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Prince William Board of County Supervisors Meeting, Tuesday, March 21, 2023

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- Official meeting video (Prince William County, Granicus): https://pwcgov.granicus.com/player/clip/3271
- Official Board of County Supervisors page (Prince William County): https://www.pwcva.gov/department/board-county-supervisors

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[00:00:00] Madden, you okay? Good afternoon. It is 2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 21st, 2023. This morning, we have Dr. Ivey, who is joining us to lead us in an invocation. If you would like to approach the podium and make sure you turn on the microphones.

[00:00:20] Very good. Let us pray. Our Father and our God, we've gathered for the Board of County Supervisors meeting. And before we petition and ask for anything, we pause to say thanks for everything. We're indeed grateful for your love, your power, and your protection.

[00:00:39] Bless Prince William County, its leadership, and every resident. Today, it is without question that we need you now more than ever before. In this room, we have leaders, families, and those who make up a portion of Prince William County.

[00:00:55] We now pray for the leadership of this county that every decision that is made will be in the best interest of those of us who live here. We pray that a spirit of unity and togetherness will be evident during this meeting, even though there are differences of opinions and views, never let our differences outweigh our commonality.

[00:01:17] God, each leader, our county executive, and the board that supports the vision for Prince William County. Then we pray for the residents of Prince William County, our children, families, and our

seniors. Let this board ensure that each resident and family can truly enjoy the beauty and the opportunities that this county offers. We're thankful in advance that you will bless our school system, every student, every administrator, every teacher and staff person. On today, bless our time together. Allow every concern and issue to be heard and taken seriously as we move

[00:01:53] to ensure that our county remains intentional to ensure that we're meeting the needs of its residents. We thank you now in advance for this time of prayer. It is our desire to please you in all that we do. We all say thanks. We close this prayer by saying it is done. Amen. Thank you very much. If we could all now rise for the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation

[00:02:28] under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. We are now on to Agenda Item 3, which is the approval of the meeting minutes for february 28th can i get a motion to approve agenda item 3a so move manager second motion made by supervisor bailey seconded by vice chair bode is there any

[00:03:02] discussion seeing none please vote vote unanimous great uh brings us on to item number four the consent agenda items uh there are today's consent agenda consists of seven items are there any items anyone wishes to remove from the consent agenda items because they have specific questions or concerns that they haven't been able to have answered before today supervisor vega thank you

[00:03:34] madam chair 4e supervisor lawson thank you 4c and i don't know if this is necessarily a question for staff or among ourselves probably staff first and then we can discuss it so can i get a motion on 4a b d f and g madam chair supervisor bailey yes i'd like to pull 4b please can i get a motion

[00:04:11] on 4A, D, F, and G. So moved, Madam Chair. Second. Motion made by Supervisor Bailey, seconded by Vice Chair Bodie. Is there any further discussion? Seeing none, please vote. Vote unanimous.

[00:04:28] That brings us, we'll start with Supervisor Bailey. 4B, is there a question? Yes, there is. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'd like for Mr. Conosalas, if you would please, just to give a brief overview of item 4B. We didn't have an opportunity to sit and chat about this, just an overview, if you would, please.

[00:04:47] Yes, ma'am. This is just, just so you understand, this is just the, to authorize the execution of a condemnation agreement. Now, this agreement is, is for Route 1, HS Route 1 LLC, which are the people out there on Potomac Shores. So it is, it is a condemnation agreement for property that is needed for the public improvement plan that Potomac Shores has put forward for the intersection of Route 1 and Route 234 for the quadrant intersection.

[00:05:16] I.e. showing progress with the Potomac Shores project. As you see, if you go out there, and I know you have, that that clearing is happening. So as we're getting this right away, they're moving forward, hopefully, to construction. It is a developer project. We don't keep the timeline or track for them, but we'll find out and get to your office, back to them after we discuss this with them.

[00:05:33] Thank you so much. Thank you. Would you like to move 4B? I'd like to move 4B forward, please. Second. Motion made by Supervisor Bailey, seconded by Supervisor Franklin. Any further discussion? Seeing none, please vote. Vote unanimous.

[00:05:51] Next up is Supervisor Lawson, 4C. Thank you, Madam Chair. Rick, is it possible for us to separate these different ordinances or at least the public hearings? Do you know, or are they bundled

together?

[00:06:08] Because I'd like to support two and not necessarily the, what I call the red light cameras, but I'm supportive of the school and construction zone speed enforcement or the additional techniques that we're looking to adopt.

[00:06:24] Do you know if that's possible? It is possible, but for the results that we talked about and the recommendations that we put forth and what we think is going to be a revenue-neutral program, both of the programs are needed to move forward. That's your opinion. No, no, no. Like I said, I would like...

[00:06:39] No, no, and the possibility is there to... And you may recall that several of us up here during the work session last week expressed are some trepidation regarding the intersection, the red light cameras, which I think you're calling traffic light, enforced traffic light signals.

[00:06:59] That's exactly what it is, right? So is that possible? Yes, ma'am. It's two different sections of code, so they could be looked at as two different board items. Okay. I'll turn to the county attorney, unless I'm wrong on that one, but I believe it's two different codes, so we could go two different board items.

[00:07:17] Okay. Yes, Madam Chair, members of the board, it is two separate code sections. The public hearing, it would be codified in two different ways. So if the board's desire is to split the question there, then it can be done. Okay. Well, then in that case, then, I move, I'm happy to discuss this with my colleagues, but move for approval in 4C to authorize public hearings for the speed enforcement monitoring systems for the highway work zones and the school crossing zones.

[00:07:51] Second. Motion made by Supervisor Lawson, seconded by Vice Chair Bodie. Is there okay? I have two people who want to speak so. Supervisor Weir, discussion. We're in discussion.

[00:08:07] It's not on this motion. Well, we have a motion on the floor. I do have a question. So if we're doing this, are we having a second motion for the red light? Yes. Okay. Okay. Okay, there's an amended motion on the floor for the first half.

[00:08:30] I see no further discussion. Please vote. Vote unanimous. And is someone going to make a motion for the second one?

[00:08:49] So moved, Madam Chair. Second. Motion made by Supervisor Angry, seconded by Supervisor Bailey. I'm sorry. We are now in discussion. Supervisor Weir.

[00:09:04] Just a question, Ralph. Gotten considerable feedback in the last... You've got to turn your microphone on. You've gotten considerable feedback over the last week since we last spoke, and there has been significant feedback from the Haymark community as to whether or not you might consider either replacing one of the proposed locations or adding a location for the 55 and 15 intersection, and if you could just take that under advisement and do as you wish.

[00:09:37] I have my guy saying that we'll take a look at it. It's an intersection that is on our list, so we will take a look and see if that's a possibility for you. as we come forth on April 11th with the different motions there, with the approval. Supervisor Franklin.

[00:09:54] Sure, thank you. So I wanted to just speak about this particular item. Obviously, I've expressed concerns about the manner in which we would carry out any type of program related to red light cameras. The concerns that I've raised in the past have been making sure that it doesn't become a predatory system and program that we implement.

[00:10:16] I've given examples of how Washington, D.C. uses their program. I will say the manner in which Virginia allows localities and the restrictions put on how localities can use them does make me comfortable in supporting this. I will also say that I have also received feedback about the red light cameras, particularly from constituents wanting myself to support this measure.

[00:10:43] I get calls every single day about speeding, and this is a pilot program. We will take a look at the results to determine if we want to make it a permanent program, and I will say that I still have concerns about how other jurisdictions use a red light program, so I'm going to be paying very close attention to our results and how it's implemented and kind of the discussion around the pilot program.

[00:11:07] So this doesn't mean that I'm going to support it permanently. I want to see how it works in this pilot program. And so I will be watching very, very closely. Thank you. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you. Supervisor Angry. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:11:23] Hey, Rick, do we have data, and I was just trying to look because I probably should have known this before, on the, I'll go with fatalities at red light intersections. Yes, sir. And I don't know if you have that with you, but I ask that because our red light intersection, and not just in Princeton County, but around the nation, is out of control with people running red lights.

[00:11:51] I mean, and so this is a measure to put in place to assist our officers, who I see even sitting at a light today, even today, with three cars ran this light that was red and completely green for me.

[00:12:07] But I get it that we don't do high-speed chases and we don't create this unsafe situation. But people have gotten away from the fact that a yellow light means slow down and a red light means stop. And so if this is a measure that we have to put in place, and I agree with Supervisor Franklin to make sure this doesn't become a tool, a negative tool.

[00:12:31] But I think for what we're doing right here now, I am 100% on board with this red light camera study, if you will. And I'm hoping that we can put these things in place permanent just to get people to slow down.

[00:12:46] I understand we can't put them at every red light. I know there's a statute for that. So wherever we can put those, I think the more we can save a life or, you know, just a bad day for somebody, then we have to do our part as elected officials to do that. So thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:13:02] Thank you, sir. Supervisor Bodie. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Rick, for bringing this to us and all the work that you and your team have done over the last year or so on this. I'll be supporting this. I still have some concerns, like my colleagues do, and I think Supervisor Franklin put it very well, so the balance we have to do.

[00:13:20] At the same time, I've always viewed that one of our prime directives as elected officials in this county is protect life. And to me, any kind of situation, anything we can test to try to protect and save more lives, We should at least look into. That's from the direction I'm looking at this because, I mean, everyone in here knows I've had in the last year or so a lot of really bad accidents in the Occoquan district at areas of my district that people should not be driving that fast to begin with.

[00:13:46] So we're talking about school zones right in front of Woodbridge High and Occoquan Elementary, or Old Bridge Elementary. We're talking about a gentleman and a dog who got hit a few months ago near Hedges Run. these are folks that may not have passed away if not for other things you

might be able to put into place to help bring bring folks speeds down but also like we've been talking about this entire time a big part of this changing the culture of how people drive in this county and i think this will go a long way in doing it and i think that at least in this portion having the red light cameras and the speed zones are hand in glove with each other to start to have that conversation with our constituents about the fact that they need to be better drivers they need to drive safer because

[00:14:25] there are lives in line every time someone takes the wheel there are lives on the line every time someone decides that light's yellow can i make it i'm gonna speed up instead of slow down every single time someone makes that snap decision there are lives at stake and i think that this is a first step for us to address that and that's why i'll be supporting this thank you so much madam chair supervisor bailey thank you madam chair uh rick thank you for bringing this uh to the fore for us um i think this will also i'm going to support it because i also think that this will help with the trucks that are running the red lights, especially, you know, it's a timely thing. In fact, today I just watched a transfer trailer truck run a red light, blowing the

[00:15:02] horn, going through the red light. And that in itself, you can't save a life when something that large is going through a red light. So I'm going to support it. I agree with my colleagues that we, you know, we've got to monitor it in a very good fashion to make sure that it is not predatory, as Supervisor Franklin said, but I think it's important, not just for the fact that we've had fatalities, but to prevent it, especially with something as big as a transfer trailer truck. And so, thank you for bringing this in a timely manner when we are having incidences, one after another

[00:15:39] in our county, that we particularly have not been having in the past. So, this is very timely, and that's why I'm going to support it. Thank you, ma'am. Supervisor Lawson? Thank you. So, Rick, how would we be able to prevent, assuming that this ordinance is adopted, April when is it scheduled for?

[00:16:03] We're hoping April 11th, ma'am. Okay. Let's assume that the board adopts it on April 11th. How would the concerns of predatory practice be scaled back? Because, you know, I see this as something that once we adopt it, you guys go off and do your thing.

[00:16:24] And we have problems where people are getting fines sent to them, violations sent to them. And what is the fine? Do we have a set fine? Our recommendation ma'am is a $100 set fine for speeding over 10 miles an hour in either a construction or school zone.

[00:16:45] Yeah, but that's not... And the red light is a fixed $50 fine for running a red light. Yeah, because this is just about the red light, right? We've already passed the hearing for school and construction, right? Yes. Yeah. So for the sake of this discussion, we have legitimate concerns about this becoming...

[00:17:06] Because the city of Manassas doesn't have any grace? They don't have any grace, and you're very right in that, ma'am. Right now, the city of Manassas, if you run the red light, whether on a right-turn basis, left-turn, or through, they have no grace period based on that.

[00:17:22] What we were suggesting to the board as we were talking about this through our work session was that we give a grace speed of three miles an hour as people take a right on red, just on that movement. The left movement still continues to be the same. straight movement still continues to be the same. Okay. And on the right movement, we would give a three mile an hour grace so it doesn't again become predatory. And again, it's based on the speed of a pedestrian, which is what we are trying to prevent

pedestrian accidents on these right on reds. The speed of a pedestrian? Correct. So the average speed of a pedestrian is about three

[00:17:57] and a half miles an hour. Okay. So we're saying that a nice round number like three, a car could still take action while a pedestrian or a pedestrian can take action as the car is making that movement. And that'll be baked into the ordinance itself? Correct, ma'am. Okay. I mean, obviously we're all sitting up here, want to do everything that we can to preserve life and improve the safety of our community. I just don't feel like I'm ready yet to authorize the hearing and would like an opportunity to hear more feedback from the community. I mean, Supervisor

[00:18:34] If I recall correctly, the gentleman who went up over the curb, if I recall correctly, he was drunk. It wasn't because he was running a red light. So I want to look at stats more. But if the board majority approves the hearing, I'll obviously be ready for the 11th discussion, and we'll go from there.

[00:18:56] Yes, ma'am. I'm not sure. Is there a question there? I'm sorry. Well, I just, like, I want to look at more data as far as the red light. And we'll get that for you. I mean, and just so you know, we're doing a pilot program here, so we're just trying to see what happens within these first nine months to bring you to see if there's actually efficacy in the program.

[00:19:16] I understand that. And if there isn't, or we're seeing that there's an issue with something that seems predatory, you can switch your rules of engagement there. You can basically go to a red light and say that you want to eliminate the right-on-red movement because you feel it's predatory or you want to increase the level of speed or you want to change the structure.

[00:19:42] Anything like that you can do wants to change. Again, we're doing this as a pilot for one year, and we're going to come back to you to make it an effective program. Without your approval next year, we will not be able to move forward past this pilot. No, I get that. I get that. I just am reluctant to authorize it until I know more of the data behind it.

[00:20:03] And we'll get you that information, anything you need. We'll get with your office. Thank you, ma'am. Supervisor Franklin. Sure, and I'll also just make the point that at some point we have to talk to our neighbors, our family and friends, because no amount of legislating is going to completely solve this issue.

[00:20:21] And we really do just, at the end of the day, need to encourage each other to slow down and pay attention to our traffic safety measures. Because, quite frankly, these cameras are not going to go everywhere. I've gotten three calls about one particular street in my district that has a lot of speeding.

[00:20:40] Red light cameras are not going to go there. So we really do have to work on each other as well. So thank you. Mr. Gonzalez, just one question. Yes, ma'am. Today's resolution is allowing for a public hearing for an ordinance. That is correct. Does it lock us into the details of the pilot?

[00:20:58] Can someone tell me that? It does not, ma'am. Okay, it's just an ordinance that allows us to do that, and then we can still talk about the pilot and the things. Correct, ma'am, when we come to the public hearing on hopefully April 11th. Right, but after the public hearing, we can still work out details on the pilot.

[00:21:14] Yes, the rules, yes, ma'am. Okay, just want to make sure everybody was aware of that. Okay, so we've still got flexibility after the – it's just the ordinance that allows us to do this at all. That is very correct. You get to set your rules of engagement. We've recommended some, but we can switch those around.

[00:21:30] Okay, and we can do that after the ordinance is approved. I just want to make sure I understand you correctly. So after the ordinance is adopted, then if you see problems within the pilot program, we can tweak the program without tweaking the ordinance.

[00:21:46] That is correct, ma'am. We took our rules of engagement, or the rules of the camera is not the ordinance itself authorizes you to do this, but you set your rules that you want for your cameras based on the envelope that the ordinance provides.

[00:22:03] of course supervisor Bailey so in layman's terms this just gives us permission to start a trial if you will and then we craft the the steps that we will move forward with if we decide to move forward with am i on point with that yes that's that that sounds correct this in layman's terms yes ma'am okay all right thank you okay seeing no further discussion please vote motion Passes 7-1. Supervisor Lawson voting nay. Okay.

[00:22:43] That brings us to public comment. No. Sorry. No. Never mind. Whoa. Motion. Someone well, we just voted on a 4C. We also have 4E. Supervisor Vega. Sorry. Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe I saw Eric walking in. Hi, Eric.

[00:23:05] Just a quick question. I've received several emails from constituents after redistricting. There seems to be a bit of a confusion. Can you please just for the folks here and the folks watching at home let us know what exactly this means especially for the 75 voters are going to be directly impacted by this the split precinct waiver okay so whenever redistricting is done sometimes the decisions that the state makes and the decisions that you all make in terms of the precincts and the magisterial districts do not align perfectly in our previous redistricting i believe we had about 26 precinct splits that affected more than 10,000

[00:23:42] voters. You all made some great changes to our current district dean, and we only have two that impact about 75 voters in the current system. I think this was mostly because you all adopted timely the district lines last year, and I'm sorry, yeah, last year, and the state was running a little behind, so there were a few tweaks at the last minute in the state system that fell a little bit out of alignment with what you all had, how you all had set up your precincts and your magistral districts.

[00:24:16] So we just have a few little areas. There's one, the residents that are between Token Valley Road and Hoadley Road in your precinct, Supervisor Vega, and one in an area near Potomac Mills in Supervisor Angry's district, a very small number of voters in each, but they really can't be resolved without you all examining, again, the entire setup of the precincts and the magisterial district.

[00:24:45] So when that's the case, what the state asks is that we apply for a waiver that they granted us in the last cycle, and we would expect they would do the same here. But we have to do it on an annual basis and provide them with that application so that the state board of elections can approve that.

[00:25:04] In this instance, I don't expect any issues with it because it's less than 100 voters that are involved in each of these splits. And it just means that voters in the same precinct might have a different Virginia House delegate that they vote for or a different congressperson that they vote for in these two instances.

[00:25:26] So that's the only impact here. It just means that voters at those precincts, We prepared different ballot styles so that when voters go to those precincts, they have a ballot style that represents the

representatives that they're going to be voting for in those instances. So this is just for you all to approve a resolution so that we can apply for that waiver from the state.

[00:25:48] Thank you very much, Mr. Olson. Supervisor Vega, would you like, do you have any further questions? Just wanted to thank you for the explanation. And yes, Madam Chair, I would like to move item 4E forward for approval. Second. Motion made by Supervisor Vega, seconded by Supervisor Bailey. Any further discussion? Seeing none, please vote. Vote unanimous.

[00:26:08] Okay, now we are on to public comment time. Thank you. We will begin with public comment time. Today we have 11 people signed up to speak.

[00:26:24] I will call the speakers five or six at a time. Each speaker will have three minutes to share their views and opinions regarding matters before the board. We ask that all speakers state their name and generally where they live or magisterial district at the beginning of their remarks.

[00:26:39] The microphone is in the back. After the first 15 minutes of in-person public comment time, we will close the in-person sign-up list. Our first five speakers are George Dodge, Barbara Dodge, Andre Ivey, Chester Outland, and Ane Johnson.

[00:26:59] Please begin. It doesn't sound like it's, is it on?

[00:27:15] Testing. Much better. Please proceed. Good afternoon, members of the board. I'm George Dodge from the Coles District. As I have a scheduling conflict, and my wife also will be not able to attend tonight's meeting, so we will address some of the budget at this time.

[00:27:35] While there are some positive things in the proposed budget, it is the negative things that outweigh the good. You push for the increase in data centers within the county by telling us that it will help us lower our taxes. But ever since the Gang of Five has taken control of the board, our taxes have gone up.

[00:27:53] The proposed budget asks that they go up again. I received a reassessment letter last week, and my property taxes are proposed to go up over $500 again this year. They've gone up every year over $2,000 since the board was constituted.

[00:28:09] The board's gang of five has been drunk with power and continues to ignore the plight of the citizens. No matter how many people come to speak here in opposition to your agenda, you continue to shove the agenda down their throats. You ignored the minority community in Yorkshire when you smashed your way through their community and their lives with the Route 28 bypass.

[00:28:32] You ignored the citizens when you did away with the 287G relationship of the Sheriff's Department and ICE. You ignored the citizens when you approved the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to allow the digital gateway next to the Monassas Battlefield Park.

[00:28:48] You lied to the citizens when you told them that more data centers would lower their taxes. They haven't, and they won't, as long as you keep their taxes low. You forced the expensive, wasteful, ideologically driven, and racist diversity, inclusion, and equity program on the county government and school system, which is divisive and destructive to community unity.

[00:29:11] destroying what the EEO program had already achieved. And now you add insult to injury when you propose to increase your own salaries by 67% and the chairperson's salary to increase by 70%.

[00:29:28] Who else in the county gets these kind of pay raises? This is an insult to every county government employee as well as every hardworking county taxpayer. Your arrogance has led to overreach, which is what you have done with your self-enriching pay creases at the expense of the county taxpayers whose taxes you raise to fatten your own wallets.

[00:29:54] Your priorities are now fully exposed. You enrich yourselves by increasing the burden on the citizens. Overreach tends to lead to backlash, and that backlash is coming. Thank you. Next speaker, please.

[00:30:12] Good afternoon, members of the board. My name is Barbara Dodge from Kohl's. The position of Director of Equity and Inclusion is both racist and a complete waste of taxpayers' dollars. It is responsible for trying to create a solution to a non-existent problem.

[00:30:32] Since its inception, the Racial and Social Justice Commission has sought to find examples of systematic racism in Prince William County, but has failed to do so. But through the Director of Equity and Inclusion, systematic racism is being introduced into Prince William County and Prince William County schools.

[00:30:52] Racism is being pushed in the Prince William County schools through critical race theory, woven into subjects and teaching methods that divide students by the color of their skin, which is racist by definition. Equity departments have been placed throughout Prince William County government.

[00:31:09] Within the Prince William County school system alone, equity positions consume just under $1 million of tax dollars, which doesn't include the costs associated with implementing their divisive programs or the cost of the positions in the rest of the county government.

[00:31:27] For example, Maria Burgos, who in 2021 made over $162,000, recently spent $78,000 of taxpayer dollars for a survey to be sent to all employees of Prince William County, asking about their sexual habits and identities.

[00:31:49] Meanwhile, schools are wanting to do away with advanced placement classes, geometry, or calculus, due to equity concerns, which is really racist. What they are really saying is that blacks can't do the work, so we have to lower the standards or do away with the programs.

[00:32:08] That is racist. By accepting Maria Burgos' dominant cultural narrative that presumes to define those who are excluded, we are ignoring those who don't fit into the prevailing cultural storyline. I agree with the great actor Morgan Freeman when he was asked, how would you do away with racism?

[00:32:29] He responded, stop talking about it. To fund and abolish the Director of Equity and Inclusion and the associated equity positions that are institutionalizing racism throughout Prince William County and wasting tons of taxpayer monies.

[00:32:47] May God bless America, Virginia, and Prince William County. And I just want to congratulate Supervisor Lawson, running for chair of the board. I'm looking forward to helping her a lot. Thank you so much. Next speaker, please.

[00:33:04] Hello, my name is Chester Outland, and I'm a resident of the Coles Magisterial District. I'm here to speak about the current budget proposal for the ADC.

[00:33:20] Thank you for giving me a moment to speak. I'm currently a lieutenant at the Prince William Manassas ADC. My current assignment is a watch commander who oversees one of the four security

shifts. I currently have 37 staff who I supervise. My staffing numbers are supposed to be at 56 total.

[00:33:37] I am also in charge of the entire ADC complex while on duty in terms of operational status to include, on average, 480 inmates and their safety and security. the visitors, volunteers, and the general public. When I began my career 18 years ago at the Adult Detention Center, the pay scale was identical to those who worked for the police department and the sheriff's office.

[00:33:59] The atmosphere around the ADC was wonderful, the job was good, the pay was good, and the benefits were good. The agency had a waiting list to be hired because it was a place people wanted to work. Fast forward to the present time, I now make less than a regular police officer. Grade 1 was the same years of service, yet I am a lieutenant, grade 5, in charge of so much.

[00:34:19] How did this happen? I don't know. I live and work in Prince William County. My children go to school in Prince William County, and I pay my fair share of taxes in Prince William County. Then with all of that, I am tasked with so much burden to safely, securely, and within laws and policy take care of our county's most dangerous citizens, yet I am paid less. Had I known 18 years ago that this is how it would have ended up, I honestly never would have stayed. To me, it's a disgrace what has happened. All of this leads me to say that what I would have done is what current staff are doing because they see the massive difference. The staff I talk of, some here today, are great people who do

[00:34:57] great things. We work in a negative environment of our community. We face many of the same dangers the police face on a constant basis. Their pay is so low that a three-year officer making $54,636, which is $13,000 less than a county police officer with the same years of service, can leave and go, for example, to Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to work as a detention deputy with no extra training required and make roughly $67,000 to do the same job we're doing. If we were placed back even comparably to the Prince William County PD pay scale like it used to be, then maybe we can start

[00:35:33] keeping these great employees that we keep losing to every jurisdiction around us, not just Loudoun that I use for an example. These employees here today and for those who could not make it deserve better for putting their lives on the line to protect the citizens of Prince William County, both citizens who are free and those who are incarcerated within the county.

[00:35:50] Thank you for your moment of your time. Thank you very much. Next speaker, please. Good afternoon, county supervisors, madam chair, county attorney, and county executive.

[00:36:16] And as always, because I don't want to be rude, gentlemen and ladies here in chambers and virtually. My name is Aene Johnson, and I am a constituent in the Woodbridge District. Today, I would like to take the opportunity to read a letter to a special someone in my life.

[00:36:34] His name is Bumpy. Dear Bumpy, for 33 months, 28 days, God gave me the privilege to be your bonus mother through foster care.

[00:36:58] I remember the first day I saw you. It was like the curious case of Benjamin Button. You were as bright as a cherry. As Queenie said, mm-hmm, this baby here is a miracle, that's for certain. Just like the kind of miracle one hopes to see.

[00:37:14] Daddy and Mommy took a deep breath and knew we were going to love you no matter what. The first few nights were rough getting you adjusted to a new environment. We rocked you gently all night

and were sure to soothe your cries. As time went on, the nights began to get shorter, and you began to grow up.

[00:37:36] I remember your first day of school. I put you in a pinstripe suit with coordinating shoes. You had on cologne and were ready for success. Your teachers and principals loved you. I fought for your education and medical needs. I made sure your appointments were scheduled in stellar fashion.

[00:37:55] You were Mr. VIP. You were Bumpy. Everyone knew the little child with limited words but big personality. But then the story changed. My dear, sweet Bumpy. Mommy and Daddy began to be treated differently.

[00:38:12] We were made to feel as if we were wrong to fight for your needs. We kept asking questions, but no one wanted to answer. We took you all over Virginia. Even Richmond, trying to find someone who would listen. Silence. Then the storm came.

[00:38:30] February 17th, 2023, they said we had to give you back. You had on matching jeans and a fuzzy sweater like your brother, Lord Tennyson, and your little sister, Primrose. You made your little roar, and Mommy and Daddy haven't seen you since.

[00:38:46] We don't know where you are or have any further updates. Mommy's heart hurts, but is on a mission. I must fight for you and so many other children who have had a wrongful change in placement from their foster homes who wanted to be adopted. When mommy cries, I hope you hear it.

[00:39:05] When you fall, mommy feels it. When you wake in the middle of night, mommy tucks you in. When you throw your food, and I know you will, mommy cleans it. And when you don't have a voice, mommy speaks for you.

[00:39:23] Thank you. I'm going to call our next six speakers, please. riquetta pain carla rays xena rios sergeant rourke first lieutenant navkey not nakvi and katherine archer riquetta pain carlos rays xena rios sergeant rourke first lieutenant knock the and katherine archer good afternoon hopefully you can hear me um i am can you make

[00:40:01] sure it's lower and that you see i want you to tilt it down thank you is this better yes thank Okay. Good afternoon, everyone. I am the aunt of Bumpy, and I stand before you. If you could give us your name and generally where you live.

[00:40:17] Yes, ma'am. Rekita W. Payne, and I live in Triangle, Virginia. Thank you. Yes, ma'am. I stand before you today just asking for answers in regards to Bumpy. That's what we affectionately called him because, again, I have a large family, So I'm an aunt to a lot of nieces and nephews, but especially my relationship with Bumpy, as my sister just stated, that is now stopped.

[00:40:48] And I recall one time we were watching a movie together, and Bumpy doesn't say a whole lot of anything, not so much that he can't, but we have to use sign language with him. And the movie was The Sea Beast, and I was watching it with him, and I recall a quote that the little girl had stated because there was some conflict, and she said to the gentleman, you can be a hero and still be wrong.

[00:41:19] And what my message today is is that although often sometimes people will do things and they're thinking they're correcting what they're doing, they're incorrect because, again, And if a person has asked questions and has not received an answer, but instead the response is they continue to have

things shut down as far as when a person is asking something, are we addressing the issue or are we just trying to get someone to silence them?

[00:41:45] So at this point, I just would ask that someone would get answers for my sister of what she's asking. And more than anything else, I just pray that it would just be heard with and grace is extended and not just something that is retaliatory. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

[00:42:02] Our next speaker is Carla Reyes. Buenas tardes a todos.

[00:42:24] Can you pull the microphone down a little bit to make sure we can hear you? Thank you. Buenas tardes a todos. Good afternoon to you all. Gracias por darme la oportunidad de hablar.

[00:42:41] Mi nombre es Carla Reyes. Y soy parte de la comunidad de Woodbridge y miembro de la Organización Inquilinos y Trabajadores Unidos. Tengo 19 años de vivir en Woodbridge con mi familia. Tengo hijos que fueron al colegio acá en el condado, pago mis impuestos como debe ser.

[00:43:03] Pero como ustedes bien saben, el condado de Pringwilliam está creciendo rápidamente. Estamos viendo desarrollo en las infracturas, en las nuevas carreteras, se están creando nuevas oficinas en general.

[00:43:22] Les agradecemos ese desarrollo que ustedes vienen haciendo, pero creemos que nosotros como comunidad más vulnerable no nos beneficiamos de ese desarrollo porque no existen programas para los adultos mayores, los deshabilitados, los jóvenes, y como ustedes lo mencionaron, queremos que el condado de Prince William sea un lugar exclusivo y de bienvenida para la comunidad y las generaciones futuras.

[00:43:53] I'll be doing the English version. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is Carla Reyes. I am part of the Woodbridge Community Members and Organization Tenants and Workers United.

[00:44:11] I have lived in Woodbridge for the past 19 years with my family. I have children who went to high school in this county, and I pay my taxes. As well as you know, Prince William County is growing rapidly, And we have seen infrastructure development, new housing, new businesses are establishing offices.

[00:44:33] And generally speaking, we are grateful for this development that you have been bringing. This development could not be good for everyone and could not help avoid the displacement of our families. Since we have lived in this county for decades, if only you as a leader start to make the decision of benefit all the residents of this county, We cannot continue massively development without having protection system for families, working class of people with low income, household, elderly folks, and people with disability.

[00:45:11] One of the biggest needs for our community is affordable and defining low-cost housing. Les empujamos a hacer lo siguiente. Establecer ordenanzas para crear un fondo fiduciario asignado de vivienda y promover inversiones significativas para él.

[00:45:40] Exigir a los desarrolladores que incluyan un porcentaje adecuado de unidades profundamente accesibles en todos los edificios nuevos y en remodelación que sean accesibles para la gente sin importar su estado migratorio.

[00:45:55] Utilizar la vecindad como una herramienta para expandir la cantidad de viviendas profundamente accesibles y dignas. Desarrollar una forma sistemática para recolectar e investigar quejas contra las compañías de gerencia explotativas y abusivas que violan las leyes de vivienda de Virginia día a día violando los derechos de los inquilinos.

[00:46:21] What do we need from you as a leader? Have a housing trust fund and dedicate a significant funding to it. Expand and create new deeply affordable houses by working with the developer and have them include a percentage of units that are committed deeply affordable in every new building and renovations.

[00:46:47] That in these units be for people who have low income levels regarding of immigrant status. Utilize density as tools to expand the quantity of deeply affordable and dignified housing. Develop a system for collecting and investigating compliance against management companies that are abusing and violating Virginia laws and tenants' rights.

[00:47:13] Creemos firmemente si ustedes crean una estructura donde todas las familias tengan acceso a una vivienda accesible, digna y en buenas condiciones.

[00:47:29] Nuestra comunidad tuviera menos problemas, como ser el de salud en general, salud mental y disciplina de nuestros hijos. Nuestros hijos se desarrollarían en un ambiente familiar seguro para poder estudiar, jugar y crecer sanos como seres humanos.

[00:47:53] No olvidemos que el asignamiento crea grandes problemas que pudieran evitar con una vivienda digna, accesible y segura. Esta es nuestra realidad y confiamos en ustedes para crear cambios positivos para nuestra comunidad. Gracias.

[00:48:12] We firmly believe that if you could create a structure where our family has access to dignify affordable houses and good conditions, then our community will face fewer problems including overall health, mental health, and structure and discipline.

[00:48:34] Our kids will grow up in a family environment that allows them to study, pay, play, and become healthy human beings. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Hola, buenas tardes. Mi nombre es Rina Ríos y es un gusto estar aquí con ustedes.

[00:49:00] Soy de El Salvador, tengo vivienda en el condado de Prince William desde hace 9 años y estoy en este día aquí frente a ustedes para que se comprometan con nuestra comunidad a proporcionar viviendas accesibles y dignas para las personas más vulnerables del condado, ya que en mi trabajo con inquilinos y trabajadores unidos como navegadora de servicio he podido observar las condiciones de vida y la falta de vivienda digna y accesible que tienen muchas personas que viven en este condado.

[00:49:25] Good afternoon. My name is Rino Rios. I'm from El Salvador. I have lived in Prince William for the past nine years. I am here today in front of you all so I can commit to our community allocated dignified and abhorrent for housing for the most vulnerable.

[00:49:45] In my work with Tenants and Work United as a service manager, I have been able to observe the living conditions and lack of dignified and abhorrent for housing that many people who live in Prince William County face. Yo sé que el desarrollo de un lugar es siempre para mejorar la calidad de vida de los habitantes que viven en ese lugar y mejorar la infraestructura e incrementar el crecimiento económico en general.

[00:50:14] Y es por este proceso que está pasando el condado en estos momentos. Gracias a su gobierno local y estatal se está convirtiendo en un lugar desarrollado e inclusivo para todos. Y eso es algo maravilloso, pero no todas las personas se ven beneficiadas con este desarrollo, ya que algunas comunidades no pueden sostener la calidad de vida que el condado exige, ya que el costo de la vida es alto e insostenible para muchas personas que ganan entre 10 y 15 dólares la hora.

[00:50:47] In some ways, development is always done to improve the quality of life of the residents who live in place and to improve the infrastructure and grow the economy. And Prince William County is going through this process right now.

[00:51:04] Thanks to its local states and government, it's becoming a more developed and inclusive place for everyone, which is awesome. But not every community feels like it's benefiting from its development because some communities cannot maintain a good quality of life.

[00:51:26] Now that the county has such a high, unsuitable cost of living, especially for people whose earnings are between $10 and $15 an hour.

[00:52:01] As you know, the cost of housing has increased a lot

[00:52:35] in the recent years and that's why we have come to speak here to we have come here to ask you to create housing to allocate funding low-cost housing for most vulnerable family who earns less than 40 percent. This is how we can have dignified affordable houses so our kids can grow in a good family environment which right now we don't have because high cost of rent and basic essentials. Many people who are forced to share housing with other families, sometimes with people

[00:53:12] that they don't even know, so they can lower the cost of rent. And this means that we do not have sufficient space of privacy in our families. No tiene que ser así. El condado puede crear mejores oportunidades para las familias que viven aquí. Creemos firmemente que nuestra comunidad necesita inversiones significativas para viviendas profundamente accesibles para nuestras comunidades de los niveles más bajos de ingreso.

[00:53:40] Como miembro de la comunidad y ciudadana residente, les pido por favor que tomen acciones para las personas más vulnerables y que pagan sus impuestos año con año, haciendo un aporte al progreso del condado. Gracias. It doesn't have to be this way.

[00:53:59] The county can create better opportunities for families that live here. We firmly believe that the community needs significant investments for deeply affordable housing for our community and those who have lowest income levels. As a community member and citizen, I ask you to please take action for the most vulnerable people who pay their taxes year to year in making a contribution for this process and for the county.

[00:54:30] Thank you. Thank you very much. We have three more speakers signed up. Please proceed. Good afternoon.

[00:54:48] My name is Sergeant Rourke. I do not live in Prince William County, but I have been employed at the Prince William ADC for the past 12 and a half years now. I know you have been receiving our letters expressing our concerns for the current proposed budget and outlining the various tasks we as ADC officers perform.

[00:55:05] So today, I'm here with my fellow officers to put faces with the names of the officers that go unnoticed and get forgotten about because we work behind the scenes and the walls of the ADC. I'm also here representing the future of the ADC and to express to you that if the budget isn't reconsidered to make us competitive to the other Northern Virginia agencies, we will be in a bigger crisis than we already are.

[00:55:33] You are well aware that we are currently 86 officers short, and that's only because you already took 11 spots from us, and you are taking 23 more spots away from us this time that we haven't been able to fill. This should be a huge red flag to you and have you question why can't we fill these spots.

[00:55:55] Instead, you just take the money. Just like the $1.6 million that you, Mr. Shorter, have decided to put into the general fund instead of back into the ADC, you have also proposed a 4.2% increase that puts us even further behind all the other agencies in the area, setting the precedence that we don't matter.

[00:56:18] I'm afraid that if you don't reconsider our pay increase and make a substantial change to it, we will continue to lose officers to other agencies that are paying more, have higher sign-on bonuses and retention bonuses, all while requiring less work.

[00:56:34] We are currently allotted 315 officer positions, only having 249 filled. Each shift at the ADC should have approximately 50 officers assigned to them. We are currently working every day with 29 officers. Half of our units are closed, and we are still having to leave one officer on most units with 69 inmates and only a can of OC spray on their duty belt.

[00:56:58] This, in turn, has put supervisors that have worked hard for a promotion back on working units to cover shortages in addition to the daily tasks that they already have. You are adding to the workload of every officer, requiring double and triple out of them than if we were fully staffed.

[00:57:15] You are having to pull from specialty positions. All of this is creating and adding more stress to an already stressful and dangerous job. Officers are working extended periods of time and being called in on overtime to cover our shortages, and there is limited time for approval, for time off.

[00:57:31] The result has morale at an all-time low, unhappy officers that are leaving the agency weekly, and don't forget the 28 officers that are at retirement age and years of service that can walk out the door tomorrow if it continues to get worse. Supervisor Lawson previously stated that there is no room for error within the ADC, and she is right.

[00:57:49] Our inmate population now is totally different than when I started 12 and a half years ago. We are dealing with an extremely violent generation that does not care. We are setting ourselves up for failure and possible liability issues, leaving the county open for lawsuits. Because without an agency fully staffed, Colonel Meletus is going to have another choice than do a mandatory lockdown.

[00:58:09] Thank you. Your time is up. I'm sorry, just one more thing. That is a death sentence for every officer that's working within that facility. Next speaker, please. Good evening, respected County Board of Supervisors and the citizens of the Prince William County.

[00:58:26] My name is First Sergeant Naqvi, and I'm here along with my co-workers to bring your attention to a matter of extreme importance. I have been working at the ADC for the past 17 years, also known now as the Training Academy for the Northern Virginia Law Enforcement Agencies.

[00:58:42] Now, some of you might be wondering why I made this remark. Let me explain. We at the Prince William ADC have been filling vacant positions at the surrounding agencies in the NOVA region for

the last few years. As you have been hearing from our co-workers that we are losing our trained officers to these other agencies because of the pay disparity.

[00:59:00] This gap is about to be widened after July 1st under the current proposed budget. In many cases, this gap is going to be more than $20,000 to $25,000 more. When the county gave Prince William County PD a 20% raise, I saw a ray of hope. I thought that the board has finally realized how to future-proof our trained staff.

[00:59:19] I was wrong when I saw a mere 4.2 pay increase proposed for the ADC. What I saw was a clear indication that the county believe some public safety agencies deserve more than others. This is a slap in the face of all these officers who are still committed to our agency.

[00:59:37] Due to the pay disparity, we are experiencing extreme staff shortages. Every department and security shift has been understaffed. If it continues at this rate, I'm sure very soon our services will be affected. There is not a single day that goes by when you don't hear someone leaving the ADC for another agency because of the better pay.

[00:59:57] I wonder how long we can sustain under the current situation before something serious occurs to the staff or to the inmates. We are at a critical point, and if we don't address this elephant in the room now, we might not be able to contain the damage. It is imperative that the respected board members revisit the current budget that, if adopted, will be a disaster for the ADC and for the Prince William County.

[01:00:20] I'll conclude by asking the respected board chairman to take an honest assessment of this dire situation so we can continue to protect the community by providing for the secure, safe, healthful housing of prisoners admitted to the detention center as we took the oath to do it.

[01:00:41] Thank you. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good afternoon. My name is Catherine Archer. I'm the mental health supervisor at the jail, and I'm here to speak on behalf of the officers that are here.

[01:00:56] The majority of my staff is here in solidarity with the officers. Can you speak up? And the majority of the mental health staff is here as well in solidarity with the officers. In order for us to do our jobs, which is to provide mental health treatment to people who sometimes do not even get diagnosed until they come into the jail, it's their first interaction with mental health, we rely on the officers.

[01:01:15] We have inmates who are at all different classification levels, And right now, since we are running so short, there are many times that we are supposed to see our clients or the inmates, and we cannot because they're so short with officers, they cannot escort them down to either contact visits or to get them even into the attorney booths.

[01:01:35] All of us were on staff when COVID hit, and we had more flexibility to see inmates at that time than we do currently. And I cannot express enough my gratitude and appreciation for how all the officers from the lieutenants and shift command all the way down to first year officers who help us out and who truly i see them how much they care about the mentally ill how much they advocate for them how when they will take time on unit to talk to someone who is expressing a mental health need or having a crisis and they'll reach out to myself or my staff so if there's any way that the board

[01:02:12] can see fit to reconsider this because I have seen it. We are losing people in droves. And as Sergeant Rourke said, if we go into mandatory lockdown, that is critical for people with mental illness. We

just can't have that. So I appreciate your time. Thank you. Thank you very much. This will conclude our in-person public comment time today. We will now go to remote public comment time. This afternoon we have 12 people signed up ahead of time, but I don't know how many people online and i will turn it over to vice chair buddy thank you madam chair um as uh madam chair said we are shifting over to public comment time virtually as with in-person public comment time you have

[01:02:51] three minutes to speak please start by introducing yourself and generally where you live in the county miss fan shall we begin yes your first speaker is sarah tindall good afternoon um i'm not driving i'm sitting in my car but my name is sarah tindall i'm a mom from the gainsville district i'm also the founder and executive director of boxes of basics we are a local non-profit on a mission to provide quality new and gently used clothing to local children in need here in prince william county we empower children by providing them with an entire seasonal

[01:03:28] wardrobe school outfits play clothes pajamas new socks new shoes new underwear a winter coat dental kit age-appropriate books and more we work with school counselors worked to provide children with stylish quality clothing that give them confidence and help them thrive we help children facing a variety of challenges from domestic violence homelessness and illness to children in the foster care system refugee families and single parents working hard but struggling to get by we help them all when a child receives their box of basics we want them

[01:04:04] to feel like they're opening a gift boxes of basics is poised for growth which is both an opportunity and a challenge the past four years has proven that boxes the basics is the solution to an unaddressed issue in the county which is clothing insecurity for children we applied for funding through the prince william county community partnership program this year but after reviewing the initial proposed budget i did not see boxes of basic listed in the partnership program i'm here today to ask you to reconsider and to support the work of boxes of basics in 2021 we distributed 400 boxes of basics to local children in 2022 we distributed over a thousand we grew from receiving

[01:04:42] referrals from 30 local schools and organizations in 2021 to receiving referrals from over 60 organizations in 2022 we are receiving a record number of requests to help local children and there were times last year and already this year we have been forced to shut down our online referral system just because we cannot keep up with demand and having to turn children away is absolutely heartbreaking. Far beyond clothing, we are helping empower children and improving their self-confidence. One Prince William School social worker said, I received a call from a mom who received a box of basics for her son. Her son was not feeling confident about coming to school prior

[01:05:17] to receiving his box because his clothes were worn in small. Today, that child woke up 30 minutes early to pick up his outfit. We are not just giving out clothing, but we're giving love and confidence. Boxes of Basics presents an important opportunity for the Board of County Supervisors and School Board to work together to improve the lives of families and children in Prince William County. I want to especially thank Chair Wheeler and Supervisor Vega for taking time to come and tour our facility and purge. I invite any other interested parties to do so. Thank you for your time today and for your consideration of making Boxes of Basics an official Prince William County

[01:05:56] community partner. Thank you so much. Thank you, Ms. Tyndall. Next speaker, please. The next speaker is Robin Stroud. Hi, my name is Robin Stroud. My husband and I live in the Coles District.

Madam Chair, board members, and county executives, Shorter. The November 22nd collective bargaining ordinance denies over 520 of us a seat at the collective bargaining table.

[01:06:28] We provisional employees were informed that the Board of Supervisors was taking 90 days to review changes to include us the 90 days came and went february 22nd we've shown up regularly asking you to change the ordinance to include us it's a worthy ask we have zero input when decisions are made that directly impact our working conditions pay and benefits and the experiences of paying members of the chin aquatics and dale city centers yesterday i taught an aqua class at at Chen Aquatic. One of the members asked me after class if the reason some of their favorite

[01:07:04] aqua classes were removed from the Chen calendar is because we don't have enough fitness instructors and did they leave because you all can't use the facility anymore without having to pay? She went on to say that she and a couple of her friends who used to come to those classes, not on the schedule anymore, are going to start watching YouTube videos and come to the pool to just have a class on their own in other words their experiences have changed as paying members and they're not happy about those changes they credit the high employee turnover and fewer classes offered to the decision

[01:07:41] that the previous county executive made taking away training access to the facilities where instructors teach this pain member mentioned that she and her friends can become members at competitor facilities and that the county should do a take better care of its employees we employees all prince william county employees need a seat at the collective bargaining table please change what is needed to include the over 520 provisional employees at that table who show up every day throughout the year so that we too may negotiate our wages benefits and working conditions

[01:08:18] county executive shorter as a workplace safety issue for employees and for paying members and to retain employees and attract new hires restore our access to train where we teach and train the county's paying members at chanandale city fitness center your predecessor mischaracterized our access as a perk this access is an industry standard and along with low wages is a major reason the county has lost fitness employees to other facilities and has a problem filling those

[01:08:52] openings. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Stroud. Next speaker, please. Your first non-resident speaker is Jill Norcross. Thank you. Hi, my name is Jill Norcross, and I'm speaking today as the Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. Navaha, as we are known, is a non-profit coalition of housing industry professionals and advocates working in five jurisdictions in Northern Virginia. Our mission

[01:09:28] is to promote healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities that meet the diverse housing needs of all Northern Virginia residents. Our activities include housing research, policy analysis, and advocacy, and we seek to build political will to advance housing affordability through a better understanding of its impact on health, equity, and economic development. As you know, and it has been well documented by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, our larger metro DC area is behind in our housing goals, and we need an additional 374,000 housing units by 2030 in the

[01:10:04] greater DMV. According to HAND, there's an annual production target for Prince William of 2,300 units, which is not being met, as only about 1,200 units were developed in 2021, with none being affordable. And Prince William County is the only county-level jurisdiction in Northern Virginia without a dedicated source of local funding for the development and preservation of affordable housing in this community. First, we'd like to commend you on the recently adopted chapters of the county's 2040

Comprehensive Plan that serves as a major update to guide the future growth of prince william and articulates your shared vision for land use and housing as well as

[01:10:42] other priorities through 2040. this chapter articulates that the county developed implementation tools for both residents and the development community provide for the construction and financing of affordable dwelling units to reduce housing disparities in the county and to ensure the construction and financing of affordable and workforce housing to permit the projected demands of 30% of the units be affordable and 42% for workforce housing.

[01:11:08] In addition, we want to continue your work, encourage your continued work to develop an affordable dwelling unit ordinance. This tool will go a long way to provide both affordable rental and affordable homeownership opportunities as you work toward finding alternative financial resources to fund the development and preservation of additional units.

[01:11:27] We recognize you're in the resource phase of the ADU ordinance, and obviously there's a lot of consideration around what the best ordinance will look like. But we encourage you to review your current research paper that the consultant provided for you to identify What the best options are for you and the best policy levers that were identified in that report and in addition to the adu Ordin's Virginia jurisdictions can use incentive donate zoning to promote affordable housing as well as other tools Including subsidy in the form of reduced land costs support landlords by incenting them to rent to people experiencing homelessness or people with

[01:12:03] disabilities, permit increase in the allowable density and the subsidy to offset infrastructure costs. So thank you for this opportunity, and I encourage you to keep going on the 80-year ordinance and other affordable housing development resources. Thank you so much, Ms. Norcross. Next

[01:12:21] speaker, please. Your next speaker is Dr. Anita Jones. Ms. Jones, you can unmute yourself. Start over. Hello? Yes, please. Okay. I would like to thank the Prince William County Board of County supervisors madam chair county attorney and county executive for this platform which allows

[01:12:55] me to speak on today my name is dr anita p jones and i reside in washington dc for 29 plus years i have practiced social work within the human services child welfare and health care arena i am an accredited professional resource with a worldwide readership my dissertation is entitled caregivers challenges in accessing services for children with autism i am here today in support of the johnson family their other children and a little boy affectionately known as bumpy He was with the Johnsons from infancy up until a couple of weeks ago, almost three years.

[01:13:24] The Johnsons expressed a desire to adopt Bumpy. No family members met the necessary requirements to care for him. The Johnson family, as foster parents, ensured his educational, social, safety, medical, food, and clothing needs were met by them and culturally appropriate providers. He was experiencing positive attachments and he was thriving.

[01:13:41] Prince William County Social Service directors and workers' supervisors assumed it was race-related and had tunnel vision. In health care alone, persistent challenges could be faced. Research shows, according to NIH, cultural and linguistic barriers to health care can result in health care disparities.

[01:13:57] The American Hospital Association defies culturally competent health care as the ability to provide equitable care for patients with diverse behaviors and values specifically tailoring health care

delivery to patients' social, cultural, and language needs. Instead, the Johnsons were accused of seeking out providers who are licensed that would pay or exaggerate findings in the reporting.

[01:14:19] The Prince William County Department of Social Services should have provided assistance versus engaging in what appears to be a cover-up and follow the ethical principles that guide social work practices. The tactics participated in by Courtney Tierney and other powers that be at the Prince William County Department of Social Services, in my professional experience, have brought harm to this potential adoptive family and, more importantly, Bumpy.

[01:14:38] They failed to provide the Johnson family with adequate information regarding the steps to take in adopting Bumpy. They failed to follow their own rules and regulations and is in violation of Title 63.2-902, Chapter 9, by not informing the Johnsons of dispute resolution process, which allows them to voice their concerns over the disposition reached without fear of retaliation from government officials.

[01:15:00] There should be a case study written regarding Bumpy's situation and other cases like his, based on the facts of the case and published. case studies are an invaluable record of clinical practices the case study will serve as valuable teaching and training material in an effort to ensure the practices that were in place with bumping and the johnson family will not be repeated in closing transparency is needed a full investigation should be launched into what the prince william county department of social services and workers and teams should have done and dotting the i's and crossing the t's nelson mandela once said the true character of society is revealed in how it treats its children the society in this scenario is the Prince William County Department of Social Services, and the specific child in question

[01:15:38] is bumpy. Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Jones. Next speaker, please. There are no more remote speakers at this time. Thank you so much, Mrs. Vann. Back to you, Madam Chair. Thank you very much, Ms. Vann. Thank you, Vice Chair Bode.

[01:15:54] That will conclude our public comment time for today, which brings us to item number six, our public hearings. We have 6A and 6B. 6A authorizes the condemnation and exercise quick take powers uh in accordance with chapter three of title 25 regarding 1420 and 1440 old bridge road it appears we have three speakers signed up

[01:16:25] for 6a this morning um i know we don't have a presentation so i will just open the public hearing on 6a and the speakers are welcome to go to the back everyone will have three minutes to speak, please let us know your name and generally where you live in the county. Our first, our three speakers are Pastor Eddie D. Pruitt, Deliah Pruitt, and Daniel Powell. Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I was told that I would be allowed five minutes since I'm the pastor of the church. Could someone

[01:17:03] confirm that, please? Sure. I want to be in compliance. I want to make sure. Is that okay? I think it is. It's if you're representing a non-profit and so you can get five minutes during a public hearing yes yes ma'am thank you very good thank you my name is eddie prude i live at 36 31 certain deputy road i live on supervisor angry's district our church is located in supervisor bode's district i know church will be in supervisor franklin's district so we you all

[01:17:35] touch all of our lives i'm a chair person wheeler and vice chair of bode i'm the pastor of holiness Tabernacle Church of God in Christ. We currently occupy the property located at 1440 Old Bridge Road. I come to you today on behalf of our congregants of our church and our many friends and neighbors

and friends from the county who we touch their lives daily. For more than 20 years, we have partnered with the county to meet the needs of its most vulnerable citizens. We came

[01:18:10] before you in November and many of you spoke highly of our church and its commitment to excellence in serving this county. Today, before you talk about us, we need your help. We first heard of this rural project under Supervisor Anderson's administration. We were told that we would be informed as planning and engineering progressed. It wasn't until a public hearing at Occoquan Elementary School in February 2021 we learned of the certainty of this project. Upon arriving at

[01:18:46] the hearing, I heard a citizen ask a VDOT representative, how about the little white church on the corner. The VDOT's response was, we've been working with the church and they will be taken care of. I was surprised to hear this and I stood up to share that I was the pastor of the church and I had no record of contact from VDOT regarding this project. Following the meeting, the VDOT representative approached me, shook my hand, and assured me VDOT would work with our church to ensure we would not be negatively impacted. I replied that we were already working

[01:19:22] to find another location and we hope to build soon. I was promised by the BIDAC representative that they would work with us. They could help speed up our SUP application and site plans. They also told us that they could work to have our fees waived. With this insurance in mind, we began looking for property and we found a place to relocate in the Woodbridge Magisterial District. Please forgive me, I'm cottonmouthed. We signed the contract in April 2021. Between

[01:19:59] In April 2021 and January 2022, we hired contractors, land use attorneys, civil engineers, architects. We paid over $150,000 to get about building a new church. We filed our SUP in January 2022.

[01:20:18] Around this time, we were contacted by VDOT and told we had to look for another location. We told VDOT we had found property and we were moving as fast as we could to get out of the way of the road project. We were never given a timeline from VDOT. April 2022, we began receiving emails and phone calls from VDOT saying that we needed to move.

[01:20:40] And they offered us $2,500 to hire a real estate agent. And then they would pay for us to hire someone to move our belongings. They then began to send us listings to relocate as far away as Gainesville, Haymarket, and Anderdale.

[01:21:01] Although most of our church lives in Eastern Prince William County. And of the 4,000 families we serve every year, they live in Eastern Prince William County. We saw the SUP was moving pretty slowly. So we began to look for places ourselves.

[01:21:19] We visited 15 sites and called several more. No one is willing to do a short-term lease with the church. And so in 2022, we came before you. You put our SUP. You may remember that young man that came and spoke, and you all just marveled about his speech.

[01:21:41] During our permit process, we became aware of an internal document between VDOT and the county saying that we had found new property and we would be out of the way because the county would assist us in moving along our plans.

[01:21:59] This never happened. I'm out of time. But I need to say this. We have done a whole lot to get out of the way, and we're getting very little help. I don't believe you all are fighting us.

[01:22:15] We need your help. Just as we help people in need that are vulnerable, today the church is vulnerable. We ask you to consider the following four items. Number one, can we have more time? We want to move to a new location.

[01:22:32] I'm sorry, Pastor, your time is up. Maybe someone else can continue there with those four points. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good afternoon. My name is Delia Pruitt, and I am a resident of the Potomac District, and I work in Prince William County as a middle school special education.

[01:22:51] So keep me in your prayers. I'm going to first finish my father's four points, and then I will, if the time is left, I will read a few comments from the community that we serve with our food distribution program. Pastor is asking, we are asking as a church for the following. Is it possible for the project to be delayed until we move into our new location, as mentioned in that August 30th, 2021 memo?

[01:23:12] If not, can the church remain in place for as long as possible until one, a temporary location, can be found that will allow the church to continue to operate as it does today? can the county assist in expediting the review of the church's site plans we do not ask for substandard review or the waiving of county design standards but considering the uniqueness of the situation and that we have done our due diligence to do all that we can we ask that the county consider the hardship that this will have on the church and finally we ask that vdot honor the assistance as outlined in the aforementioned guide and again i have with me 122 letters from families and community members stating their support that the county just assist us with our

[01:23:50] transition to a little to a new location without disruption to our normal operations and just to give you a small snapshot of the magnitude of our operations in our current location and I'm just going to read the 2022 snapshot we served 4,346 families which is 21,169 people and we distributed 349,422 pounds of food just from that little white church on the corner and you'll notice if you have a chance to review, our numbers have been going up in the need in our county. I'm just going to read two quick comments from some of the letters, and many of them have been translated from Spanish

[01:24:28] to English, so please forgive any grammatical errors on my part. The church has been so helpful to my family of six. I am currently seven and a half months pregnant. I wake up early every Friday to receive food from Holiness Tabernacle because of the blessing this ministry has been to my family. As Holiness Tabernacle is a partner in supporting my growing family, I respectfully ask that you would support and honor their requests to sustain their church family. Thank you. We share extra food that we don't use from the distribution with our neighbors that don't have cars, so it won't be harder for them to get the help that Holiness Tabernacle has given to the community residents and workers. Thank you very much to Holiness Tabernacle for the food distribution. It is very

[01:25:05] important what they do for the community with supporting us with the food, especially in these times that we are going through with all this inflation. Once again, thank you for supporting. I am writing to support Holiness Tabernacle's efforts to preserve and protect the integrity of its ministry and its food distribution i've been coming here for more than a year to collect food for my family of four their help has been enormous and it helps tons of families financially thank you for taking the time to review and support this request god bless you programs like this should be supported more their help is provided many uh it's important for many families i'm going to stop there but if you all could just consider giving us the assistance that we need to make the transition smooth um because we are a partner with you and we like to continue to do so

[01:25:44] thank you for your time. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Hello, my name is Danielle Pell, and I live in the Potamic District, and I'm going to read for you a letter from Mrs. Laura Thule of the Occoquan District. She's one of our long-serving volunteers of our Holiness Tabernacle Food Missions Program. She writes, I understand the question at hand is to have Holiness Tabernacle vacate their current premises by May of this year. I'm asking the board to reconsider this timeline and consider the impact it would have not only on the church, but the local families who get support from this church. I've had the great privilege of serving in the Holiness Tabernacle's

[01:26:19] food distribution since the fall of 2020. Every Friday, the church serves 85-plus families helping to supplement their food needs. Lines for food start as early as 6 in the morning, even though the distribution doesn't begin until 9. Each box has shelf-stable food, meat, produce, bread, milk, and dessert to help supplement food needs. Now, this isn't just a case of 85 families not getting their box of food each week. It's what the box represents. God's love, provision, guidance, and a way to touch families to show that they are being looked out for. During the week,

[01:26:55] food pickups and deliveries are arranged. The food is stored at the church to be distributed on Fridays. Without the church, that all goes away. The pandemic was an opportunity as a community to see the needs of people. So many are food insecure, and since the pandemic, that has only become worse as other prices have also increased. Since COVID has calmed down, many of the provisions that were available to help families are not there anymore, making these types of food distributions even more important. Mrs. Thule continues to write, I work full-time and I have a family of my own, and Friday mornings are my favorite time of the week that I make time for in

[01:27:33] my work schedule. It's when I come to the church to help serve the local community. I get to say good morning to each family I serve and wish them a great weekend. I get to see the smiles on the children that are in the car and see their excitement at what will be in their box that week. It is my opportunity to show God's love for them through me. For many, that may be the only time they experience it each week. Being a retired military spouse of an active duty Air Force Chief Master Sergeant of 30 years, I know the game of hurry up and wait, and it is not only a game played by the military, but throughout all government. I know it's important to make sure all ducks are in a row by the time the road construction needs to happen, but I would like

[01:28:12] to ask the board to consider the timeline of when the actual road construction will start to see if the date to vacate the current premises could be reconsidered. Finally, please consider the impact of Holiness Tabernacle as a whole church. The food distribution is just a small part of their world missions department and doesn't even begin to touch the importance of the church in their members' lives. Church is where people come together to hear God's word and share in his praise of everything that's been given to them. It's where people gather to feel supported during a hard time.

[01:28:42] You will feel the energy and love of a service there. Thank you for consideration of extending the date for Holiness Tabernacle to leave their current location. Thank you. And again, this is from Mrs. Laura Tholl. Thank you very much. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak on item 6A?

[01:28:58] If so, please approach the microphone in the back of the room. Seeing no one rise and approach the microphone, this will officially close the public hearing on item 6A. Mr. Canizales. Madam Chair, members of the board, Rick Canizales, your director of transportation. Yes. Could you help us understand the concerns and the situation at the moment? Sure, ma'am. The church is the tenant of the

property. We have been in discussions with the property owner for over a year in this property. We were actually trying to get advanced acquisition of this property because it's going to be a total take for the road. This portion,

[01:29:37] this property is part of the utility relocation portion of this. So this property is needed ahead of the construction of the project so we can move the utilities for the construction of the project. This is a federal project. We are on a VDOT dashboard on this and the usage of the grant and how the project moves forward. We have been in contact with the church, as mentioned, since 2021, and we have been talking to them about relocation for at least the last eight to nine months. We have showed the church many locations or offered many different locations. They have,

[01:30:10] Of course they like they mentioned a lot of programs and maybe those locations were not suitable for all those programs to continue in that temporary location. We cannot expand the time on this project to the time they are ready. My understanding is that they still have a site plan within the process right now so it will be over a year or more before they get anything up and ready. We cannot wait that long on this project so we will have to move them to a temporary location.

[01:30:34] This item before you today is a public hearing to allow for the condemnation of the property, which deals with the property owner, which the church is not. They are the leasees. And then allows us to get the money necessary to have these talks with the church about relocation, where we can put them temporarily, what we can do to help them out in a manner of getting them somewhere until the time that their property is ready.

[01:30:58] Obviously, I'm the Department of Transportation. I can't expedite the review for development services. can't even expedite that review for me. We don't waive, as you know, we don't waive fees, so I don't know how that was said to anybody because we never waive fees. They're not even waived for our department on development services fees. We can talk to Wade and Mandy on this and discuss a possible expedition of this, but even as expedited, there will not be enough time to not have the church go into a temporary location at this time as the project is scheduled.

[01:31:34] We are still in communications and in negotiations with the property owner. This is, again, the property leasee. We need this item passed in order to get the funds necessary to be able to help them out as they have asked us to help them out. As to more time in there, as I mentioned, we're on a very tight deadline here, and this is part of the utility relocation process that we need this property for.

[01:31:56] Right now, we have asked them to vacate the property by the end of May. We could probably wait until the end of July at the most in order to get the proposed area while we continue to work with them in finding them an adequate location. Okay.

[01:32:14] So I'm just trying to make this methodical. We have four speakers. I'm just going to start the normal people. Supervisor Bodie. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Rick, for that insight. And I appreciate you all coming out to voice this to us.

[01:32:32] I'm caught a little bit by surprise because the last we had heard was back in 2022 where we heard that people were being discussed. So I want to say that I would hope there had been more conversation with our office before we got to this point. But we can fix that moving forward. Rick, I appreciate your insight, but I also want to turn to Wade, who's here right now.

[01:32:51] Because it sounds to me like based on what was said, there was a promise of expedited processing with the SUP and some other things. But it sounds like, at least from their perspective, that didn't happen. So, Wade, if you could please address that concern that was said. Yeah, Madam Chair, members of the board, I'm Wade Hugh.

[01:33:08] I'm checking right now with our Acting Director of Development Services to kind of get a status update of where we are. Unfortunately, I don't have any details right now, but we're looking into it. Okay, because it sounds to me like one of the things that was promised to these folks as part of them doing the due diligence of partnering with the county to vacate their property for this project, which is an important project in my district, is that expedited processing of them moving.

[01:33:34] Because it sounds to me like part of the issue is that they thought they were on one track to move to where they had decided and they had chosen, but because the process wasn't moving as fast as they were promised, now they're being given other sites that doesn't necessarily suit their needs.

[01:33:50] And so we're in a quandary here because it sounds like someone somewhere may have overpromised or didn't make the timetable very clear to the folks that actually reside at that property. And I think that we're in a dilemma right now.

[01:34:05] So we get that information back as soon as possible to know where we are in the process and to know what we can do to expedite it. I think that'll help regardless of where we move on this. Yeah, we're looking into it right now. We should have an answer hopefully shortly. And as far as expediting anything moving forward, we will absolutely expedite it.

[01:34:23] Okay. And I have a question. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Hugh. Mr. Kenneth Zullis, you said that we might be able to push this back to July. I guess my question is, if that's the case, do we have to actually make, do we have to take action on this today?

[01:34:40] No, sir. All right. So that said, when is the latest we could have a decision on this for it to work with you? We could bring it to you after your budget hearings to have them vacant in July.

[01:34:55] But at the same time, at that point in time, there will be no more chance for deferrals and there will be no more chance. But that's going to be bottom line date to when our utilities are going to be moved at that time. So more or less a drop dead date. Right. Right now our utilities are planned to be moved in August of this year.

[01:35:13] That's why we're saying July we could probably get that demoed in time for when the utilities are coming through. As you know, we're having issues with utilities. So if we miss our opportunity, it could be very problematic and impactful to the project. And so where I'm going with this for my colleagues is it sounds like we don't need to take action on this right now.

[01:35:31] I think we need some information back from Mr. Hugh and the folks he's working with. I think that there needs to be some discussion between Rick and the folks that actually reside there as opposed to just the landlords because it sounds like there is some communication disconnect there as well. I think we need more time to work through this before we take action today.

[01:35:48] And sir, I'm sorry, I misspoke. There's a 90-day period to taking of the property, which would have to happen on July 31st. So we would have to bring this item to you at your next meeting. As in next two weeks from now?

[01:36:06] Yes, sir. That's so quick, but it's better than doing it today. No, we can bring it to you at the end of the month. We can bring it to you on the 11th or towards the end of the month.

[01:36:23] We just can't go beyond April. We need a 90-day period up to August. The end of April. Oh, there's nothing in April. 11th is the last one, right? So it would have to be April 11th, sir, which is two meetings away.

[01:36:41] So could we perhaps schedule a special meeting during the day, or can we do it at night? Does it have to be during an afternoon session? Again, April 11th is two meetings away. We can have those kind of discussions. It's not going to take away the fact that we need to have vacation by the end of July, no matter when we do it.

[01:37:00] So we can have those discussions with you, your office, the church as well. At the same time, again, the item allows us to get that money necessary to help out the church, too. That's what we're trying to do as well here, trying to release funds for relocation because it's two different codes that we deal with here with the property owner and the leasee.

[01:37:17] And the leasee gets some other types of funds through the federal relocation program that we're trying to make sure that we have available to help the church out as well. So we're going to need to do this sooner rather than later, sir. So I don't think we should take action today, whatever.

[01:37:34] So I'm just saying I have... There still needs to be a motion to defer. Do we need a date certain to that motion, though? I assume we do. So, at this, but we can, if we, it seems like once we get to the 11th, we still need more time.

[01:37:50] It sounds like we have flexibility to maybe add another session later on the month. Yep. I'm hearing that. So, with the understanding of my colleagues, does anyone else want to weigh in on this before I make a motion? Well, no, I'd rather have you motioned, then we'll discuss. All right, so at this point, Madam Chair, I will move to defer action on this item until April 11th.

[01:38:07] Second. Thank you. Motion made by Vice Chair Bodie, seconded by Supervisor Franklin. We are now into discussion. Supervisor Franklin. Sure. Thank you for this. And, Supervisor Bodie, thank you for your questions, because I was actually going to ask the same exact questions, particularly about deferral.

[01:38:24] And I guess the frustrating part is when we have projects and we need utility companies to move quickly, they don't, and they delay our projects. But then when it comes to a situation like this, we're being pushed to actually take action as soon as possible. Now, of course, ours is tied to funding to get a certain amount of funds.

[01:38:43] We have to move at a certain pace, but it's just the frustrating part. The other thing, too, is I think we have to do a better job of making sure that our communication goes out to not only just the owner of the property, but also kind of taking that extra step proactively and talking to those that are leasing the property as well.

[01:39:01] I think sometimes we put it on the owner to have those conversations when I don't know that that always happens. So even if we don't have to, it may be good to proactively start thinking in that manner for projects like this. Obviously, I support deferring this.

[01:39:18] Wasn't sure of all the details before now surrounding kind of the movement. Obviously, they're moving into the Woodbridge District, and we welcome you all and looking forward to having your congregation here. But obviously, you all need some temporary space. So are we actively helping?

[01:39:35] Yes, ma'am. Okay, and that's good, because I know we've done that, particularly with the church off of Route 1 that did Streetlight Ministries. Yes, ma'am. We kind of helped them with resources. Yes, we did. So I just want to be very clear that we are working and we're going to prioritize this particular case in terms of helping them to get to a new facility, because that helps us continue with this road project.

[01:39:55] It's not giving special treatment, but obviously the county needs something out of this as well. Right, and I think the issue, ma'am, has been we have shown different facilities. I think the issue has been, and my guys can correct me if I'm wrong, but it's been the facilities aren't able to provide all the service or they aren't feasible to provide all the services that they're currently providing at their location, and that's where we've been having a little trouble.

[01:40:21] But we will continue to work with them as land becomes available, as the areas become available. And please do, because that was the same challenge with Streetlight Ministries, finding a location that could do all of what they were providing to the homeless community. So I know it can be done, and I do expect positive results out of this.

[01:40:38] We will try our hardest. Supervisor Lawson. Thank you. Pastor Pruitt mentioned something about $2,500. There was a dollar amount, and I need more context on that.

[01:40:59] Do you know what he was referring to in his public hearing? Yeah, I just wanted, this is going to be deferred, so more time to. Well, I'm being told by my person right here, and I don't know, if Art Klaus wants to get up, he's our right away agent, he's saying that that is a search fee.

[01:41:21] And you can explain more to him if you like. Yes, one of the things, I'm Art Klaus. Speaking to the microphone. Madam Chair, members of the board, I'm Art Closs, Transportation. One of the first things that we offer assistance with is by providing a $2,500 search fee.

[01:41:43] Not only is our relocation specialist looking for properties themselves to help the tenant relocate to, we provide the tenant with a search fee so that they can be doing their own search at the same time and that's what the $2,500 is now that amount cannot be offered until after the county takes possession of the property so we've been trying to do all the preparation work in advance of taking possession of the property so that once we have possession of the property we can immediately move

[01:42:21] forward and help relocate the tenant. And at that time, they would receive $2,500 search fee and any other expenses involved with relocation. So thank you, Art, and welcome to the county. Thank you. Art came to us from VDOT. So thank you for that clarification. First of all, this is a total take? It's correct. Right? Correct. The pastor said of the four things, and I don't think he got through all of them, but he said the church needs more time.

[01:42:55] The question is how much time? And before you answer me, Rick, you and I were just on the phone last week talking about the nuances of the Ballsford project and Supervisor Weir's district and how the utilities are delaying progress there.

[01:43:13] Yes, ma'am. So my concern is I hear you talk about, you know, utilities starting in early August. how confident are we that that that is their timeline they're saying today in March but the last thing we

want is for the church to to have to be relocated prematurely because the utility companies who we don't have any control over aren't really going to meet their their timeline. I couldn't agree with you more we can only work with the timelines that are given to us and that we are able to get to the utility companies their delay is is on them we have no

[01:43:50] control over that like you mentioned so okay i'm like you said yes that is always a a risk that we're taking on that we're saying this is going to happen on this stage so so do you know how much church how much time the church needs that the pastor who unfortunately can't speak anymore um uh i mentioned that they need more time you know did you figure out where they're in the process not yet huh so they're on second submission of a site plan right now okay uh and i think you know that once they get approval, they got to go out there and get the work done. And that's why I said that I was guessing that it was not going to be any shorter than eight to 12 months to get this

[01:44:28] done. And again, we definitely do not have that much time. And I would just end my remarks with to Pastor Pruitt and your congregation, I highly recommend that you take this time to reach out to the members of the General Assembly that represent the church. So your state delegate and state senator because these are utilities that are um the answer to the state entities and they can probably advocate for you better than us when it comes to the utilities um so ring their phones

[01:45:02] so thank you i just want to point out this isn't an interactive so which which is why we'll speak but we can't allow you to speak it's just one of our our things please know that i i suggest that You work with Supervisor Bodie's office. You work with my office.

[01:45:18] We will work with this. It's unfortunate that we just found out about this today, but that's okay. And I know also moving down to Woodbridge, you know, in terms of site plans and everything like that, we will work to help you with that. It sounds like it's going to be deferred this evening.

[01:45:34] It gives us a couple of weeks to get more information and work together to move forward and see what we can resolve regarding this and also understand, you know, but can we ever just double-check with VDOT and see what they're thinking and whether their plans are actually on track? It's our plans, ma'am.

[01:45:50] I know that the Reverend said that, but it's what we are doing and administering the project, so the utility relocation is on us, and we move forward. I know Katab Shmoud is back here, my assistant director for capitals, and he's telling me that we need to have that building demo before the utilities even consider coming in to move.

[01:46:11] So the property is needed for that utility relocation. It's electric, so it is an overhead line that needs to be moved into that area. Again, the area where that church stands today will be road in the future. Okay, well, thank you. I have two more, Supervisor Franklin and Supervisor Bodie.

[01:46:26] Sure, I should be very quick and just reiterate the importance of reaching out to members of the General Assembly. We can help facilitate that through Supervisor Bodie's office because they do hold the weight with VDOT. And unfortunately, the utilities are generally always held up. But that's exactly what I was going to say.

[01:46:44] And I think that's critically important. And Supervisor Bodie and I have been communicating offline just now. And he's going to make sure that you all have that information. Supervisor Bodie. Thank

you. Like Supervisor Franklin just said, and Supervisor Lawson, there's different levels of government that are involved here.

[01:47:02] It's not just us, like was said. And we understand how frustrating that can be because you come to us, you go, we're the closest to you. And obviously, as Mr. Canazala said, it's projects being administered by our local transportation department. However, BDOT's involved, the SAC's involved, there's utilities involved, things that are regulated a heck of a lot higher than us.

[01:47:20] So what we understand that you came here today to help hopefully get a resolution from us. I hope the deferral gives us some time to come together, because I think that's been a critical missing piece, is that we haven't been able to talk about this. And I feel like that will be a key piece to helping us get everyone to the table to find a solution that works for everyone involved.

[01:47:38] And I know that each one of these situations are different. I know that Sir Rinkley mentioned Streetlight earlier, but I know that's not the same exact case that you guys have going on. So I want to make sure that we understand the unique needs that you all have so as we continue to work together, we can find something that works for you all.

[01:47:54] So I also want to appreciate my colleagues for collaboration here. Again, this was a sort of spot decision, but I appreciate the fact that we're all able to come together. And even if we can't necessarily push things back, at least push us back our action here so we get more time to work with you all. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. Thank you, Supervisor Bodie.

[01:48:10] So we have a motion on first and seconded to defer the action on 6A. Seeing no further discussion. Madam Chair, are you deferring it to April 11th at 2 o'clock? Yes, we'll defer to April 11th at 2 o'clock to a date certain. Thank you, Ms. Droble. Okay, seeing no further discussion, please vote.

[01:48:30] Vote unanimous. Thank you, ma'am. Okay, thank you for coming out today. That moves us on to item number 6B, the polling place adjustments for precincts 215, 508, 607, 613, and 614, affecting a few magisterial districts.

[01:48:51] Ms. Madden, do we have anyone here to speak on 6B? Well, this will officially open the public hearing for item 6B regarding our ordinance and the polling places I just mentioned.

[01:49:11] If anyone is here to speak on 6B who did not sign up, please approach the microphone in the back. Seeing no one approach the microphone in the back, this will officially close the public hearing on item 6B.

[01:49:32] Supervisor Angry, do you want to provide a motion for 6B? Sure, Madam Chair. So moved. Second. Motion made by Supervisor Angry, seconded by Vice Chair Bodie. Any further discussion? Seeing none, please vote. I am so sorry.

[01:49:51] Supervisor Vega. Thank you, Madam Chair. Eric, just a quick question for you. I know that in the past when this was initially brought up, there were some concerns versus this location accommodating in terms of space. Those were the initial concerns. Are those no longer the concerns?

[01:50:06] Yeah, we talked with the facility. They have multiple rooms available so they can adjust based on whether we're talking about a busy general election or like a light primary election. So those have been addressed, correct. Thank you. Seeing no further discussion, please vote.

[01:50:24] Vote unanimous. Supervisor Lawson, absent from vote. That brings us on to item number seven, County Executive. Mr. Shorter, the floor is yours.

[01:50:41] Thank you, Madam Chair. No official updates today, but I understand that there may be questions given some of the testimony. Yes, Mr. Shorter, I'll take that. I want to ask about if you could talk to us about the ADC situation.

[01:50:58] We have a lot of people from the ADC here today and help us understand. I'm just trying to, you know, often during budget time there are people who are above the people who work there who come and advocate for either the salaries or the number of employees.

[01:51:15] And so I'm trying to understand who that is in this situation as well as what our plan increase for our ADC employees, if they are our employees are. Could you help us understand that? Sure. I'm happy to do the best I can in this situation. I'll say that, and just to make sure that I remind the board and the listening audience, what we propose, because I think there was some confusion even from ADC employees today, is, yes, a 4.2% market adjustment, but we have also proposed a 3% step increase.

[01:51:50] So that is a total of a 7.2% increase as part of this proposed budget. That said, as far as I understand, our ADC employees report to a superintendent, Colonel Meletus, who was present this afternoon.

[01:52:09] They are in state comp positions, but they are a part of our pay band. And so they are not officially in Prince William County positions, but we consider them as part of, they are certainly in our time management system, in our personnel system.

[01:52:33] And so it is a unique situation in terms of classification. And so I'm hopeful, and the superintendent reports to a jail board. And so they do not report into me as your county executive in the same way other employees do as part of the workforce, the Prince William County government workforce.

[01:52:59] I hope that clarifies. I'm happy to answer additional questions if it doesn't. Do other colleagues have questions on this, or am I the only one? I'm not sure. Are you Supervisor Bode? So you actually asked the question I was going to ask about ADC, but I also had other questions for him in general.

[01:53:19] Thank you, Mr. Shorter, for that update. A couple of things. One, we had some residents come and give testimony about affordable housing. They mentioned the Affording Dwelling Unit Ordinance, and I'm hoping that we get an update on when that might come back.

[01:53:36] I skipped over Supervisor Franklin because I thought your questions had directly to do with the ADC. No, that's fine. Sorry, I tried to clarify that, and she said no, so...

[01:53:52] Okay. So, one, formal dwelling unit ordinance. Number two, we had some folks also in the past talk about, you know, housing relief and other things like that, and we had allocated about $10 million, I think, to the Human Services Alliance of Greater Prince William.

[01:54:14] We'd love an update on how that is being doled out and how that's moving along the process at some point as well. Sure. I'll ask Deputy County Executive Elijah Johnson to speak to the affordable housing piece of this. I will say that we have certainly talked as a team. I know that this came up during last budget cycle, and we talked as a team, and I believe I've even made public comments to the board about our consideration as part of the budget process in terms of an affordable housing

[01:54:46] fund. And so I want to make sure that I said sort of said that out loud. So as Mr. Shorty just said, I'm Eliza Johnson, Deputy County Executive, as you just mentioned. As you know, we needed to get the comprehensive plan chapter update last year that was done. The various affected agencies, planning, zone administration, housing office, county attorney office, has kicked off our meetings to start to look at how we can institute an affordable dwelling ordinance. We're starting that work. It's going to take us some time to get through all the legal things and make sure we have the right ordinance in place based on what order we have under the state code because it's not the

[01:55:25] same as what Fairfax, Loudoun, Alexandria has. So we're examining all of those documents and hopefully bring you back something later this year in reference to that. We'll also be looking at probably in the next budget cycle what funding and housing options we can come back for financing affordable housing projects. As far as the alliance, as you recall at the end of last year When all the funding ran out at the state level, we went back and sat down with the alliance and reallocated about $2.3 million of that funding, the $10 million we gave to a rental assistance program.

[01:55:59] That program has been going well. People have been coming. We're also looking at adding some additional capacity with the CARES Act money that the housing office got. We've been in contact with HUD to see if they would lessen some of the priority requirements, and they have agreed to do that.

[01:56:17] So Ms. Duckett is working on that and will be coming out with some additional resources to address anybody who may have utility assistance issues or rental assistance issues and mortgage assistance issues. I appreciate that. Because the reason why I bring that latter part up is, one, I wanted to hear where we were on the ADU ordinance.

[01:56:34] But two, I heard some concerns with the community about those allocated monies to the Alliance, and they weren't really sure the timeline on that, whether they were getting money, who was getting the priority, what have you. So it sounds like you're on top of that as well. My last question is at some point we get an update on where we are with the collective bargaining ordinance changes and the review period because, as was said, that review period was over as of the end of February.

[01:56:55] We're now halfway through March, so an update on that would be helpful as well. Thank you, Madam Chair. Supervisor Franklin. Sure. Actually, yeah, I was going to ask about the Affordable Housing Ordinance. Maybe I'll make more of a comment since you already addressed it, but I think you mentioned that towards the end of the year.

[01:57:14] We have not set a timeline, but hopefully within this year we'll be coming back with something because we just start that process and examine all the laws that are surrounding it. Yeah, because we've been talking about it for two years. So let me just point that out. I think I issued a directive almost when I first started, and I think the working group was put together maybe a year ago.

[01:57:35] And I'm not really sure where we are even with that. You gave a little bit of an update, but I would think that by the end of the year would be a bit unacceptable since we've been talking about it for two years. So let me back up and clarify. As we talked about that, and we put that, when you guys all gave us that directive, the initial thrust was to make sure we had our housing chapter in the comp plan aligned.

[01:57:58] And the planning office did that work. And then once we finished that, we were going to come back and dial Devin to the Affordable Law of the Ordinance to bring you back an ordinance after we had

done that work on the comprehensive plan update. And I think we voted on the comp plan in December. Yes. So just pointing that out.

[01:58:16] again it's been kind of a two-year process since we've talked about it it was my understanding that once we get in the comp plan then we can move forward we've done that so i think um maybe having another update maybe at the next meeting on how things are actually progressing and with a little bit more uh specifics but i do appreciate the work um you've done elijah on housing issues in general but i think we need more specifics on where we are um the other thing i was going to ask about nothing related to housing is obviously I issued the directive with regards to dredging and I know

[01:58:48] we're supposed to give back to some of the marina owners with regards to fees and restrictions and wanted to kind of see if we have an update not necessarily related to dredging but at least on getting them that information in them in the time being or for the time being chair william members of the board Tom Smith director of public works supervisor Franklin we did provide your office with some information about stormwater fees and how that money did you all provide it to the marina

[01:59:27] owners I got to go back and look where that email went we just need to make sure that the marina owners have that information okay I'll make sure I wasn't sure whether you would forward that on or your staff would but I'll I'll make sure that happens so but I did provide that information As far as finding location for dredge materials, this is a rather large problem, which is going to take a large piece of land somewhere.

[01:59:54] And so we're working on it. It's trying to get the state involved and some other stakeholders. So my plan is to get a task force rolling with our environmental management folks. So we obviously got your directive, and we are working on it. Thank you. Supervisor Angry.

[02:00:12] Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to go back to the ADC conversation we're having, because I don't know what question to ask, but I appreciate what you just explained, because what I'm hearing, it sounds almost like the public defender's office, right?

[02:00:28] So when you say state, does state fund some of the ADC? They do, but I will say that this is, we got into this conversation when we presented the comp study the first time.

[02:00:50] There are different categories of state employees, and it could be confusing if we try to respond today. So what I'd like to do is maybe come back, I think, we'll provide a response in terms of the nature of the position, I will say, the positions.

[02:01:11] They are comp plan positions, but unlike the public defender, they are in our pay ban and in our time system. So we certainly consider them slightly different, and I hope I'm saying that correctly.

[02:01:27] So we'll provide a response that provides some clarity on adult detention center employees and sort of where they fit. But I'm, again, today happy to respond to a reporting relationship because I know that there was some confusion there. Yeah, and because, you know, Matt and Trevor, if I can, because the last thing I'll say about it is I know we're in budget season.

[02:01:48] I know, you know, we've got to set a budget for next year. Right now, we're having every employee from every department request more, rightfully so. And so I just want to make sure I understand where the ADC falls in this.

[02:02:05] And then I heard you say what we're giving them, and then the 2% step, you said increase, 3%, 3% step increase. So I don't know what that number looks like, but if we can, you know, and we did discuss it. It's just every week it's more information, so that filters to the back, and then I've got to give a refresher on it.

[02:02:22] And we're getting all the emails. We had all the folks here today. So I want to know what that number is, and I don't want to say they don't understand it. But if that final number we're talking about putting into the JDC or ADC personnel for pay increases is sufficient, right?

[02:02:41] So even if you add in the 3% step, and maybe they're missing that piece. I don't know. I just want to make sure whatever it is that we are doing, I guess making them whole as well. It seems like this budget year is going to be all about employees. I'll say that again. I said it before. And so I want to make sure they're good because I heard a lot of concerning comments, I'll say.

[02:03:03] And, you know, I'm not a fan of concerning comments because many of them I've talked to, many of them I know, and I just want to make sure that everybody understands this is going to be an employee year in this budget. And so we're going to have to make this thing as balanced as we can throughout all of the departments.

[02:03:21] So I say that to everybody. I just wanted to kind of mention that to you, but thank you, Madam Chair. Questions for County Executive Shorter, Supervisor Weir. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Shorter, I broached this subject last week when we got the briefing on the fire department, and I asked for the underlying data from Gallagher to support what was proposed for the fire department.

[02:03:48] One of the other reasons I asked for it was because the same data is supposed to support what we're proposing for the ADC employees. I hear what they're saying. I share their concerns. I wish I were in a position to say more, but we literally just got the Gallagher report right before we sat down in chambers tonight.

[02:04:11] I'd appreciate the opportunity to talk to you in further detail about how that report justifies what's being offered if you're going to have some time in the next couple of weeks. I don't want to belabor the point here, but I have some genuine concerns about the methodology.

[02:04:28] I believe I said that last week, and just preliminarily looking at it while I've been sitting here, I think those concerns have been heightened. So if you could reach out sometime, I'd appreciate it. My hope certainly over this next few weeks is that we will continue the conversations.

[02:04:45] We are certainly in that process. And, Supervisor, I appreciate the way you framed it. You are recentering or bringing us back to sort of where we started in terms of, and I want to sort of say this out loud, especially to those employees that came in today, our proposal is really a proposal that started with our consultants' recommendations.

[02:05:10] And even in our presentation around fire and rescue two weeks ago, in us considering some additional options for fire and rescue, it was important as a government team and as staff that we stood on the analysis that we came to you all with.

[02:05:32] And anything additional that we might do will be for other considerations and not necessarily something that I would or could have proposed initially. So I'm happy to kind of make myself available and

certainly the staff who are much more expert than I am and make sure that we dissect the analysis with you.

[02:05:56] I believe I am on schedule this week with many, many of you, so I am happy to continue that and repeat that until we get to the final approved budget. Supervisor Lawson. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[02:06:12] Mr. Shorter, Mr. Johnson touched on the alliance, the $10 million allocation from COVID. I think in response to Supervisor Bodie, I don't remember exactly. Could I ask or could the board get some type of update where that, and I apologize if anybody has sent it in like the last month or two, but an update as to how the alliance is operating and where the money is distributed or has been distributed with that?

[02:06:47] We're happy to do that. Thank you. Happy to do that. Supervisor Bailey. Thank you, Madam Chair. And, yes, kind of exact, I'm very glad that we do have scheduled meetings with us this week because I think that will kind of center us as well, along with what Supervisor Weir was saying.

[02:07:05] I really appreciate that. And, again, bringing us back to the center and making sure that our employees are aware that we are working on this, but we're not at the end of this and we do hear their voices. So I appreciate the concerted and focused time that you'll have with us individually.

[02:07:24] But I want to go back to have a question for Mr. Smith, if you will, if you don't mind, County Exec. In reference to what Supervisor Franklin had mentioned about the dredging, I think that's very important, certainly in her district as well in mine.

[02:07:42] But the other thing that I need to have maybe feedback on, if not today, the direction that we're going in terms of the silt. And you and I have not been able to come back and talk about that, but we are in silt season. And I have had a call from the Montclair community, and I want to make sure that we are, the promise that we've made, we will keep as we go forward and have a direction with that.

[02:08:10] And if you could comment on that. Yes, again, Tom Smith, Director of Public Works, Supervisor Bailey, you and I chatted about this a little bit. We are pursuing, with the Marine Corps-based Quantico, who actually have a relationship, we work with them.

[02:08:29] There's some logistics to work out, but they are willing to at least talk to us about providing some area on the north side of the base for silt disposal. Right now it's under their internal reviews, and certainly if it seems like a positive thing, we will get our own internal reviews to make sure everything looks okay.

[02:08:49] But as you know, they have a lot of land, the base, that they don't necessarily use. You know, a lot of it's kind of a buffer area. So that to me sounds like a positive thing, that we could provide some, have some partnerships there.

[02:09:05] But we have to work out some of the logistics, which we are working on with the base. And as you and I talk, sometimes the wheels of government move slower than we want to, and that's both at the local and the federal level. So we are continuing to work down that path to see if it can bear some fruit, and that's kind of the commitment we made.

[02:09:25] They haven't said no yet, but there are some hurdles we're working on to get through, and we'll have to internally work with our county attorney and others to make sure everything is above board on

that process. Thank you, Tom. And so there's a legality part to that, there's a logistical part to that, and there is a partnership part to that.

[02:09:47] And so am I on point with that? Yes, and there's also an environmental issue that the Marine Corps base is looking at. Obviously, we're going to be testing. We'll do all the right things to make sure it's a safe and environmentally sound solution.

[02:10:03] Okay, okay. Thank you very much. Thank you, sir. Thank you very much, Mr. Shorter. We are now on to county attorney time. Ms. Robel, the floor is yours. Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the board. We will have consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members pertaining to the discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, along with the accompanying consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel pertaining to lease agreement and purchase slash sale agreement law where

[02:10:43] such consultation, discussion, or briefing in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position, negotiating strategy, or litigating posture of the public body. And then we will have personnel discussions and considerations relating to the hiring of a new fire and rescue system chief and the performance of the members of the Board of County Supervisors where consultation, briefing, or discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position, litigating posture, or negotiating strategy of the public body.

[02:11:10] These items are appropriate for closed session pursuant to 2.2-3711A1, 3, and 8 of the Virginia Code. So moved, Madam Chair. Second, Madam Chair. Motion made by Supervisor Angry, seconded by Supervisor Bailey. Any discussion? Seeing none, please vote.

[02:11:27] Vote unanimous. Great, thank you, Ms. Rubel. That brings us on to item number nine, our budget work session. Today we have a public works presentation for the proposed fiscal year 2024 solid waste fee. I believe Mr. Smith is here.

[02:11:45] Welcome, Mr. Smith. Yes, good afternoon again, Chair Wheeler, members of the board. It's my pleasure to, again, pleasure to talk to you about the solid waste system, and particularly the solid waste fee, and I'll try to move fairly quickly and try to be as concise as I can.

[02:12:04] With me today is Monica Gorman, who's our Assistant Director for Solid Waste, who put a lot of this information together, as well as Jason Polly, our Deputy Director, who's also been working on the Solid Waste program.

[02:12:21] This just summarizes kind of what our services that we provide to our community. Obviously, the county has a landfill and has, believe it or not, since 1969 at Independent Hill run a landfill, taking in about 380,000 tons of refuse per year.

[02:12:40] And we do about 555,000 transactions as well per year. At one point in time, we were number two in the county, saw a waste facility, the landfill, for visitors. Number one was Potomac Mills Mall, and I think...

[02:12:57] Third was the Manassas Battlefield. So it's a very popular place, and some people can tell that because of the traffic that we see there, particularly on weekends. Our composting program is fairly new,

but we've been working to expand that.

[02:13:12] Again, composting of leaves, grass, and now food waste, about 55,000 tons, a little more, continuing to grow. We're continuing to work to divert organic material to composting to make products and, again, extend the life of the landfill.

[02:13:32] We do provide services directly to residents, and I mean by that we have convenience sites where they can come and drop off their trash, their recycling. We have a household hazardous waste program. We have drop-off programs for recycling, and, of course, our litter program, which is funded from the solid waste fees, and general education and outreach to keep our community informed about solid waste issues.

[02:13:59] Now, the solid waste is run, the fund is an enterprise fund, which means it's totally funded from fees. It's full cost recovery. It's operated, all the operating costs for Balls Ford and the landfill are covered, all our capital projects, all the recycling program, diversion programs, all our vehicles.

[02:14:22] It's all covered through these fees. We also have a reserve. There is sinking fund. The county at one point in time had debt. That was no longer the case for the solid waste system. But so all, and it has been all our capital costs, including the liners, which typically cost about $5 million to put a new liner in right now every three to five years.

[02:14:42] It's all been kind of a pay-as-you-go system. We set money aside, and then when we have a large capital cost, we do fund it through that means. We also have a requirement, both from a state standpoint, from regulations as well as some accounting requirements, to set aside money every year for future closure or capping of the landfill sites, as well as post-closure care.

[02:15:07] You cannot, as you know, just walk away from a landfill. There are long-term liabilities that we must fund. Right now, the post-closure requirement is a minimum of 30 years after the last ton of trash is placed in a facility. So we do set aside money every year for that.

[02:15:24] So the landfill is both a long-term asset as well as a long-term liability. About 80% of the solid waste system is fund from the solid waste management or solid waste user fee, which is placed on the real estate property tax bill of every waste generator in the county.

[02:15:44] So all generators of waste, including county facilities, nonprofits, all get a solid waste fee. And it is dedicated to solid waste programs. This is done legally through a sanitary district. Believe it or not, you are the governing body of the Prince William County Solid Waste Sanitary District.

[02:16:04] This is how it was set up. And so there are some restrictions on how the fund can be used. It can only be used for solid waste-related expenditures and programs. So that fee, which was established in 1998, was $70 per single-family home, and we call that a single-family equivalent, which is about 1.3 tons of waste.

[02:16:28] That's how the system was set up. And that fee has not increased since 1998. So in today's dollars, if you just add inflation, it would be over $125. So we've been working over the years to try to be more efficient in how we operate, and so we've been able to have no fee increase for that length of time.

[02:16:50] Again, it's a flat fee. It doesn't go up with the property value. It's been $70 since 1998. So again, all our cost, capital, equipment, operation, all been funded through these fees.

[02:17:07] We do get some revenue from like sale of recyclables, but again, 80% is through this fee. But unfortunately, over the last several years, we've had significant increase in cost. Obviously, our population continues to grow. Overall, inflation has increased our cost, particularly for construction.

[02:17:28] We've seen construction costs go up 20% to 30% over the last two or three years. We've seen cost of buying a piece of equipment go up at least that much. So that's really put a strain on the system. The system is getting older. We continue to have to meet environmental regulations.

[02:17:46] We've got to meet the employee compensation increases that are proposed and continue to work on, again, providing the services we need to our community. We do also provide the general fund, an indirect cost.

[02:18:02] That is an amount equal to, it's based upon a study that all the support services, the solid waste system is supported by like finance, budget, county attorney, et cetera. So that number is over a million dollars a year that's sent back to the general fund for those costs.

[02:18:22] The big issue, one of the biggest issues we're facing right now is expansion of the landfill into what we call phase four. If you can see that map, the existing landfill, he says, is to the south. We have about 10 more years of capacity there, and then we have to move north.

[02:18:40] And when we move north across the creek, there are significant capital costs involved, extending roads, adding scales, constructing administrative facilities, maintenance facilities, and just doing general site development. And that phase four right now, based upon our current preliminary design, will give us another 25 to 27 years of capacity.

[02:19:02] So right now, the Prince William landfill has about 35-plus years of capacity, but the estimated cost, the large capital cost to build Phase 4 is looking at $200 million over that 20-year period. So we hired, the county hired an independent consultant who is familiar with Solid Waste System Enterprise Funds to look at our current fee structure and particularly look at the future needs and the future capital that we're going to have to expend.

[02:19:36] And the study showed, and this is not surprising to us because we've been projecting this for quite a number of years, that we're going to fully deplete the fund balance by FY26. Be honest with you, we knew this day was coming. And we've had discussions over the years, should we start gradually increasing the fee and be honest with you, the appetite for fee increases in previous administrations was not strong, although we did talk about it and knew that at some point in time, the fees would have to be increased.

[02:20:08] So we don't have sufficient funds, obviously, to finish Phase 3, the final liner, as well as go into Phase 4. And just the next couple of years, we have a $750,000 permitting fee just to Phase 4 permit, And our infrastructure costs anticipated in 2025 to build some of that infrastructure north of the creek is over $10 million.

[02:20:31] And also it's proposed in next year's budget to increase our litter control efforts, which is funded as well from the solid waste fee. So our consultant looked at various scenarios. we ran several different scenarios again looking at looking at especially the need for these capital costs coming up and we and they and together we talked about it with the budget office and county exec are proposing and it's in the budget is what I call a hybrid or a combination system and I'll

[02:21:05] explain a little bit more of what what that is but basically we're proposing an increase in that solid waste user or solid waste management fee of $5. So $70 to $75. It's a little less for the townhomes and other homes, as you see here, because there's less trash generated in general from those types of structures, types of facilities. Businesses will be charged $70 per SFE, which is 1.3 tons. So we do a calculation based upon actual waste generated. But we're also

[02:21:40] proposed and to make up that large deficit in capital a commercial refuse disposal or what we call a tip fee of $40 a ton when we when the county went to a solid waste management or solid waste user fee in 1998 our tip fee went from like $60 to zero and at that time it made sense this solid waste management fee provides tremendous stability in revenue it really keeps bondholders and because the, you know, especially if it's a flat rate, it doesn't vary with the economy.

[02:22:15] Assessments may go down, but the $70 stays consistent. Now, assessments may go up and the $70 stay consistent. So it's been a very stable revenue, extremely stable over the years, and it's very easy to plan out. You can plan out what the revenue is going to be just looking at projected growth in the residential and commercial side, and we've been very good at projecting and managing that because it's extremely stable.

[02:22:41] But what has happened, let me just talk a little bit about. And the consultant looked at debt financing, but particularly with interest rates right now, they believe it's more cost effective to continue like a pay-as-you-go and set money aside.

[02:22:57] So the increase in the solid waste fees from 70% to 75% is about a 7% increase. The tipping fee would apply only to commercial haulers. Most landfills in our region charge individual residents to use the facility. We will continue to not charge an individual resident we call a self-hauler who comes maybe with that couch or, you know, with that extra little bit of trash or some in our community come to the landfill every week, some two or three times a week.

[02:23:26] So it's become a very popular place. So we would continue not to charge an individual resident who comes, continued to fund all our programs. One of the issues we had when we originally went to a zero-tip fee and established a solid waste management fee, you could actually get some money for recycling, even co-mingled.

[02:23:45] You could get $5 a ton, $10 a ton. But right now, due to current markets, recycling is costing money. Most of the recycling facilities in the county are charging, I don't know what the latest, but it was $80 to $100 a ton in some cases. So it encouraged our waste haulers to cheat.

[02:24:03] because you can go to the Prince William landfill and dispose for nothing. And so this will actually, we think, encourage and stop that kind of cheating where the haulers would not be incentivized to throw away recycling. Now, the big question you might ask is if we go to this tip fee.

[02:24:22] By the way, $40 a ton, which is proposed, is significantly less than the region. The region is $60 to $70 a ton for tip fee, but they don't have the solid waste management fee to supplement, And they do charge all their residents by trip or some of them sell passes.

[02:24:38] But the question is asked, well, how is it going to impact the haulers? And this is a good question. We've noticed in the community that you would think that to pick up trash in Prince William because there's currently no tip fee versus to pick it up in Fairfax, Loudon, Stafford, it would be significantly less.

[02:24:56] But we've seen that, what we call that creep, where it's not significantly less. So we're not sure, you know, how much savings an individual customer who hires a hauler is receiving from having to pay no tip fee right now. So we think this will kind of keep them honest.

[02:25:13] How much will that go up? I mean, I can calculate a number. You know, an average of 1.3 tons per household times $40 is $52 a year. That's $4 to $5 a month. But the marketplace will ultimately determine rates.

[02:25:30] I've heard even recently a hauler increase their rates $11, and he said it's because of what Prince William County has done. And we haven't done anything recently, so you never know what the haulers are going to do. We will certainly reach out to them and explain the situation.

[02:25:48] And again, the landfill tipping fee would also, starting a tipping fee would discourage some haulers who will try to cheat again and bring in waste from Fairfax or Stafford County. which has happened. We have a pretty good inspection program to inspect for waste haulers throwing away recycling as well as out of county, and so we do have hefty fines, but this would help keep them, quote-unquote, honest.

[02:26:14] One of the big issues that we're going to face, particularly with the tip fees, is public outreach. Let me mention, I should have mentioned, if the board approves a tip fee, we are proposing to not implement that tip fee until January 2024.

[02:26:31] So essentially there will be a seven-, eight-month period where we can outreach. And that gives time for HOAs and other customers to negotiate rates and things like that with their hauler with this tip fee. So we're only looking for a half year of revenue, basically, from a tip fee of $40 per ton, which will be implemented in January 2024, where the solid waste fee increase of $5 will go on a tax bill due in July.

[02:27:03] So we're going to reach out to, obviously, our property owners, HOAs in particular, work with our refuse companies. And so these are some of the activities. If the board does approve this, we would immediately start in the month of May, reaching out through various means to advise our customers of what to expect.

[02:27:32] Wow, questions. Thank you, Mr. Smith. I'm going to start with just a couple of questions myself. Did we have to state our fees and advertise them, or are those not subject to the same things as our tax rates?

[02:27:50] My understanding is the solid waste user fee, which is part of the sanitary district in accordance with the ordinance, does require a public hearing. but the tip fees that we charge at the gate of the facility does not although I think we put something in the ad just so they're aware of it but that's something the board can either establish themselves or in the past they can also delegate and have done that in the past to the county executive. We have all lists of fees not just tip fees we have fees for tires we have fees for this and that so a lot of times in the past the board has delegated those kind of fees to the director of public works

[02:28:28] with the approval of the county executive So I hope that answers your question. It's not part of our budget process, budget public hearing. Ms. Roble? Madam Chair, member of the board, the taxes are, the fees are also then, I believe the fees and the taxes are incorporated into the budget presentation, which Mr. Shorter has proposed to you and would then be adopted by the board.

[02:28:52] So the funds that Mr. Smith, and correct me if I'm wrong, is talking about implementing January 1 have been included in the budget numbers that have been presented to the board. For a half year. For a half year. Okay, correct. It is in the advertisement that way, if that's what you're asking. But technically, we could change them, I guess.

[02:29:10] I'm not suggesting we do that, but technically we could. Are they bound by the same advertisement? Advertising for changes of the taxes versus the fees, you can probably change the taxes later. However, the board's budget is presupposed on the revenue coming in from these taxes.

[02:29:31] My next question is, I mean, so you said you had someone come in and do a lot of analysis. And so I'm just assuming that all those increases in all those areas, along with the tipping fee, and you projected it out 20 or 30 years or 20 years, addresses everything you need.

[02:29:52] We did look long-term. I don't know how many years we went out. But we didn't just look at next year or even five years. We looked 10, 15 years out. And when the consultant did his study, he was looking at that revenue stream and expenditures for the next 15, 20 years.

[02:30:08] But to answer your question, yes. One of the reasons he set these fees and he actually proposed certain increases every couple of years was to make us whole for the long term. So there are proposed increases over the next couple of years. Yeah, the way, again, every year we'd have to come back to you.

[02:30:27] But the analysis that we did shows a $2.50 increase on the solid waste fee that goes on a tax bill every two years and a $4 increase on the tip fee every two years as well, so a little more moderate increases.

[02:30:44] And I think we want to do that rather than wait, you know, until we have a crisis and say, oh, we have to go up a big amount. Yeah, I just want to make sure that, and I didn't realize there were, I apologize, I didn't read the whole staff report, I didn't know that that worked. I should have mentioned that, and I glossed over it. Sorry about that.

[02:30:59] No, that's right. So, okay, so that you think you're good to go. That's good for me. Supervisor Weir. Good afternoon, Mr. Smith. With respect to the TIP fee, once it's instituted on an annual basis, do you have a sense of what percentage of total solid waste revenue would be generated by the TIP fee versus the individually charged waste management fee?

[02:31:31] I can get you. I'm doing numbers in my head here, Supervisor Weir. I think the majority would still come from the solid waste fee. I'm thinking, you know, 40-60 kind of range, 60% from the fee, 40% from the tip fee.

[02:31:50] That's a proximate split. Which leads to my concern. Yeah. Because as little as three weeks ago, actually three and a half weeks ago, I was actually in the process of renegotiating a trash contract. And a large number of residents in this county are tied to trash contracts, either through an HOA or some town jurisdiction.

[02:32:12] And if you incorporate that tip fee into the commercial haulers, they're already planning to charge that back as part of their contract. So, in essence, what you're doing is you're allowing the trash hauler to pass on what is, in essence, an increase in a solid waste management fee, but only to those people that they have a contract with.

[02:32:37] So their garbage hauling bills are going to go up significantly to cover the tip fee. And it just seems to me it's a little more transparent if you simply factor in what you need.

[02:32:54] And, I mean, I can't believe I'm saying this, but incorporated into the solid waste management fee rather than essentially having it fall back on the taxpayer as a hidden tax because it's buried in their trash hauler's contract.

[02:33:11] We looked at that scenario, and certainly if that's the board's wish, we can give you a number. I think it was the solid waste fee would be, Monica's looking, quite high, like over $100. It may be in the $120 range. But for the reasons, you know, I put in this one slide about keeping the haulers quote-unquote honest is why we're recommending the hybrid.

[02:33:37] It's not perfect. You're going to shock a lot of people because they're already renegotiating the contract simply because of the fuel cost and labor shortages. So, I mean, you could literally see, I can envision a scenario in the next two or three years when most of these contracts are up or have to be renewed where your hauling contract and thus the individual homeowner's share of the hauling contract could rise anywhere from, I'm spitballing anywhere from 30 to 70 percent, depending on the hauler and depending on how much tonnage they're hauling.

[02:34:12] Yeah, Supervisor, obviously we don't regulate the rates that the haulers charge. I encourage an individual and an HOA to compare costs, to rebid, but costs are going up. There's no doubt about it.

[02:34:29] Yeah, but if you're suddenly charging the hauler a tip fee, that's not a cost that they can control, and they're going to have to pass it on to the contractors or whoever they're contracted with. Correct. Otherwise, I mean, you're asking them to essentially operate at a loss over time.

[02:34:46] So I've got a real concern with the way you want to do this, but... Yeah, as I indicated, we've seen situations where the haulers, for example, are charging very similar rates in Fairfax and Prince William on individual homes, even though they're paying zero tip fee in Prince William and $70 in Fairfax.

[02:35:06] So how that's all going to work out in the marketplace, again, I gave you my calculation of if every home generates 1.3 tons, which is pretty close, at $40, that's $52 a year. That's my best estimate of what the haulers will have to charge to make up that tip fee.

[02:35:25] Does that make sense? Supervisor Lawson. Thank you. I want to make sure I understand you. And right now, commercial has not paid a tipping fee, correct?

[02:35:44] You just said that, correct? They have not since 1998, correct. Okay. I'm sitting here thinking, in the commercial industry, it's probably the restaurants that pay the most. Is that a fair statement?

[02:35:59] The restaurants have a lot of trash, very heavy trash. You know, as far as it depends upon the size of the business, et cetera, et cetera. I'm just thinking of a typical family-owned restaurant or drive-thru.

[02:36:15] What other industry is probably second to restaurants or food providers that would have higher solid waste fees than them? Some of our higher fees come from the large malls. Grocery stores sometimes are pretty high.

[02:36:32] Large restaurants can be high. A small restaurant, not so much. Fast food tends to be very high. you know, the McDonald's and the world and things like that? So have we calculated an estimate of what the average solid waste fee would, or the tipping fees would be for those commercial industries?

[02:36:52] Supervisor, yeah. I know I'm asking you to calculate something that's really hard to. Yeah, Supervisor Lawson, are you talking about what they pay at trash haul or what they get charged in the solid waste management fee on their tax bill? Both. Well, both. But I guess we wouldn't necessarily know what trash hauler contracts are.

[02:37:10] No, we don't know. I mean, the amount they're charged on the solid waste management or user fee is quite a wide. I mean, it can be low as less than $70 to as much as, you know, $20,000 plus dollars. It really depends upon the size of the business and the type of waste they have, you know, if that makes sense.

[02:37:29] All right. I guess, and this is my other question. Why, I mean, it's somewhat impressive in the sense that it's stayed at the same fee for 25 years. And I know that we've had other conversations and board policy changes regarding our landfills.

[02:37:49] But how did this one stay under the radar for so long? And then what I struggle with is right now we've got labor shortages. we've got a lot of folks that are disgruntled that we haven't had our facilities open seven days a week you know that tom you've seen those same emails we've got all kinds of other issues that are out of our control and i just don't think that this is going to go over well i mean

[02:38:25] this board unanimously supported that yard waste program and we got a lot a lot of angry communities that were expressing their displeasure with us because they had to renegotiate their contracts. You all remember those days. So what I'm trying to say is the timing is certainly not ideal. Yeah, I understand. And this is one of the reasons why we want to delay anything we do until January to give us, because us and as well as the HOAs enough time to negotiate, adjust, you know,

[02:39:05] to have any impacts this might have on them. Well, I appreciate that, but the fact is that the eight of us are expected to make decisions, and we can delay it until January, but it's coming. Right. And it should obviously be advertised, and people should be notified.

[02:39:26] Business owners, residents, everybody should be notified. But I just think the timing of this is less than ideal, and maybe we should schedule a meeting. I don't recall a virtual meeting or an in-person meeting regarding this particular proposal.

[02:39:46] You've been out to my office for other... We all discussed this with you briefly when we talked about the Solid Ways Management Plan last year. If you recall, we went and kind of explained this was coming, and now it's here, so to speak. Yeah. Yeah, it's been in the works because we knew this day was coming.

[02:40:01] I know. I mean, I'm aware that we've been doing a lot of things to improve our life cycle or long-term longevity of the landfill and Ballsford, but the timing of this is very difficult because of those other factors that I've mentioned that a lot of them are out of our control.

[02:40:30] Supervisor Franklin. Yes, if I could, Director, if you'll, three things I'd like you to address. mostly have. I just want to make sure you reiterate. If you could just talk a bit about what kind of rates we are seeing in terms of tipping fee and surrounding jurisdictions.

[02:40:53] If you could also talk about service level. I got an update a few days ago that when we compared our hours of operation, that there was some difference and that we provided a better service level. And also, if you could, it was rate tipping fees, service level. And yes, I certainly talked about this

during the budget proposal, but if you could just talk a bit about the landfill and what these fees would actually be helping if the board decided to move in this direction.

[02:41:27] Thank you, Mr. Schroeder. Yes, again, most landfills surrounding us, you know, Monica put together some data. Fairfax County, the tip fee is $70 a ton. I believe Loudoun is $68 a ton.

[02:41:42] So we're looking at rates surrounding us, 65 to 70 in general. If you go down south to Stafford, they have what they call contract arrangements with their haulers, and even their rates, their discount rates are right around 40. So anyway, that's kind of what they're charging.

[02:42:01] And again, they all charge residents individually. Fairfax charges, if you have up to five bags, $15 to go to their facilities. And we're still proposing, you know, because we do have a solid waste management fee, no fee for an individual self-haul resident to come.

[02:42:20] Loudon charges $7. Stafford, they have a regional landfill. You can buy an annual pass for $120, which is the cheapest way, or $5 per trip. So our proposal, again, is to, you know, be lesser on the tip fee as well as continue to charge, you know, and provide our residents no charge for when they show up at the facilities.

[02:42:45] We, you know, we looked at hours, and I know this is an issue with Sunday. We are open longer hours during the week than any other facility. We're open 12 hours a day, 6 to 6 every day, Monday through Friday. That helps our haulers out, as well as residents who want to come before work, after work, at the end of the day.

[02:43:05] So we're open probably longer hours than most facilities, even on weekends. The facilities that are open Saturday and Sunday generally have reduced hours. We're open 8 to 5 on a Saturday. So overall, and I understand Sunday is an issue, but overall we have more hours open than most facilities surrounding us to meet the needs of the haulers and get the trash off our streets in particular.

[02:43:30] And the services we provide, we do try to be very customer-oriented with our household hazardous waste program. You know, we have a lot of self-haulers who come to the landfill and occasionally it gets backed up. But overall, the satisfaction is usually pretty high.

[02:43:47] It's kind of a one-stop shop. We generally get very positive comments from customers who use the facilities. I hope that addresses the concerns, Mr. Shorter. Thank you, Mr. Smith. Supervisor Franklin. Sure. It's more so a comment because you and I have talked about this before with regards to where we can put silt from dredging.

[02:44:08] And obviously, the landfill would be optimal, except currently we have very limited capacity. Now, obviously, we're looking at hopefully expanding capacity. But even if we did that, it would still be a concern of do we have enough capacity for silt?

[02:44:24] So can you just talk a little bit about like some of what we've talked about in our conversations? As you can see in this existing landfill in the future phase four, most of it's earmarked for landfilling. We don't want to take, to be honest with you, an area that's designed for disposal of waste and kind of fill it up with silt.

[02:44:44] That's why, Supervisor Frank, we are looking for other locations for silt, long-term possibly an east-west solution, you know, because this is a problem not only for the marina owners, not only for Lake Montclair. It's a problem for our own staff in dealing with silt in our stormwater ponds.

[02:45:00] This is a long-term issue. We have to come up with a long-term solution. Sure, and thank you for that. And currently, I know that some individuals have to go to Maryland and other jurisdictions to basically, I don't know if they, I guess they're charged for bringing their silt.

[02:45:18] But obviously, we're looking at some solutions other than the landfill. But obviously, in the future, if we were ever to get additional space, you know, it would be optimal to be able to have it here. Previously, the silt was placed on the upper corner of the existing landfill.

[02:45:34] As you know, that's now going to be a liner. So, you know, I don't want to bring silt in and a year later have to dig it all up again. It just doesn't make any economic sense to do that. There are private facilities that will take silt, but they'll charge a lot of money. And generally, it's a farther distance as well.

[02:45:52] They're not in the county. So I'm going to go to Supervisor Bailey because she hasn't asked a question yet, and then Supervisor Weir will be on his second set of questions. I try not to ask questions unless it's dire indeed. But thank you, Supervisor Franklin.

[02:46:07] get out of my head because SILT is, that is the opportunity, Tom, and I know it is, and, you know, not to open Pandora's box, but that's why you are looking at other places to do so, and I commend you for how conservatively you've managed this whole process and whole project with your team, and now we're at a point where, because we've done so well at what we do with the landfill, The timing is here, as far as I'm concerned, because now I'm getting calls from my community about when is this going to be calmed down and reopened and expanded.

[02:46:46] So I commend you for how conservatively you've managed this whole process. And I see this as an opportunity as we move forward, not just to expand, But in terms of the fees, as we go forward, just to support the community as we grow, as we expand, is that, am I looking at that appropriately?

[02:47:09] Yes. Okay. I just wanted to make sure. But thank you, Supervisor Franklin, for your comment. Supervisor Weir. Mr. Smith, if we could go back to the tipping fee. Could you elaborate, do all of the other jurisdictions charge both a waste management fee to the taxpayer and a tip fee?

[02:47:26] No. And if they do, is it a comparative level where they just charge the tip fee? Yeah, let me make sure I'm clear. supervisor. All the other localities fund their systems differently, but their primary source of revenue is the tip fee. They do not have a solid waste management fee. Now they do, for example, I think in some jurisdictions, some of their residential services such as household hazardous waste, litter pickup is general fund. It's not funded from tip fee. So you have to look at each jurisdiction if you want to look apples with apples. But I mean, there are other jurisdictions that charge a solid waste management fee, Montgomery County, Maryland, for example, they have a dual system.

[02:48:06] Their fees are both higher than what we're proposing here. So we're not the only jurisdiction that does this, but I believe we're the only one in Northern Virginia that does it this way. Maryland's rules are somewhat different, too, as I recall. My concern is we're not getting an apples-to-apples comparison here with the other jurisdictions.

[02:48:26] If the other local Virginia jurisdictions are all tipping fee based and we're not, there's a layer of transparency here that I'm very uncomfortable with.

[02:48:43] And like I say, I've been working on negotiating trash contracts for the last six months. And the increase in what they're proposing for a commercial hauler is staggering right now. And that's only based

on labor issues, labor costs, and fuel charges that have been skyrocketing.

[02:49:06] Now, a lot of contracts are locked in for X period of years. The one I was working on expires this year, so it was mandatory that they had to renegotiate it. If you suddenly throw a tip fee into this, it's going to really throw it out of whack, and it's going to get extraordinarily expensive, and it will impact quite a number of people.

[02:49:32] You can see HOAs that cover it raising their HOA fees significantly on a per-house or per-unit basis simply to cover the tip fee. And it appears that all we're doing is, you know, we're making up for past failures to raise the solid waste management fee by passing it off as a tip fee now and just essentially hiding the cost behind the hauler, where the hauler will collect the tax or the fee instead of your agency directly.

[02:50:10] And I'm just very uncomfortable with that. Understood. Refuse hauler costs are going significantly higher for the reasons just you mentioned, labor costs, fuel costs, insurance costs are skyrocketing.

[02:50:28] They're facing the same labor issues that we are here in the county of hiring truck drivers, for example. So I don't disagree with you that it's going to go higher. But again, for some of the reasons mentioned in this slide is why we thought a tip fee would be the best way to go, so to speak.

[02:50:47] Again, the other option is to really increase the solid waste management fee significantly more. But we thought this hybrid system, you know, again, and we discussed this back and forth amongst ourselves, was the best approach long-term. Again, we understand it's going to be a big adjustment, you know, when we start charging a tip fee.

[02:51:06] But then hopefully it will kind of, quote, unquote, settle down, if I can use that term. You'll still be paying the same amount. You're just paying it to a different entity. Correct. You're not seeing it. It's money going into the system. How we get it is certainly there's various options.

[02:51:21] Yes, I agree. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Smith. Thank you for coming out today. I know we have decisions to make, and we will do that going forward. And I do know that we have had our own jurisdiction, and we have our own methodology, and at this point in time, we have to figure out how our own methodology is going to be adjusted to be able to move forward with the things we need to do.

[02:51:44] And so I appreciate it. It's hard to compare ourselves to other jurisdictions that aren't exactly the same, and so I think we need to take care of what we need to do ourselves to figure out how we move forward in a financially stable manner. So thank you for coming at us today. Great. Well, that will end our budget work session for today.

[02:52:03] We are on to supervisor's time. We have three appointments that are listed here, 10A, B, and C. Could I, if I could get a motion for those? So moved. Second. Motion made by Supervisor Bailey, seconded by Vice Chair Bodie.

[02:52:18] Any discussion? Please vote. Vote unanimous. Great. We're going to do supervisor's time now and go around the horn. Everybody has five minutes. Supervisor Angry, I'm going to start with you.

[02:52:34] Thank you, Madam Chair. Just want to reiterate from what we discussed this afternoon about the red light cameras and the schools on cameras. I'm very happy to see that we're going to get this project

underway. I've already gotten a few emails on how important this program is, and hopefully we can get folks to understand that speeding is an issue and running red lights is an issue and safety is an issue.

[02:53:00] So I'm just happy that we got that program up and running. This Saturday, OWL, Volunteer Fire Department, is having their installation of officers, so I'll be attending that, happy to say. And just lastly, I'm going to be scheduling a community meeting for the Prinsdale-Darbydale projects.

[02:53:17] That's two areas where we have some by-right uses going on with some pretty large residential projects. Dates and times will be forthcoming. I will announce that and also post it on my website and Facebook page. If you don't know what that website is, it's www.neapsconews.org, and you can search Neapsco News on Facebook, and the information will be there shortly.

[02:53:42] Thank you, Madam Chair. That's all. Thank you, Supervisor Angry. Supervisor Weird. Supervisor Lawson. Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I want to say that today is National Down Syndrome Day, And I want to just recognize the importance of people that have Down syndrome.

[02:54:05] They are absolutely precious. And I am blessed to have a niece with Down syndrome. And she just turned 27 last week. And frankly, I cannot imagine our family without Abby. And so today I have a special admiration for folks with Down syndrome.

[02:54:27] and I hope that you all join me in celebrating their beautiful lives and what they contribute to our society. I'd like to give notice of intent to appoint Mr. Joe Diaz. Diaz, you all might be familiar with him.

[02:54:43] He works at Did Lake. He is a constituent, and he is willing to serve our community on Persons with Disabilities Commission as well as the Commission on Aging. And I don't know if the clerk's office, they already have his resume.

[02:55:00] And let me tell you, he's more than qualified for both of these bodies that help us. And then I also want to let everybody know, and hopefully the weather will be nice, although lately our weather record hasn't been so great, that this Saturday at the Brentsville Historic Courthouse from 2 to 3.30 is a scrambled egg hunt.

[02:55:24] You can come and collect clues to determine where the candy and toys can be found. The cost is $30 a family, and families who need special or individual assistance can reach out to our ADA coordinator, and her number is 703-792-8066 before March 25th.

[02:55:48] And I went, maybe it was a year or two ago, and it was actually a really fun event. I remember the weather was nice, but I just wanted to let everybody know, especially those who have a little one that likes to be outside, explore.

[02:56:07] They can look for scrambled Easter eggs. And then the last thing I have, Madam Chair, is just to give kind of a notice or a heads up that my office will be working with your office.

[02:56:22] I appreciate that your willingness to recognize that April is the month of the military child, and I have a preliminary resolution that we'll be submitting to your office for approval, and I'm asking that you will put it on the agenda for our first meeting in April.

[02:56:41] As Prince William County has 42,000 veterans, we obviously have a lot of kids that need to be recognized for the sacrifices that they make while their parents serve our nation. Ms. Madden, is that already on the draft agenda?

[02:57:02] Yeah. Well, it's funny that you say that because that's quite all right. Because I actually, before the meeting started, asked Supervisor Angry if he wanted to champion this, given his veteran status. Someone had already – because, you know, we should talk about the timing on getting proclamations through to our office.

[02:57:22] It's something that would probably have to have been done three or four weeks ago for our next meeting, which is fine. It's on there. It's already on there because his office put it through in the correct time frame. His staff put it through.

[02:57:38] You don't have it? So maybe that's just – it's my understanding that my office talked to the chair's office, but it doesn't matter. as long as maybe they missed so maybe they missed it doesn't matter as long as long as we can do at some point in april i would be grateful for that we did talk about there were six proclamations at our first meeting in april okay so we can move it to a different april date if that would be that yeah so we'll talk about that okay but duly noted thank you and it probably was your office and probably just got it doesn't matter supervisor angrily my apologies okay whatever you know what

[02:58:12] i'm confident in our aides will work it out yeah okay supervisor bode or vice chair bode thank you madam chair just like a few updates from me first um on wednesday the 15th i was able to uh to join uh casa for their americorps week celebration i know the supervisor bailey was there as well it was a great uh celebration of the all the great volunteer work that the AmeriCorps team does over at CASA in all the philanthropy and really good uplifting programs they have from financial literacy to helping folks prepare their taxes to workforce training

[02:58:49] and what have you. So it was a really great opportunity to go and visit them. On Friday the 17th I was able to join my colleagues at the Prince William County Potomac Neabsco Mills Commuter Lot groundbreaking ceremony. It's one of those great projects we have that's going to be really uplifting and bringing to a new level our commuter and our transportation network, especially in a part of the county where my district, Supervisor Angry's district, and Supervisor Franklin's district all intersect and have a lot of heavy commuter traffic and folks able to utilize those facilities. On Sunday the 19th, I joined Madam Chair for the

[02:59:29] Life Connect Church ribbon-cutting ceremony over in the Potomac Mills area It was a great celebration of a great congregation that's done work in the community in the past, but has a new congregation, a new house of worship in the Occoquan District, so it was great to be able to talk to them and celebrate the ribbon-cutting of their new sanctuary.

[02:59:47] And then yesterday, I got a chance to pop my head in to see that we had a great tour of the new Christ Receiving Unit Receiving Center facility over at Gatner Mountain, hosted by none other than Supervisor Bailey, alongside several county staff. So I wanted to highlight that and thank them for their work as well in regards to that.

[03:00:07] Upcoming for our community, we have Dumpster Day coming up on April the 1st, working with folks to make sure that we have lined up for that. And that's it for me in terms of updates. I did want to put on the radar that we had quite a few folks that came in today from the ADCs, so I appreciate the conversation we had surrounding that.

[03:00:26] I also know that our Fire and Rescue folks have been coming in week after week in regards to that. So I'm hoping that in the coming weeks we can talk about how we can value them more as well. And I

would put in a request, if not a full-on directive, to see if there's anything we can do for them in terms of Q4 of this fiscal year in terms of salary adjustment.

[03:00:46] Thank you, Madam Chair. Supervisor Bailey. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. Good afternoon to everyone. And I did join Supervisor Bodie for the Casa AmeriCorps Open House, and it was absolutely fantastic.

[03:01:05] I think they had about 10 students that graduated from that program, and we had great food as well. So congratulations to the graduates of that. On the 16th, I had a wonderful opportunity to attend our MVRC meeting where we talked about in the community and military and federal facility partnership with Northern Virginia about affordable housing, and it was absolutely fantastic as we are supporting our veterans and their spouses in our community.

[03:01:39] So thank you to MVRC for that. On the 17th, I want to just say a happy belated birthday to the counties on Prince William County NAACP president. He was 35 again. No, I'm just kidding. But happy birthday to him. On March the 18th, I attended the Bel Air Women's Club, stepping out and celebrating 50 years of service to this community, and it was a great fashion show.

[03:02:04] We had a great time, attended that with Supervisor Angry, and to Ms. Ernestine Jenkins and her team and how they have supported this community for 50 years, I salute you. On the 18th, I was the guest speaker for the Stafford County Women and Networking and their tea that they had for the NAACP, and it was great.

[03:02:27] It was at the clubs of Quantico here at Quantico Base, and so it was an excellent opportunity for just we as women to get together and network. On the 19th, I presented a commendation to the Winner's Church here in my district where we celebrated through accommodations their excellent community service in our backpack drive, our food drive, and providing COVID testing during COVID to our community.

[03:02:57] So congratulations to Winners Church for all that you do for our community. On the 20th, as Kenny said, we were really fortunate in being able to show off the CRC at Gander Mountain and how that mental health facility is going to really serve our entire community from the west to the east, from the east to the west.

[03:03:21] And we're very proud of that. And thank you to Senators Kane, Congressman Connolly, and Senator Warner for the $2.5 million that you bestowed upon the county to stand up that facility. On March 25th, upcoming events, we'll be having an amazing opportunity that I'll have to speak at the upcoming Marine Corps 1775 K run in Forest Park.

[03:03:50] They're back again. They're not going to let me shoot the gun this time, but that's okay. I did it before, but that is going to be on the 25th of March. And then just as a reminder again, March the 30th, the Potomac District will be having a community town hall that will engage with all of the agencies here from the county just uplifting them and letting them tell where we've been, where we are, and where we're going to at Potomac High School.

[03:04:21] And that's March the 30th from 6 to 8 p.m. Madam Chair, thank you. Thank you. Supervisor Franklin. Sure, thank you. On March 16th, I attended the Woodbridge Potomac Civic Association meeting where we discussed several projects happening in the Woodbridge District, including the North Woodbridge Town Center.

[03:04:41] So thank you for the invitation and for everyone who came out to that. Also, this past Saturday, I was honored by the Prince William County Chapter of the Coalition of 100 Black Women for my service in the county. It was quite unexpected, but I just want to tell the Prince William County Chapter thank you for that honor.

[03:05:02] Upcoming event, I will be hosting an Affordable Housing Town Hall with the Coalition of 100 Black Women. March 27th at 7 p.m. The information is on my website. It will be via Zoom. On the 28th, I'll be co-hosting a women's history program, 6 p.m. at the Fralazzo Building, alongside Supervisor Bailey.

[03:05:22] And this year, again, just pointing out dumpster days in the spring and fall, spring, May 13th, from 10 to 2 p.m. at Fred Lynn Middle. And the fall will be September 30th from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at Rippon Middle. And we will have the shred truck. And that is all I have.

[03:05:37] Thank you. Thank you. Supervisor Vega. Thank you, Madam Chair. First off, I just want to wish everyone a happy spring. Yes, yesterday was the first day of spring. It sure didn't feel like it, but today was much nicer outside. Really looking forward to this new season and all the new changes that are to come.

[03:05:54] Next, Madam Chair, I would like to reappoint Willie Deutsch as a Coles representative to the County Board of Equalization. And I would also like to appoint Martin Jeter to the Sustainability Commission, as you all know, because Supervisor Weir was elected. That is now a vacant position, and so I would like to appoint Martin Jeter.

[03:06:13] And in consultation with the Chair, I also would like to appoint Lou Sager to the Community Criminal Justice Board. Madam Chair that resume will be coming to you if not soon or probably it's already there as my staff gets to it. Next on Saturday April 1st no it's not an April Fool's joke we actually do have the annual Coles District Easter Egg Hunt featuring the Easter Bunny. This year's event will take place at Joseph Reading Park which is located at 8460 Maplewood Drive in Manassas from 10 a.m. to noon and finally right now in Prince William County if you have two or more acres zoned agricultural

[03:06:48] and you live in the domestic fowl overlay district you can have a cow or a horse however you need 10 or more acres to have a goat a pig an alpaca or other smaller farm animals I know this might seem funny to some folks but in the spirit of being efficient and practical and fair I would like to without objection issue a directive or actually rather a direct county staff to draft language for zoning text amendment which would allow farm animals including but not limited to goats, pigs, sheep, alpacas, and llamas on parcels that are within the domestic fowl overlay district that

[03:07:25] are zoned A1 agricultural and greater than two acres. This language should include a table or formula similar to those used for cattle or domestic fowl which defines the allowable number of animals per acre. And just so my colleagues on the dais know I have reached out to county staff and we have been going back and forth and that's all I have Madam Chair.

[03:07:44] Supervisor Vega, because we don't want to do policy through a directive, could you just change your directive to have them examine this issue and come back to us, and then we could issue a ZTA? Sure. Okay, just so we're not doing direct, you know, directives that change policy. Thank you very much.

[03:08:00] Same thing, but okay. I'll try to be brief. Friday on the 17th, I also participated with some of my colleagues on the Potomac-Napsco Mills Commuter Garage Project, along with Supervisors Bodie and Angry. Angry, yeah.

[03:08:16] and Franklin? Okay, okay. And, you know, anyway, it's a great project. I just want to point out that it's right next to the new express lanes that are going connecting to 95 at Opitz Boulevard, which makes that commuter garage extremely valuable and very efficient. On Saturday, I also attended the Bel Air Women's 50th Anniversary in Fashion Show. It was wonderful.

[03:08:45] The Bel Air Women's Club has been around for 50 years and has done amazing things for our community. I was grateful to participate in that. Later on that afternoon, I got to attend the Haymarket Food Pantry Super Bingo. And it was a great play in bingo and talking about the importance of the food pantry. I just want to throw out there for anyone who's listening, and I also put in my newsletter, they're always looking for volunteers.

[03:09:09] Everyone's always looking for volunteers. So I'm just going to throw that out there in terms of the food pantry. On Sunday, I was able to participate also with Supervisor Bodie in the New Life Connect Community Church. She just found a new home in Potomac Mills. It was a wonderful service and then a wonderful ribbon-cutting, albeit somewhat cold on Sunday morning, if anyone remembers.

[03:09:30] It felt like it was like 25 degrees outside, not in the sun. But it's going to be – they got to expand there, and they do wonderful things in our community. I was grateful to be a part of that and be able to speak. Yesterday I was able to also go with Supervisor Bailey and tour the CRC with Senator Cain as well as watch his and participate in that afternoon roundtable regarding some of the questions that people had discussing with Senator Cain and some of the issues regarding mental health.

[03:09:58] It was a great afternoon. This morning I had the pleasure of speaking at the new PWC Green Business Council, which was an event that's still probably not going on anymore. but was over in Manassas, and it was started by Keep Prince William Beautiful.

[03:10:16] And I would encourage any business that is listening that wants to join the Green Business Council to reach out to Keep Prince William Beautiful and Rico Fleshman. It really will dovetail nicely with a lot of our own sustainability efforts and environmental efforts.

[03:10:32] And I used the theme of, when I spoke, lead by example. And I think the county has been trying to do that over the last few years. oh very good lead by example i didn't even think about that um i'm and so i'm grateful for all the organizations that i've seen over the past week and what they do for the community um with my count out of the way i just want to give my notice of intent to appoint sean anderson to the hilting performing performing art center board and i believe we have his resume but i will double check and make sure that's on file so with that um our next item it's 5 10 we will go to closed session

[03:11:12] and then come out and report out of closed session. And then after we report out of closed session, we will be in recess until our evening meeting this evening for our budget public hearing at 7.30. So with that, we will go into closed session.

[03:11:38] We are back from closed session.

[03:12:10] If I could get a motion to certify. So moved. Second. Motion made by Vice Chair Bodie, seconded by Supervisor Bailey. Any discussion? Seeing none, please vote. All right, vote unanimous.

[03:12:37] At this point, we don't have anything to report out. And we will take a recess until our 7.30 budget public hearing. Welcome back to board chambers for today's meeting's evening session.

[03:13:05] We're going to move on to agenda item 12. But before that, Supervisor Angry has a COIA statement he's going to read. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, before the public hearing on the proposed budget begins, I need to declare a personal interest in this matter.

[03:13:24] My wife is a special education instructional aide with the schools. As a school employee, my wife and I are members of a group which is affected by this transaction. Because I am able to participate in this matter fairly objectively and in the public interest, I will be participating.

[03:13:40] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Supervisor Angry. So, public hearing to obtain the public input on proposed fiscal year 2024 annual budget. I am now going to open the public hearing for Agenda Item 12A. If you wish to speak regarding the noted item, I will call everybody.

[03:13:57] Please sign up, and I will call people five at a time. When you come to the podium, the microphone in the back, if you could state your name and generally where you live or your magisterial district in the county, that would be great. And we will get started.

[03:14:14] And I was going to say sign up doesn't close for this because it is a public hearing. So if more people show up and sign up, then we will have more people. The first five people are Noelle Schott, Pahi Bright, Josh Quill, M. Rowe, and Mike Beattie.

[03:14:34] I'm requesting, I'm with the Prince William SPCA, a 501c3 nonprofit, and I'd request five minutes, please. Yes, and I just want to make sure, is her microphone working? Because she was speaking. Yeah, I'm sorry.

[03:14:51] That's better. And I put something on the projector screen, please. Okay, thank you. Great, okay, great. Yeah, okay, great, thank you. Hello, I'm Noelle Schott, Occoquan District Appointee on the Animal Advisory Committee.

[03:15:09] I'm also Vice President of the Principal MSPCA, and I volunteer foster with the Animal Services Center. First, I want to acknowledge the outstanding job the staff of the Animal Services Center is doing in caring for the animals. We are requesting the 2024 budget include the three veterinary positions, a veterinarian, a vet tech, and a vet assistant required to operate the full scope of the veterinary suite that is already available in the shelter.

[03:15:34] I submitted a question to the budget website on 28 February and received the following response from the county on March 3rd. The police department did not request a staffing plan in the 2024, as the department is currently focused on filling existing vacant positions.

[03:15:50] The police department is exploring future options for spay-neuter release program at the Animal Services Center that may include an on-site veterinarian and support staff. In the interim, the county contracts veterinary services for animals at the shelter. I understand and respect the police department's focus on filling their vacancies.

[03:16:08] However, the police department vacancies, in my opinion, should not be held against the animals receiving full-time vet care, which we are requesting. About the police department's point about the contract that they have, currently the vet contract process used at the animal shelter is not sustainable.

[03:16:24] Today, Animal Services Center has a contract with a local vet clinic that only comes in twice a week. This limits intake of new animals to only those two days. As I mentioned, I'm a foster for the shelter,

and that means I can only bring my foster animals in on those two days. Having an on-site vet staff would give more flexibility and consistent care to all animals.

[03:16:43] In addition, not having the full-time vet has increased medication costs. Based on the current state shelter regulations, the county can no longer buy medication in bulk unless you have a veterinarian on staff. Therefore, filling this vet position will reduce costs. Based on the March 15th Prince William Times article, I believe the police department is in support of adding these positions.

[03:17:02] First Sergeant Jonathan Perroque, the police spokesman, said that while hiring more staff would not fully eliminate the need for partnerships with local vet clinics, it would increase the quality and consistency of care for the animals in the shelter. He went on to say an on-site veterinary staff could provide limited services, including basic surgery, more frequently.

[03:17:19] With these services being performed on-site and with more availability, the length of stay for animals in the shelter would likely be significantly reduced, which is better for the animals and also reduces the cost of care. Paroque said that increasing the adoption fees would help the shelter provide more services to adopters, including testing animals for diseases such as heartworms.

[03:17:38] So let's discuss adoption fees. As the chart shows here and on the screen, the total for the three salaries based on industry costs are approximately $250,000 plus the addition for benefits. There are ways to offset this cost by increasing adoption fees. Currently, 80% of the dogs and cats entering the shelter have to be spayed and neutered.

[03:17:56] In 2022, that was over 2,500 dogs and cats. Currently, the adoption fee is only $45. That does not include the cost to spay and neuter because that cost is paid directly to the external vet clinic. For the three external clinics that work in the shelter, spay and neuter costs range from $280 to $400, depending on size.

[03:18:16] For my estimate, you could raise adoption fees to $200. $45 still goes to operations. The remaining $155 can go to labor and expenses, which means you could raise $390,000 to support the labor. By having the veterinary staff on site, we will be able to reduce the length of stay for animals.

[03:18:33] Today, if I adopt an animal at the shelter, the animal stays until they can get spayed and neutered at a local clinic. That keeps the animal at the shelter for an additional five to seven days. It costs $15 a day to care for the animal. That could be an additional cost savings of $200,000 that could be reallocated to help offset labor costs.

[03:18:51] Now let's compare ourselves to other surrounding counties. Prince William County operates a building that is 30% larger, serves 30% more animals, responds to 43% more calls for service, and serves 13% more residents with approximately 20% less staffing than Loudoun County.

[03:19:07] Prince William County sheltering operations are comparable to the size of the facility in Fairfax, but operates with 30% less staffing than Fairfax. All surrounding counties have already adopted in-house veterinary staff. Their adoption fees include spay and neutering. That means all counties have already implemented the veterinary science program in the high schools.

[03:19:27] If we add veterinary positions, then Prince William County schools could add the same program to their career and technical education program, which they desire to do based on my

conversations with them. In summary, hiring these three positions is a win-win. The cost of the additional positions can be offset by bringing services in-house and adjusting adoption fees.

[03:19:44] It's better, more consistent care for the animals, reduces length of stay, utilizes a fully functional on-site vet suite that is not operational today, ability to bring new veterinary education programs to Prince William County. And finally, it also supports the trap, neuter, vaccinate, and release study that was emailed to you by Chief Newsom in March.

[03:20:03] Woo! Eight seconds. Thank you. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Hello, good evening. My name is Dr. Patty Bright. I'm a veterinarian.

[03:20:18] I live here in Prince William County. I'm in the Occoquan District. I spoke to you guys a couple weeks ago regarding this issue as well. I can't possibly top what Noelle just did. However, I am as fashionable or more fashionable than she is. But I'm here tonight again to speak in support of supporting funding for the shelter staff.

[03:20:37] We really do need to have a veterinarian, a veterinary technician, and a veterinary assistant. You know, as Noel pointed out, it's extremely important. If we want to get the Trap, Neuters, and Release program going, we need to have those positions in place. There are also other benefits to doing that. One of them is that one of the other things that the Animal Advisory Committee is working on for Prince William County is to start an education initiative.

[03:20:58] So we are working with Osborne Park High School right now with the hope of getting a vocational training course set up for a veterinary assistant program. We also have the ability to work with the veterinary school down at Virginia Tech as well as with Northern Virginia Community College as they train veterinary technicians. Having the shelter up and running in place with a veterinary suite would be fantastic.

[03:21:18] It would allow options for these students to be able to get hands-on training, and it would also provide free volunteers for the shelter. So it would allow us to get some additional expertise in there and the center. One of the last things that I did want to talk about, sorry, I'm a Yankee, so I do talk fast.

[03:21:36] One of the last things I did want to talk about is, as many of you know, in the human medical field, there are specialties, right? So if you have a problem and you need a dermatologist, you want to see a dermatologist, right? You probably don't want to go to your podiatrist. The same is true in veterinary medicine. So I have a specialty in epidemiology and preventive medicine.

[03:21:53] That means that I did additional three years of training. I also had to take a specialized exam in addition to my veterinary license. The reason that we have these expertise is similar to human medicine is that there are certain jobs and certain requirements that require extra expertise, right?

[03:22:10] So if I go to my small animal veterinarian, they're used to seeing individual animals or seeing them for individual animal problems. When you come to the shelter, you are dealing with a completely different set of problems and a need for a completely different set of expertise. So there is actually a specialty in shelter medicine.

[03:22:28] It requires three additional years of training, so they actually do a veterinary medical residency. They do take an additional exam to pass, and they deal with issues that your general

veterinarian don't necessarily deal with. So these are things like trauma, behavioral issues, and things like population infectious disease issues.

[03:22:46] So imagine if you get a dog that comes into that shelter that's carrying something that is infectious, you now have a potential issue there where you could be infecting hundreds of animals, right? And so you're dealing with a much greater cost. So it is extremely important that we do get the right expertise at the shelter.

[03:23:01] And as I mentioned last time, we have this fantastic veterinary suite that you guys were kind enough to invest in, but it's sitting there idle. So let's use it, and let's use it with the right expertise. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Next speaker, please. Good evening.

[03:23:21] My name is Josh Quill. I live in Gainesville, Virginia. Over the past few months, I've had a great opportunity to talk to a significant number of residents in the county, and we talk about a number of things to include issues and what could be better just generally.

[03:23:38] The number one thing that people bring up is the cost of living. We are still at a significant high inflation rate, and people say to me, what's going on with our taxes? What's going on with the real estate tax? Why am I paying so much?

[03:23:56] Number one issue that folks talk about, and I hear and I watch, I look at social media, I read the Wheeler report. Hey, we've reduced the tax rate. But at the end of the day, all the taxpayer sees is that their bill has gone up. That's what they see. I'm here tonight to ask for a couple of things. But number one, please amend the budget. Amend the budget so that the tax rate is such so that the bill of the taxpayer doesn't go up. What do we have? 126 million in

[03:24:33] spending increase. I feel as though we can look into the budget a little bit and find cuts. I've led a budget for a 24,000 person organization, I know it can be done. I know it can be done. I've done it. Just to share a little bit, it's not only the homeowners that are negatively impacted.

[03:24:52] It's not only the renters. It's also nonprofits in the area. I want to talk about a nonprofit that's in the Gainesville Magisterial District. I believe many of you have heard of it. They're called the Willing Warriors. The Willing Warriors, they have this amazing warrior retreat. Two houses actually up there. And basically what they do is they bring in wounded and ill and sick military members over at Walter Reed and other hospitals. They bring them there for a week-long retreat with their families. Each home can house 10 people. So they can bring in large families. They bring

[03:25:28] them with their families. They get time together. Some of these veterans, some of these military members have PTSD, TBI, and they need this time with their family to realize why they are needed.

[03:25:46] The challenging thing is these properties are taxed. So guess what happens when the real estate tax goes up? This is money that organizations like this have to use, not for veterans and their families, but to pay back to the county. Look into the budget, look into your hearts. I'm sure you can find the cost savings to be able to bring the rate down so that the real estate tax is not increased and folks don't see their bill going higher. Thank you very much for your time. Thank

[03:26:17] you. Next speaker, please. Good evening, Chair and County Supervisors. My name is Em Rowe, and I'm a Woodbridge Supervisor of Pony for Woodbridge District for the Animal Advisory Committee.

[03:26:35] Today, I'm here to advocate for all that animals who have gone into the shelter and left without any medical care, euthanize due to lack of medical staff, and stay much longer at the shelter due to lack of medical attention. We all know Prince William County is one of the largest counties, but the shelter operates in a level of smaller rural shelter when it comes to necessary amenities.

[03:26:56] Although we have a great shelter now, thanks to your efforts, and thank you for including a veterinarian suite, but we do not have any staff to use that suite, and it's just withering away. In my opinion, why spend all the millions to have a state-of-the-art room and not use it?

[03:27:12] It is like me buying a Roy's Rolls and just letting it sit in my driveway. Please include one veterinarian and two vet techs to assist and help our shelter animals and employees to stay safe and thrive in your 2024 budget. You may say, well, how can we pay for this?

[03:27:28] That will cost us about $250,000. Well, currently, adopters pay for their own spay and neuter. So why not include the set amount and raise the adoption fees, which has not been raised for about nine years? I'm pretty sure any responsible adopter will be just fine to pay directly to shelter instead of a vet.

[03:27:46] Plus, having a veterinarian perform spay and neuter at a location frees up resources of transportation and all logistics to the vet clinic. Gas is expensive, as we know. Not sure when was the last time you spay or neuter your pet, but it isn't cheap out in town.

[03:28:02] There is but one low-cost clinic in the county, and it could be anywhere between $300 and $700, depending on the weight and gender of the pet. Pretty sure doctors will be very happy to pick their pet up already, spay, neuter, and basic wellness check.

[03:28:18] In short, the quality of life for our pets and staff will be extended. Imagine going to the shelter, looking at a healthy spay, neuter pet, and just take them home instead of waiting for a shelter staff to find, transport them to a third-party clinic and wait to be called to pick up your pet from the clinic. Perhaps avoid another outbreak of sick animals.

[03:28:39] Thanks for your time. Let's do some serious budgeting and help those who are voiceless. By the way, Fairfax County now have two shelters, and all the surrounding counties have their own veterinarian and spay and neuter is included within their adoption fee. Thank you for your time. Thank you very much. Before our next speaker, I want to call up the next five. I apologize, guys, I'm having trouble reading this, Laura, H-A-U-K-R, I assume they know who they are, Ron Krieger, Eric Fagerholm, Susan Smith, and Steve Amato. Please proceed.

[03:29:16] Good evening. My name is Mike Beatty. I'm with the Magistrate, Gainesville Magistrate. I'm here to extend concurrence with Noelle's position on the need for having a vet and staff at the new shelter wing as a citizen in the county i really would appreciate being able to support the spca and having my pets new spayed and neutered in the county and thank you so much

[03:29:45] thank you our next speaker is laura hau no aquaquan district no okay uh then ron krieger thank you madam chair members of the board ron krieger coles district and i'm the appointee for the Animal Advisory Committee. I have sent many emails to you over the years, so it's an honor to actually be in chambers finally. I do advocate for the three positions for the shelter. The quality

[03:30:22] of care will automatically go up on day one by having these positions. We also can alleviate outbreaks of disease. If you remember, I think it was seven or eight years ago, every cat in the shelter was

euthanized because of an outbreak of a disease that could have been caught if somebody was there monitoring this every day. Spay and neuter. If you've ever adopted a pet, I've adopted many from the shelter. Leaving it behind to be taken to a vet is heartbreaking because you've gotten excited. You want to take that pet home to give it its forever home, but you've got to wait.

[03:31:00] And sometimes it's a week or two weeks. My dog, it was actually two weeks. I had to wait for it to get a vet appointment and get it back home. So I encourage you to find the funds to do this. It makes sense. I wish it could have happened when the shelter was built, but we have this opportunity now to make sure that this is a world-class shelter, which it is, but we've got to take care of our furry friends and make sure they get their homes that they need. Thank you.

[03:31:27] Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good evening, Madam Chair, supervisors, staff. My name is Eric Fagerholm. I proudly represent the Potomac District on the Animal Advisory Committee. I'll keep it very short and sweet. I just ask you to fund the veterinarian position and the two vet techs. Thank you. Thank you. And it was just pointed out to me, fire law, if you can stay seated, if you're not standing in line, that would be great. Thank you. Next speaker, please.

[03:32:07] Good evening. I'm Susan Smith, a concerned citizen from here in Woodbridge, and I'm concerned about the 2024 budget. We have no right to blindly, selfishly twist truth to meet our own desires, especially concerning money. People spend their lives working to accumulate money.

[03:32:36] Our government's design was historically influenced by our righteous, almighty God to promote what is honest and fair for all the people. Be honest and fair.

[03:32:51] I quote, he who oppresses the poor to increase his riches and he who gives to the rich will surely come to poverty. Bible, Proverbs 22, 16.

[03:33:09] Be honest and fair, especially at this time in our nation's financial situation. Thank you. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good evening, everyone.

[03:33:30] My name is Jessica Rodriguez. I am a financial consultant. I've been living here in the Prince William County for 16 years. Since I've been here, I've been seeing too many things. So recently, as you know, the past year, well, past couple years, inflation has increased tremendously.

[03:33:49] It has impacted, like, all our citizens from Prince William County and probably spent through the region. The most people who are suffering, I believe so, honestly, are the people who have the low income, plus are elders. But when we define a low income, I just want to make sure there are people that are hardworking, they are working every day to be able to bring the money to the table to feed their families.

[03:34:16] I do believe the budget that you guys presented, it should be to educate people about financial, how to manage their money, how to manage the thing and find a solution to them. It is very hard, as it is, as you guys know, accumulating all this money from taxes, from real estate, from property taxes, that I think we should do something better for our community.

[03:34:41] We should present it to our young people to let them know about how we can be able to manage and budget their money so we can avoid in the future how to do all these things. And also, it is very, in my ending, that I see people who are trying to be able to refinance their home or trying to be able to do something.

[03:35:01] They cannot do it just because taxes went up tremendously in the real estate. That's very, unfortunately, because, once again, they came here since 1988, 1990, and, unfortunately, they are forced to be moving now just because of this situation.

[03:35:21] And I believe so if you are here in Prince William County. And we are growing tremendously. We should input in our community and not force our community to go out. Thank you very much. Thank you. And before our next speaker, I'll call our next five. Paige, Kenyon Paige, Dusty Rapun, Carol, either Foy or Fox, Justin Engel, and Mary Lauren.

[03:35:48] Next is Mr. Amato. Amato. Good evening, Board of Supervisors. Ms. Wheeler, county attorney, county executive.

[03:36:04] I'm Steve Amato. I reside in Lake Ridge, Virginia. I'm going to talk this evening quickly about the base rate for our real estate tax. Before I get to that, a brief history of myself. In 1999, I relocated here with my family through our great Air Force.

[03:36:25] And from 1999 to 2019, my real estate taxes increased about $1,800, $90 a year on average. From 2019 to 2022, my real estate taxes increased over $1,800, a little over $333 a year.

[03:36:51] I do not think our base rate is low enough. There was a surplus that was released in January of this year where we had $71 million from 2022 taxes.

[03:37:07] So I question where is the approximately $34 million from that $71 million being reprogrammed for this year? $41 million approximately is supposed to be going to the schools out of that $71 million, which is an agreement.

[03:37:30] So I think, first of all, that $30-some-odd million should be refunded to our paying real estate county residents so we can have some tax relief since Congress has increased our inflation.

[03:37:47] And in January, I wrote our board members to include my supervisor about the proposal to refund that money. And I only heard from two supervisors and their staff, which were not even from my supervisor. So I think the county base rate should go to a .94 instead of a .97.

[03:38:09] The proposed 2024 budget wants to increase the school budget by 10% to almost three-quarters of a trillion dollars. So we just gave them $41 million in surplus, and we want to give the school over $70 million more this year, question mark.

[03:38:31] I think it should be down to about 4% instead of 10. And we're also going to invest in pay raises for the county, $54 million. So the $41 million in surplus, is that being programmed into the pay raises?

[03:38:48] Question. Again, I think our base pay should be at 0.94. Give us a break with the surplus and provide refunds to us. I'm sure there's thousands of county residents similar in my situation.

[03:39:04] Thank you for this evening's comment time. Thank you very much. Next speaker, please. Good evening, Page Kenyon-Page, Coles District.

[03:39:24] Once again, we are here up against the BOCS in Prince William County that is not serving its constituents' best interest. Shocker. Coincidentally, that's your job. It is being proposed to keep the average residential tax bill within 1% of fiscal year 23.

[03:39:44] Let's break that down. 1% of $100,000 for an appraised house is $1,000. Now, we've been promised and lied to that allowing corporations to build their data centers in our county will lower our

property taxes. Lies. Our taxes have increased 13 consecutive years with 25 data centers already decimating our pristine land.

[03:40:06] The tax breaks for data centers is crippling the residents, especially with the current high inflation. The tax rate for data centers in Stafford County, $5.49. Fairfax County, $4.57. Loudoun County, $4.20.

[03:40:24] Prince William County, currently $1.65, with a measly increase to $2.15 proposed. Why? Why are we not competitively charging a higher rate like our surrounding counties? Could it be a payoff, an increase in certain members' financial portfolios to keep their tax rates well below what should be coming into our county?

[03:40:48] I'm curious. We need an equitable tax rate higher than 4.5%, not the proposed $2.15. This year's proposed budget facts, a record $126 million spending increase or $308 million over four years minus state and federal disbursements. Another increase to the residential tax rate with an average of over $2,200 increase in four years. Outrageous.

[03:41:17] Real estate tax, .977, which is higher than Falkyer, Loudoun, and Stafford counties. Maintenance of the 4% meal tax, hurting residents, and punishing county restaurant owners trying to make a comeback from years of a pandemic if they even survived it.

[03:41:36] And the most cynical and disturbing proposition from this board is a 70% pay increase for the board chair. Let me repeat that, 70% increase pay for the board chair and a 67% increase for all other district supervisors.

[03:41:54] Not an increase for pay for our teachers, not to our EMTs, not to our firefighters, not even for our police force, which zero new police officers have been hired, not hired at all for two years in a row, zero.

[03:42:11] You should be ashamed of yourselves. Next speaker, please. I'm sorry. For those who are new, we don't allow clapping or any kind of display. It's just to keep decorum in the chambers, whether you agree or not. And if it continues, we'll just take a recess.

[03:42:30] Next speaker, please. Hi, my name is Dr. Dusty Rappoon. I am from Manassas. My office is in Woodbridge. I am the chief medical director and veterinarian at Crossroads Animal Care Center. I'm here today because I'm requesting that we do get a veterinary position and two support staff members over at the shelter.

[03:42:51] I was recently contacted by the shelter to help alleviate their burden of medical care. I am not a contracted veterinarian. They have veterinarians contracted right now, but the current veterinarians cannot keep up with the demand.

[03:43:07] The reason the current veterinarians who are contracted cannot keep up with the demand is because the shelter, I love them, this is not a knock to the shelter, they are not paying us a small business owner fair wages so fair meaning i hear you guys knocking some numbers out there what spays and neuters cost but here's a reality folks when the human health care cost goes up so does my overhead i don't know what people think that i can do a spay for two hundred dollars i go congratulations i'm 50 i uh got my colonoscopy and got the bill for my frigging my anesthesia. My doctor gave me the same drugs as I give cats and dogs. I went to eight

[03:43:47] years of college to be an anesthesiologist, to be a doctor, to do an ovarial hysterectomy for $200 that doesn't even cover my cost. In fact, when I do it at that rate for the shelter, I'm paying out of pocket. And when I, as a small business owner, have to pay out of pocket, guess what? I'm only going to maybe do one a week for them. And I want to do more, but it has to be on my time, and I have to volunteer to do that. And right now, the coordination that takes between that shelter, finding veterinarians who can do these below our own cost services is very difficult.

[03:44:23] You have an enormous amount. Thank God these volunteers are here. If it wasn't for them, this would never get done. The shelter really needs a veterinarian there. Unfortunately, I hate to say it, it's going to cost a lot of money. I know that some people are throwing some numbers out of what a veterinarian's going to cost, but that veterinarian's going to need other stuff like anesthesia machines, anesthetics. These all things, they cost money and guess what? Anesthesia machines, they're not doggy and cat anesthesia machines. They're just anesthetic machines that I have to pay the same price. I had to pay a guy $200 in just to drive to my office, just in the

[03:44:59] driving fee to look at my anesthesia machine to see what was wrong with it. And that's not even how much it costs to fix. And yet we're expected by the county to do these ridiculously low procedures. It's almost an insult. Let's get a real veterinarian on board. Let's increase that budget. And by the way, $45? What a deal you guys are offering to the public. Animal health care is freaking expensive. First year of animal health, if you came to me, I'm not saying I'm overpriced, but a thousand bucks is what someone's going to cost an animal these days at 40 pounds.

[03:45:33] Let's get those adoption fees up, and let's get a veterinarian in there, and let's get better health care. Thanks, guys. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good evening, board.

[03:45:51] My name is Carol Fox. I'm here from the Gainesville District. You all know about the inflation. We've been having this now for the last two years. Last year, I came down and talked to you about the budget, and I asked you not to raise the budget, but you went ahead and rose it anyway. So I'm talking to you again this year about the budget and about inflation and about your constituents.

[03:46:14] All of you are up for re-election this coming November. That's November 7th, by the way, in case you don't have that marked on your calendar right now. Everybody in this room feels the inflation every time they go to the grocery store and they buy food.

[03:46:31] They buy eggs. Eggs are ridiculously expensive. Of course, they keep burning down the places where the chickens live. So that's why eggs keep going up. And they say this, the flu, the bird flu, so they have to kill all the chickens off.

[03:46:47] That's so the bird flu doesn't hop to the people and we get avian flu. So then we have to get a vaccine for it and then we all can die anyway. But let's leave that there. I know you all up there on the board are feeling this inflation. I know you're feeling it because you have in the budget a raise for yourself.

[03:47:08] The board chairman up there is going to give herself a 70% raise and the rest of you are going to get a 67% raise. That's fantastic. How many of you in this room are going to get a 70% raise from your place of employment or from your social security or from your pension?

[03:47:28] Anybody in here getting a 70% raise? nobody's raising their hand. I guess we're not going to get the same raise you're going to get. So I suggest if you get a raise, you get the same raise I get, which was

two and a half percent. And that's all you should get. Cost of food, cost of gasoline. It keeps creeping back up again.

[03:47:49] Cost of eggs, cost of clothing. A lot of people in here have children or grandchildren. They provide clothing for their children, grandchildren. That cost of clothing is going up. So we're not, none of us in here are getting raised, none of us are getting a 70% raise, and we don't think you should get a 70% raise either. That's one place where you can cut this budget. Now, the other thing I want to talk to you about is the police officers. Last year, you were asked to spend to employ another 300 police officers that are in need in Prince William County. That didn't happen.

[03:48:22] And if you look around, every day I keep waking up and I hear about, oh, another shooting over here, another person killed over here, another person killed over here, another person attacked over here another here over here safety that is your important job your job is to keep all of us safe in prince william county and you're not doing your job you're not providing us with the police officers on the street to keep us safe we need those police officers you need to put the raise the amount in there for the other 300 police officers that we need in this county thank you

[03:48:53] very much next speaker please justin angle coles district uh i've been to more of these meetings and I care to admit one thing I do want to say and I challenge you guys by the time we come back to a public meeting I ask that you move public citizen speaking time back to the beginning of the meetings where it belongs I find it absolutely ludicrous that you don't allow us to speak at the

[03:49:31] beginning of the meetings before you guys discuss and vote on things it's kind of redundant for us to have to wait till the end of the meeting to say what we feel about something that's on the agenda have you guys vote on it and literally wait until odd hours of the morning when you guys are done with your meeting before we get to say anything about how we feel about what's going on in this county it used to be at the beginning and and i know you changed it to the end and i find it ludicrous that that is the way meetings are scheduled now you are the board of county supervisors you are here to represent the constituents the people who voted you into

[03:50:08] the position that you are in you represent the citizens not outside large businesses i ask and i say and i wonder where votes are why votes are going towards over developments of the rural crescent data centers energy leeches on our community data centers use three times the amount

[03:50:44] per square foot of a residential house per square foot. They are 10 years, is 10 to 12 years is the average use of the building. The equipment that's inside of it has a lifespan of three to five years. When you make this decision to pave our rural crescent with these data centers, there is no turning back from that. I ask what the private interest is in protecting these data centers that want to come in here and overdevelop our areas, our county, and the fact that you guys don't

[03:51:18] listen to the citizens of our county and keep doing this. Political lines, Republican and Democrat, should not have a place in local politics. And the point that it is so divided, your votes towards these matters, Republican and Democrat, concerns me. I don't care your opinion on abortion or gun rights or anything else when it comes to local politics i care that we elect you to

[03:51:51] represent what the citizens of this county want that's all i ask protect us public safety schools the only people i see the animal shelter in here all the time fun of them as well thank you before the next speaker i'll call up the next five lisa gray david strand alicia gloss alan gloss and laura

[03:52:21] the HEU. Thank you. Okay, I'm Mary Lauren, and I've been here before. I do not have anything prepared, but I've already sent you something, and of course, I naturally... Could you just tell us generally where you live? Oh, I live on Yates Ford Road, and as of this time, I am not absolutely certain whether I'm in the Coles District or the Occoquan District, because I think it changed recently um so i won't know i guess till i go vote um although i did get a voting card um okay

[03:53:00] i am i find it terribly insulting for this board to put out um a publication saying oh we're reducing the tax rate well holy cow you're reducing the tax rate well you have already got so much more in the assessed value and the basis, and yet you're reducing the tax rate.

[03:53:29] Well, that is a great insult to me. And particularly, I see on a lot of this preparation of the budget that the average tax bill, real estate bill, is like $4,900. Well, I do not understand how that can be, because my bill is just under $5,000, and my house is a very, very modest house that was built in 2001 and hasn't had anything else done to it. So I don't understand with all of the commercial property that has been added here since I came to live here,

[03:54:03] I do not understand why it's not carrying more of the load and why we, the residential properties, are having to carry so much. And I did hear something about this 70% increase for the chair and I thought, oh, that must be over in Fairfax because I heard something about that on the news.

[03:54:22] Well, now I'm hearing that it's really here. Holy moly, do you really, really, really think you want to do that when you're coming up for election? And plus the fact that why shouldn't teachers be getting that much? I mean, all they've gone through, if anybody gets a raise, teachers are the ones that need to be getting a raise and certainly not the board because the board, in my opinion, I've lived here now over 22 years, and I thought highly of different members, and they always responded to me.

[03:54:54] But I am finding that I'm not getting the kind of response that I have been accustomed to. And so I'm really, really turned off from this administration. And, of course, the data centers and this whole business of telling us that the data centers will reduce our taxes?

[03:55:18] Well, obviously, they haven't. So, you know, why are you going to continue to push that? Only because you have accepted, from what I've read, contributions from people, and you are serving them rather than us, the taxpayers.

[03:55:36] So I think you better revise your budget, cut out the raises for yourselves, and take care of our necessities instead. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good evening.

[03:55:59] My name is Lisa Gray. I live in the Sudley District. I have been a resident of Prince William County for close, almost 30 years now. So I've seen the county go from just a little backwoods, goats running down the street at any moment to where we are today.

[03:56:21] I've always pushed for the animal shelter that we should, you know, make it nice. And I so much appreciate what the board and the taxpayers have done in our county to get that up to par because we were way behind.

[03:56:37] But we do need veterinarian staff. We are really wasting resources and taxpayers' money by building onto something, a medical area, and not being able to take care of our animals. To have to wait, you know, a week or two to pick up your animal is insane.

[03:56:56] I know that in Stafford County, you come in, you adopt an animal, they spay or neuter it, and the next day you come and you pick up the animal from their facility. And Stafford is supposedly behind our county. So, you know, we really need to step up and do this.

[03:57:14] And I think that if you guys lower, you know, the amount of raises that you're wanting to approve, You can fund a veterinarian staff, the technicians, and probably some more staff as well. I also wanted to address the police and the problem, the crime, the increasing crime.

[03:57:34] I live, again, in the Sudley area off of Sudley Manor, and we rarely see police out there anymore. I don't know what the police staff is down, but somebody had given me a 30%, 35% reduction in the amount of police officers that we have.

[03:57:55] Let's give them some more money. Let's see what we can do to try to get more police officers in here because we're losing residents in this county. I know many people in my development who have moved, people that have lived there two or three generations that have picked up and left the county because they can't take the crime so we have to do something to protect our citizens the shopping center there off of Sedley Manor there's a beautiful brand new giant in there they had to they had to hire local security for the parking lot I mean I I don't understand why I live anymore

[03:58:29] I've lived here for like I said decades this was a wonderful community to live in but we really need to put our resources where we need them, where we serve our constituents the best that we can with what we give them. I've certainly have seen the taxes go up astronomically since I've been here. But everything costs more money, and I understand that. But let's see what we can do with the budget to try to stretch it farther so that we can fund some of these things. Thank you.

[03:59:01] Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good evening. I'm Dave Strand. I live in Woodbridge, and right now I am the interim CEO of Action and Community Through Service. So first of all, I want to thank you for the proposed funding in your 24 budget for the Community Partners in Acts.

[03:59:22] I think in the last 54 years, we have formed a super partnership with the county and have done some amazing things with our nonprofit and the partnership with the county. I really appreciate that. And I'd also like to specifically thank your staff because they've been wonderful to work with.

[03:59:41] I've been in the position for nine months, and I think they've been super to work with. I'd like to especially point out several of the people that have gone above and beyond. Eliza Johnson, Courtney Tierney, and Joan Duckett. They've been super, and they've really helped my transition into being the CEO.

[04:00:00] Thank you for your time. Thank you very much. Next speaker, please. Can you hear me okay? So my name is Laura Hoffler, and I live in Acaquan.

[04:00:17] I first of all wanted to thank Supervisor Vega for answering to our call to wear blue today and supporting the animals. We really appreciate it. And everybody in this room that's wearing blue today is in for the animals, so thank you very much.

[04:00:34] This T-shirt is going to be for the champion of the animals that's sitting right there for us, Mr. Victor Angry, The supervisor who is championing the animals and is going to really be supporting us to try to get that veterinarian position in place that we need for the animal shelter.

[04:00:54] I also wanted to bring something to your attention, Supervisor Bailey. I know that you've been championing your crisis center, and this is a great accomplishment. But I think it would really, really help

to keep in mind that some of these individuals that come to your center with several crises also own animals.

[04:01:18] And so I would like to see an articulation between that crisis center and the shelter cooperating together so that nobody has to lose their animal because they're going to a crisis center. And there can be a fostering program, hopefully, so that both can work together.

[04:01:34] And if somebody has to go to a shelter because they're in a severe situation, they don't have to choose between getting help and losing their animal. So I would really appreciate that. And I'm going to hand this out to Mr. Angry.

[04:01:50] Thank you. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Alicia Gloss-Coles. After Supervisor Lawson announced her candidacy for chair, Chair Wheeler sent out an email calling her divisive and extreme.

[04:02:07] You want to know what extreme is? After you are elected as chair, you change the long standard of having public comment time from first to last, sometimes going into the next business day before people can speak. Extreme, continuing to seek to redistrict public, sorry, continuing to seek to restrict public comment time just last month you considered but chose not to because of the upcoming elections.

[04:02:31] Extreme, restricting supervisors' time, limiting their ability to represent their districts, and when they do speak, constantly interrupting them. Extreme, restricting supervisors asking questions when part of their job is to provide oversight. Extreme, attacking the public with nimbyism for not wanting data centers 100 feet from their home impacting their quality of life.

[04:02:51] Extreme, paving over our natural resources with data centers, all while speaking at the Green Business Council recently. Extreme, voting for data centers outside the data overlay district despite massive voter pushback. Extreme, disregarding the will of the people over and over again.

[04:03:08] Extreme, disregarding the planning commission when they make a recommendation you don't like. Extreme, disregarding the sustainability commission's recommendations, one in which you voted to create. Extreme, shutting down supervisors for questioning the taxing of data centers at half the rate of other counties.

[04:03:23] Extreme, refusing to acknowledge conflict of interest, discussing and voting on data centers, having owned Blackstone stock and still own other data center stock currently. Extreme, voting for mills tax, which hurts Prince William County's businesses. Extreme, holding a public meeting, discussing public business with all five Democrat Board of Supervisors present with no Republican representation, violating the open meetings laws.

[04:03:46] Extreme, choosing developer first, citizen last policies. Extreme, labeling citizens that oppose your policies as STPs are the same 10 people. The truth is, Chair Wheeler, you are just projecting how you operate. You have induced massive public turnout because your policies are divisive and destructive. You are the one that is too extreme for Prince William County. Regarding the budget, it's the most extreme spending by this board in Prince William County history, and data center taxes aren't saving the taxpayer money, as Chair Wheeler says, or decreasing the tax burden on county to homeowners, as Supervisor Angry said in his March op-ed. We aren't dumb. We can all read, and our tax burden isn't going down, Supervisor

[04:04:25] angry. The revenue generated should have decreased our tax bill, but the appetite of this board to spend more of our money, that is why it continues to increase year after year. You refuse to raise the tax rate on data centers half the rate of other counties because the chair says we need to entice businesses to come to Prince William County, all while voting for a mills tax, which has been devastating to Prince William County businesses. We can't afford this board's wasteful spending, and we can't afford another four years of this current board, so we most vote to change this in november before our next speaker i just want to call up our next two

[04:05:02] kimberly hessel and jared k gay okay proceed ellen gloss coals up and up that's the theme of prince william county taxes why every single year this board has been seated not once has this board ever given anything resembling a coherent thought to lowering our taxes except for of course taxes on data centers they're half that of our neighbors why i read supervisor angry's op-ed where he paid lip service when he said he wanted to lower the tax burden on taxpayers yet the same op-ed was

[04:05:37] nothing more than a love fest for those data centers i remember supervisor bailey talking about spending the budget and as someone who has overseen multi-million dollar budgets that type of spend it or lose it mentality is as stupid as it is infuriating i would like to remind those with this same attitude that the money that you are spending does not belong to you. It belongs to us.

[04:06:02] You are charged with being good stewards of our money. Unfortunately for all of us, you have completely failed in that endeavor. But nothing is more crazy than the interaction I watched between Chair Wheeler and the newly minted supervisor Weir on his Facebook page, where Chair Wheeler attempts to sugarcoat the actual ground level impact to the average homeowner. She does that a lot sugarcoating things that make it appear better than what it is. My psychologist friend calls it minimizing. Let me read this interaction to you. Weir, when you have been able to successfully lower the real estate tax rate for over the last three years to offset increases in home values, that's a

[04:06:41] quote by Chair Wheeler, shouldn't you also tell the taxpayers that you increased their average tax bill by $2,212 over four years? Hashtag intellectually dishonest. Wheeler then replies, facts matter, blah, blah, blah. The average increase was only $788, to which Weir replied, facts are important, as is reading comprehension. While you correctly note that the average tax bill has increased by $788, what I am noting is the total compounded increase over the same period,

[04:07:17] a different data point. Raising the actual tax in year one carries with it a compounding effect over the ensuing years. What I am delineating is the true cost of year-over-year increases in the average tax over time. He then pointed out that the numbers he quoted was sent out not by partisans, but by government finance professionals. And she just failed to read the financial documents the county created. Because as you know, to Chair Wheeler, the impact of any policy on the county on the people of prince william county absolutely does not matter to her the only thing that matters to chair wheeler is doing what she wants done raise taxes

[04:07:57] on data centers and the meals tax and lower the taxes on citizens and for for everything do not even think about raising your pay by 70 percent push your fat bellies away from the taxpayer table Thank you. Next speaker, please. Hello, I'm Kimberly Hessel. I work for Prince William County Public Schools as an elementary educator. I wanted to talk to you today because we,

[04:08:33] the teachers, are getting a 5% pay increase, which does not keep up with inflation, meaning we are actually getting a pay decrease. Now, people like the police and firefighters have all gotten significant

funding with a lot of the same complaints that teachers have of being short-staffed, of not having the supports we need. And some people are saying, you know, oh, well, they have dangerous jobs. I'd like to tell you something about the state of education right now. Quoting a Washington Post article published today that quotes the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rate of injury from interpersonal attacks per 10,000 workers for police and sheriff

[04:09:11] patrol officers has gone down between 2011 and 2019 from 60 to 32. Meanwhile, teaching assistants except post-secondary have gone up from 16 to 50, meaning they are now interpersonally attacked more than sheriffs and police officers. Elementary school teachers, except for special education, who face a lot more interpersonal assault than I myself do, have gone up from 7 to 16.

[04:09:40] We are, in essence, frontline workers. We keep the kids in school so that everyone else can go to work. At the risk to my own safety, I nurture, educate, and protect children. This year alone, I have been hit, kicked, choked, had my hair pulled out, scratched so hard, I still have three healing scabs on my hand. And on one lovely occasion, a five-year-old threatened to bring a knife to school the next day and stabbed me and my IA. And every day I go back to that school and I teach those children with love and respect. And I see that you're docking my pay. I can't afford to live

[04:10:20] in a home in this county or where my fiance works. All I ask is that you don't dock my pay so that maybe one day I can afford the dream of having a house. Next speaker, please. Hi, my name is Jared Gay. I teach in the Neabsco district. This is my ninth year as a public school teacher. Over the last decade, I have seen a lot of trends developed, including larger and

[04:10:56] larger class sizes, more and more standardized testing, fewer and fewer expectations of students with regards to discipline and academic work, and more and more time and energy being required of teachers and education staff than ever before, much of it unpaid. It's no surprise to anyone entering the teaching profession that it is a difficult and often thankless job. In my experience, people who take up this particular calling often have a strong sense of social duty motivating them to work in education, despite many of the frustrating and at times tragic stories we've all been subjected to for years. But I've never seen as high a level of desperation among educators and staff than I have in Prince William County over the last two years. Some of the contradictions

[04:11:35] that plagued our profession were exacerbated by COVID, but many of these trends that I've named started well before the pandemic. And despite the fact that these trends are generalized across the state and across the country, I've yet to see less of a sense of urgency on the part of division staff and school board members in response to these trends, as I have in Prince William County over the last two years. There are almost 1,000 vacant positions across the division right now, and that number is higher than it was at the beginning of the year. Almost 1,000 positions

[04:12:08] right now that are not being staffed in our schools. I hear over and over again from leadership across the county and especially across the division how much of a priority our students our children are that they're the highest priority they're our future and yet we don't see we don't see it necessitated to actually adequately fund our schools and make sure that we have enough people qualified individuals in there to give the kind of care and education to

[04:12:41] our students that we require there you'll be hard-pressed to find a single educator in your social network who's not seen multiple staff members quit since the beginning of the school year and this is a problem that is a particular note in prince william county many retired earlier than intended many left

the profession altogether and many have taken up positions in neighboring divisions where the pay is higher and the employees are slightly less desperate a lot of this desperation comes from the lack of concern shown by our division leadership and our school board members we just saw the end of more than a year of bitter struggle with our school board to achieve a collective bargaining resolution that they still resisted delayed and watered down as

[04:13:18] much as they could. So in that context, I hope it's easier for you to understand how disheartening it is to see other county employees get pay increases between 6 and upwards of almost 18% while teachers are given a 2% cost of living increase while our health care costs increase at the same time. This is unsustainable. Ultimately, the Board of County Supervisors has the ability, despite the fact that the school board budgets, they get their money from the Board

[04:13:49] of County Supervisors. You can help fix this. Please do. Thank you. Before we switch to remote public comment time, is there anyone who would like to speak tonight regarding the budget public hearing? Just go to the microphone in the back. Seeing no one approach. She's coming. Okay.

[04:14:21] Good evening. I live in the Gainesville Magisterial District and my name is Brandy Provenzano. I am a 22-year veteran educator in Prince William County. I teach high school students, and I love them all, just in case any of them are watching tonight.

[04:14:39] I'm here to advocate for them and for all Prince William County students by advocating for all Prince William County School employees. As you may know, our profession is largely comprised of women. Approximately 70% of Prince William County school employees are female, with 38% of those identifying as minority.

[04:15:02] There once was a time when women chose teaching as a career to supplement the family income. Their salaries covered family vacations or other non-essential expenses. However, that is no longer the case.

[04:15:17] We are not supplementing. We are breadwinners. Only we can't win enough bread to live in the same county where we work. Our proposed 5% raise is hardly a raise at all. It doesn't cover the cost of living and increase in our health care costs.

[04:15:34] But I'm a teacher. After 22 years, a master's degree, and my national board certification, I am making, brace yourself, $90,000. But what about my friends here in the audience? The special education teacher assistants who make less than a Walmart employee to be spit on, yelled at, inundated with data and training, asked to cover classes, to stay late, unpaid, to come in early, unpaid.

[04:16:05] They're doing the most important work, and they are making the least amount of money. This is a dying profession, and no wonder. How could we ever make this look appealing to 20-somethings who are trying to choose a career path? Go to college for five years, take out student loans, go into debt, starting salary, $54,000.

[04:16:25] Get skipped over for raises, frozen on the pay scale, just to have to beg year after year at the Board of County Supervisors and school board meetings. If you want to invest in this county, invest in the children that will someday be leading it and invest in their education.

[04:16:42] We are absolutely worth it. We are worth it, but not just the teachers. all Prince William County School employees, our bus drivers and our nurses, our TAs, the custodians that clean those floors and

make those buildings shine, our cafeteria workers who fed everyone throughout the entire pandemic, and the teachers and special ed teachers that showed up the entire time.

[04:17:07] Schools were not closed then. They were not closed for many of our teachers and staff. Please invest in the students and teachers and families of Prince William County. We can't put a price tag on the kids, but we can put a price tag on what we can afford to pay the teachers and staff members, and it's much more than a 5%, not 5% raise.

[04:17:31] Thank you. Thank you. Our next three speakers are Deborah Phillips, Carlton Phillips, and Robert Ruffalo. Hello. My name is Deborah Phillips. I live in Woodbridge, Virginia.

[04:17:47] I believe I'm in the Occoquan District since it's changed. We own Prince William Arena. I was born and raised in Vienna, Virginia. I lived there as a young child, bought my own home there, and it got too expensive.

[04:18:05] Moved to Woodbridge, Occoquan District, loved it. Small town community like Vienna was once. Then Prince William County started getting more expensive. All you're doing is raising the taxes on the people that are young and want to move here and work here.

[04:18:28] We employ a lot of people who can no longer live in our area to come to work. They're having to go all the way to Orange and Fredericksburg. And now we can't find people because they can't afford to live here.

[04:18:47] They can't afford to travel 95 because you all have made it too expensive. I can't tell you how many people I come across that say I'm getting out of Prince William County. It's too expensive. It is.

[04:19:03] The crime is rampant, and I'm getting out while I can and get at least a little bit of money from my house because now you've got taxes so high, the housing isn't selling. So at this point, I'm asking you to stop giving yourself raises and help the county so people will move back here again, young and old.

[04:19:30] Thank you. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Hello. I'm Carlton Phillips. I do own Prince William Marine Sales. I'm not an educated person. I'm not going to speak as well as everyone else did here.

[04:19:46] But I said it all night, and frankly, very little to say, I am embarrassed by you folks. You need to turn around and look at yourself. and look at what you're doing, and listen to what the people are saying here tonight, and maybe make a change of mind and help people. Thank you. Thank you. Next speaker, please.

[04:20:06] Good evening. I'm Robert Ruffalo. I'm from the Gainesville District. First, I would like to say it's International Down Syndrome Day, so I hope that we all send thoughts and prayers and positive energy to those who are afflicted with this syndrome. Second question, actually the first issue is, it's always difficult to follow Carol Fox, so I'm going to do my very best.

[04:20:24] But my question is this, is the data center overlay really full? And the second question is, what space is available on this side of the county for us to put data centers in? Thank you. Good evening. Thank you.

[04:20:41] Is there anyone else in chambers or in the atrium who wants to speak to public hearing 12A? Please approach the microphone. Madam Chairman, Supervisors, County Attorney, County Executive.

[04:21:06] My name is Kent Wright. I'm actually in the Occoquan District, and I don't have anything prepared to stay. I've just been listening to everything else that's been said since we've been here. I'm not here to throw stones. All I'm here to do is to ask each member of that Board of Supervisors to exercise your fiscal responsibility to your constituents.

[04:21:27] Remember that you were elected by us. You are the people representing us and our interests. So when you sit down to put this budget together, remember that. Keep us in mind. Look for something that we can agree with, something that will take care of our county, but will not overtax the burden of the people of this county.

[04:21:46] And that's all I've got to say. Thank you. Thank you very much. Seeing no one else approach the microphone, just making sure they were going out.

[04:22:01] I will turn it over to Vice Chair Bodie for remote public comment time. And if we can maybe find out how many people are online before we start, that would be helpful. Sure. Thank you, Madam Chair. Ms. Vann, how many folks do we have lined up to speak tonight? We have three at this time. All right. Thank you. As Madam Chair said, just like in-person public comment time, you have three minutes to speak during virtual public comment time.

[04:22:22] Please state your name and generally where you live in the county, and please begin. And let's get started, Ms. Phan. Your first speaker will be Joe Marshall. Good evening.

[04:22:41] I'm Joe Marshall from the Coles District. I would like to talk about parks and trails and the budget. I'd like to give kudos to the board for adopting the Comprehensive Plan 2040 and the mobility section, especially the various trails and maps.

[04:22:58] A lot of work went into that, provides for hundreds of new trails and doubling of parks and open space over the next 20 years. Also, happy to see the attention last month to incorporate the missing trails from the aspirational trail map.

[04:23:13] Hopefully, these will result in more parks and trail access for all parts of our community to improve health, wellness, eliminate vehicle trips, and provide safe routes to schools. I often ride my bike to shopping or church when I don't have a heavy load.

[04:23:31] avoid driving if there is a path. How will this vision happen? In order to realize these trails and their benefits the board must support incrementally adding these a little at a time over the next two decades. We can't do this all at once either now or 20 years from now. Various groups are trying to help out as volunteers but often have been told a parks volunteer manager is needed. I personally help with blazing and cleaning up the discovery trail in the landfill complex. I'm hopefully someday to see it expanded all the way into the Powells Creek Greenway and

[04:24:07] all the way to the Potomac as shown in the plan. This is just one example, touches many communities. When asked how to make things happen like this on the county-owned plan, Parks has said they will not add new trails unless they have a way to maintain them and they don't have the staff.

[04:24:25] Thus, I'm surprised that multiple park positions are being eliminated in the current budget that have to do with maintenance and no new parks positions are being added to work with volunteers. No new trails are those in the 2019 bonds or negotiated during developments.

[04:24:41] Thus, I'm also surprised that there's no new trails being added to the general fund or the CIP plan that includes funding out to fiscal year 28. Therefore, I would challenge the board as part of its budget work, consider adding at least one maintenance or trail manager position, one volunteer manager, two parks for trails so that we can move forward. And to add some funding at the end of the CIP or the general fund so that we can continue working new trails after the current bonds are spent, something that should be considered each year. How to pay for

[04:25:19] this? I suggest finding ways to use the data center revenues. These are the antithesis of health, wellness, equity, and clean water. It would only be fitting they contribute more to improving the environment they otherwise hurt. If each supervisor supported one new trail segment each year through 2040, this would go a long way toward realizing the parks and trails benefits. Thank you.

[04:25:45] Thank you, Mr. Marshall. Next speaker, please. The next speaker is Lori Williams. Hi, good evening. My name is, hi, good evening. My name is Lori Williams. I'm from the Woodbridge District and also currently the representative to the school board for the Woodbridge District.

[04:26:04] I just want to say thank you for allowing me to come before you to advocate for the current proposed budget. I deeply appreciate this board and its commitment to funding or fully funding the school division by not only honoring our revenue sharing agreement, but by also providing funds above and beyond the agreement.

[04:26:25] This was especially impactful during the pandemic. It allowed the school division to purchase laptops for our one-on-one devices for our students ahead of other school divisions. and as we know, public school system has been chronically underfunded since long before each one of you took your seats. Now, with the implementation of the meals tax, schools will receive even more funding. Why does this matter, you ask? We need to pay our teachers and staff competitively. We started this process as we are well on our way as last year the school

[04:27:01] division provided the largest increase in the history of the school division for our staff to continue to have our teachers paid adequately. This year, we plan on doing another increase of 5%. The funding we receive is critical not only for competitive pay, but for instructional programs like dual enrollment and CTE.

[04:27:23] Since schools are not able to generate revenue, we are dependent on local, state, and federal funding. I want to thank you again for your support of public education, for working collaboratively with the superintendent and the current school board to ensure that we can adhere to our strategic plan and provide students with a thriving future.

[04:27:42] And on a personal note, I just want to commend the board and our county executive for all the hard work that has been put in on the proposed budget. As a resident, I appreciate the lowering of the tax rate. And I'm also appreciative of the fact that my housing, the value of my house has increased. And that is the reason why I'm paying more for taxes is not because of the higher tax rate. I also want to remind the public that since we're all up for election, this is the only year that any board can provide an increase for itself. And the increase does not go to the current seated members. It goes to the next seated board. So I think that's very critical for the public to

[04:28:19] understand because it can only occur once every four years. Being the second largest county in the state of Virginia for schools and for the BOCS, if you look to our neighbors, we pale in comparison. It's

high time that we provided ourselves a viewpoint through Look of Equity and funded ourselves equitably for the work that's done on behalf of the citizens and residents of this county. Thank you so much for your time and thank you for all of your hard work. And I hope that we are all able to come to agreement on this proposed budget for the betterment of every

[04:28:54] citizen in this community. Have a good night. Thank you, Ms. Williams. Next speaker, please. Your last speaker is Beth Walker. Hello, and good evening to the chair and the members of the Board of County Supervisors.

[04:29:19] My name is Beth Walker, and I live in the Brentsville District. I am a county employee at the library, but tonight I'm speaking on my own behalf. As always, I want to thank the board for allowing me time to speak at this meeting. I know that budget season is the busiest time for all of you, and I really appreciate the opportunity that you give us to provide some input.

[04:29:39] My comments are not necessarily for a specific budget line item, but it does relate to the collective bargaining ordinance that passed last November. As you recall, there were discussions regarding investigating changes to the language in the county code to include a larger number of employees in that ordinance. As you may know, the 90-day review period put forward by Supervisor Bodie has passed, but there's not really been any movement on the issue of revising Chapter 19 to include part-time and provisional employees into collective bargaining.

[04:30:12] I wanted to bring this issue up again during budget season because as you're talking about the budget, I want you to take into consideration that just as the library needs the budget to pay for our books and other resources that we provide for your constituents and our patrons, the county relies on the employees to provide services to the community.

[04:30:38] So the current budget recommendations include providing pay adjustments to keep our positions competitive with surrounding localities, and that's certainly helpful to us as county employees. But I also believe that ensuring that as many employees as possible have access to the collective bargaining ordinance will be a benefit to us.

[04:30:59] So while you move into all the considerations that come with the county budget, please don't allow this small detail to get buried underneath everything else that you have going on. I would also like to add my support to other speakers tonight who are advocating for a veterinarian and technician position at the animal shelter.

[04:31:17] Residents would surely benefit from the services that positions like that would provide. I appreciate your time and the effort that you put into this budget process, and I hope that you will take my comments into consideration. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Walker. And to confirm, Mrs. Vann, that was the last speaker, correct?

[04:31:34] That's correct. Thank you, Ms. Vann, for all your assistance, as always. Have a good evening. Thank you, Ms. Vann. thank you vice chair Bodie this will officially close uh item 12a our public hearing on the proposed budget um we also have uh one issue to report out on supervisor uh supervisor Bodie yeah thank you madam chair i move that we authorize the execution of the purchase and sale agreement with the owners of the property located at g pin 8289 i'm sorry 8 not 8292 dash seven one dash six one one five second motion made by vice chair bode seconded by

[04:32:12] supervisor bailey if there's discussion i have a little red dot but i can't click on it that was issue okay okay seeing no further okay so we're in discussion is there someone who wants to say something supervisor weir this will come as no surprise to the members of the board but with

[04:32:50] With respect to the motion, I've got any number of issues with it, and I think principally I've got a problem philosophically with dumping $20-plus million outside of the adopted CIP and without consideration of the impact of this expenditure on the existing CIP project, essentially putting it ahead of the line.

[04:33:08] I personally believe it's poor public policy to expedite an acquisition of this magnitude in 14 days from presentation to allocation, regardless of how good the opportunity appears. that timeframe makes due diligence difficult, if not impossible. This is a fundamentally irresponsible action on our part and an expenditure of public funds.

[04:33:31] And the process that we're dealing with tonight and we've been dealing with for the last two weeks, in my view, and it's only my view, is far less than transparent. The holding of this motion and this vote at the end of the meeting and the manner that this has been engineered is problematic to me, so I will not be supporting the motion.

[04:33:55] Supervisor Lawson. Thank you. Supervisor Weir laid it out very well, probably better than I could have. I'm just simply not comfortable with this, I guess, authorization.

[04:34:13] And it's not that I don't support the concept. It's just feeling rushed, and I have to feel confident in allocating money, especially of this size, as he said. And I think you brought up a good point, too, about the CIP.

[04:34:31] So I will be voting with you, Supervisor Weir, and I'll make other comments at a later date. Thank you. Supervisor Bailey. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll be supporting this resolution as it relates to a project that we've voted on collectively for the last two years in supporting the mental health initiative here in the county.

[04:35:01] It is an extension of that voting as a collective body here on the board, and it relates to something that one of the constituents said this evening in relationship to us having an expanded vision to support mental health for not only our adults but our children as well.

[04:35:19] And so this will give us an opportunity to actually plan as a collective body moving forward in a respectful but a very adequate fiduciary way in supporting a collective project that we have voted on.

[04:35:38] So I will be supporting this and that I have been a champion for mental health in this regard for the last three years. Seeing no further discussion, Ms. Madden, please vote. It worked, yeah.

[04:35:55] Motion passes 6-2, Supervisors Lawson, and we're voting nay. Motion to adjourn. Second. I will second. Okay, motion made by Supervisor Angry, seconded by Vice Chair Bodhi. Please vote.

[04:36:16] Vote unanimous. We are adjourned.



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