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Prince William Board of County Supervisors Meeting — Recessed Meeting of April 18, 2023, Thursday, April 20, 2023

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Place	Prince William County Board of County Supervisors, Virginia
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- Official meeting video (Prince William County, Granicus): https://pwcgov.granicus.com/player/clip/3300
- Official Board of County Supervisors page (Prince William County): https://www.pwcva.gov/department/board-county-supervisors

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-11-04. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] Continuation of the April 18th meeting. We are going to start this meeting with a moment of silence for anyone who wishes and those who wish to keep former Supervisor John Sterp in their thoughts and prayers. Thank you.

[00:00:27] And I feel like we should start off with the Pledge of Allegiance, even though it's a continuation, so we're just going to do that. Pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

[00:00:48] Thank you for doing that twice on the agenda. We were, when we recessed our meeting on Tuesday evening, we were in the middle of public comment time. The way we're going to handle public comment time today is we're going to finish with the people who signed up on Tuesday, including our non-residents, and then moved on into our new speakers who signed up fresh today.

[00:01:09] So our next five speakers are Alicia Gloss, Alan Gloss, Sergeant R-A-R-K-E, Alyssa Leder, and Mark Branca.

[00:01:29] And everyone gets three minutes. Please state your name and generally where you live in the county at the beginning of your remarks. And there will be a timer, and you'll see it when your time starts running out. Thank you. Please proceed. Alicia Gloss-Coles.

[00:01:46] In the chair's recent newsletter, she stated data centers in the digital gateway will generate $400 million in new annual tax revenue, which will assist in reducing the residential tax burden. It sounds great, right? But I bet this board has a potential data center tax revenue already spent.

[00:02:05] The only way to reduce something is to take away, not add to it. But the proposed budget is the most extreme spending by a board in Prince William County history. It's like we are giving our money to a person with a gambling addiction and expecting them not to gamble it all away. This board has shown no appetite to control their out-of-control spending and has no intention of reducing our tax burden since they have had four years to do it and our tax bills haven't gone down.

[00:02:31] We have the highest real estate tax rate of all the counties except Fairfax. And recently, when others discussed raising the data center tax rate to match Loudoun, since ours was $2 less, the chair was not happy about it at all. We are all about paying for our fair share unless it's data centers.

[00:02:50] The chair and other board members' biggest donors. Let's talk about the burden of the 4% mills tax added to the 6% we already paid, totaling 10%, resulting in a huge loss of revenue for businesses. So when the chair talks about inciting businesses or enticing businesses to come to Prince William County, she only means data centers.

[00:03:09] And I think we all know why. So many unnecessary increases in potential ones. Increase of $126 million in new spending, a 70% pay increase for the chair and 67% for supervisors. Increase of residential tax bills the last four years.

[00:03:26] 4% mills tax, increase in violent crime, and increase in homicides. and a budget that gives zero additional police officers that are needed for safety. This board needs to understand the difference between a want and a need. We didn't need to rename 12-mile stretch of a highway for $3.6 million.

[00:03:46] We didn't need to spend $78,000 on a 21-question intrusive and inappropriate workforce survey from the DEI department. And do we need to spend $73.2 million a loan in the Woodbridge District and $2.5 million in the Potomac District for capital projects of board and community interest?

[00:04:07] Stop squandering taxpayer money and give it to our sheriff, audit detention, adult detention, police, fire and rescue departments who are fleeing the county for better pay. We cannot afford another four-year burden of the devastating policies this board has implemented and proposes with this new budget.

[00:04:24] We are in need of desperate relief, and we have the power to reduce the burden placed on us by this board by voting for change this November. I also want to thank the first responders who I personally witnessed last Tuesday save Mr. Sturrup's life, and they did a fantastic job, and they definitely deserve all of his support.

[00:04:44] So thank you from me as a taxpayer and a citizen of Prince William County. Next speaker, please.

[00:04:59] Coles District, Alan Gloss. An Inside NOVA article quotes a George Mason economics professor saying that Northern Virginia has a problem looming in its midst because it has lost its economic mojo.

[00:05:16] Surrounding areas are hammering people and jobs. Fairfax lost population last year, and as the population goes, so does businesses. A more layman like myself would say that as Northern Virginia gets woke, we go broke. as this board endeavors to find new woke ways to work in 126 million dollars of brand new spending we have to ask is prince william county next i think so and here's why the county relies on property taxes to fund the government and all the new woke spending this board is proposing 64.3 percent of last year's budget you see on your screen the 1.2 billion dollar county budget

[00:05:55] comes from property taxes in 2008 let me show you this this is miss aftree slides by the way in 2008 that bottom fell out of the housing market professionals are saying that we are poised to do that again now the county weathered that storm back in 2008 because we had a fiscally conservative board those people no longer exist on this board we want to spend and spend big we're here on fire to spend here what is going to happen when the bottom falls out of the housing market again with

[00:06:24] this board when mr shorter presented the proposed budget in february his stated number two goal was to mitigate the impact of rising real estate assessments. You know, after he presented that, that's the last time I heard that talked about here, and I've been here every day.

[00:06:44] Now, in my layman's terms, I call that right there, providing pandering lip service. So knowing that the county gets the majority of its revenue from real estate taxes, a smart board would do something to diversify the revenue sources, but not this board. This board is hell-bent on bringing in more resource and square footage-dependent data centers that only add about a dozen employees instead of reaching out to attract businesses that bring in more revenue and employees.

[00:07:10] Why? I think it's because developers are their biggest donors. You guys, I'm tired of this board not listening to the community. I've been one of the handful of voices cautioning this board about its woke policies, but today I'm going to take a different approach. I want you to freely spend our money on all your woke ideas.

[00:07:26] Don't decrease the real estate burden on homeowners who are not going to realize the supposed gains because the market is poised to crash again. And definitely do not increase the peripherals tax on data centers because we want to encourage more of them and not charge them the same as other counties.

[00:07:42] Don't budget for more cops or detention officers because we don't need them, even though crime is rising. And by all means, please give each one of yourselves that 70% pay raise. After all, you deserve more money to do the opposite of what the people actually want. Maybe asking you to do the opposite of what we've been asking for the last three years will get you to not blow our money.

[00:08:01] But hey, if it doesn't, that 70% pay raise will surely sit well with taxpayers come November. You should definitely do that one, no matter what. Next speaker, please. Hi, my name is Alyssa Leder. I'm an attorney from the Public Defender's Office, and I'm here to request that the board increase the supplement for the Public Defender's salary.

[00:08:21] I'm just one person, but I want to let you know that my story and the challenges that I face, they're not unique. They could be repeated by 10 or more attorneys here in my office. I'm just the person that's here today. I'm a young attorney. I've been practicing law for less than three years. All of those three years have been at the Public Defender's Office here in Prince William County.

[00:08:41] And in addition to being a young attorney, I'm just a young person. In fact, I got married a couple weeks ago, and in a lot of ways, my life is just starting out. And I love Prince William County. In the three years that I've been here, I've become so invested in this community. I feel like I know my clients and their families.

[00:08:57] I've seen their kids grow up. I've seen them at their highest highs and their lowest lows, recovering from mental health disorders as well as substance abuse disorders. I'm committed to being a public defender here in Prince William County, and I'd like to stay here and practice in Prince William County as long as you'll have me. But it's hard to justify for a young person like me when I look at Fairfax and Arlington and Loudoun and Alexandria, where I know that public defenders make more money than they do here in Prince William County. And I hate to talk about money, but I went into a profession that takes a lot of money to get into. I have over $100,000 in student loan debt. And I knew that I would when I started law school. But I've been

[00:09:36] so fortunate in my own life that I wanted to find a way to give back to people. Being a lawyer, specifically being a public defender, has been my opportunity to do that. And I knew when I started doing it that it would mean sacrifice. But I'm at a point where there's a tension between that sacrifice and my future. Living in Northern Virginia is extremely expensive. I know we all know that. For example, I would like to have kids, but my husband and I worry that the cost of daycare is going to be so substantial that it's hard to justify me working rather than just staying home with children. We'd like to buy a home, especially here in Prince William County, so that I can live

[00:10:12] in and be a part of the community in the area that I serve. But right now, we can't afford to purchase property here or anywhere else in Northern Virginia. I know I can speak for my colleagues when I say we are absolutely so grateful for what this board has done and the supplement that you already give us. It's really hard to come before you and ask for more money because we are so grateful, but I'm doing it on my behalf and on behalf of my colleagues because we love this community and we want to stay here. We want to keep serving here without feeling like we're having to sacrifice to be a part of the community that we love. We're asking for an increase in our supplement so that this work and our office

[00:10:46] is sustainable for years to come. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Sergeant Rourke and I'm with the Adult Detention Center. Good evening, Madam Chair and Board of Supervisors. I'm here tonight to say thank you to those of you that took the time to meet with staff and hear our concerns since the last time that we were here. I also wanted to follow up on a couple of things. Yes, Madam Chair Wheeler, we usually do have a jail board that comes and represents us. I am hoping that with

[00:11:21] us being here, advocating for ourselves for the first time in the history of the jail, shows you just how much of a staffing crisis we really are in. We have had five more officers leave our agency since being here on March 21st.

[00:11:37] And representatives from Loudoun County have been back to our HR department reviewing another eight officer files. Loudoun isn't afraid to say that they find it funny and a joke to poach our well-trained officers by offering them all around better compensation than we receive here.

[00:11:55] We are not here asking for special treatment. We are here asking to be valued as equals. All four public safety entities within Prince William County stood in the same courthouse, taking the same oath to serve and protect this county, just in different capacities.

[00:12:12] No one department should be valued more than the other. There has been a huge disparity with our raises over the years that has led to lifelong earnings that we have lost by not getting appropriate raises like other departments have. Earnings that we can't get back, but we can make a change.

[00:12:33] A systematic change now, starting with this budget to help retention and attract new officers to our agency. It has been said in these meetings that this is the year of the employee, and if you are going to make it right, the time is now.

[00:12:49] I agree. Don't leave any one department behind. I am asking you to approve the 17.5% market adjustment across the board to include the adult detention center, the sheriff's department, and fire and rescue. Bring us together instead of continuing to divide us.

[00:13:09] Make us somewhat comparable to the surrounding agencies that we continue to lose our great officers to. And please compensate us for the dedication that you expect of us. Thank you for your time. Thank you. And so I apologize, but based on decorum, we're not allowed to clap or make any noises.

[00:13:33] And whether it's a cheerful thing or not, it's just one of those things we don't do. For those who are first in, I would say that to anybody who clapped, even though it's you guys and it's really hard. So please don't do that. But thank you. So next speaker is Mark Branca. And is Reverend Andra Hoxie still here tonight?

[00:13:52] Hoxie, Hoxie? No, she's not here tonight. And Tracy Lennox, is Tracy here tonight? Did she come back? Okay. Those three would be our last left over from the other evening, and then I'll start on tonight's list. And if you're not speaking, you need to be seated.

[00:14:17] I think I'm next. Okay. I'm Tracy Lennox. I'm the Chief Public Defender for Prince William County. I've made my arguments to you folks regarding the service we provide in the Public Defender's Office to the justice system to make it more fair, to make it more balanced, to make it more inclusive.

[00:14:37] I've also, I think, made the case for why it's important for the health and sustainability of our office that the board consider increasing our salary supplements in this budget cycle. I think we've made it clear I'm asking for the board to consider a supplement of at least 25%.

[00:14:54] But I'm not going to repeat all those arguments tonight. I've had an opportunity to talk to you folks about that in the past. Instead, I just want to thank you for the extraordinary work that you all do. This is not an easy job, and we know that. especially at this time of year.

[00:15:10] And instead, I just want to thank you so much for focusing on investment in Prince William County employees and for those public servants who serve the county, beyond the public defenders that you are hearing from last Tuesday and tonight, including all of those that are here tonight in uniform.

[00:15:28] Thank you for hearing us in this budget cycle, for listening to us as we bring the needs for retention and hiring to you. It is important for us to be able to attract and retain the best people for the jobs of service to this county.

[00:15:44] It's our people that make Prince William County so strong, and it's because you invest in us that we will continue strong. I say that not only as the public defender, but as a person that works in conjunction with law enforcement, for example, at the adult detention center, or in the course of the many, many ways that, as a community-engaged stakeholder, I'm interacting with our police department, with our fire and rescue.

[00:16:07] with the adc with the sheriff's office every day thank you for investing in the people of prince william county and the servants to prince william county this budget cycle of course especially the public defender's office and i'll just end by asking you to make us competitive with other northern virginia public defender's offices and i'm asking you to increase our supplement to to 25 thank you thank you and sir you you're standing in the back are you waiting to speak are you one

[00:16:35] of the people I spoke about. If not, you need to be seated. Thank you. Our next five speakers are

[00:16:50] Mike Beatty, Eric Fagerholm, Elena Schlossberg, Kevin Willis, and Patty Bright. My name is Mike Beatty from the Brinceville District. I'm a member of the Animal Advisory Committee. I want to say thank you to the board for the funding that's being provided to the animal shelter and that

[00:17:30] I hope to see two new programs in the coming year. The development of a CTE program to train future animal technicians and see implementation of a TNR program within Prince William County. And thank you. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good evening, Madam Chair, Supervisors.

[00:17:48] I'm Eric Fagerholm, Potomac District Representative to the Animal Advisory Committee. Thank you so much. You have built a first-rate animal service center. Let's staff it out on page 11. I fully support those three veterinary positions.

[00:18:04] And something that has been not talked about enough, I think, are what Mr. Beatty said, CTE, Career and Technical Education. We have a shortage of vet techs. We also have high school students who want to become vet techs.

[00:18:20] If we get those positions, we can do so much for our young people in this county. So I urge your support on that, and I thank you so much for the shelter. While I'm here, I also saw on page 12 about reforestation. I've got to give a shout-out to Public Works. they do this on a shoestring. We do little seedlings. A lot of it is volunteer labor. In fact, I happen to know the Potomac District Supervisor has been there with me digging holes in the ground and planting trees. It's done very efficiently. Tim Hughes, he should be recognized as well as his supervisors for what they do. And thank you. Good evening. Thank you. Next speaker,

[00:18:58] please. Good evening. I think that's right. Good evening. My name is Elena Schlossberg.

[00:19:29] I live in the Gainesville district and I want to thank all these public servants for being there for the community and I want to recognize a public servant that is often was often in the background and unrecognized but everybody in this room if you live in Prince William County and you visit a park or green space, I want you to thank Kim. Sorry. Sorry. Kim Hosen, who passed away last week after

[00:20:07] a 10-month battle with cancer, and she faced that challenge like she faced protecting green space in this county. She was a hero to many people, and she is not only a loss for each and everyone in this room. She is a loss to me personally. Some people I am concerned are using the loss of Kim to try and rehabilitate their reputation for turning their back on the real crescent. Kim

[00:20:45] doesn't want a park named after her. What Kim wants you to do is protect everything that she fought 20 years to protect for everyone in this county. I'm not going to say much because obviously I'm very emotional tonight, but I do want to thank Janine Lawson for being there. And I think that you holding her hand before she passed gave her comfort that people were going to be here to

[00:21:18] still fight on behalf of everything that makes Prince William County special. This is Kim at the Bluebells at Miramec Farm. And I hope that if it's possible, wherever she is, she can still feel of those bluebells, and I just want everyone to hear some of Kim's favorite song.

[00:22:11] This county is missing someone really special, and I hope that everyone in this room remembers that protecting green space does not mean industrializing, it doesn't mean data centers, it doesn't mean everything that Ann Wheeler's trying to do. It's everything that Kim Hosen

[00:22:40] opposed. Next speaker, please. Good evening. My name is Kevin Willis, and I live in Nicole's district, and I've been a county resident for close to 20 years. And as a member of VOICE, We've worked with the board and the state delegation to provide public defender services for residents of Prince William County.

[00:23:13] So we'd like for you to take this in terms of formulating the budget. We ask that you seriously consider increasing the supplement from 15% to 25%.

[00:23:29] We've spoken to members of the board and individuals in the administration over the past several years. And we've also watched the services that the Public Defender's Office has provided.

[00:23:45] And, in fact, my understanding is their caseload is more than twice that of a Commonwealth attorney. So we do appreciate your consideration and hope that you will support that.

[00:24:01] And on a side note, I would also support the increases in wages for our uniformed services. particularly the firefighters i've got one living with me and i'd like for him to find his own home so thank you thank you very much before before the next speaker i'm going to call up the next

[00:24:35] five to line up the next five after this speaker are laura ha Tom Haworth Mary Jo Haworth Joe Mirable and Tina Fisher Ms. Bright thank you hi i'm Dr. Patty Bright i'm a veterinarian I've spoken to you guys before regarding the animal shelter and requesting funding for a full-time veterinary staff there.

[00:24:58] So I won't go through all my arguments again, but I do just want to, first of all, say thank you. You guys have supported the shelter in the past, and I just, I really, we are so grateful for all that you have done for the shelter. I also want to introduce Stella. Unfortunately, Stella's T-shirt's a little big for us, so she's not wearing it tonight.

[00:25:16] Stella is an alumni of the shelter. she is the love of my life don't tell my husband I said that but thanks to the shelter she's here with me tonight and you know our shelter sees we they receive between three thousand and four thousand animals a year they do an amazing job our animal control officers do an amazing job as someone mentioned here earlier one of the things that we are working on right now is with Prince William County Schools they are interested in starting a career technology program that would focus on veterinary science and as a result what would happen is we would be able to get some students that come out and they have certification as veterinary assistant one and there's a real need for that right now in our

[00:25:54] county there's a real shortage of veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants we spoke with some of the other schools in the area in fairfax county and arlington who have these programs and they said they are one of the highest demand programs out there the difference between them and us is that what they offer at the end is they don't offer certification prince william county when we've spoken with sarah martin who is the cte director she said we need to do better we can go deeper we need to think about

getting that certification that certification though would require that we do get students out and they do internships so they have to get out outside of the school and actually do practice and so what we would love to see is if we could get the veterinary staff up and writing at the shelter to then have us partner with the shelter have the

[00:26:34] schools partner with the shelter so that the students could do their internships over there so again i just want to say thank you for all of your past support we really appreciate it and stella thanks you as well thank you thank you next speaker please good evening My name is Laura Hauffler. I live in Acaquan and I am the newly elected vice chair of the Animal Advisory Committee in Prince William. I'm very compelled to speak again. You see me often

[00:27:10] with this t-shirt. I want to stop wearing this t-shirt. Please help us. So we really need you guys to approve the veterinarian position for the shelter for all the reasons that Patty already elaborated on. That will decrease the suffering in our county exponentially and that is one very noble thing that you guys can do whether you are in the board next year or not. This is something that will be remembered whether you approved or said no to this. People will be looking at this.

[00:27:47] So please approve the veterinarian position, and one simple reason is if you have a dog or a cat and that little one escapes for whatever reason and ends up in the shelter and is injured, there may not be anybody to look at your dog or cat, and it may die.

[00:28:07] So you want a vet to be in that shelter right now. So thank you so much, and have a nice day. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good evening. My name is Tom Howarth. I live in the Brentsville District.

[00:28:23] I'm here to request an update on the status of the Devlin Technology Park rezoning application. When last presented to the board on February 7th, during the early hours of the next day, Supervisor Bodie proposed what I call a Frankenstein approach to combine the previously approved housing project and confine the data center development to the land south of the University Boulevard extension.

[00:28:46] At that time, the chair offered to schedule a vote for the next week to allow the applicant to revise the data center application to accommodate that approach. There seemed to be a sense of urgency to get the rezoning approved quickly due to the soon-to-be-held February 21st Gainesville Supervisor Special Election.

[00:29:02] After much discussion amongst the supervisors, the application was deferred until March 7th. Perhaps not coincidentally, on February 21st, representatives for Stanley Martin wrote the Prince William County Planning Office and Board of Supervisors requesting deferrals on the Client Farm and Devlin Technology Park proposals, saying the developer needed time, quote, to explore proposal alternatives.

[00:29:25] So here we are, more than two months after the board originally heard the rezoning application, and we have no idea why a proposal that was offered a one-week extension for revision is still deferred. It's unfair to leave this threat dangling over the heads of concerned citizens. Thank you. Next speaker, please.

[00:29:42] Okay, my name is Mary Jo Howarth. I live in the Brentsville District, Victory Lakes. Is Stanley Martin seriously considering the Frankenstein Compromise? Has your planning commission reviewed their new proposal for the Devlin Technology Park?

[00:30:03] Or is this deferral purely for political reasons, such as the upcoming June 20th primary and November 7th elections? Or perhaps you'll sneak it in during the summer vacation months when you think we'll be out of town.

[00:30:22] Can it be that you actually think it's a good idea to build additional housing surrounded by data centers? Absurd. The Bodie proposal isn't a compromise. It does nothing but add additional housing surrounded by noisy data centers.

[00:30:40] What developer would want to build there? Do you think Stanley Martin? Who would want to live there? Would you? Would you? Any of you board? It does nothing to satisfy the other existing neighborhoods, businesses, and Montessori school that will be impacted by the proposed mega data center development.

[00:31:04] Chair Wheeler has been asked several times to hold a town hall with the residents of the Linton Hall-Devlin Road communities to explain her position on this project and receive feedback from the affected homeowners and businesses. She should meet with them.

[00:31:21] Better still, schedule the Devlin Technology Park rezoning for a May vote. This will allow supervisors to take credit for their decision in the upcoming elections. You will have every opportunity to explain how your vision for industrial sprawl justifies subjecting homes and schools to intolerable construction, operating noise, and increased electricity bills to pay for the necessary power grid infrastructure upgrades. Or, alternately, you can show you have at last regained some sense of

[00:32:01] empathy for the people you claim to represent. Thank you. Thank you. And before our next speaker, I don't see someone after him. There is Tina Fisher. Our next five speakers to line up would be David Brickley, Steve Amato, John Miles, Patricia Gross, and Bruce Tucker. Please proceed.

[00:32:31] Chair Wheeler, members of the board, Mr. Shorter, Joe Mirabile. I live in the Occoquan district now, formerly Coles. I have the pleasure and the honor of being the secretary treasurer for Prince William Professional Firefighters Local 2598. Pardon me, I didn't plan on speaking last Tuesday, but because of last Tuesday, I feel compelled to speak. I think last Tuesday, fortunately and unfortunately, everybody got a front row seat to see what unfortunately we have to do day in and day out in this county as first responders, which is provide life-saving care to people. I am immensely proud of our off-duty and on-duty members who rendered care and the outcome

[00:33:11] I couldn't have been prouder of. That just shows the level of professionalism and skill of our firefighters and paramedics. We're here today to talk about compensation for firefighters and paramedics. As the consultants report showed, our starting salary for a firefighter is $18.11 an hour. Right down the road at Wawa, it's $20 to $22. So I have every faith in this board that they're going to do the right thing and fix compensation issues for first responders in Prince William County. I do believe that. I also wanted to say that I thank you for taking time away from your family to render public service to this county by being here and doing your role

[00:33:50] guiding this county through this next budget process. I know it's not easy. I know it's contentious, and I do thank you for it, and I thank you guys for your time. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good evening. I'm David Brickley. I have the pleasure of serving on the Trails and Blue Ways Council and the Historical Commission, and I'm here to ask that when you do the budget markup, especially for the Parks Department, that you ensure that a grants writer is included in that markup.

[00:34:23] That position, that of a grants writer, will more than pay for the salary it is going to cost to hire that individual many, many, many times over. We, as you know, live in one of the most historical and most scenically beautiful jurisdictions, I think, in the country.

[00:34:46] The General Assembly just passed the American Revolution 250 Commission. We've got the 250th commemoration of our American Revolution, of the Revolutionary War, and our independence coming up over a multi-year process.

[00:35:03] When you look at the history along, especially along the Potomac River Corridor from Occoquan down to Stafford County, It just flushes out with potentials on how we can really take advantage of our limelight, of where we are, where we're situated.

[00:35:25] And to do that, it means that we need to have one position that is very critically needed in the Parks Department, and that is that position of a grant writer. The Potomac Courage Nest Scenic Trail goes from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, down to the Virginia shoreline and the Chesapeake Bay.

[00:35:46] We are blessed going right again from Occoquan down to the Stafford Line. You know the national awards that we are able to receive from the Neabsco Boardwalk. We can do the same thing now, maybe even more so, I believe, with the Powell's Creek Crossing that we're working on right now and be able to sell Prince William County as a place to live and work and recreate like no other jurisdiction around here.

[00:36:12] So if we can manage that and ensure that there is a grant writer within the Parks Department, it will more than pay for itself. And it's just not the Potomac Heritage National Center Trail. It's not the commission that the General Assembly provided.

[00:36:32] It's the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route going right down Prince William County on the eastern part. It's the East Coast Greenway going right down. These things all can really magnify the beauty in what makes Prince William County so great.

[00:36:49] And by having a grant writer in there, we can maximize our ability and our leverage of those wonderful things we've got. Thank you very much for your attention. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good evening, Board.

[00:37:20] Madam Chair, Deputy Attorney, Executive of the County. I'm Steve Amato from the Lake Ridge District. I have a theme tonight about, I want my fellow citizens to understand this, and it's called over taxation.

[00:37:38] FY22, there was $75-plus million in surplus that was raised in the county. Second quarter of FY23, it's $15.7 million in surplus, over $90 million in surplus.

[00:37:59] At least five organizations in this room have asked for additional funding, additional compensation. Have you asked your county representatives, your board supervisors, where the surpluses have gone?

[00:38:16] Have you asked them what their plan is? Citizens, we need to voice about this overtaxation. So, for the third quarter, it's estimated $10 to $11 million in surplus.

[00:38:35] Did you know that? Over $100 million is going to be in surplus from FY22 for our county budget revenue to the third quarter FY23. You need to find out where the surpluses are going.

[00:38:56] Some of you are getting compensated. So the board is recommending a whopping 0.96 real estate tax rate, a reduction of the .97. Personally, that saves me a huge $75 a year. I could fill up my gas in my truck. You need to find out about these surpluses. Every citizen who pays real estate tax should be getting a refund. That's where we get compensated. So my second thing is, what are we

[00:39:34] doing as far as leadership on this county board of supervisors to get engaged with congressional representatives. The congressional representatives are pushing budgets, pushing money throughout all kinds of wasteful spending, driving up inflation rates, getting back to energy dependencies, which impact our county. Our supervisors should be standing on the desks of Senators Kane, Warner, and all the other congressional House members that represent our county.

[00:40:12] They're impacting those two things, which is driving up our costs in this county. It's called collaboration, coordination, advocating from the local level to the congressional level. Thank you.

[00:40:29] Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good evening, everybody. My name's Tina Fisher, and I'm here to represent, or I'm here as representative of voice this evening, And I'm here to support the increase in pay for the Public Defender's Office.

[00:40:55] In my opinion, it's the most vulnerable population that is in need of this critical service. And it requires very competent people to do that work. And it is needed and it is necessary.

[00:41:13] Also, I wanted to say that I have been involved for several years on a restorative justice initiative with the Public Defender's Office, and that is through a grant that we have been working on. And what I have seen through my work with restorative justice, also in seminary when I took a class on restorative justice, is that this is a way to, it's an alternative way to have the victim be heard and be a part of the process.

[00:41:49] And to have more funding for the Public Defender's Office would create some more funds to have this program implemented, which has been shown to decrease recidivism, decrease violence, create better relationships within the community and just make the community a better place.

[00:42:14] So I'm just here to advocate for that. And I want to thank you all, all the public servants here tonight for your service and everyone on the board. I know that we're all just trying to do the best we can with the resources we have, and I appreciate all of you.

[00:42:32] Thank you. Thank you. Next speaker, please. I am Patricia Gross of Manassas City, and I'm a part of a member of Voice.

[00:42:49] I am speaking to support a pay increase for the Public Defender's Office. The public defenders of Prince William County also serve Manassas City and Manassas Park citizens.

[00:43:05] They protect and defend the rights of their clients in all types of cases, from misdemeanors to felonies, and they provide other services. Due to the low pay and heavy workload of the public defenders, I am asking that you support raising their pay up to 25% or more.

[00:43:33] And thank you for listening. Thank you. Next speaker, please. My name is John Miles. I've been living in the Coles District since 1984. I moved out of Fairfax County to live up here because I got to afford to live.

[00:43:53] I had a wife and kids, raised five of them up, and been married 39 years. And I've loved living in this county. But I'll say one thing about the police and the firefighters and the sheriffs and everybody

that serves us, they're outstanding.

[00:44:10] They're the best of the best. And we should take care of each and every one of them to the highest level possible. I was a firefighter for Fairfax County years ago, and I served with Annandale, and I know they took care of us.

[00:44:29] And I just hope that this county will do the same thing and understand that what speaks loudly of this county and each and every one of you is how well you take care of what we have. That's the most important thing going forward.

[00:44:47] If we take care of what we have and support them and give them the best, everything they need to do their job, we'll have what we had the other night. Outstanding work. I'm very proud of all the firefighters and everybody that was here the other night.

[00:45:03] It was outstanding. My daughter also works in the fire department, as well as my son-in-law, and they're outstanding. I can't say enough for them. I've seen them come home tired, stressed out, seeing things that would make any one of us, you know, sick to our stomach.

[00:45:22] But at the same time, they go on and do their job to save us and to protect us. So all I'm asking is that we take care of them. That speaks loudly of this county. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Next speaker, please.

[00:45:40] Madam Chair, Honorable Board Members, my name is Bruce Tucker. I reside in the Rock Hills District of Stafford County, former Prince William resident. I come before you tonight as a former volunteer with Dale City and a 26-year veteran of the Department of Fire and Rescue. In honor of the Prince William Professional Firefighters President Mitch Nation, who is celebrating his birthday with family in an undisclosed location, I have signed up to go last.

[00:46:05] Like Mitch, I could use this time to hammer home the importance of providing competitive compensation for firefighters or how a 56-hour schedule based on a law designed in the mid-70s is antiquated and, frankly, out of touch with modern-day emergency services. But I don't think you need to hear any more about why the pay study was significantly inadequate.

[00:46:24] Rather, I want to take a minute before you get down to the hard work of balancing citizen and employee needs with the resources you have available to you, and just say that Tuesday night we were fortunate and we're all thankful that there were five off-duty and one on-duty fire and rescue members present.

[00:46:40] Their efforts made a significant difference in the outcome and showed the importance of early CPR and early defibrillation plays in saving lives. I want to take a moment to encourage every citizen and every employee to learn CPR so that the next time, the luck of having firefighters in the chamber has nothing to do whether or not someone lives during a future incident that may happen here or anywhere throughout the county.

[00:47:03] Thank you. Thank you very much. This concludes our in-person public comment time. I will now turn it over to Vice Chair Bodie for remote public comment time. Thank you, Madam Chair. Ms. Vann, good evening. how many folks do we have online tonight? Good evening. We have two speakers. Let's begin.

[00:47:33] Your first speaker is Suzanne Priscotta. Good evening, everybody. Buenas noches a todos. My name is Suzanne Alvarez Priscotta. I live in Fairfax County, but it has been my privilege to work in Prince William County for 25 years as a Supreme Court of Virginia certified interpreter and translator in your courts and business community and also I'm very proud and most importantly I have served for the past 10 years as a co-host in Panorama Latino TV show which has

[00:48:11] been airing for 23 years in Spanish weekly as a tool as a communications device and forum in order to include the growing Hispanic population in Prince William County. In 1990, the Hispanic population numbered 4.5%, and today it is upwards of 23%. The Hispanic community, this Hispanic community considers Prince William County its home. I've been using my professional bilingual

[00:48:48] talents in order to interview leaders in law, medicine, safety, health care, and a myriad of other important topics and arenas in order to inform, educate, and reach out to the community with the hope of helping the community be more inclusive and increase participation of all communities in Prince William County. We are very thankful in Panorama Latino of the recognition

[00:49:22] that we've received in the past from your board, from the Virginia Senate, from community officials, and we're at the point now where we want to become a community partner, a full community partner, and we're requesting funding in order to continue with our mission from this, our county. Our mission again is to continue to provide a link and increasing participation between the diverse community, the Hispanic community, and continuing to enrich the Prince William community at large.

[00:50:00] Thank you very much for listening to me. Buenas noches. Good evening. Thank you for your comments and contributions. Next speaker, please. The next speaker is William Wires. Good evening, everyone.

[00:50:21] and thank you for having me. Thank you for continuing the public comment section over from Tuesday. My name is William Whitus. I'm a resident of the Brentsville District. I am here in my capacity as immediate past president of the Prince William County Bar Association, and I'm here to ask you to increase the county supplement of the County Public Defender Office from 15% to a minimum of 25%. For the first eight years of my career, I was a criminal defense attorney, and I was on the court-appointed list for all of those eight years. I do not work in criminal defense anymore. I have

[00:50:56] moved on to civil practice, and that is partially because the practice of criminal defense law, and especially representing the indigent population of Prince William County or of any county, is extremely difficult and extremely stressful and extremely taxing. You don't leave work at 5 p.m. You get calls from clients at 11 p.m. at 2 a.m. You get calls from clients' mothers, from clients' grandmothers and their fathers and grandfathers. The people who represent our indigent population are extremely impressive individuals. And I can tell you with firsthand

[00:51:32] knowledge, they are extremely passionate about their job. Representation of the indigent population of Prince William County increased greatly when our public defender's office opened. But now the shine of being a new office is starting to wear off. And I know the county is losing excellent attorneys to neighboring counties just because they are paid more. At some point, as Ms. Leader said earlier this evening, at some point finances become a key factor in what you choose to do for a living and where you choose to do it. Prince William County made an excellent decision three

[00:52:10] years ago when it decided to open a public defender's office and I hope that today it will make the decision to make the pay competitive with neighboring jurisdictions so that our extremely passionate, are extremely skilled defense attorneys who choose to make less money because they strongly believe in what they do for a living, will stay with Prince William County and will not leave to go to other slightly greener pastures because this county will make it obvious that they care about all populations and will compensate those doing the dirty work down in the trenches as they deserve to be compensated.

[00:52:47] Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Whitus. Ms. Van, is there anyone else online for tonight? There are no more speakers for tonight. Thank you, Ms. Vann. Back to you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Vice Chair Bodie. Thank you, Ms. Vann.

[00:53:02] So that will conclude our public comment time for this evening. Our next item on the agenda is number four, County Executives. Mr. Shorter, do you have anything for us this evening? Good evening, Madam Chair and Board. I certainly look forward to the budget markup discussion this evening.

[00:53:21] As you know, I made my final recommendations last week and officially handed the budget over to you. I have asked our budget director, Dave Sinclair, and our CFO, Michelle Atry, to be here tonight, obviously to respond to questions or provide any additional information you might need.

[00:53:43] And so as we go through the discussion tonight, we'll certainly be here to answer questions. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you very much, Mr. Shorter. Now it's county attorney's time. Mr. Smith, the floor is yours. Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the board.

[00:54:00] There are no closed session items for you this evening. Okay. Welcome, Mr. Smith. Thank you. Thank you. Okay, that brings us on to supervisor's time. And we are going to begin on marking up the budget. As the county executive mentioned, this is the time when the budget goes from being what he proposes to what the board marks up.

[00:54:20] And we generally start with what he proposes and add or subtract or make any changes. I am going to start this evening and take a—actually, let me say a few things. Madam Chair. Oh, yes. Supervisor Angry has a COIA thing that he has to read.

[00:54:39] Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, before the board begins budget markup, I need to declare a personal interest in this matter. 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 matter. I will be participating in it because I am able to do so fairly objectively and in the public interest.

[00:54:59] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Supervisor Angry. I want to begin by saying we finished last year's budget. We indicated that the FY24 budget would focus on our internal workforce and strengthening it. We weren't going to start a lot of new programs as we had been doing, and we were going to focus on making sure that our workforce was strong.

[00:55:19] I believe that the budget that we are going to end up accomplishes that. And I think it's also important to point out that this budget, based on last week's recap and the county's executive proposal, which offered up a tax rate of .966, which was a reduction from the 1.03 because of the increases in assessments, balancing that out, that the county's executive proposal offers up a zero increase in the average residential tax bill.

[00:55:50] You know, when I look around some of the counties around us and what's happening and what they're doing, I feel very lucky that we're able to offer up a zero increase in our average residential tax bill this year. You know, this hasn't happened for over 15 years in Prince William County.

[00:56:06] And the last time it did happen, it was because the market, the real estate market had cratered. And we had most, a lot of us, myself included, had lost our places where we lived, lost 30 percent of their value. And we had some of the worst foreclosure rates in the entire nation.

[00:56:22] And that is not where we find ourselves today. We find ourselves in a fairly strong position, which is, I'm just very, I want to say, grateful for the great financial management of the county and all the other things that we've been doing to diversify our revenue streams.

[00:56:41] So it seems like it is being able to offer a zero increase in our average residential tax bill is making an impact. So with that, I'm going to begin by passing out a sheet, and it has Tuesday's date on it, one, two.

[00:57:00] And what I'm hoping is, you know, there are a lot of, you know, there are a lot of things as a board I think we can find in common. Do you guys want a copy of this? You know, there are a lot of things as a board I think we can find.

[00:57:18] Yeah. Oh, no, here. Okay. I just didn't pass enough down. Okay. You know, and as a board, I'm hoping that we can come together and get some consensus moving forward, you know, and work together to, you know, offer up a good budget.

[00:57:43] You know, I'm going to begin with, you know, proposed sources of revenue. As we saw in the county executive's recap, there was an additional $10,045,818 above what was budgeted, in addition to some additional agency revenue, which was $343,860.

[00:58:06] So that was revenue that had not yet been allocated based on our recap. And we also talked about increasing the computer and peripherals tax at some point, and the county executive gave us various scenarios. You know, we had said it was going to be $1.80, but we had $1.85, $90, $95, all the way up to $2.15.

[00:58:27] And I am proposing, you know, after when Supervisor Brody brought this up a few months ago, you know, and bringing it up to $2.15, you know, and I had sort of pushed back. And, you know, part of leadership is understanding that keeping an open mind and after conversations with Supervisor Brody and some of my seatmates, I'm proposing that we bring the computer and peripherals tax up to $215, which is the maximum that we can do this year to get the maximum amount of revenue, which gives us another $4.2 million.

[00:59:02] So in total available, that leaves us an additional $14,589,678, or roughly $14.6 million. So then I have proposed suggested uses. The first of these are increases.

[00:59:18] And in the sheet I have, I have gone, the county executive had different increases based on the proposed 6.8, 10, 12.5, 15, and 17.5.

[00:59:33] And these numbers, I don't believe, well, anyway, the 3% step, and I'm suggesting that for Fire and Rescue, the ADC, the Sheriff's Office, as well as the Public Safety Communicators Office across the way in the Owens Building, all have an increase of 15%.

[00:59:54] And so I've taken those numbers from Mr. Shorter's presentation from the 15% column, which for the Friar and Rescue is $6.7 million. The total detention was $3.4 million.

[01:00:11] The 15% increase for the sheriff was $900,000. And I had asked about the public safety communicators, and the 15% increase for the public safety communicators is another $900,000, which totals $11.9 million and so that's what I'm offering up as a starting point for discussion on the board You know, I know that supervisor we're had asked about the 15% and we had a Email on that very well laid out also I'm suggesting that and I I think I have the support of my colleagues that these

[01:00:51] Increases in pay start April 1st. Is that the beginning of the next quarter? April 1st. And I know that the county executive had laid out those amounts in an email of how much that was. And I believe that our savings from last year could cover that.

[01:01:09] We have enough money for that. Yeah. Okay. Not April 1st? Well, it's the beginning of the quarter that we're in now. Okay. So not next quarter. You said next quarter. Okay. Oh, it's already April. It's fiscal year, fourth quarter.

[01:01:24] yeah the fourth quarter I guess so I know we're in April I'm a little slow we're in April yeah so April 1st of this year so this quarter so I guess it would be backdated so so that's sort of the general things I'm suggesting I'm also suggesting we spend you know there was a list of things the six hundred and ninety-five thousand dollars for the two techs and the vet at the animal shelter I think everybody you know I mean from my conversations you know we we have a veterinary we built we spent money on building a veterinary space in

[01:02:01] the shelter we really probably should utilize it and I would also like to suggest that we increase the salary settlement for the public defender's office to 25% as they request to be a little bit more commensurate with some of our surrounding areas as a starting point and that's 358,000 so that still leaves 1.6 million left and there there was a whole sheet of things like grant writers and landscaping and parks and rec maintenance that we had talked about that I will sort of throw it open I don't know whether anybody so this is

[01:02:37] sort of I'm hoping this is a starting point they can we we can start out with numbers and and then are there any questions on this at all it's pretty straightforward supervisor buddy thank you madam chair so um so the way we're going to do this we're going to try to go methodically um you know make sure everybody gets at least one chance to speak before someone else speaks a second time so just be very if we can just be methodical and thoughtful about how we're moving down thank you thank you madam chair so um not a question on on this specifically but just for the public and for the all the uniform folks in the uh audience right now

[01:03:17] The 15%, I know I ask this every time it comes up, but just so people know, the 15% we're talking about does not include this step. This 3% step is going to be above and beyond, is already programmed into the budget, so it'll be a total of 18% for folks who are watching, just to be clear about that.

[01:03:32] Yeah, so I just wanted to, that. Two, it's a question about another part of the proposed budget that the CXO presented early on, which is the salary increases for the Board of Supervisors.

[01:03:44] I know there's been a lot of talk, a lot of folks have talked about that, I've collected a lot of feedback from my constituents about it, and there's some concerns about the size of the increase from a

percentage standpoint, what other folks are doing across the region, so my question for staff, so they can work on this while we're talking through, is if we had, from 2011 until now, all the step and market adjustments that we gave the general government workforce, if we just did that to where we are today what that would be for our increase and what that price

[01:04:20] tag would be i would appreciate that thank you madam chair is that something you can do while we're sort of working and needling through this it's all right for the board we would need about 10 or 15 minutes to okay work that up we're happy to do it but okay we can do that concurrently with the board's discussion okay and maybe for anyone who's watching the reason we're using 2011 is because the board hasn't had an increase in salary since 2011 so mr. Bode is there anything else at this time for your on your um they weren't questions they were just more comments I don't know if you want to do comments now or questions um or if they're in support of things yeah I would take your time now

[01:04:59] if you're ready for that sure so um first I want to thank you sure we look for presenting this um this first time I've sort of seen this all laid out like this I know we've talked about it in bits and pieces throughout the budget cycle. And I will say first that everyone in this room that wears a uniform is a hero. And we saw that on Tuesday night. We saw how quickly, as some folks said, their reaction time was difference between life and death for someone that was speaking during public comment time. That's not lost on us on this board. I think that we can all agree on that. I also have talked a lot about making sure that the folks that serve our community can live in the community in which they

[01:05:36] serve. This goes a long way, I think, in getting to that goal. While also, as Chair Wheeler said, promoting what the county executive said is a flat tax bill for the average county resident. That's average, so some folks may see a little bit of an increase, but some folks will see a decrease in their taxes as a result of a flat tax bill. So that helps in both directions on that.

[01:05:56] You know, not increasing your standard of living when it comes to the cost from a tax standpoint, but also increasing your salary commensurate with the service that you do to our community. So I want to say I appreciate that too. I will also say that I appreciate the chair and some of my colleagues coming around on the 215 computer peripherals tax. I know that myself and some of my colleagues talked about that very early on in the budget cycle and how we wanted to say as high as possible with making sure that one of the biggest industries in the world pays its fair share in county taxes to this community. And I think that 215 is a big step in that direction.

[01:06:28] We do do more work in subsequent budget years, but I appreciate the willingness of the chair and others to come along with that. The last thing I will say is I completely support the April 1 retroactive increase of those new salaries of the 15%. A lot of these adjustments have been a long time coming for a lot of you. I know the fire and rescue guys have been in here for the better part of a year talking about it, but the ADC and sheriff folks have been sharing with us harrowing stories about what they deal with each and every day in their respective roles, and I think that these increases are a long time coming so I support all this I'll just give a brief shout out to our folks

[01:07:03] for the vet tech the vets and the techs um we did build a top rate uh animal shelter we need to staff it with top rate employees and this goes a long way in doing that um and it also opens up the opportunity to invest also the next generation of vets and techs because as folks said during public comment time we can open up a partnership with with community and the school system to have new folks come up after them and be mentored by the folks we will hire with this um the public defender i

won't say anything more than the folks that spoke during public comment time i was a big supporter of the public defender's office and the initial 15 we gave them back when it opened up

[01:07:41] and i'm a big supporter of making sure again in their role as well they can deserve and and they should be able to uh afford to live uh where they serve so thank you so much madam chair for that thank you supervisor bode supervisor weir madam chair i'm not ready for my comments yet but i do a procedural issue that I think we need to address and that's the April 1st supplements we're talking about the FY 24 budget tonight not the FY 23 so we need a separate motion that has to be handled separately yeah I know so let's let's not I mean well I just I was actually just really saying that for the people who were sitting in the room to make sure that they understood it's a

[01:08:19] completely separate resolution and we can do that that's not a big talking about it but I just well yeah it's not part of the budget I just want to make sure that we've got that in focus and that we handle that separately and not and not as part of this discussion and I'll let everybody else go first I think we're all set I see no one wanting to speak we're good well I don't see anybody I'm just saying no one's yeah if you do you have stuff you can go

[01:08:52] through methodically yes questions thank you madam chair I don't recall if we thanked the first responders on Tuesday evening when we went into recess I think we did I certainly hope we did yeah actually we gave a standing ovation but I'm still gonna take this opportunity to thank you again I'm gonna fight off the emotion and just tell you I'm incredibly proud I'm incredibly proud of the men and women that I got to watch save my friend's life and I hope I never

[01:09:32] get to watch that again but I'm sorry some of you I've had the pleasure of

[01:10:05] knowing since I've started on the board like Joe Kim I just met you if you know a couple weeks ago and it was no coincidence and I saw you in action and I just want you all to know sheriff's deputies you were right there also the gentleman the deputy in the back I saw you on the news you're sitting in that same chair I just simply wanted to take this moment to personally tell you how proud all of us sitting up here are of you and I know the public agrees with us

[01:10:43] and I especially know that the stirrups are incredibly grateful to God Almighty himself and and to to each of you who saved John's life I mean and I joked with John yesterday on the phone and said John I guess the takeaway is if I'm in a collapse and code do it in the presence of literally 30 first responders feet away and he laughed so all right now we're going to talk serious budget stuff I don't know if I should address my question to Mr. Shorter or were you going directly down to the floor to Mr. Sinclair

[01:11:23] and Ms. Etrie okay great great so I last year at this time in budget season was definitely raising concerns about specific agencies that had high vacancies, had a lot of hemorrhaging.

[01:11:47] Police Department and the ADC were two of them. Community Services, Mental Health was another one. If anyone recalls those days a year ago, that was me advocating that we stop the bleeding and we do what we can to fill those positions.

[01:12:07] And I certainly still support that. And now we've got other agencies that are having the same problem. And frankly, they're all of the public safety agencies, Fire and Rescue and Sheriff's Office as well.

[01:12:22] But what turned into was a concern of mine about specific agencies has now ballooned into $54 million of everybody across the workforce.

[01:12:38] And I know that there's a labor shortage out there and there's market adjustments across the board. But I still want to know some numbers on the general workforce and if we have any capacity to have some conversations about different percentages for the general workforce.

[01:12:58] So my question, Dave Sinclair, is what is the cost of 1% in the general workforce pay compensation or pay scales? I just need a moment to find it.

[01:13:19] I have it. Okay. I'll give you a moment.

[01:13:30] We're at 6% adjustment now with 3% merit, and then next year, 2.5% adjustment with another 3% merit, correct? Does that sound right? And do we still have agencies and general workforce that have significantly higher vacancy rates and problems filling those vacancies, like community service, for example?

[01:14:10] I would say the two predominant ones at the moment are ADC and police. Okay, I'm sorry, general workforce. I'm on general workforce. I haven't looked at the latest numbers, ma'am, but community services somewhat.

[01:14:30] But mainly 50% of the vacancies, I believe, are still public safety related. Okay. But I will say, just to add to our budget director's response, we really took a concerted effort as we were developing the budget to look at vacancies.

[01:14:49] And I'll remind the board that we actually provided for, as part of the proposal, a significant cost savings as part of the vacancies that we found. The board was clear last year during this process that you all wanted us to look at vacancies, and we did just that.

[01:15:12] Dave, I'll maybe ask if we can pull up the number, how much we were able to save as part of the proposal. I wanted to make sure I made that point. You did, and thank you for reminding me of that. I do recall, like, ADC was one where there had been so many vacancies for so long that we, I don't know how, I don't want to articulate it in the wrong way, but we essentially eliminated some positions because we just simply weren't able to fill them year after year after year.

[01:15:45] Is that a fair way to describe it? That is correct, but it is not just the fact that the positions were unfilled. It was also looking at, in the case of ADC, population trends.

[01:16:01] And in the case of some of the other agencies, we were also looking at programs, services, and our forecasted need. We are always, obviously, if the need arises in the coming year, For us to pivot, in the case of, for example, community services, we certainly will be prepared to come back to the board to do that.

[01:16:24] But we were looking at a number of factors, including the length of time that positions were vacant. Okay, so it looks like you've got some numbers. And remember, I'm asking about general workforce. Yes, general service, non-sworn employees, each 1% market adjustment is worth $2.9 million.

[01:16:45] Okay. And then, and I'm sorry to ask you this when you may not be ready to answer. And like, for example, are we having a lot of problems with vacancies in park and rec and tourism? Is that an ongoing problem like it is in our public safety agencies?

[01:17:04] Not to the public safety magnitude. Okay. Sorry, that's the best I have to offer. That's okay. That's okay. It gives me an idea of what I, it kind of affirms what I was thinking. Thanks.

[01:17:25] Supervisor Weir. Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to the starting points, I'm good with virtually everything on the starting point except for one. As Supervisor Lawson moved the 215 rate a couple of weeks ago, that gave us some flexibility.

[01:17:44] What I would suggest is reducing the real estate tax down to 0.964, and that essentially zeros it out and still allows you to accomplish all of these other additions, both the 15% pay raise or market adjustment, whatever you want to call it.

[01:18:00] as well as your other additions, I would suggest that if anybody wants to add anything, there are ways to accommodate that in the budget. You're going to have to give something up.

[01:18:21] I have, last night, was made particularly well aware of what the concerns of many of the residents are, and it's not what we're talking about. Their biggest concerns are, you know, neighborhood patrols by the PD, fixing the sidewalks, putting the streetlights in, parking enforcement, fire marshals, and blight.

[01:18:45] So if you want to add anything else into the budget, it's easily done. And because of the way the budget's been constructed, there's a relatively painless way to do it without raising any more taxes or raising any more fees. Every 1% that we reduce general fund support, and simply general fund support, not state funding, not local funding, I mean state, federal, or fee-based funding. If you take every agency except the public safety divisions and you reduce their general fund support, essentially

[01:19:21] cutting their increase, you save a little over $2.7 million. If the agencies in this government can't find a 1% efficiency, then we don't have the right people in place. So if you want to fund something, I would suggest that's the way to do it. Supervisor Weir, I don't understand your point nine six four comment zero point nine six four i'm sorry okay so everything on this sheet

[01:19:55] that i passed out is okay except for the tax rate i'm good with everything on the sheet and how much does it cost to get down to point nine six four it would zero it out but how much does it like so it's the 1.6 million dollars at the bottom correct okay okay didn't mean to interrupt you i just want to make sure no i'll let it go with that for the moment supervisor bode thank you madam chair um And Supervisor Weir, I appreciate the thought behind what you're proposing.

[01:20:34] I guess my heartburn comes from a place of proposing this now at markup and asking for agency heads to then suddenly go out and find those kinds of savings. Even if it's just 1%, you know, different agencies are different sizes. That's a different amount of money for everyone.

[01:20:51] So I would hate to put that on them now. We can certainly talk about finding efficiencies. I know that last year, I know that some of my colleagues brought up the vacancy issue, which then came back this year, and we were able to address it on a pretty good, solid level.

[01:21:08] So I'm concerned about having this done now without giving agency heads time to look at what they could possibly be cutting. I think this is a sort of a, it doesn't sound like a huge change on first brush, But 1% of any agency's budget, just cutting it now, to me, is a big ask.

[01:21:27] And it also doesn't give us time to see what we might be inadvertently doing on it and consequences moving forward. So I have heartburn about that. But I appreciate the thought of maybe in subsequent years us looking at efficiencies that could be had like we did last time with the vacancies that came forward this year. And we're able to find efficiencies that way.

[01:21:43] Thank you, Madam Chair. Okay. Next up is Supervisor Angry. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just got one. And so can we go over the rest of, I don't think we did this, about the 1.6 and the grant riders and what those other, because even if we're talking about going down 9.6, 4, that's going to come out of that 1.6.

[01:22:08] And I get what you're saying, Supervisor, where that we've got to make choices on what we want to cut. However, I do know what we've been discussing here, and there's some additional positions such as those grant riders and other things that we talked about. So I'd like to go through that list completely before we start seeing what we have left over, if that will affect that 964 that you're talking about.

[01:22:33] Okay. Do you want to start? I mean, do you have the list in front of you? You know, it's in my wall locker. Okay. I mean, I have it. Do you have it? Do you want to show it to him? Chris, does he have it on his?

[01:22:50] He has it on his screen.

[01:23:10] And you need to turn your mic on, too. but i definitely want to talk about this list before we start finding if we even have change left if you will to go down any lower so well we okay do you want me to lead us through it i can do that so the first one was community events um with the 1.5 fte you're standing there yeah you want to go you have information i i do have information i i um just a refinement regarding

[01:23:42] Mr. Weir's rate of 0.964. The cost on the county side to get to 964 is about $760,000 off the balance on your sheet, Chair Wheeler. Our share of a penny is $3.8 million. So to go from 966 to 964 is two-tenths of a penny, which our share, that two-tenths of a penny comes out to 760,000. If I may, Mr. Weir, I think you were calculating it off of a full penny,

[01:24:20] but the impact on the county side is less. So to get to 964, 760K would come off the balance that you showed, Chair Wheeler, of about 1.6 million. I do have a question. The 0.964, we already have a zero average increase. What does 964 get us to?

[01:24:49] I would need to look at my snappy matrix. What's the point? I mean, we're at, it seems like a lot.

[01:25:08] Maybe, yeah, why don't we come back and visit that. Why don't we go through the community events. You know, I got the sense from everybody at last, whatever time we were talking about the community events that I might be the only one who really loves community events, and I'm willing to let that go, you know, as a straw poll here.

[01:25:27] You know, who would like to spend $550,000 on a community event? Okay. okay well you want to go what do you mean he wants us to go through this now yeah because I have comments about okay well I'm just going to go through it one by one can I sort of cross that off and say that's not on the table yeah it's on the table it you know I thought we could just go through and just do a rough straw poll and vote I just hands up you

[01:26:06] know just I mean these are all pretty basic the next one was landscaping countywide 500,000 like i feel like i should editorialize but all those in favor spending half a million on on landscaping community events are gone it's a no trust me it's a no it's gone say it's bad so the next one is landscaping countywide at half a million dollars so straw poll madam chair yeah do we have a list

[01:26:40] can we be more specific as to where no no i understand the the total amount requested but we say countywide that's so random and so general i don't believe it is there is a specific list i don't think there's a specific plan the idea is to help some of the land landscaping countywide and it's some of this is ongoing because it takes an extra effort it's sort of you know like mr weir was talking about when he went out and spoke to the neighborhoods about you know just medians and and and beautifying some of our neighborhoods i don't think i think it's meant to be spent

[01:27:16] throughout the county but i don't think they have a plan to evaluate at this time and that just gives me a little concern. It's similar to the community events. You asked about it, Supervisor Angry. What are we going to prioritize? Which district are we going to prioritize? So the fact that we really don't have a plan in place gives me a little concern because are we going to take care more of the Brentsville District versus the Coles District? And I would like to see something, you know, more concrete as to where we're going to allocate these funds exactly for. Madam Chair, may I chime in? Yeah. Yeah. So I think that's a fair point Now, in my discussions, because this did come up because of some of the challenges we have in my district,

[01:27:55] and it's my understanding that other districts have some similar challenges, it's my understanding from discussions that this estimated amount would be able to take care of annually any number of projects that may come about. So I don't think it's a, I actually think this amount doesn't prioritize one district over another.

[01:28:15] It simply gives the funding to be able to handle all the districts. Now, obviously, we need to be careful, and there can't be 20 landscaping projects from Woodbridge and have that monopolize what our county staff would be doing.

[01:28:32] But it's my understanding, and staff will correct me if I'm wrong, that this is an amount that could take care of the entire county because I think it will go towards, I guess, maintenance, essentially. Correct. So, Madam Chair, as presented last week, Tom Smith and Public Works actually did come up with this forecasted amount.

[01:28:54] They are prepared to talk about tonight what this amount would get us, and this would be a county-wide program, and we would be able to provide support for each district. So, Director, do you want to chime in?

[01:29:11] Thank you, Mr. Shorter, Madam Chair, members of the board. The estimate is based upon our average cost of putting in a project, so it includes seven projects. And the intent there is, of course, to have one for each magisterial district. Obviously, it's up to the board, but that's historically how we've done projects.

[01:29:27] Seven projects, plus the maintenance to continue to maintain those seven projects. Any further questions for Mr. Smith? Supervisor Lawson? Go ahead. Ladies first? Ladies first. Thank you.

[01:29:43] Thanks, Tom. Chivalry is not dead. That's right. Chivalry is not dead. Did you hear that, man? So, Tom, you know that I have been a nag about litter. With you on my chivalry.

[01:29:59] Yeah. Yeah. So I love chivalry, and I have been pestering you a lot. Maybe pester is a better way to put it, about litter. And it's litter, I've mentioned it many times sitting up here, it's litter all over the county.

[01:30:15] It's litter, a lot of it is, you know, in commercial retail areas. I like this idea and concept with the private market, and I don't want to do this unless we've exhausted every effort, and I'm not convinced that we have. I'm not convinced that we have taken efforts to send, you know, letters to property managers and let them know

[01:30:48] that we are expecting them to clean up their properties and I know we've got a community partner that's doing their best but I also said what ordinances do we have where we can enforce litter are we and I know that's not your purview with you know I don't not look our cops have a lot more important things to do than follow people around and sign them for litter I really believe that we have a problem and it's not a problem you know specific to Prince William County I've seen it in other areas of the country when I've traveled and it tells me it's a labor shortage issue too

[01:31:27] but before we resort to the public funds you know helping with this problem what what efforts have we taken and have because I'm not convinced we've exhausted them yeah let me let me make sure we're clear on this landscaping this landscaping is not litter this is going out into make sure i understand what you're asking supervisor loss and this this is going out into the medians of highways and along highways and planting plants out there and maintaining them kind of as a beautification okay litter is a separate program but um anyway well maybe that's where there's a

[01:32:06] disconnect because i have in my notes that it's also includes litter litter um litter uh crews I think the county, I don't want to quote the county executive, but somebody said that during these budget conversations and put that in my head about, yes, sir.

[01:32:25] Can I, oh, I'm sorry. Oh, so I think what the director is alluding to is that litter abatement and enforcement is going to be resourced in a different way.

[01:32:43] This program is meant as beautification and has been described and funding forecasted for that purpose. Beautification in the sense that the department will be prepared in perpetuity to provide maintenance and support to whatever planting happens in the districts.

[01:33:04] Litter abatement, we have talked about as part of the proposed budget, and we talked about it as part of the solid waste. and so director I don't know if you want to say a bit more about yeah we we did put together and I'll ask Mr. Sinclair to help me another initiative to to either hire additional staff or actually hire a consultant not a consultant excuse me a contractor to help us pick up litter I don't know where that's in the process Dave if it's in it's one of the options or not but it is in the proposed budget as part of the the solid waste fee okay that's thank you for clarifying yes so

[01:33:39] That is part of the proposed budget to enhance and help, you know, particularly on the roadways. Commercial properties, it's private property. We do have some enforcement powers through Chapter 22 Refuse Code through our Neighborhood Services Division.

[01:33:56] If we, you know, we can cite property owners, it's got to be pretty – typically we have problems in dumpster areas where it gets pretty bad. We have reached out to commercial property owners. We've got a program going now with our communications office to continue that, but it's a constant challenge.

[01:34:13] Thank you. I appreciate it. I'm not going to belabor it. It's half a million dollars, but it's the point of it. And thank you for setting me straight that this is different than litter. These are public right-of-ways? Correct. Where you will be planning, and VDOT, you'll be coordinating with VDOT?

[01:34:31] We must get a permit from VDOT to do this, but VDOT will not maintain them, So the funds and the $500,000 includes maintenance for those additional seven areas. So we have a pretty big maintenance budget right now for landscaping, and this will just add to that as well as seven new installations, so to speak.

[01:34:49] I hope that's clear. Are the seven new installations like specific locations? We don't have specific locations. That's somewhat up to the board. But it's always been the program when we develop these programs, each district gets to pick a site. That's how it's been done in the past.

[01:35:05] Thank you, Tom. I appreciate it. and you were a gentleman when I said I pester you a lot about it. So I'm going to let Supervisor Bailey say something about this and Supervisor Weir, and then I'd like to take a straw vote and just keep on moving on. Yeah, I just wanted to make sure I'm in concert with Janine's questions.

[01:35:22] This is in relationship to the directive that we had earlier as it relates to the beautification, and you're bringing it back with a projection as to how we can do that. Am I correct in assuming that? You are correct. Supervisor, do you have a question on this?

[01:35:40] Just a comment. Mr. Smith, members of the board, before we start pursuing marigolds from medians and spending another half million dollars on a new initiative, I would strongly suggest that we take that half million dollars and address existing deficiencies in areas of neglect.

[01:35:55] I think that half million dollars would be much better spent on blight abatement, property management, or property code enforcement, improving the quality of the neighborhoods that are seeing that type of blight, dealing with streetlight deficiencies or malfunctioning streetlights.

[01:36:13] I think you get a greater payback both from a public safety standpoint and from a community value standpoint than dropping another half million dollars on putting flowers in the median strip. With that money, I think we should be addressing what the residents are really complaining about, which is an enforcement issue that falls along the same lines of beautification.

[01:36:38] If you beautify the neighborhood by getting or addressing some of the blight and addressing some of the other issues that haven't been addressed in some areas for quite some time, I think that's money better spent than putting flowers in the median strips, which will require maintenance ad infinitum.

[01:36:59] Supervisor Franklin. Sure, just want to chime in. So, yes, a couple of different things, though. As mentioned, yes, we can do code enforcement. We can already do that, but that's on private property. We're talking about public right-of-ways. And also, again, this is strictly towards maintenance.

[01:37:20] It's not just planting pretty flowers because we actually have to do native plants, but it's basically maintaining that we can go in, pull out the weeds, basically make it look manicured as opposed to right now vdot can only mow in there right away so we can already do code enforcement property enforcement that's totally separate than what we're talking about you mentioned street lights we all have a street light budget so we can also take care of street lights through that manner i've done several street lights already so i i hear your point i'm with you but but we already have things in place for the uh examples that you

[01:37:56] gave and I and to Bob's point just you know just making sure that the public understands I think that the transportation department has presented to us in the last three or four months in terms of the street lights and all that there is a budget supervisor Franklin says there is a budget for it and we've out they've come to our offices and ask us about those and so I I think we are in a good trajectory as it relates to what the public is requesting and making sure that those streetlights are put in.

[01:38:32] But this is just the maintenance I can see in terms of the directive that was given, the maintenance of cleaning up as we secured and we got our districts to make sure that that is continual in cleaning up. So I respect and understand what Bob is saying about the streetlights and what the public is asking for.

[01:38:50] That is in play already based upon the Transportation Department visiting our offices. Okay, if we can just keep moving on, otherwise we'll be here until midnight. Straw poll, landscaping countywide, please raise your hand if you're in favor.

[01:39:09] Raise your hand high so she can see it, by the way. Five, five, three? Okay, fine. So that, I'm just going to take that off of the, if you can keep track, Mr. Sinclair, I just took $500,000 off the 1.636.

[01:39:32] Okay. Gets on to the reforestation program, 1.0 full-time equivalent, 302,000. I know we talk a lot about reforestation and how important it is for the very – okay. So we've got one hand up. How about – everyone in favor of reforestation?

[01:39:54] Okay. Is that a no? Well, Madam Chair, so I thought we were going to be discussing, you know, your proposal, right? And that's where we initially started, and then somehow we deviated. i'm so sorry i thought everyone for the most part was okay with no it started over there but the reason why i bring this up is because we're taking straw pools based on the proposal that you gave with the 9.966 on the real estate tax and so this is probably going to shock you and 98 percent of the folks in this room but i almost agree with everything that you initially proposed except the

[01:40:30] real estate tax. And so I don't feel comfortable partaking in the straw pool when I wanted to propose a different tax rate. Okay. So we hadn't really gone through everybody talking in general. We can stop this for a moment and do a straw poll on the tax rate. Okay. Why don't we do that? And then we know what we're working off of. And Madam Chair, if I could just say, because the reason I was this, because there are some needs that we've heard from the public of being here. And So to surprise the where's point, if we're going to go into the residential tax and learn that, it's definitely going to take away something here.

[01:41:08] So either we're going to do that first and something here is not going to happen. And I can tell you there's some things that people want to see happen on this list. Madam Chair, but we also have to consider what you propose and what is left over to go ahead and fund those needs. And if we haven't settled on a rate, then we can't move forward.

[01:41:26] Okay, so that's a good place. So I presented .966, which was the flat tax zero increase of the bill. Supervisor Weir is doing .964 to take 760 of the $1.6 million, I assume. Did you have a different tax rate you were going to propose?

[01:41:44] I did, Madam Chair. And again, I just want to mention that I am happy to see that we have come full circle with the 215 in the data center tax proposal that was initially thrown out a few months ago. I also agree with the proposed pay for all of our public safety personnel.

[01:42:05] The only thing that I would say, also agree with the Animal Service Center Vet Clinic proposal, the only thing that I would like to see for us consider is instead of funding the state-run public defender's office, and by me saying this, I'm not trying to minimize the work that you all do if you're all still here in this room.

[01:42:23] I recall when we initially had conversations about this office being established and how we were told that it was going to be a one-time thing, but it seems to me that it's reoccurring every single year. So at what point do we say, okay, wait a minute, is this going to be the final year, or how are we going to be moving forward in terms of funding a state-ran office?

[01:42:41] So with that being said, I would like to make a substitution motion. I guess that's the proper way to do it. I know that Supervisor Rear has given another rate, and I would like to make a substitute motion to propose a .947 rate. And the reason why I am proposing a .947 rate is this.

[01:43:00] We know all of the hardships that we've experienced over the last three years, the pandemic, inflation, and how everything virtually has gone up. And so I would like for us to arrive at a win-win situation where we're actually giving the taxpayers a break.

[01:43:15] And we accomplished that with this rate, and we can pretty much fund everything which would be paid for with the increase to the general workforce at 7% versus 9%. Well, I guess we could.

[01:43:41] Oh, I'm sorry, Madam Chair, and I forgot that would save the average taxpayer about $100. That would be the savings. So we accomplished pretty much everything, virtually everything that you initially proposed, except the Public Defender's Office. I would like to use whatever's left over for the military spouse tax exception program that I talked about.

[01:43:59] How much is that? That would be roughly $336,000 based on the numbers that we got. Yeah, because we were talking about that. Yeah, and I do understand based on Michelle's email that we would have to do a public hearing draft and ordinance and work with the county attorney's office, which I intend on doing at our next meeting initiating that directive.

[01:44:18] Okay. So I think, honestly, we should just start with yours. yours is the lowest and sort of the most radical for mine with a 0.947 and then lowering the raises for the general workforce from 9% to 7%. I don't know that saying lowering is the right word. I mean, you're still getting an increase. So 7% pay bump for the general workforce.

[01:44:45] Okay. So that's on the floor. We can discuss it. Yeah. Questions. Thanks. So, Supervisor Vega, is that a 4% compensation, like pay scale adjustment with a 3% merit?

[01:45:02] Yes. Okay. On that note, I actually thought of some additional questions I had on the general workforce from earlier. Does that matter for your vote in this instance?

[01:45:22] It might. Okay. So, what is that question? Yeah. Yes. So, right now the proposal is 6 and 3. So now we're going four and three, so a reduction of 2%. So roughly $6 million?

[01:45:40] 5.8. Okay. I actually will support that, Supervisor Vega. Like I said, I wanted to do things for agencies that we were really hemorrhaging employees, whether it was public safety or non-sworn.

[01:46:05] I didn't expect last year's discussions to come back with a $54 million price tag for compensation scales that, frankly, we just went through in 2020. The board adjusted the pay scales right after the pandemic hit.

[01:46:25] We spent millions of dollars back then, like three years ago. And here we are spending tens of millions of dollars.

[01:46:37] Public safety it's a different discussion. I also have brought this up over my last many years that Prince William County has a 37 and a half hour work week. I know I discussed that with the county executive and his team when at some point in these budget discussions, to my knowledge, we're probably still one of the few in the region with a 37 and a half hour work week for the non-sworn.

[01:47:08] I appreciate all the hard work that they do, but the reality of it is the public safety folks have tougher schedules, never have the opportunity to work remotely, and the risks are much higher.

[01:47:26] And I frankly think that their pay scales are different for that reason. And I can support that tax rate based on those arguments. I'm just gonna point out right now. We have the public safety at 15% with a 3 and she's suggesting general employees be a 4% and a 3 I You know that seems a little say she she's suggesting a 4% with a

[01:47:59] 3% step and right now we have public safety at a 15 and a 3% and I the disparity between the 4 and the 15 seems like a lot to me you know based on the analysis I mean the numbers that were that initially that the county executive came up with were done by a consultant doing in medians and not even the highest of the high it was done for the the medians based on a compensation study across the region and I think yeah you know we we want to have a well compensated I mean the whole idea of this budget was to compensate our workforce and so I can't support a four and a three I could only support a six that's fine and and I'll take note that

[01:48:38] that consultant didn't even talk to agency directors didn't visit the work sites and you know I just because he consulted for our county and presented his proposals doesn't mean I accept them and like I said we have a general workforce and a non sworn who's at 37 and a half hour work week the public safety agencies would probably absolutely love to have that work week and we know the reality of it is they don't matter of fact fire and rescue has

[01:49:15] a 56 hour work week so we can have these debates back and forth I understand math and 15 is a lot higher than four but like I said there's reasons why I have the positions that I do supervisor Bodie and then we can take a straw poll thank you madam chair a quick question for for staff um if we went down to the what was the nine four seven service Vega four six four six how much would that take out of the contribution to the school system I did the calculation I

[01:49:53] apologize to the board at nine four seven the reduction to the county would be seven point two million and so the reduction to the schools would be I get 9.6 million so thank you for that and the reason why i bring that up is while i do appreciate the conversation about general workforce versus public safety and we do believe as a board that public

[01:50:32] safety does have a harder job which is again madam chair's point of why we are here we are talking about 18 percent versus the uh the the lower amount for the general workforce i also want to make sure that as we talk about lowering the tax rate we are talking about dollars going away from uh supporting the school system at a time where a lot of folks have reached out to me in my office about learning loss struggling with uh absenteeism with with kids uh re-engaging with parents um and frankly teacher pay i have heartburn of us pulling more money away from the school system now i know that some folks may say oh well we're still giving them you know 72 73 more

[01:51:10] million dollars than we did last year which is historic we should celebrate that but i think that we should be giving them more because just like was brought up just now their jobs are tougher too their jobs have been made tougher over the last three years because of the pandemic and i think that at a time where we're talking about teacher pay peeling back more money from the school system i think is the wrong direction that's why i'm not going to be supporting that thank you okay thank you supervisor weir and then we'll do it and supervisor vega and then we'll do a straw poll ms madden can you clear out the speakers list because right now i'm just looking it lights, it's just easier. Thank you. Supervisor Weir. I'm actually willing to support

[01:51:48] Supervisor Vega's number and a couple of reasons why. You're saying 6.6 million is the reduction, Mr. Sinclair? The reduction to the county would be 7.2 million. So, okay, 7.2 minus the 1.6 net available left on this chart here. It's going to be, because of the increase in the computer to peripherals tax that offsets some percentage of the seven-point whatever correct what's your what's your net net with the increase in the CNP under the

[01:52:26] chair's proposal that included the the CNP so you've baked that into the calculation okay still in all that's roughly a 7% reduction in 126 million dollar increase in the budget we're not cutting anything we're just reducing the increase um still affords you the opportunity to pay for everything um it just reduces how much we're increasing the budget and how much we're gonna have in what is essentially discretionary spending at the end of the day if we want to give more if we want to give more of the schools and

[01:53:05] i'm all with you on that then i think the first thing this board needs to do is get rid of the revenue sharing agreement you want to fund them to the level that you want to fund them and i want to fund them then we have to throw that arbitrary number out and do it based on real numbers and not Just a percentage base, and I'm going to move that for next year immediately after this budget cycle.

[01:53:26] Supervisor Vega, then we'll take a straw poll on your proposal. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I appreciate the discussion. Just want to say that, yeah, we're talking about $10 million cut to the school out of an $800 million budget. That is a drop in the bucket. And so also in regards to the study, Madam Chair, there's a reason why the cost of living was not included.

[01:53:46] When you compare the cost of living of Prince William County to our actual neighboring jurisdictions, the cost of living in Prince William County is great. It's way lower than, you know, Fairfax, Arlington, which we don't neighbor. And I've made that point from the very beginning since that study came out. We neighbor Stafford.

[01:54:03] We neighbor, you know, Falk here. And so there is a big discrepancy there. And so just for the folks here and for the folks watching at home, again, $10 million out of an $800 million budget. Supervisor Angry. I hadn't said anything.

[01:54:18] I know, that's fine. And I'll just be quick. I mean, and I know I have all the public safety. I mean, I am a public safety. No, I'm a volunteer firefighter. I served this country 23 years. If you can find another way to do what you want to do, I think you can do that. But, you know, even when you talk general employees, you know, they're still a part of this whole family.

[01:54:38] So I don't want to start cutting into, you know, pitting between public safety servants and general employees and lowering their race because they're not public safety servants, which I completely

get.

[01:54:54] Don't get me wrong. It's a tough job. I've been there, done that. But if you can find another way to do that, I think that's it because I don't think that's right. You know, I'm not interested in really getting into our general employees because we're just going to have this new situation. I mean, I always say, you know, decisions have unintended consequences.

[01:55:14] And this is literally what brought us here today. What we did with our police department was unintended to all of this. What we're going to do if we're talking about general employees is going to have an unintended consequence that this board will fill after this session. So we have a proposal on the floor for a .947 rate by giving our general county employees a 4% raise instead of a 6% raise.

[01:55:40] Everyone gets a 3% raise. can we take a straw poll on whether who's in favor of that madam chair i just want to reiterate we're not cutting anyone's pay my proposal is saying that instead of a nine percent we're doing seven percent and i want to be on the record don't put words in my mouth i'm not saying i don't value our general workforce i do it's just that if we really want to give the taxpayers a break while funding public safety in its entirety and still increasing the general works uh pay we arrive with a 9.47 rate. And I guess our one difference is we have a zero increase in our residential tax bill, and I think that's an amazing thing in the first time in 15 years.

[01:56:18] Madam Chair, but just not increasing is not a favor to them after what this board has done over the last three years. They too deserve a break. All those in favor of Supervisor Vega's proposal, raise your hand. Okay, so that straw poll falls. Why don't we go on to Supervisor weirs point nine four seven rate and his one no his was nine six four hers was

[01:56:51] nine four seven I know no so so I'm assuming he's not withdrawing is he still wants his point nine six four do you still want your goat to do a straw poll on your point nine six four why but what we're at nine six six is what I'm saying so if you want to change it to 964 we're gonna okay and that was with a one percent cut just a general employee that's just just all it does is reduce the net available left right to roughly nine hundred thousand dollars instead of

[01:57:28] 1.6 million give or take please keep in mind the through straw vote the board added landscaping and reforestation yeah as Supervisor Vegas said we return to the original sheet. So that drops it down from 1.6 to roughly 900,000. And you want us to vote on their proposal? Would you like us to straw poll it right now? Sure. Okay. Straw poll on supporting Supervisor Weir's .964, which reduces the bottom line of the 1.6 to roughly 900,000.

[01:58:06] 900,000. All those in favor of Supervisor Weir's proposal, please. With landscaping and reforestation. No. No, no, no. We've got to go back and add it. We're just establishing the base first. Got you. Okay. All those in favor of Supervisor Weir's proposal, please raise your hand.

[01:58:24] 964. 964. Supervisor Beggar? Oh, okay. Okay. Okay. So we're back to point 966. So I guess it's just us two. Supervisor Franklin. Sure. Thank you. Just wanted to make a couple of comments. Some of it has already been expressed.

[01:58:42] I do think it's important And I think this board does share a concern about our public safety workforce, which is why I think we're having this discussion, obviously, this is the appropriate time. We did what we had to do with the police department, and I think we are attempting to bring as close as possible our other public safety entities.

[01:59:04] I will also just point out that I've also talked to people within our general government, and they, too, are concerned about the current budget, right? And so when you talk about a budget, you often talk about a compromise. And so where we are is trying to figure out how do we get as close as possible to what everyone is asking for.

[01:59:26] And I think that's what this process reflects. So I do support the current proposal at .966, I believe, Because I think that it gets as close as possible to a fair compromise where everyone can share in an increase regardless of what your title is.

[01:59:48] And then particularly as we move towards the list that we were discussing, we do have some things that we need to put investments in within this county. Some of those things we've already discussed. supervisor Vega mentioned about some other priorities that I think we can get to without having to cut further cut costs and cut investment and so looking forward to continuing that discussion okay so the supervisor Bailey so I was trying to run through the list and you guys want to make comments is it are

[02:00:25] they pertinent to the the next item of reforestation or is it just general stuff okay well are we back to 96.6 yeah this is pertinent mine's minor to 966 but go ahead if you're to 966 what is your I think I think when we're considering 966 one of the things that's going on addressed is yes it results in roughly a zero based or a zero net increase in real estate taxes but I think what everybody's also forgetting is the solid waste fee and particularly the tipping fee, which is going to add a significant burden to anybody that's got a cartridge carrier doing their trash.

[02:01:04] So anybody with an HOA or anybody that's got a contract, you've got an effective tax increase. Now, Public Works will call it a fee, but that fee is actually a tax. So you're not actually delivering an end result net zero because you're adding on that $40 a ton tipping fee, which will add significantly to the existing trash bills.

[02:01:27] So by keeping that hidden in the background, you're actually increasing the burden at the end of the day. If you go to 964 or you go to what Supervisor Vega had suggested, then you effectively either eliminate that additional burden or you actually create a net savings for the taxpayer.

[02:01:47] But not addressing the budget in its entirety, you've got to factor in the fire levy, you've got to factor in the solid waste fee, all that other stuff. It's nice to say we're delivering a zero impact, but we really aren't.

[02:02:03] Supervisor, you're welcome to say that the $7 impact from the fire levy makes a huge difference in everyone's lives. We are close to a zero-based tax bill. If you want to talk about the solid waste fee, we haven't had a tipping fee in 40 years. All the other jurisdictions do.

[02:02:21] These are fee-based services that are covering things that are for solid waste growing and related to their business. So there are needs in the solid waste area, and Tom Smith set up an outline of those and talked about those and why he needed that increase that we hadn't had in, I forget, how many years.

[02:02:42] Madam Chair. And so you're welcome to split hairs and say, you're right, we're raising everybody's tax bill because of the solid waste fee because it's not covering our current costs, then that's fine. I'm still believing that as a real estate tax bill is going to have an average zero increase.

[02:02:59] Madam Chair, it's not splitting hairs. It's actually being transparent. If you go to the other jurisdictions, they bake everything into the rate. They don't add, for the most part, separate levies. And as I told Mr. Smith when he came to my office this week or perhaps last week, The fact that we're in a situation that we have to raise a solid waste fee and now finally add a tipping fee is because of a lack of foresight by both this board and its predecessors for allowing them to use up their reserves and get to the point where they now have to do a capital expenditure with no money that hasn't been planned for for more than a decade.

[02:03:37] That particular need has been known for a very long time, and the fact that we are now at the point when we have to do something and we suddenly have to pass an immediate burden on to the taxpayers in the form of a tipping fee that they've never seen before, tells me that this board as a unit, both this current board, the past board, and quite frankly, Public Works and the Solid Waste Division, has mismanaged this for decades.

[02:04:04] That's not splitting hairs. That's being fiscally responsible, and that's understanding how you budget out in the future. If you've got a known capital expenditure, you don't sit on your hands for a decade. I think we have one of the best solid waste, run solid waste facilities in the entire Commonwealth, and I refuse to disparage them by saying that they've been mismanaged.

[02:04:27] But I don't want to, it's right, I will back that. It might be a wonderful facility, but the way that it is funded and the way that it has not been properly funded for a decade is an issue that we should discuss. Madam Chair. Supervisor Bode, then Supervisor Bailey, then Supervisor Lawson.

[02:04:44] Okay, Supervisor Bailey, Bode, Lawson, how about that? Okay, thank you. So, one of the things that I think, I think we're on a good trajectory in terms of discussing what Madam Chair has presented and, thank you guys, Bob, your voice is caring, you've got a heavy voice.

[02:05:06] Okay. I think we're on a good trajectory in terms of what Madam Chair has proposed. The thing that I want to remind the board, when you talk about longevity and things that have happened in the past, we're trying to right some wrongs in terms of things that have happened in the past.

[02:05:21] no cut against my colleagues that have been here longer than me i respect that but as we do that as we do that it's in writing some wrongs when you talk about salaries for our for our employees that is essential we talk about um writing some wrongs in terms of the salary for our public safety employees that is essential and so we have to do it collectively and respect the fact that they are here for us and so I'm really focused on what we need to do for public safety tonight

[02:05:57] and and supporting them and our general agencies and our employees because they work hard for us and we don't need to argue about that we just need to support them as we go forward there's some old stuff that we need to clean out and we need to be transparent about that and so as we do that that's not going to happen overnight it's going to take some time and so um in the rhetoric of us not wanting to support certain entities that's not true we are here tonight to make sure

[02:06:33] that we right some wrongs and so i'm very interested as my colleague said in terms of transparency i'm very interested in how we do that collectively in a positive way rather than arguing about it because we don't accomplish anything by arguing about it and so madam chair with the list that you were going through I agree with you in terms of the community events I can't do that but where we are

now I respect the fact that the county executive brought things back to us that we requested in this budget grant writers reforestation landscaping I respect the

[02:07:11] fact that he did that he heard us because the community said that and so that's kind of where you know I think we need to just keep a good rhythm and a positive rhythm as we go forward and identifying this and finalizing this and madam chair I have a question in terms of the 15% for the PSC could you just clarify that for me please um so the public service communicators are the people in the 911 operators and they're I believe they should be treated as part

[02:07:47] of a public safety, as a public safety unit, though at the moment they're not. When they gave me an estimate, I think it's almost everybody in the department except a few of the admins for the 15 percent increase. And I mainly, you know, after touring there with the people from the FCC, there is even a push at the Commonwealth, the regional level, as well as the national level, to have public service communicators recognized as public safety as a group because of the training.

[02:08:16] You know, my point was that they're trained for six months. They're highly trained. They report up through Dan Alexander. They're still in the public safety realm. And after watching them and talking to some of the people, I think they should be brought in under the public safety umbrella, which is what that changes.

[02:08:36] And that's brand new and different. Okay. Thank you. Madam Chair. Supervisor Lawson. A couple questions for you. Does that mean that they will be a 25-year pay scale or retire at 25?

[02:08:54] No. Is that what you mean by the umbrella? Right now all of our sworn officers are. Right, and they're not sworn, but it was just at this point in time as we work on integrating them, and they're still not a separate unit, they're still under general government, just for this year giving them, you know, a 15% pay bump to recognize that we're going to try to work them into our public safety umbrella yeah they're the first of the first responders yeah um so uh a

[02:09:27] different kind of on a different note but somewhat of a same discussion and then i i have another question um what about the uh security officers at the at the jdc are they are they sworn do we know if security officers at the juno detention center are sworn officers they're not yeah

[02:09:53] Okay, I think we need to look into, I'm not given a directive we'll talk about later, but I've been to the JDC, and they certainly have heavy responsibilities about keeping that facility secure.

[02:10:10] So we'll revisit that later. All right. But while we're having this discussion, I thought of the JDC. So we're back to 96.6, right? we're back to 96.6 we're back to the 1.6 million we've taken 500 off yeah the community events but but before we go back to that mm-hmm yeah landscaping right and reforestation no we haven't passed reforestation oh everybody stopped

[02:10:44] me when we were doing okay okay did you okay okay yeah I thought so was it yeah I didn't really think we finished can we just do reforestation for my own all those in favor of reforestation spending for reforestation yes everyone okay I want trees trees are good it's it's a good program okay used it and so

[02:11:19] that that goes us down next to grant writers okay so but before we go back to this list. I actually would like to make a proposal I'd like the board to consider and given the comments that were made, I don't expect it to pass but I think it's worth the ask.

[02:11:43] We have a public safety scale and we have a general workforce scale. I've repeated many times tonight why there's a difference. Public safety retires at 25 years, general workforce 30 for full retirement. There's lots of different things I've already laid out.

[02:11:59] What I made clear in December when we adjusted the police scale, which I fully supported at 17.5%, is that I do not like the idea of big margins, big gaps in our different agencies.

[02:12:15] They're all vital. They're all play a part in keeping this community healthy, safe, and secure. With that in mind, I would like to discuss doing for those agencies what we did for the police department and all fairness and equity at 17.5%.

[02:12:35] Because if we're going to look at adjustments across the board for the general workforce, then I think the same argument applies for public safety. And I'm going to go back to Supervisor Vega's proposals.

[02:12:53] I know the general workforce doesn't like this, but the reality of it is you've got advantages and differences in your work and responsibilities. and everything else that I've laid out before that public safety doesn't and I think that we need to keep those agencies more equitable with each other there's there's been tension since

[02:13:22] December that we need to clear up and DFR they work a 56-hour work week 56 hours that that's a huge difference from 37 and a half hour work week huge difference and we need to have these discussions. So I'm going to go back to suggesting that we don't be so aggressive in changing the general workforce compensation scale. We just did it. We just did it. What are our peers doing

[02:14:01] in the area? Have we looked at what they're doing or have we looked at how many hours a week they're required to work where Prince William is 37 and a half? Are we doing that? I don't think we are. have not been given clear answers so i i think that we should look at reducing and going back to either depends on what the math is dave you can help me out but what would it take in a reduction in general workforce pay scale proposals to and i'll make it very clear public

[02:14:37] safety does not like it when when the board does this they they don't like pitting against each other or against general workforce so this is not coming from public safety folks but it's something i believe there is a stark difference and i don't like the tension that has been created among our public safety agencies since december and the police department deserved that big bump but i think everybody else that serves this county for public safety deserves it too so what what numbers

[02:15:14] are we looking at in order to go from 15 to 17 and a half would require an additional 3.4 million dollars okay so that's a little like a one and a half percent adjustment on the general workforce so so reduced each one percent on general non-sworn is 2.9 right so that you said three three and what million 3.4 million to go from 15 to 17 and a half percent right so so am i right 1% is 2.9.

[02:15:48] So instead of giving a 9%, it would be a 6% adjustment. We'll keep merit out. A 6% adjustment, we could do 4.5 for general workforce, right, and 17.5 for public safety?

[02:16:08] I think it would be a little higher on general workforce. Instead of 6, it would be like 4.8, 4.7. You're talking fractions. Okay. Yeah. And that's not including the 3% merit.

[02:16:25] That's not including the 3% merit. Well, the 3% merit is for public safety also, so that would be a 17.5, so it would be a 21.5. Right, 21.5 and a 7.5, right?

[02:16:44] You're welcome to put that forward. I just did. Okay. That's fine. I will say I will, you know, this is the first time since 2008 that we've deviated from general employees being different from public safety and we're doing that to try to adjust and and do that i i can't do that further at the expense of the general employees but that's just me we can take a stroke yeah i and i i do want everybody to know this is not the first time i have made these distinctions and compensation i i did it when cory stewart was the chair of this board it's not the first time

[02:17:24] there is a difference in our first responders and the responsibility on them the park and rec department is incredibly important to the county but the reality of it is is their roles and responsibilities are incredibly different and that's why and we're hemorrhaging public safety agencies and the public safety agencies we're hemorrhaging them we're not the county the budget director just affirmed what i believed is that we don't have a high vacancy rate in park and rec And, Seth, sorry, your agency is my example tonight, but that's the reality of it.

[02:18:02] Okay, let's take a straw poll. Supervisor Bode. Yeah, just sorry. Before we go there with that, we do have programmed next year for the sheriff to get an additional market adjustment, right? Or is it ADC? Sheriff. You are correct.

[02:18:19] There is a two-year sort of built-in adjustment for general government and a two-year built-in adjustment for sheriff. I do want to add two additional things. I am receiving information and want to make sure that I'm clear that JDC is its own pay ban and not considered sworn and not on the public safety pay ban.

[02:18:45] They are considered general government and on general government pay ban. I also want to say there are hard-to-fill positions in general government. And so I think we missed the opportunity to say earlier that there are a number of positions that are hard to fill. and that we are experiencing recruitment challenges in a number of general government agencies.

[02:19:06] And I'm happy to sort of go through some of those positions if and when needed. Well, I certainly know that mental health is one of them. We had that discussion last year, and I'm assuming that's still the case. So if we want to separate, you know, community services and have a discussion about that agency and compensation, I'm willing to do that, but I've made my case pretty clear, and unless you want to really dissect it.

[02:19:35] So Supervisor Bodian, Supervisor Angry has a comment. Yeah, so why I ask that question is, one, to leave it there that we still are looking to adjust the sheriff next year as well. And I guess my thought is that if, for whatever reason, we can't quite get there this year because of where we are right now in terms of talking through it, it would be possible to make the rest of the adjustment to everyone next year.

[02:19:57] so we're talking about going from 15 to 17 and a half we could do 15 this year and do the rest of that 2.5 next year i i just want to throw that out because i know that some folks are having heartburn about this will be the only time we'll ever be able to change it um but i also get that there are folks that are looking to get that right now um at the same time i do have heartburn about like i said lowering the the pay raise for those hard to fill positions in the general workforce because we haven't dissected enough to know how this will affect those um so i just want to talk

[02:20:35] through that a little bit more and also say that i hope that regardless of what happens in this budget cycle there's look for that rest of the adjustment next year as well thank you supervisor angry social

services is hemorrhaging right now okay we know that they don't have enough counselors in there. They're leaving left and right. They move on to other localities. There's higher pay there. This is why I think it's very difficult to separate out any general employee and even try to further break them down into different, you know, bands, if you will. This is not easy. I think we

[02:21:13] got a good starting point. I know what brought us here is because everyone complained. I didn't complain. They had concerns about, you know, speeding, reckless driving, deaths on the road, high crimes, whatever the reasons are, we focused on our police at the time because there were shortages, police probably leaving, the pay wasn't the same as everyone else in the round area.

[02:21:34] So we made that adjustment first. It woke up the rest of our unintended consequences, which wasn't ever the fact that we don't have faith in our sheriff's office or our ADC or any of our other sections. Because I will tell you, I was at the courthouse, took a tour of the courthouse, understood exactly what our sheriffs do and our judges and our criminals or whatever you want to call them.

[02:21:57] They're just the cases that go on there. That's a full-time job just in that building alone, which is to capacity, by the way, and we know that. But there are worlds that happen in situations that are relevant, but I just, you know, if we can't find another way to get there, I don't think it's a good idea to mess with, and it's not lowering what we've done for our general employees, But the pay bump that we're expecting to give them as well, which is already lower than what we're doing here.

[02:22:27] The fact is, and I know we did this three years ago with that same group, the general employees. But today is not the same as it was even three years ago. And so, you know, there are some needs out there that apply in that, you know, band or batch of employees as well. So, you know, this is not easy what we're doing.

[02:22:44] I get it. But I got to tell you, I think this is what we've done here is the best we can do for now. And I would love to talk, and I think Bob had a great point because I've been saying it the whole time, that we need to look at our departments and find some efficiency spending in them alone, and that may be where the savings come from that we can do more things with.

[02:23:03] But I think what we've done here is spot on. It's the best we can do at this time, and we can only do better by understanding the needs going into next to school year's budget. Okay. Why don't we take a straw poll on supervisor?

[02:23:20] I wanted to respond. Oh, okay. I'm sorry. Thank you. Supervisor Bodie, thank you for, you know, your comments, and Supervisor Angry as well. They're not easy, and leadership sometimes requires, or a lot of times requires, tough decisions and decisions that not everybody's going to agree with.

[02:23:39] For the record, my daughter works for the Department of Social Services in Missouri, so I have a daughter in social work. So it's something that I'm not just dismissive about with the general workforce. But the reality of it is, is we are hemorrhaging public safety employees weekly.

[02:24:07] And that's my concern. And money talks the loudest. It's just how humans are wired. Supervisor Bodie, we don't know what this board is going to look like next year. Every seat is up for election.

[02:24:23] So I'd rather do it this year. I may be enjoying the beaches of Florida next year in budget time. I want to do it this year while I know I'm here, it can make a difference. And I would really appreciate if you

and others joined me on it.

[02:24:42] Okay. A straw poll on Supervisor Lawson's proposal to do 17.5% for the public safety. That doesn't include, does that include the PSC people, the numbers that you're giving us?

[02:25:03] Yes, ma'am, it does. Okay, okay. And then at giving the general county employees a raise of only 4.8%, plus everybody gets another 3% on top of that. All those in Supervisor Lawson's in favor of her proposal, please raise your hand.

[02:25:26] Okay. We go on. Can we go back to going through our list? Okay. Next on is reforestation. We did that already. That was 7-1. Grants writers.

[02:25:44] Everybody seems to think that we need more grants, and we need grants writers across the county. These aren't specific to any area that someone was suggesting earlier. They're just general and will be used as necessary. It's two full-time equivalents at $300,000. Does anybody, you know, I'm generally in favor of grants writers because they probably pay for themselves.

[02:26:05] Does anybody have any additional comments on that? Madam Chair. Supervisor Vega. So they're asking for $300,000 for $200,000. Where did we get this figure from? I don't know. Did we do comparables? It's a general estimate for two FTEs, including salary, benefits, taxes, technology, subscription services, so that we know what grants are out there when they are due, things of that nature, what the grant requirements are.

[02:26:40] Supervisor Bailey. Dave, I would assume, Dave, this is a question also, in your research for the grant writers, You did research on salary.com and things like that just to understand what that budget looks like in terms of requirements and benefits, I would assume.

[02:26:58] We are budgeting the salaries at the minimum, as we do for every new position. Okay, okay. With benefits included? With standard benefits that every county employee is offered, including medical, dental, technology costs, subscription-based services so that we know the universe of what is out there.

[02:27:25] Madam Chair, I just have another comment, too. I want to support this because this is something also that we talked about in terms of opportunities and missed opportunities, and that's getting grants in-house on the bottom line.

[02:27:43] It also can support things like opportunities to write grants to bring revenue in to support services that the public is requiring us to provide. So I'm going to support this because we need it, because we are missing opportunities, both in terms of transparency, both in the past and currently, to bring additional funding for the services in the county.

[02:28:07] And going back to something that Supervisor Lawson said, in terms of the mental health piece, this is an opportunity for us to have grants come in and provide the subject matter experts, in terms of therapists and things like that, to provide mental health services with the CRC, for example.

[02:28:26] So I'm going to support it, and I think it's a good idea. Supervisor Brody. Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple quick things. One, I didn't get a chance to talk about reforestation too much, but I supported it, obviously. and I know that I had a directive out as part of my fast track resolution to expand the program for that. Glad to see that we're making the first step there. Grant writers, I couldn't agree more with Supervisor Bailey and I think, Chair Wheeler, you also said it. These folks can pay for their own salaries within a few months of getting grants into the door. They can bring millions and millions of

dollars into the county in the form of grants and I hope that they take some tutelage under Rick Canizales, Maggie Landis and transportation folks because those folks do a really great job, bring millions

[02:29:04] of dollars of other funds and buckets of money that are taxpayer funds but regional and federal and state money as opposed to just us going in alone from our local funds so I hope that's on there too. Sustainability is on my top of mind for that as well as mental health as Supervisor Bailey said housing because I know there's grants out there for housing as well and parks and recreation and some other things so I hope that you know if we do fund those positions in the budget that the county executive will get started working very quickly on where those hooks to be housed, but there's a lot of potential there, so I'll be supporting this.

[02:29:39] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you. Supervisor Vega? Thank you, Madam Chair. So these two positions for grant writers are countywide. You teed it up perfectly for me, Supervisor Bodie. How many departments do we have in this county? You cannot be a subject matter expert in searching for grants for the various departments that we have, and I know that the police department does a great job with the resources that they already have by sworn members of their department and I can say the same about the various departments so for me this would be a waste because nobody knows the department better than the folks that run it and the ones that have currently been doing the job of looking for

[02:30:18] grants and applying for the grants so I will not be supporting this. Supervisor Weir and then Supervisor Franklin. I would simply point out to the board that there's no such thing as free money and these grants come with generally speaking matching fund requirements so you're going to have to fund that somewhere or find the money for that.

[02:30:39] Quite frankly, although I'm not necessarily opposed to having grant writers for general government operations, with the size of the administration of this particular jurisdiction, that we don't have people with that expertise currently operating a grant writing program or a grant seeking program in each individual division is unfathomable to me.

[02:31:07] And I suspect that is actually the case, that we do have staff that are doing it and are qualified to do it and should be doing it. And I'm certainly sure that the police department is because it actually shows up in some of their budget in terms of the VDOT safety grants and the DOT safety grants.

[02:31:24] So, I mean, it seems like overkill. I would just not oversell this. Supervisor Franklin, and then I'll have a comment. Sure, just a couple of things to clarify. Yes, some grants do require a match, but not necessarily all of them.

[02:31:43] And there are thousands of grants that exist for various programs that we may need. And then just talking about the role of a grant writer. It is true that each department has their specialty. They know how to do the work of that department, but a grant writer doesn't get into the work of that department.

[02:32:01] They simply go and find the grants that exist from the feds and the state, and even actually may be from some non-profits. that pertain to whatever that issue area is. So it's not like the grant writer would need to be an expert in policing to go out and find grants that are specific to what will be essentially DOJ budgets that get the federal grants, the state that will get grants that they put out from the General Assembly.

[02:32:31] You don't need to be an expert in the actual department to be a grant writer that either a grant writer that can that can help to respond to grants or that can go out and actually seek grants that's not the

role of a of a grant writer so i'm just going to chime in and say you know for a long time we didn't go after grants in this county because we know what happens when we go after grants i'm looking miss casciato it's it was the it's the idea that you once you go you get a grant and you start something then you got to keep continuing it and so we've got to be very careful about not getting grants for operating and we've actually done that over the last few because there are a lot of grants out there.

[02:33:07] So the fact that we don't have a grant writer in every single department is really because we're fiscally responsible because we're not trying to just start programs with grants. You know, we do have grant writers in specific areas. There are other areas where we don't have grant writers, and this is just an attempt to help out certain departments that might not have the expertise to help them find the grants that they might apply for because you really do need to have to be a subject matter expert to write a good grant, and they can certainly help with that.

[02:33:35] You know, this is just, you know, right at the moment, given where we are in history, there is a lot of federal money out there. There's a lot of state money out there. And we have to make sure that, and some of these things are one time and they're capital and they're not necessarily operating. We have to make sure that we're trying to find all those.

[02:33:53] And so I do, I just want to go on record as saying we've got to be careful that we just don't go out of grants for loss of operating because then we end up having picking them up after they're done. So, Supervisor Vega. and i agree with you madam chair um so should these two positions be funded i would expect that they would honor uh your your your your comments right now and that we don't go down that road but my question to staff is do we have any data to support the need of these two positions um a perfect example was just given our department of transportation rick and company they do a great job and that's just one department and so i'm wondering if if there's any data to support the

[02:34:29] need of these two positions have we missed out on a major grant opportunity with arpa funding we've been using a consultant at the moment to assist us with the grant writing. I will also point out these ideas came from the board members. I'm sorry, it came from who? The board. The board.

[02:34:50] During the budget process. Thank you. Okay. With that, we have two grant, you want to say something? Sorry, Supervisor Bailey. Yeah, thank you so much. I just wanted to reply to Supervisor Vega's question. Yes, we have. And one of the things is what one of the gentlemen that was here earlier today. When you talk about federal grants, we missed out on opportunities in the last two years in applying for federal grants that could help us here in the county. And so when you talk

[02:35:24] about grant writers, going back to what Supervisor Franklin was saying, it takes time away from what your job responsibilities are in each department. And so when we're missing these opportunities to support the services for the county and because we don't have the bandwidth to do it we're missing out on funding to support our community so to answer your question yes we have and and i've i've watched this happen during covid over the past three years so that is certainly the reason

[02:35:56] why i made the request uh not by myself i'm sure but i made the request for this opportunity to support the community in this way supervisor we're mr. Sinclair you just mentioned the consultants that we currently use for this what's the what's the out-of-pocket on that and I'm assuming that's still baked into the FY 24 budget so out of the fun I think it's out of the Finance Department budget we contacted with IEM they do some of our ARPA administration work but we were able to do a contract modification with them to do some grant research for us so

[02:36:35] they have been letting us know if there are grant opportunities we send them out to the departments they're available to help write grants if needed do you know what the ballpark expenditure on that contract is i think i think we for the addendum i think we encumbered 50 000 but i'd like to if i could follow up with that please all right okay so you know for the discussion if we could have a straw poll on the grant writers at 300 000 all those in favor please raise your

[02:37:07] hand okay did you get that um you know we have two more parks and recreation maintenance and tourism plan but supervisor Vega were you gonna bring up one up something that you wanted to bring forward like with the like your email asked about the tax abatement for okay so not in this well that's what I'm saying so we if that I'm just looking at that number of 336 if that's we may not have enough to do all but you know if you want us to consider that as one of the other priorities you

[02:37:47] know in terms of the tourism master plan or parks and rec would you like us to do that okay um do you want to speak to it pardon me the tax abatement program yeah uh it would be a reduction of $336,000 in general revenue so the impact on the county would be only $144,000 based on the revenue sharing agreement oh because we're not paying for it we're just not getting the revenue right ah $144,000 on on our side and that uh madam chair does that roughly was it was

[02:38:23] it 80 we were estimating about 60 60 60 mr. shorter would you like to say something just to just to remind that that action would require an ordinance change so we would as supervisor vega mentioned need to deal with the via resolution and then we would be able to provide for some additional action madam chair supervisor bode and then supervisor weir but to that and i think where we're going is we want to at least save that amount just like we two years ago saved a million dollars for sustainability not knowing yet where that was going to go knowing that I think there is consensus among the board to pursue that so we want to save that money now so when we do

[02:39:03] have the legislative action necessary to get it passed we will have those monies already baked in to have those impacts contemplated. Thank you Madam. Supervisor Weir then Supervisor Franklin. Sort of what Supervisor Bode was saying since we're doing an FY24 budget exercise you've got a plan ahead for it so even though it will require a resolution public hearings and the adoption of an ordinance you budget it now in advance of the resolution and the ordinance yep just just want to say i i do support this um we clearly have the funding to do it and i'm hoping this can be a bipartisan effort okay manager supervisor bailey yeah i'd like to support that also being

[02:39:41] you know i think it's it's very timely it's necessary and it it is collective leadership and supporting it is madam chair and thank you all for the support i appreciate it straw poll on supervisor vegas motion oh yes this is good yeah 144 okay so mr sinclair where are we now i

[02:40:16] have 396 78 but what do you have that's what i have uh 400k would be fine too okay well so i'm looking at the next two items we have parks and rec maintenance and tourism master plan um you know i i happen to know that i know that they took the long-term positions that they hadn't filled in parks and rec out but i think they needed them they just hadn't filled them yet and we took them away as part of our let's get rid of all long-term positions and there was i forget the reason why they couldn't fund them so i tend to support the parks and rec maintenance positions back because

[02:40:54] you know we can only do better in parks and rec maintenance quite frankly i honestly believe that given the number of parks and you know we've really focused on we've bought new parks and we've started new parks and we've created wellness parks and kids parks and all different kinds of things but we

really need to focus on making sure we maintain our current parks because they're not all equal um so i'd just like to throw out that the 269 if we have 400 000 left um i'd like to say you know give back parks and rec maintenance their two positions that they lost any discussion

[02:41:28] on that manager supervisor bailey um understanding and supporting what you just said i just want to bring to the fore that there are we did take away two other agencies and I just want to offer this as consideration and with emergency management and our Department of Social Services don't know if everybody received a letter in terms of that but there was a request I'm just putting it out there so that we can have some consideration there was a request for the for the FTEs that they requested

[02:42:06] as as well and so as we are considering uh parks and recs the maintenance thereof and those positions because we did do a vast investment in parks and recs during covet i would like for us to look in the future in the in the spirit of transparency bob i would like for us to look in the future those positions in department of social services and emergency management that we have been requested to look at as well going forward. It's very important that we do that as well, particularly with emergency management and Department of Social Services as relates

[02:42:46] to us coming out of COVID. So I just wanted to say that. Mr. Shorter. I very much appreciate that, Supervisor. What I'll say is certainly what I said on February 28th When we presented the proposed budget that was originally put forward to you,

[02:43:20] we fully understand that there were a number of staffing plans that we were not able to fund with this budget because we focused on pay and compensation and are very much aware of the fact that we have to pay very close attention to making sure that we fund staffing plans and build capacity as part of our number one priority for next year's budget.

[02:43:45] And so by no means am I suggesting that if the board is interested in providing for some pivot this current budget, we are certainly open to that. But I just wanted to say out loud that we are aware of the staffing needs, the staffing plans that we were not able to get to this year and we'll be focused on making sure that we that we do that in next year's budget. I'm sure I have a question. Supervisor Frank

[02:44:19] Lawson. Thank you. Mr. Shorter I don't know why I just thought of this but what if we have what if we budgeted in contingency? The amount is half a million dollars as required by the board's adopted principles of sound financial management okay so i just want to suggest to the board that even though we have a million six you know capacity and we're down to how much now 390k 390

[02:44:54] um 678 dollars according to supervisor we're um we don't have to spend it matter of fact i would like to put more in contingency because there are certainly you know chances for things to come up throughout the fiscal year um so i just want everybody to be mindful of that well i i'd still like the parks and rec maintenance because i think that we need maintenance for our parks but

[02:45:31] you know i'm not gonna die in that hill depends on my colleagues so any other comments i'm not going to support it um i'd rather see that money go into um contingency and and then as the year goes we just have more flexibility and i do want to point i've struggled with getting a bridge replaced for five years so i'm not gonna i'm not gonna send 270 000 more their way when i can't get

[02:46:07] a bridge over a stream replaced five years later i do want to point out the public defenders the Next one down, we've already taken care of because it was one of the line items initially. And the Affordable Housing Fund, we actually can't start until we have an ordinance.

[02:46:26] But, Mr. Shorter, we're going to have an Affordable Housing Ordinance soon, right? Yes, Madam Chair. We, in fact, provided an update to the board via memo maybe a month ago, three weeks ago.

[02:46:41] We do expect, and once that ordinance change occurs, we will be matching it with some recommendation on a funding source for a housing fund. Great. Okay. So, quick straw poll on putting back in the parks and rec maintenance positions that were taken out.

[02:47:01] All those in favor, raise your hand. Okay. Okay. So, tourism master plan, if you want, I'm welcome to put that in a contingency, you know.

[02:47:23] Thoughts? Anybody else want to advocate for that?

[02:47:25] Okay. So, are you okay? For what? I just put it in contention. If we don't vote it in, we'll just put it in contention. Okay. So, I appreciate, for the most part, people being somewhat on board with where we started. You know, that was pretty simple. And I appreciate the support for the Animal Services Vet Clinic total, like I think, you know, and even the Public Defenders Local Salary Supplement.

[02:48:03] So that sort of leaves us finished with budget markup. Madam Chair, what about my first question? Oh, oh, oh, okay. So, yes, Supervisor Brody had a question. And, yeah, okay.

[02:48:21] So starting in 2011, which is when the last time board salaries were increased, if those salaries increased commensurate with employee compensation during the past 12 years, and assuming the general scale increase in the FY24 proposed budget of 6% plus a 3% merit increase,

[02:48:55] the chair's compensation would go from $49,452 current to $75,296. Board member compensation would increase from $43,422 to $66,115.

[02:49:15] Please keep in mind that is the increase from 2011 to 2024. And obviously this doesn't take effect for the members sitting here until January 1st, whoever gets, whoever is still sitting here.

[02:49:30] What were the numbers? What were the numbers on the... See, because it was proposed. Yeah, the proposed. The chair's compensation that staff recommended in the proposed budget was $84,739.

[02:49:51] The board member staff-recommended compensation was $74,282, and those were the median salaries of Fairfax, Arlington, Alexandria, and Loudoun at today's salaries that we knew of today.

[02:50:13] Okay, Mr. Bode. You said the numbers you just gave at the outset includes the proposed for the general workforce. Do you have the deltas for that, between what was the proposed and what was just said?

[02:50:41] Yes. The change from what was proposed by staff in February is a reduction of $9,443 for the chair position and $8,167 reduction for board members as recommended by staff in February.

[02:51:02] Okay. I don't know if anyone else has any questions before I sort of... I mean, if you're, I mean, that's a, you know, the initial numbers were come up by, came up by staff. For as a median, this is another way to come up as, for numbers. If it pleases the board, I have a table that I can hand out tonight, or if you prefer, I can send it out to the board tomorrow on how we arrived, the progression.

[02:51:31] Yes, sir. You have a handout right now? And Madam Chair and Board, this, to be clear, and Dave said it, I want to reiterate, This median does not include any action taken by county boards this year for next year's budget.

[02:51:55] This is their current? Current. Do you want to put forward that proposal, Mr. Bogart?

[02:52:21] Yeah, let's, because I know that we've had some bipartisan support over the last year or so for the increase, but I know that some folks had concerns with it, like I said, from the broad public, with just being a median of everyone else. And to me, this is at least another take at being more fair, looking at what staff has gotten over the years, as opposed to just putting a number out there with our peers.

[02:52:44] So we'd love any discussion. If no one else wasn't saying anything, I'm ready to do a straw poll. Madam Chair. Supervisor Vega. Thank you. It's still greater than 50% raise, and I'd say we put it in contingency.

[02:53:07] Supervisor Weir. So, yeah, it's reducing it from what the county executive first proposed to what Dave Sinclair just handed out.

[02:53:48] Did you calculate the half-year savings? Approximately $36,000 compared to what was proposed.

[02:54:13] Full year, the savings would be $72,000. Madam Chair. Supervisor Vega. Thank you. And collectively, with this new proposal, what is the total number for everybody? I'm sorry, $140,000 less $36,000 would be about $104,000, $104,000, half year in fiscal 24.

[02:54:50] Okay. Supervisor Brody, is this important to you? I mean, you know, it's another way to do it, so that's fine.

[02:55:08] I can support that. No? Any other thoughts? I mean, I know Supervisor Lawson, you had talked about supporting board raises and made that offhand comment last time. An offhand comment? Yeah, you said you believed you had said in the past that you were going to support the board raises.

[02:55:27] When we were sitting at the dais. I don't recall what I said other than to a reporter that I'm open to a discussion about it, but I certainly am not open to a board pay raise at more than 50%.

[02:55:44] That is, I said a modest pay raise. This is not modest, and we don't serve the public for the sake of, you know, enriching our salaries, And this is way too high of a pay raise that I would ever support.

[02:56:04] Okay. Well, I believe that the next board coming in, whoever it is, you know, deserves to be paid commensurately with the people around and the surrounding areas, you know. And because we haven't, you know, Loudoun's been giving themselves raises for the last four years.

[02:56:24] So has Fairfax. And we haven't done it since 2011. And I guess it's just a philosophical thing. I'd like people to be able to do this on their own and be able not to either, you know, not have to worry about what it is or, you know, anyway.

[02:56:41] Does this include Stafford and Fauquier? Like, who are the peers that you're comparing to other than? It's always been the northern, it's always a regular Arlington, Alexandria. The regular, our peers is being the second. So the same peers of the other compensation agency or other compensation comparisons?

[02:57:00] Yeah, we are the second largest common, you know, county. Really? I didn't know that. Amazing. I'm just saying. It's just compared as to Fauquier that has 70,000 people. I just don't know if it's really. I know. Well, when you say peers and neighbors, we obviously neighbor Stafford and Fauquier.

[02:57:19] That's why I'm trying to find out. Yeah, it's just, you know, Fauquier and Stafford don't have, even don't have at-large chairs, do they? No, they don't have. And I think Falkier's 70,000 people, even though it's really large and looks like us. And Stafford has about 125,000 people.

[02:57:36] But I can go check that by Google. So are you going to make that motion, Supervisor Bode or Vice Chair Bode? Okay. Supervisor Bode is suggesting that we increase the salaries instead of what the county exec had put in the budget based on the analysis of median salaries for the area commensurate with the market adjustments that were given employees since 2011, since the board salary has last been adjusted.

[02:58:05] All those in favor, raise your hand. Okay. Motion fails. So that said, I guess that being the case, what would it look like if we just did in line with what the county executive proposed for the general staff?

[02:58:30] That, what is it, 9% 6.8% and then the 3% or whatever it is? No, no, it's not. What we just voted on is from 2011. I'm talking about the increase for just this year.

[02:58:47] So you're saying just make it lower? Yeah. Oh. Yeah. Sure. My ask then, sorry for the miscommunication there, is what would it be if we increased our salary just by commensurate with just this year's proposed salary increase to the general accounting workforce?

[02:59:17] The chair's salary, the chair's position salary would increase from $49,452 current to $53,902. That's a 9% increase. Board member's salary would increase from $43,422 to $47,330.

[02:59:38] Again, a 9% increase. Let's draw a poll on Mr. Bode's 9% increase. All those in favor, raise your hand. All those in favor, raise your hand.

[02:59:56] Okay. Did he say where he was going? motion so all those in favor raise your hand i'm i'm i'm supporting look we can end up back at what's in the budget right i mean right now we're back at where what's in the budget you know so

[03:00:31] i mean can i can i offer some okay so that failed okay well then we will end up staying with where we were in the budget

[03:01:09] because we don't have if the budget is the budget right yeah pardon me no it's in the budget so Okay, so as of tonight, that sort of finishes us up, I believe.

[03:01:31] Oh, no, I'm sorry. Supervisor Weir, what did? That might very well finish up your proposed budget markup starting points and establishing a base budget, but I'm not done. You know, it's interesting that we have, since the proposed budget was released, we've increased the C&P tax rate by 20%, generating a mere $4.2 million.

[03:01:59] We managed to take that and essentially deliver a flat bill, no real savings to the taxpayer, and then at the same time spent an additional $1.6 million that we didn't have in the original budget without addressing a single existing area of concern, but rather laying on new programs.

[03:02:23] And I'm hearing that members of the board have heartburn reducing agency budgets at the last minute. This is not the last minute. This is what markup is for. This is what the intent of markup is for, and any agency director that is counting their chickens before markup is done and a final budget is proposed should know better than that.

[03:02:46] We've got professionals running these departments. They know what their budgets are, they know what the proposed budgets are, and they know where efficiencies can be gained. I've got a couple of proposals.

[03:03:01] Mr. Sinclair, if I understood you correctly the other day, there is an unallocated sum within the community partners program? The proposed budget does include $100,000 for potential new partners at the board's direction.

[03:03:22] Have any applied for that funding? Yes, there have been a number of applicants, some of which you have heard during the public hearings and this evening. As a matter of fact, how are we going to allocate that additional $100,000 staff put in that placeholder in the proposed budget for the board's decision?

[03:03:49] So it hasn't been earmarked and it needs to be earmarked tonight in theory in theory. It does not have to be it is still available to the board to do with as the board. I mean, the first thing I'd like to do is mark 50,000 of it to the willing warriors.

[03:04:05] And I'll make that a motion for a straw poll. They are an eligible 501c3, correct? So thank you for that, Mr. Weir. The Serving Our Willing Warriors, if you want to throw that out for the straw poll.

[03:04:24] You know, our community partner program is meant to be for people in the community who are doing things that the county would normally do to serve its citizens. As much as I love serving our willing warriors, the people who come to Serving Our Willing Warriors and the people who stay there and are totally valued, you know, I totally value those people.

[03:04:47] They are not usually community residents. They are from other places, and they bring them in. And so the intent of our community partner program has always been for our community residents. And so it's not that I don't want to support serving our willing warriors. They're a wonderful organization, but it's not quite the intent of our community partner program.

[03:05:05] I would suggest that many of the community partners are multi-jurisdictional partners that apply funds elsewhere, not just in Prince William County. So we're supporting not only issues in Prince William County, but elsewhere in Northern Virginia, if not statewide or nationally. The money we give to Northern Virginia Family Services is spent in Prince William County.

[03:05:25] Do we have an accounting for that for every community partner? I don't know. I'm just talking about the intent of the program. So please know that I always support serving our willing warriors. I just don't think this is, you know, we are about to, our community partner program needs to be overhauled.

[03:05:42] We've talked about this. may not be aware about this we've talked about this for a few years because it's difficult to get new community partners it's difficult to break in there are a lot of community needs people apply you have to have the right agency we've talked about maybe putting it out of house and and you know that extra $100,000 is for early for one we can reevaluate the program there are community partners that have come forward there are competing interests and And so then we were just putting that, I believe we were just sort of putting that in as a placeholder so we could address further community needs.

[03:06:20] So Supervisor Angry, and then Mr. Shorter wants to say something. Ultimately, whatever amount is approved by the board, we have made a commitment to come back with clear criteria to

evaluate any new community partners that are brought onto the program.

[03:06:40] We are also talking internally about how, moving forward into the next budget year, we partner with community to administer the program. And so I'll say that ultimately, wherever we end up at budget approval, whether it's $50,000 or $100,000, we will be prepared to come back to the board with clear criteria for admitting new community partners and then a plan for how we will implement the program moving forward.

[03:07:14] Thanks. And Madam Chair, Supervisor, I appreciate you bringing up our Will and Warriors. I've toured that facility, and I will tell you this. As far as community partners goes, them, Youth for Tomorrow, you know, these are large organizations. Now, at some point, I was going to introduce to this board, you know, them being tax exempt because that is the issue that they're looking for as far as their real estate tax goes.

[03:07:40] Now, I don't know what that number looks like. I know I had spoken a little bit about that. Maybe that's not tonight, but I will tell you, I think even in what this budget has shown us and we've made it an employee budget, it is something I definitely want to introduce for next year, and I've been telling that organization that for a while.

[03:07:58] So I don't know what $50,000, and, you know, the community partners money we design on that, I've never looked at them on that. I don't want to call lower level as far as anything the service that they do, But I didn't know the magnitude of what Will and Warriors do. And that's a veteran service outstanding organization that has done a lot for our veterans.

[03:08:20] And so, you know, I'm looking at how do we find a way to make them tax exempt. And I want to do that. I believe we're to that point. And I was going to end the night by saying our next budget, I really want to propose that we start, you know, figuring out how we can do that.

[03:08:37] So you notice a talking point about it. And I will say there are a lot of nonprofit organizations that want real estate tax exemption. There's been a moratorium on that in the county for many, many years that we still, I don't know how much it is in the budget, but it represents the ones that are optional.

[03:08:59] We know that some are not optional, that we have to give tax abatements to, but we do have a large sum of money for optional tax abatements. Is that correct? So the number I have is the total tax relief, which is about $37 million. $37 million. And so knowing all the other tax-exemptor organizations that want tax abatement and opening that door is very difficult.

[03:09:23] This is expectations management. Everyone loves serving our ruling warriors and support them. So Supervisor Lawson? Actually, Supervisor Weir has hit his button. I would just point out that there's no practical difference in terms of service to the community for that particular entity and several others we've got.

[03:09:49] Rainbow Riding, for example, is not dedicated to county residents. In fact, I think the first group of people to pass through Rainbow Riding were from Fairfax, if I recall. not that I necessarily agree with how that's funded but to make a blanket statement that all of the all of the community partners are 100 percent spending the money in Prince William County and on Prince William County residents just quite frankly isn't the case so I guess we can do an audit on that and see I mean I had a girlfriend whose son rode it at rainbow riding so I know that

[03:10:23] there are county residents riding there so just to say offhand that it's not I think those are things we need to look into and we need to examine so i agree supervisor lawson thank you i think supervisor weir's point was is that rainbow writing has out of county participation so i would imagine so would many others special olympics being one um so i just want to recap the supervisor where you you are suggesting that of the hundred thousand dollar capacity that we have and community

[03:10:59] partners you would like to earmark 50,000 for serving our willing warriors okay turn your mic on i'm offering that as a starting point open open to negotiation i will absolutely support that fifty thousand dollars and give give the county executive a year to work on reform of the community Partners. This is an organization that is probably near and dear to everybody's hearts,

[03:11:33] and considering that we just last week had a proclamation for, remember, April is month of the military child, and we have many, many military families across this county. I think we have 42,000 veterans, but for the public that's watching this, this is a residential retreat for wounded warriors that typically come from Walter Reed and the organization is run I believe predominantly

[03:12:03] by volunteers I'm not acutely familiar with their finances but they probably operate solely off of donations don't don't get a lot of big fat federal grants like a lot of other community partners do And that, therefore, I would like to spend $50,000, which is, you know, not to call it a drop in the bucket is not even close to the minuscule, minuscule drop in the bucket.

[03:12:38] And I think that's something that we can do for a great nonprofit out in Haymarket that, frankly, has been tied up with these problems because of a bunch of, I believe it was, subdivisions of their parcel.

[03:12:55] So, anyway, I think it's a great gesture that we, the board, can offer this program for, and it's just a one-year commitment. It's not a future commitment, right? It's just a one-year? or is that your point in the 50,000 yeah it has to be yeah just like every other community partner it has to be renewed every year so I think it's a great gesture for a well-run organization that again does I believe does not have the the benefit of a bunch of federal grants like a lot of the other community partners do so before we go to superintendent Bailey who was the next up I saw county exec sure you had your line on for a second did you okay so

[03:13:33] Ms. Bailey. Thank you. I love it when things come full circle because I remember this is something that Vic did talk about earlier and Bob, I certainly could support going forward us looking into it. I recall back in COVID when we had new community partners. Janine, you might remember when we were doing it for the food insecurity and so coming back to what the county exec was proposing to us before about reassessing where we are with our community partners and having new community partners come into the fold I think our needs have changed in

[03:14:08] the community and it's this is the appropriate time as we go forward so just just supporting the idea and certainly the organization I think it's absolutely necessary as we go forward and addressing all of the needs in the camp in the county but particularly that was one that had been we had discussed before so thank you Bob for bringing it back supervisor weird and supervisor

[03:14:36] are angry supervisor angry I do have just one question so be and you know you throw this out here you already got me um but you mentioned that there are already applicants on who had already applied I'm just curious um do we know what that dollar amount may be I know there's a whole approval

process but you know would we be uh this board are automatically you know putting out 50,000 to our willing warriors and if we had more than 50,000 that wanted to be

[03:15:15] a part of this, what are we doing with them? I guess I would ask, have they applied to be a community partner? Do we have their proposal? We do not have a formal application from serving our willing warriors. Those who did fill out the application totaled about $450,000 Mr. Angry. And thank you for that Mr. Sinclair because one thing I don't want to happen in that world is kind of what's happening in this world.

[03:15:48] where we do one for one organization, and then we wake up the other organizations, and then it becomes a, well, even though we know our veterans are important to us, you know, why not us as well? So I just want to make sure we... Mr. St. Clair, you should restate what you just said, because I think there may be a misunderstanding.

[03:16:08] We have already received $450,000 by way of request for organizations that are interested in entering the community partner program. That is in addition to organizations that are already in the program.

[03:16:26] We have, in this budget, proposed only an additional $100,000. So I just wanted to make sure that we were clear about that. Okay. Why did you say something different? I thought he said four.

[03:16:43] Madam Chair. Supervisor Lawson. Thank you. On that note, did we do a straw poll about? Okay. Okay. I'll just say, you know, we have applications in.

[03:16:59] We have people that have followed the process. I'm just not comfortable doing this. And so as much as I love serving our willing warriors, I don't think it's a good path to follow in terms of our community partner program. I think we, you know, I know two offhand that I would love to give money to that have put in applications, actually three that are sitting here thinking about it.

[03:17:18] And so, you know, that's fine. Strobel, all those? Madam Chair, just out of transparency, obviously I stepped out during this discussion, so I'm going to abstain from the Strobel. Yeah, and Madam Chair, I mean, let me just be clear, because I think this is a very difficult one now, because we now know that we have well more than community partners out there that have applied.

[03:17:51] I think that's just, you know, not right to bump all of that process, even though I'm probably, and I appreciate the support of our willing words, and I'm a veteran to sit here and say, here we go once again. I mean, we've got folks in the hopper, if you will, in this process.

[03:18:10] You know, if we can find another way to do this, I'm all on board. I don't think this is the way to do that now because I think in the priorities of things, folks have applied for this, and we need to finish that process to see what that looks like. I don't even know if they will make it past it. And if they don't, would there be $500,000 left to then give to our willing warriors or not give to but support them in their efforts?

[03:18:30] I'm wondering if that's something we can look at later. So 50,000. Yeah. Yeah. OK, it's 50. We went to five because that would do their taxes, too. You know, but anyway, 50,000. Strawpole, supervisor, we're sorry, do you want to say something?

[03:18:48] I was just going to say in full transparency, I again, I think it's a great opportunity for us to look at it. But I would like to finish the county execs process because we did ask him to reassess and look at the

community partners and inclusive of what.

[03:19:05] bob is saying i'd like to finish that because we have a process in play already so i just wanted to say that madam chair supervisor vega and on that note as a county executive is doing that i think the conversation um needs to happen as to probably why we shouldn't really engage in using public funds for non-profits and charity because it violates the spirit of the original purpose and so i would love for us to have that conversation madam chair supervisor franklin I do want to point out that obviously I'm abstaining from this.

[03:19:37] But in terms of that discussion, I think we do need to have that discussion. But to be clear to the public, the community partners program are entities, many of which, probably all of which that are non-profits, that serve a purpose to the community that the government, for whatever reason, cannot serve fully or because that entity does it better.

[03:19:57] So it's more so like a partnership. So I don't want people to think that we're just picking and choosing who's part of the community partners and that we're just giving nonprofits taxpayer funds. They have to serve a public good that the government either cannot do as well or can't do at all.

[03:20:17] With that, can we have a straw poll supporting Supervisor Weir's proposal to give $50,000 to serving our willing warrior? All those in favor? Part de.

[03:20:38] Um, as I mentioned earlier, we just dropped $1.6 million on new stuff, and we've saved the taxpayer virtually nothing, even though we increased the budget by even more than the original $126 million that was proposed. We added another $4.2 million roughly net.

[03:21:00] In order to give the actual taxpayer a little bit of relief, I would note that if you reduce the general fund support for every agency in the county, with the exception of the public safety and the courts, you would generate $2.7 million in savings for every 1% efficiency saved.

[03:21:25] I would suggest doing 2%, and I don't believe that the executives or the managers of these departments can't be asked to save 2% over a year. And I don't care if they do it by cutting the coffee fund, not buying paper clips, or recovering it out of vacancy savings in their departments.

[03:21:52] And I think it's very easy, it should be easy to achieve, it should be easy for the county to budget for. Um, if you did two, if you did a 2% clawback, you're looking at 5.4 million, a little over 5.4 million, almost 5.5, which I would suggest using to knock down the mill rate on the real estate tax a little bit more. And if anybody thinks we can't do it, simply look at the size of the surplus that we're getting this year, the size of the surplus we had last year and the size of the surplus we've had every year prior to that. This County, to my recollection, has never operated in the red. So there's plenty of money within the budget and within what will be a surplus

[03:22:29] certainly next year to accommodate this. So all I'm asking for is a 2% clawback in general fund support only, not to include state, local, or fee revenue, simply that that's listed as general fund revenue in the agency budgets. And Mr. Sinclair, you'll have to do the math on what five million four hundred seventy seven thousand and two hundred and forty four dollars equals in terms of reducing the mill rate supervisor franklin sure just a couple of things i'm just kind of going back to the comments made earlier about uh reducing

[03:23:09] department budgets um i think everyone could probably um uh find savings right to me that's the easiest thing to do but the hardest thing to do is to figure out where those savings come from within a department right um and i can guarantee you it's not just paper clips and copiers they have to make real decisions about where to make cuts and it reminds me of this the discussion it's probably about 10 years ago maybe a little bit more when the federal government was talking about sequestration right and i can tell you that there are some uh federal agencies that are still reeling from sequestration some agencies that never bounced back from that and i'm not suggesting

[03:23:47] that that's what you are suggesting but it is it does go down that road of when you say a two percent cut one percent cut across all boards it's not just paperclips that they're going to end up cutting so I just want to make sure that you know there may be a philosophical difference between small government versus in my opinion effective government but we have to make sure that when we're just saying tell all the departments Elijah you go and cut by two percent well that that really does alarm me because I don't need my social workers to stop doing certain jobs. I don't need

[03:24:22] my finance department to stop processing certain types of payments or to reduce hours because they don't have the resources to do that. So we're not talking about paperclips and copiers. We're talking about real jobs that have to be done within these departments. Could I elaborate a little bit? I came up with that percentage based on a couple of things. It's not unprecedented in prince william county it has been done before i believe you did a five percent clawback several years ago when cory was still the chair mr sinclair was there a five percent clawback a couple of years ago if i recall correctly i don't know if it was five percent it may have been on the back

[03:25:00] of the housing market crisis but i thought it was five percent across the board general the total revenues including of everything um i haven't been on the board that long okay the other The other thing I would note is that, as Mr. Shorter has noted, each agency is budgeted to 100% FTE, even if it's at the minimum salary for the lowest FTE within the department.

[03:25:27] The county budget's based on, yes, 100%. I would suggest that there is plenty of leeway within the department budgets given that. And given that we're having, quite frankly, an exodus in some areas of executive members or highly paid members that should, in theory, be replaced at a lower rate, sorry, I'm short or not you, I think there's plenty of room to accommodate this without an agency even feeling it.

[03:26:01] It will just take them to restructure their internal budgets. Maybe you should be county executive. Doesn't pay enough. You know, I trust the county executive has put together a good budget. I do think that we have had, you know, years where there was austerity in this government and we're starting to build back.

[03:26:25] And, you know, the vast majority of that increase that we just got when we found the money is going to our public safety raises as well as it should. So, you know, I don't know where you worked, but I was always taught, you know, doing across-the-board cuts of every department is a really bad way to operate a business or anything because it just doesn't take into account real consequences of those things.

[03:26:50] And so I can't support that. But I'd love to have a straw poll on your suggestion right now. Those who support. Madam Chair, I have a question. Okay. To Supervisor Weir, does your proposal include the board's office budgets?

[03:27:06] Because I guarantee I can reduce my spending by my office spending by one or two. Well, yes, it does. And to Madam Chair's point, she has all the faith in the world, Mr. Shorter, as do I. I have all the faith in our department directors that they can find a 1% efficiency or a 2% efficiency in each of their agency budgets.

[03:27:29] I don't believe that is asking too much, especially when you're not really, we're not, what you're doing is not a cut in the agency budget. It is simply a reduction of the increase in the agency budget. They are getting significantly more funds in every case than they were last year.

[03:27:46] All you're doing is not giving them as much more as you were going to give them and not funding that additional increase on the back of the taxpayer. Right, right. Thank you for answering my question, but I actually also have a comment before we take a straw poll vote on your proposal, Supervisor Weir.

[03:28:04] Prince William County has not experienced austerity. Pre-pandemic, post-pandemic, post-housing crisis, austerity is what governments experience or people experience in third world countries.

[03:28:22] I've seen austerity in Russia. I've seen austerity on missions trips in Jamaica and elsewhere. I reject your notion that Prince William County has experienced austerity during a housing crisis.

[03:28:40] when our revenues plummeted and we were making national news for short sales and foreclosures. One thing is for certain, austerity is not Prince William County's government. Okay, let's take a straw vote on Supervisor Weir's proposal to cut 2% across the board.

[03:29:04] All those in favor, please raise your hand. Okay, can you see those, Ms. Madden? Okay, that straw poll fails. I don't believe we, do you have something else, Mr. Weir? Okay, a straw poll on Mr. Weir's 1% cut across all the organizations.

[03:29:25] I'm sorry, I didn't hear that, Supervisor Weir, what was that? Sorry, which for the record is roughly $2.7 million. Okay. Shaved off. All those in favor of Mr. Weir's 1% cut across all organizations.

[03:29:43] Raise your hand. Okay, thank you. So I don't see anything else. So we are not actually adopting the budget tonight. We adopt the budget next Tuesday evening at 7.30.

[03:29:59] Which is called budget adoption. I do want to put something on the table. I would I'd love a resolution We do turns out we do not have any land use cases for May 9th or next meeting We have nothing to advertise We have no we usually do land use cases in the evening and we don't have any time to anything to take up that time And so I'd like to have someone make a motion to remove the evening session of May 9th Motion made by Supervisor Bailey seconded by Supervisor Vega any further discussion Madam Chair.

[03:30:31] Supervisor Lawson. You may recall that back in March, I asked you to reschedule the Devlin Tech Park case. The public hearing is closed. It was agreed upon on February 7th that the case would be heard and finalized on March 7th.

[03:30:52] The applicant on February 21st requested an indefinite deferral. The community has asked both of us to have a joint town hall. There's been this inertia. The applicant has no plans and made it clear to me that he doesn't plan to bring this case back until after the election.

[03:31:15] I don't like that. I don't like playing political games on land use cases, and I'm asking you to schedule this. I believe I asked you back in March to schedule it for May, and you said you would talk to the

applicant.

[03:31:32] and get back to me. I never heard the communities waiting for you to respond as well. We don't have any legal obligations to continue to let this case be left out looming in the uncertainties until after the November election. Frankly, that's just playing political games, and that's what we should not be doing. So I'm asking you to schedule it on May 9th, since you just said we don't have any other land use cases this case needs closure up or down for the sake of the

[03:32:10] community in particular and i'm disappointed that you have completely ghosted the community that has asked you via email with me copied on it they've told me you know i i just excuse me you're interrupting me they they told me that they have repeatedly asked you to meet with me and them and the public and i said i would i would i would arrange my schedule with you and you have you have not responded i'm not gonna let you continue to drag this uncertainty out on the

[03:32:44] night of february 7th you wanted the vote that night then you suggested that we vote on it on february 14th so if one week later was good enough for you then why isn't may 9th the the the applicant has chosen to just sit on his hands and not work to find some type of compromise that's not fair to the public that we were we were elected to represent you i'm asking you to put this on the agenda for may 9th or may 23rd i believe is another land use night and i'm going to tell

[03:33:24] you that the applicant doesn't want to brought forward my understanding is that they have the right not to do that they've asked for an indefinite deferral we have given it that and so no I won't be bringing it forward May 9th and I just want to be clear that I've actually been out I've walked the neighborhood with people I have met people I've emailed with people I've sat and talked to people and and so to say that I haven't engaged with the neighborhood is is not true um you know right now I don't think we know what's going to happen you know there there was a compromise proposal I don't know where that's going and so meeting with the neighborhood I don't think is really beneficial at this point until we know it's actually going to go forward and we don't

[03:34:00] have that right now so i appreciate that but i'm not going to do that first of all i am fully aware of who you've walked the community with because they report it back to me i'm very engaged with this community i know you've been out there but that was like in february maybe early march before these political games started of the uncertainty of not scheduling it and to your point about they have a right to leave this out into indefinite la la land is not accurate i've checked with the county attorney's office we had the public hearing it's been closed the only thing the county attorney's office is recommending to us is that we notify the applicant which by the

[03:34:38] way tonight is public notification that i want this scheduled the community wants it scheduled They do not want this lingering in uncertainty until after the November election. That's exactly what this is looking like, and I'm not going to play those political games.

[03:34:55] If you think that this is such a great project, then vote on it in May and run on it on that. But I'm not going to allow you to just let Stanley Martin get their way and shelve this until after November. It's not fair to the public that we were elected to represent.

[03:35:13] I'm glad that people report back to you after I've been out there, but I've been out there since it's been deferred. So maybe you don't know all the things I've been doing within the neighborhood. Well,

whatever the date was that you walked. But the point is, is they have communicated multiple times to you and me both. You've seen the email threads.

[03:35:29] I have let them know that I will gladly meet with you and them in a joint town hall. And you have ghosted them. you from what they have told me you are not replying to the multiple requests that they have made so i'm asking you tonight if you're not going to schedule it on may 9th then nope you're not then on main on tuesday may 9th since we're not going to have a board meeting let's schedule a joint town hall to meet with the community and hear the concerns the applicant can come

[03:36:07] February 7th was a proposal that had never, I'd never seen the magnitude of a proposal of splitting a data center rezoning and making it into a disastrous case with keeping half of it residential rezoning.

[03:36:28] It went off the rails, it was unprecedented, and the community deserves some answers from the applicant and from you and me. So if you don't want to have the vote on May 9th, then let's have a public town hall.

[03:36:44] That's the least we can do. To be clear, Supervisor Lawson, if the applicant doesn't want to go meet with the community at this time or doesn't have a proposal, they're not going to. And I don't intend to have a joint town hall with you ever. So I'm just telling you, we can talk about this.

[03:37:02] This is a political move on your part, and I'm just not going to get into it. Excuse me, you're calling it a political move? Madam Chair, point of order. We have a motion and a second. This is a discussion. Both of you have already spoken twice. You know what? It's a political move that you have told Stanley Martin you're going to shelve it with him until November.

[03:37:19] That's what's the political move. I think at this point we should just call the question. Thank you. Ms. Batten, we have a motion to cancel the evening meeting on May 9th. Can I get confirmation of the Supervisor? I think it was Supervisor Vega. Okay, I just wanted to share it. I heard her jump in rather quickly.

[03:37:37] Okay, all those in favor, please vote. Motion to adjourn, Madam Chair. Motion passes. Six to two.

[03:37:54] Motion to adjourn. Second. Motion made by County Executive Mr. Shorter. Yes, if I could. I just wanted to make sure that we got clarity. Sorry. No, no, no. We needed to make sure that we got clarity on the Board's direction on the April 1st.

[03:38:16] I want to order, Madam Chair. There's been a motion to adjourn with a second. There's supposed to be no discussion. Mr. Weir. Mr. Weir. It's parliamentary procedure, Madam Chair. Either you're going to follow the rules or you're not. If you want to hear from the county exec, then you vote no on the motion to adjourn, and we go back to the business of the day.

[03:38:35] But we need to do this properly. Am I correct, Mr. Attorney? Or withdraw the motion to adjourn. Withdraw your motion. Yeah, and Madam Chair, may I just say, we don't need to be contentious about a motion to adjourn. We just need to do it properly. Okay, but we don't have to yell at each other.

[03:38:51] It's fine. It's okay. It's okay. Mr. Shorter. All right. I just want to make sure that we give the team direction for next week's resolutions. We were not clear that we received a straw poll for the current year adjustment, the April 1st adjustment for public safety personnel.

[03:39:12] Yes. Okay. We didn't really actually do that, but all those in favor of doing the current year adjustment for public safety personnel for August 1st, please raise your hand. April 1st. Sorry. Actually, yeah, and then we'll vote on the resolution next week. You can prepare that at the same time.

[03:39:28] Okay, so that's good. That's good. Anything else do we need to clarify? You think you're good? I think we have direction. Thank you. Okay, thank you. Supervisor Franklin feels she needs to say something. Yep, just one thing that I was going to mention during supervisor's time, and I'll just kind of read this statement.

[03:39:45] and I know that social services is already working on this, but just for the public's edification, as the public health emergency ends that begin in March 2020, our local social services department finds itself faced with the challenges of certifying 54,000 clients who currently receive benefits from Medicaid and other public assistance.

[03:40:05] The end of the continuous enrollment requirement under the public health emergency represents the single largest health coverage transition event since the first since ACA basically opened up and I just want to urge residents who may be affected by these changes to work closely with the social services department and to update their information so that certification can occur in a timely manner and social services will be working diligently to assist those who are no longer eligible for Medicaid to navigate through the ACA exchanges to get private insurance. I just want to make that note for the public and I'm happy to send out any information over the newsletter. Okay. I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

[03:40:45] Motion to adjourn. Second. Motion made by Supervisor Angry, seconded by Supervisor Bailey. Discussion. I wasn't going to. It's 11-10. Okay. Sleeps vote. It's 11-10.

[03:41:02] The board that goes to 10-15 in the morning. I guess we're voting on it.

[03:41:20] It's 11 o'clock. I'll just go to 10 a.m. I'm impressed that the ice was...

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