what you guys are dealing with and how they are hard decisions. We have seen money have to be taken away in order to help cover other costs.

[01:39:32] Being in a Title I school is a huge honor. Being able to really see and help and give back to the the community is a huge honor, but basic economics will tell you that people have to work for an incentive. We have teachers that cry every year because they cannot afford to continue at our schools. If we lose out on teachers, they lose out on their craft, we lose out on relationships, we lose out on helping those students. We have a huge bilingual population, or the speak mostly Spanish, and we're trying to help them and be there for them, and we cannot guarantee that these teachers will be able to pay their rent. We are constantly trying to raise efforts for the students.

[01:40:04] So we constantly try to do food dries. We've done the shoe dries. I've been there for all of it We help with truancy as you brought up earlier We kind of attendance parties and do anything we can to excite the children bring joy. I would just like to quote Maya Angela We don't want to survive. We want them to thrive. I'm not a Manassas City resident I've had the privilege of working in the city since 2010 when BB&T was an old town And I was lucky enough to transfer over to the Mass City public schools We have an amazing staff that we just want to make sure they can eat every day and it's that dire it breaks my heart and I understand I don't live here I I'm very fortunate and I'm in a great position I do not truly understand the hardship of the property taxes that are here or any of the things that are going on with your utilities but what I can

[01:40:42] tell you is that a lot of your staff that is here trying to invest into your students to your children into the people of this community are not able to eat they have second jobs we are also dealing with people who are paying in student loans I'm sure all of you know they're talking about taking that out of their paycheck as someone who helps with payroll that is heartbreaking they are paying hundreds of hundreds of dollars a month to have insurance you know it is not easy and I don't think it's easy on anyone

here but I ask you I plead with you to invest in your students invest in your children these are the people that are going to be taking on your positions when you're gone they're the ones who are going to be taking care of you we are constantly being pressed with assessments from Russell Wells we know for the fact that the state of Virginia

[01:41:18] has a surplus I strongly encourage you and ask you to please choose your teachers I'm a bookkeeper I'm support staff I look at the pay skills every day they can't afford to live here we have teachers who are commuting from Warrington who are coming in from areas I haven't even heard of like Goose Creek who are we have teachers that are now moving to West Virginia because they are just trying to live they can't afford the apartments here we just had a program open up where they're asking them to find a roommate we want to be here for your kids I love working with this community I love knowing your people by name please allow us to continue to put that effort into our teachers and give us the 1.7 million contingency I understand it's hard for you guys but I

[01:41:56] beg you we need your help and we really want to continue our work thank you thank you Alan much Nick signed up for this one as well did you want to come back up Alan for this item you signed up for this okay all right Janet Plovniak good evening my name is Janet Plovniak and I've been a resident of the city of Manassas for 42 years by my choice we chose to live here and I want to stay here I came I've been coming to meetings for

[01:42:36] over a year now it took four months to get crosswalks on weems road to the park thank you and then it took 10 months got stop signs so thank you for doing that a lot of the things i have to say people have said tonight so and and i feel often we're not heard and listened to so i'm gonna take it up a step to the next level and i'm gonna pray for everyone so i'm gonna ask our heavenly father to please bless each and every one of you and to touch your hearts and make you see and hear what the people here are asking for.

[01:43:16] You all live here, you live here too. It's hard to be able to afford. Like Lynn said, I'm an empty nester too. We can afford to be here, but do I want all of my money going to taxes? No. So I just want to pray for all of you that you hear what we are saying.

[01:43:35] Literally hear the words that we are saying. And I ask that God touch your hearts, let you really think about this for the people, not for the money. I am blessed to be parked on the \$6 million parking lot across the street tonight. That's a waste of our money.

[01:43:54] If anybody else can park there, it was great coming down and being able to have a place to park. So, Father, please keep these people in your thoughts and prayers. Please give them the wisdom to do the right thing. And I ask this through the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

[01:44:14] Thank you, ma'am. Mark Kempen signed up again. He left, okay. I don't have anyone else signed up, but if anyone else is present and wish to address the item 3.3, please come forward. Lynn Fort Calgary, Manassas City resident, sorry.

[01:44:33] I know we don't speak at all of them, but I feel like I have to this year, mainly because of the comprehensive plan. So I was a little bit disappointed to learn some of the things that are being proposed to be removed from our comprehensive plan, primarily conservation and preservation of our green space, which you know I advocate strongly for, and most of you have actual articles in the paper that can be Googled or FOIA'd if you'd like, where you've talked about green space before and protecting it.

[01:45:05] And also our historic heart and our modern beat. I know there was a survey of some kind that was put out by the Economic Development Office. And I think that with seeing the changes in the comprehensive plan, I'm very nervous that for some reason we are trying to remove citizen or resident input.

[01:45:30] We are trying to remove our historical significance when it comes to our planning. and we are trying to remove importance of saving green space and if that's not the intent of those proposed changes I hope that the language will be modified so that we make sure it's not awesome an email actually so you know I mean for all of you but I'm just letting you know that when that the comprehensive plan was something most people do not know about even when you come to speak at budget time most of our residents I was one of them eight years ago that had no idea that the plan for the community was called the comprehensive plan or the comp plan i did

[01:46:08] not know that that didn't make me stupid but it did make me blind to how the process was for projects to get approved so with the public hearing for your projects if you're a project manager like i used to be the 90 completion rate is about the time you have a public hearing at that time the appetite to make any changes or go back to square one is about zero so having those community conversations in the beginning of your projects is so important please do not get rid of that

[01:46:41] secondly i would just say obviously when i come here i know you have a hard job and i maybe take for granted that some of us have worked together longer than others i never intend to sound disrespectful from this podium i only try to advocate for the best of our city and our residents and i hope that you understand that i get a little frustrated when it seems like we're being lectured from the dais up there because you asked for this job and you were elected to represent all of us and if you're not representing us then who is it's not staff's responsibility to represent us

[01:47:16] it's yours most of our staff don't live here you do and you're my ticket to having my thoughts brought to the table that i'm not at you're our voices at the table we are not at It's very, very important.

[01:47:32] Thank you so much. Thank you. Anyone else who wishes to address counsel on item 3.3, public hearing? Madam Mayor, move to close the public hearing. Second. The motion by Vice Mayor Wolfe, seconded by Council Member Vasquez-Luna, to close the public hearing on item 3.3.

[01:47:50] Any discussion? Hearing and seeing none, Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Vice Mayor Wolfe? Yes. Council Member Vasquez-Luna? Yes. Council Member Ellis? Yes. Council Member Smith? Council Member Osina?

[01:48:06] Yes. Councilmember Hudson. Yes. The motion carries. All right. Thank you. That moves us forward to item four on the agenda is ordinances and resolutions. Item 4.1 is resolution number 2025-709, XSSTAR Community Living Services, Beacon 2 Adult Daycare Center, SUP. Mr. Arciere is here to help us with that. Good evening, Your Honor. Members of Council, the resolution before you 2025-709 approves a special use permit for an adult day care center at one of the existing

[01:48:42] commercial centers at 8705 stonewall road the public hearing was held in close planning commission and staff recommend approval and i stand ready for any additional questions any questions council members motion madam mayor i move to approve resolution 2025-709 second with a motion by Councilman Vasquez Luna seconded by Councilman Smith to approve resolution number 2025 - seven zero nine any discussion hearing and seeing on mr.

[01:49:12] Smith please call the roll councilmember Vasquez Luna yes council member Smith yes vice mayor wolf yes councilmember Ellis councilmember Ocina yes councilmember Hudson yes motion carries thank you for that star series still with us item 4.2 ordinance number 2025 - 710 for Liberia Associates, LLC, Signal Hill, Condominium Association rezoning.

[01:49:38] Your Honor, members of council, the ordinance before you on first reading removes the existing out-of-date I-2 heavy industrial zoning and replaces it with the business office zoning for an existing office building. This is a city initiated regulatory update. Public hearing is closed. Staff and planning commission recommend approval. Stand ready for any additional questions.

[01:49:57] Any questions from Mr. Ossier? Now I entertain a motion. Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Ossier. I didn't see you. - I'm gonna make a motion here. - Oh, you wanna do the motion? - Yeah. - Okay, go ahead. - Okay, I move resolution 2025-710. - Second.

[01:50:14] - We have a motion by Councilman Osina and seconded by Councilwoman Vasquez Luna to approve ordinance number 2025-710. Any discussion? Hearing and seeing none, Mr. Smith, please call the roll. - Councilmember Osina? - Yes.

[01:50:29] - Councilmember Vasquez Luna? - Yes. - Vice Mayor Wolf? - Yes. - Councilmember Ellis? - Yes. Council Member Smith? Yes. Council Member Hudson? Yes. The motion carries. All right. Thank you so much, sir. Next on the agenda is Item 4.3, Resolution No. R2025-764, Amending Manassas Regional Airport Rules and Regulations for Aeronautical Services and Activities.

[01:50:53] Ms. Berry is here. Good evening. Thank you for being here. Good evening, Madam Mayor, Council, and Mr. Burke. I'm here tonight for the approval of the airport rules and regulations. The rules and regulations are intended to provide the basic guidelines for aeronautical activities at the airport.

[01:51:10] Activity-specific requirements may be imposed in lease agreements, franchise agreements, or other agreements between the city of Manassas and persons engaging in aeronautical activities at the airport. The airport tries to review these rules and regulations every five years, and at the time we may add new rules or update current rules.

[01:51:31] The rules and regulations were out for public comment for 30 days, and we received four comments and addressed them as best as we could. These rules and regulations have been reviewed by the city attorney, and also the airport commission approved these rules and regulations with the recommendations for city council approval.

[01:51:50] I stand ready to answer any questions you may have. Thank you, Ms. Perry. Any questions for Ms. Perry, council members? Mr. Rosina? Thank you, Mayor. So I looked at this. Are there any major revisions that were done to the rules?

[01:52:09] There's not. The main purpose for this update, again, is just because it's a routine update for every five or so years. We defined more definitions, clarified some of those. And then throughout the document, it was more grammatical things, updates, and then just some added areas that we needed more clarification on.

[01:52:29] Okay, very good. Thank you. Any other questions or comments from Ms. Barry? i'll entertain the motion madam mayor i move that we approve our resolution r2025-764 we have the motion by councilwoman vasquez luna seconded by miss ellis was it miss ellis to approve resolution number r2025-

764 any discussion hearing and seeing none mr smith please call the roll council member vasquez luna
yes council member ellis vice mayor wolf yes

[01:53:07] council member smith yes council member osina yes council member hudson yes the motion carries thank you very much and that moves us to item 4.4 resolution number r 2025 765 amending manassas regional airport minimum standards for aeronautical services and activities miss barry so i'm also here tonight then for the approval of minimum standards the minimum standards are intended to provide all entities who desire to conduct, carry on, or engage in aeronautical, vehicular, or pedestrian activities at the airport. The basic requirement to conduct such activities

[01:53:44] without exclusive right or infringement on the abilities of others to provide similar activities. The airport, again, tries to review these minimum standards every five years, and at the time we may update a new service. For example, being an air carrier service, this includes the use of terminal building and airline service. Also within that franchise that was executed, it required an update for rental cars and if anyone else wanted to build a commercial use terminal. The minimum standards were again out for public comment for 30 days and we received no comments. These minimum standards were reviewed by the city attorney. The commission

[01:54:23] did approve these minimum standards with the recommendation for the city council to approve. I stand ready for any questions you may have. Thank you, Ms. Perry. Any questions, Mr. Osina? Yes, Mayor, thank you. So, again, the revisions, as I saw, seem to be minor, mostly grammatical.

[01:54:44] Were there any substantive changes, such as I see there's a Section 24.1, Article 24 about commercial use airline passenger terminal building? Was that part of the document five years ago?

[01:55:02] No, that was a new section that was added. And what that one does is it's mainly for if someone wants to come in and build a new terminal, what those requirements would be. And then it also goes into talking about passenger, or excuse me, rental cars and what those requirements would be.

[01:55:23] But this is mainly for the facilities on that one. And we got some of the square footage for what the building would need to be, and also the footprint for parking, and then what the acreage would have to be for that. So in Article 24 there, are these requirements based on our agreement with AvePorts, or are these independent of our work with AvePorts?

[01:55:53] So they're based on the franchise that we, yes, that we executed with AvePorts. Okay, at this point. So this fits what our agreement is, is that correct? Yes. Along the way here. All right, very good. The other question, I'm sorry, Mayor, the Airport Commission has seen this?

[01:56:12] Correct, and they have approved it. All right, very good. Thank you. Any other questions or comments? I'm good, he asked a little question, so yeah. Thank you. Ready for the motion? May I, Mayor? I move resolution R-2025-765.

[01:56:32] We have the motion by Councilman Ocina, seconded by Councilwoman Ellis to approve resolution number R-2025-765. Any discussion, hearing, and seeing none, Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Councilmember Ocina? Yes. Councilmember Ellis?

[01:56:49] Yes. Vice Mayor Wolfe? Yes. Councilmember Smith? Yes. Councilmember Vasquez-Luna? Yes. Councilmember Hudson? Yes. The motion carries. Thank you so much. Thank you, Julie, for being here. Item 4.5 is resolution number R-2025-770, a landscape grant for 9403 Battle Street.

[01:57:10] Mr. Small is here for that. Good evening, Madam Mayor, members of Council. I'm here tonight to recommend for your approval a landscape grant in the amount of \$6,265 for 9403 Battle Street. This is a beautiful historic home on the corner of Battle and Church that backs up to Monza's.

[01:57:29] The landscape grant is for improvements in the backyard, which are visible from Battle Street. They are eligible improvements. Most people, as you're aware, take advantage of the Facade Improvement Grant Program. We also have this Landscape Improvement Grant Program that's available to help commercial properties beautify themselves and their neighborhoods.

[01:57:52] They meet the conditions of the grant application, and again, we recommend them for your approval. Thank you. Any questions or comments from Mr. Small? If not, I'll entertain a motion. Madam Mayor, move to Option Resolution 2025-770.

[01:58:11] Second. I have a motion by Vice Mayor Wolf, seconded by Councilman Osina to approve Resolution Number R-2025-770. Any discussion? Hearing and seeing them, Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Vice Mayor Wolf? Yes. Council Member Osina?

[01:58:27] Yes. Council Member Ellis? Yes. Council Member Smith? Yes. Council Member Vasquez-Lona? Yes. Council Member Hudson? Yes. The motion carries. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. All right. Next on the agenda is our public comment time. Do you have the sheet? I don't have anyone signed up to speak, but it's always, we will let anyone speak who wishes to on any item address the council. So now we are open for public comment time.

[01:58:57] I spoke at Town Hall, so this is my second ever appearance here. I'll be quick because it's getting late. I wanted to speak on three things. The first two, thanks for addressing the comments that my parents had when we came to Town Hall. The electric car racing, they stopped using the megaphones on the weekends, so whoever talked to them, thank you.

[01:59:17] The city is dealing with the fallen trees on their property, so they're happy. And then the third case would be the, I guess, the MI initiative that I kind of wanted to talk about to show support for the legislation of backyard chickens. Most of the council members did get back to me with some general concerns if they had any, which is great.

[01:59:40] It's a great start, but I feel like this is the same process that was done in 2021. Like nobody had specifics to the red lines that were done. So I'm, so for example, if in your initial red lines that were presented to some of you that were here back then, whether 10,000 square feet, if that's not enough, you need to increase it to 15 to 20.

[02:00:01] Those are kind of, I think, the comments that your staff would need. I'd really hate for your staff or whoever's performing this work and reaching out to all these other people to, they don't know what a success or the goal line is. So they'll just be wasting money and their money or our money, time, money to kind of rewrite something that you know they don't know what's wrong with what it's wrong with I'm also new to the process so initially I just emailed you the sign of petitions that I collected and I didn't know I initially I thought they need to be hand signatures so the process of collecting those is anytime

[02:00:40] I'd walk with my parents around Old Town to kind of get them to exercise with me we'd see anybody that's either gardening or walking a dog or some someone that's that you know not knocking door-to-door to be to harassing people but to see hey would you support something like this for only single houses we didn't have specifics because I didn't know what red lines you've already had so that's how I got

the 70 signatures that I emailed to you but I have them printed here so we can kind of I don't know add those to the record maybe or whatever the procedure is but in talking to some of the to some of the folks here after the town hall I understand that you can also do this electronically so in like a week and a half I've gotten like a hundred and

[02:01:16] seventy eight signatures I have a lot of people so I also brought those and again people included their phone numbers and street addresses, excluding either a number or a few numbers of their house address to kind of keep it a little more private. So I wanted to submit those too. I understand that the, I guess this would be discussed at the May working session, which the public isn't allowed to speak at or answer any questions that you're dealing with. So I guess this was the last time to, I don't know, speak up. Some of us here that supported this, even in

[02:01:55] town hall now have already reached out to be prepared to answer questions of something that wasn't initially discussed was well what will we do with if a bird stops laying eggs like how do we dispose of that how do we give that to a better home plenty of farms at the farmers market are willing to take those and continue to like feed them and have them on their farm so those are just some of the questions that if we were to be included in that conversation when you have these concerns they can be addressed that's it thank you do i give these printed to someone to the clerk there thank you anyone else who wishes to address

[02:02:34] council for public comment time um linford calgaryen manassas city resident good evening mayor and council members i'm here tonight because i believe in manassas i believe in the families who live here and the homeowners who care for their property and the promise of a city that truly supports people who want to make this their home our city's future depends on how we treat the people who've built their home in our city our residents our homeowners our small businesses

[02:03:08] these are the people who care for our city raise their families here coach the teams here raise the flags here and fill the stands of all the events you ask us to attend they are not asking for special treatment they are asking for fairness flexibility and for the freedom to live well on the land they've worked hard to own let's support policies that empower not restrict those who live here. Let's allow homeowners to build responsibly, like adding accessory dwelling units for aging parents or adult children. I know that kind of failed in the planning commission, so I'm trying to bring that back. Let's support the right to responsibly keep back your chickens, something

[02:03:45] that fosters food security, family connection, and sustainable living. These are not fringe ideas. These are common sense choices rooted in self-reliance and care for our community. Let's also protect the places that bring us together. The A.G. Smith ball fields aren't just high-valued grassland.

[02:04:02] They're spaces where our children grow, where neighbors meet, where memories are made. Selling them while acquiring more land isn't sound planning. It's trading legacy for uncertainty. We should be preserving these places, not giving them up. And let's be honest with ourselves and with each other.

[02:04:19] When citizens ask for transparency, like requesting a record of how much land the city owns, that information should be readily available. Not hidden on a database. Not delayed. Let's update those records regularly. Let's make openness our standard. If we truly believe in a vibrant Manassas, one that honors tradition while building a strong future, then we must act like it. That means trusting our citizens. That means protecting our green space. That means ensuring every homeowner feels supported, not

sidelined. Let's not become a city that just grows on paper. Let's be a city that grows with purpose and with people at its

[02:04:56] heart. Thank you. Thank you. Anyone else wish to address? Oh, go ahead. I'm sorry. Andrew Smith again. Just want to make a couple comments here really quick. I did notice in the budget too that there's some vehicle purchases and everything. I know I've spoken about this before, but I really would encourage the council to, where appropriate, purchase electric vehicles. And I know that some people have unfortunately turned this into a political issue, but I see it as a technological

[02:05:29] advancement plain and simple and you know I my family is 100% EV and so when people think sometimes they're surprised by that I drive to Michigan all the time driven down Florida I would hope I think that there's some use cases where in our small city the vehicles are staying in this area that it makes a lot more sense and probably financial sense as well around maintenance operation cost I don't think it's works for in every scenario right but I do think in the

[02:06:01] light-duty fleet, I would encourage the city to please kind of propose, you know, ideas in advancing the EV space. And then the last item, too, is around VRE. So I know Ms. Vazquez is on the VRE board. I would like the city just to push them a little bit harder on the Saturday service. I'm very excited about that and I know other residents are as well and I think it'll be a great test run not only

[02:06:38] to allow us to travel to other areas on the weekends without needing a vehicle but it will also bring people to the city and I know I work with a lot of people that sometimes like oh I'd love to go to Manassas whatever been in a while but you know it's a lot easier to get on a train and kind of have to sit through 66 or something so yeah so that's the other thing that's all thank you very much for everything you do thank you mr smith anyone else for public comment time janet plebniak again some of you were on the council four years ago when the chicken issue

[02:07:15] was up there was never anyone here in favor of the chickens i was here against them alex has done a lot of work i agree with lynn it's our property um it sounds like they have some other details that they have gone into like i said before there was never anything for them we were just going to do it and i'm not sure why so just for the record i'm not against the chickens thank

[02:07:45] you anyone else good evening again i'm helen zarita long-time resident again i want to thank you all for sitting here listening even going to church at times um been an eventful evening but for you all working during the day and your normal jobs and then coming to listening to the constituents is very important i understand what you're going through i'm trying to budget my

[02:08:19] household because I know that federal government is messing up everyone else's budget. All the localities in the United States are going through what you all are going through. And I have true faith in all of you that you will relook at the budget, make a decision, and execute it the way that you all need to do. And I feel like what constituents are not recognizing is that you all too live in this city and everything that you all make a decision on also will affect you all it's

[02:08:59] not like you guys are in a glass by yourself so i understand and i applaud you for sitting here it's been a long night but again i understand everyone's concerns i have concerns my electric bill going up my taxes going up but that's the cost of having a beautiful livable city that we live-ins. A lot of the little places in the city that have gone down have now come up.

[02:09:27] I work for East End Mobile Home Park, and these residents are living, and they are well taken care of, and for you all to sit here and listen to everyone's concerns, I'm going to let you all go. Have a good night. Take a deep breath and hammer out the budget. Thank you.

[02:09:48] Thank you. Anyone else? If not, I'll call on Mr. Brown For next item on the agenda, authorizing our closed meeting, item 6-1 is Resolution R-2025-766, authorizing a closed meeting.

[02:10:05] Good evening, Madam Mayor, members of council. Next item on your agenda is the discussion of qualifications of applicants for appointment to city boards and commissions. Under state law, that discussion can take place in a closed meeting of council.

[02:10:20] To convene that closed meeting, I would recommend your adoption of resolution number R-2025-766, resolution authorizing a closed meeting of City Council. Madam Mayor, move to authorize the closed meeting.

[02:10:37] Second. Motion by Vice Mayor Wolfe, seconded by Councilman Ocina. To approve resolution number R-2025-766, authorizing a closed meeting, any discussion? Hearing and seeing none, Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Vice Mayor Wolfe?

[02:10:54] Yes. Councilmember Osina. Yes. Councilmember Ellis. Councilmember Smith. Yes. Councilmember Vasquez Luna. Yes. Councilmember Hudson. Yes. The motion carries. All right. Thank you. We'll proceed into that room over there. Thank you.

[02:11:12] Mayor, members of Council, immediately following a closed session, state law requires that you certify that the only matters which you discussed in the closed meeting were those which were identified in the motion convening the closed session and which are exempt from open meeting requirements under state law.

[02:11:32] That certification is included in resolution number R-2025-768, resolution certifying a closed meeting of city council, which I recommend for council's adoption. Thank you, sir. Mr. Wolfe. Madam Mayor, move to certify a closed meeting.

[02:11:49] Second. Who do I give it to? We have the motion by Vice Mayor Wolfe and seconded by Councilman Vasquez Luna to approve resolution number R-2025-768, certifying a closed meeting. any discussion. Hearing and seeing none, Mr. Smith, please call the roll.

[02:12:06] Vice Mayor Wolfe? Yes. Council Member Vasquez Luna? Yes. Council Member Ellis? Yes. Council Member Smith? Yes. Council Member Osina? Yes. Council Member Hudson? Yes. The motion carries. All right, thank you. Mr. Osina.

[02:12:21] Thank you, Mayor. Members of Council, I'd like to move Resolution R-2025-788 making appointments to boards, committees, and commissions that we appoint the following folks. Appoint Timothy Conroy to the Architectural Review Board as a regular member for a full term beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2029. Reappoint Anne Hempton to the Beautification Committee as a regular member for a full term beginning July 1, 2025, ending June 30, 2029.

[02:12:56] Appoint Philip Garrick to the Manassas Business Council as a regular member for a full term beginning April 28th, 2025 and ending June 30th, 2029. Appoint Robert Sweeney to the Manassas Regional Airport as a regular member for a full term beginning April 28th, 2025 and ending June 30th, 2027.

Appoint Shelly Zenowick to the Social Services Board as a regular member for a partial term beginning April 28, 2025 and a term ending June 30, 2028. Appoint Robert Angeletti to the

[02:13:34] Utility Commission as a regular member for a full term beginning July 1, 2025 and term ending June 30, 2029. And appoint Jonathan Mills to the Solid Waste Committee as a regular member for a partial term beginning April 28, 2025, and term ending June 30, 2027.

[02:13:55] Second. We have the motion by Councilman Osina and seconded by Councilwoman Vasquez-Luna, approving the motions, approving the appointments as read. Any discussion? Hearing and seeing them, Mr. Smith, please call the roll. Councilmember Osina?

[02:14:10] Yes. Councilmember Vasquez-Luna? Yes. Vice Mayor Wolfe? Yes. Councilmember Ellis? Yes. Councilmember Smith? Councilmember Hudson? Yes. The motion carries. okay and next is adjournment anything to come before the council i do one let me let me really quickly i'm going to jump in front of me karen's last meeting is tonight and i forgot to say something at the other at the beginning of the meeting i'm so sorry well you get it now you get all our love so thank you for a job well done and putting up with all of us and we're glad that you decided to choose us for the time that you had and bigger better calls you and we're very proud of

[02:14:49] you it's a scholarship thing yeah that you had looked for before and then government got in the way and now it's back on and so um definitely proud of you and thank you so much for helping us out and being here with us we really we're gonna miss you so yeah thank you for all your help so yeah mr wolf uh i spent the afternoon working with miss bergeron putting together this spreadsheet to help us on Wednesday?

[02:15:13] Sorry, Diane. So, yeah, she's correcting my math. So if anyone's got any, I think I've captured all the requests and things on the budget, but if anyone's got something else that they want to include, please send to me.

[02:15:29] Well, Ms. Veskid, I saw her first. Okay, can she go? Okay, thank you, Ms. Veskid. Madam Mayor, I'll continue to advocate, and I know we're going to get there. I won't be here in person, But the last thing is I want to make sure that my ask will be from the regular budget that we have the HMI money and also at least one part-time position for Marcella.

[02:15:52] For the kids, my other ask, other than the \$2, but I'm sorry, the two pennies reduction, I don't know if I will have the support, but my ask is that we don't forget whether it's from that or from the data center's money that we do something for affordable housing.

[02:16:15] And that has never come up. That's what I wanted to say. And I won't be here. You won't be here for the next meeting, 30th, this week. Okay, okay. Thank you, Ms. Vasquez. No, no, Ms. Rosina. Thank you, Mayor. Ms. Vice Mayor, I may have something for you tomorrow afternoon.

[02:16:32] Okay. No problem. Because you're not the boss of me yet. No. Any other comments or questions? All right, if not, we are adjourned. Thank you, Donnie.



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