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Prince William Board of County Supervisors Meeting, Tuesday, April 2, 2024

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- Official meeting video (Prince William County, Granicus): https://pwcgov.granicus.com/player/clip/3452
- 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 2026-11-01. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] you need to make a plan and help safeguard your financial future in the event of a disaster. Whether you're at risk of hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, wildfires, or earthquakes, here are three steps you can take right now to protect yourself financially and weather any storm.

[00:00:20] Step one, download FEMA's Emergency Financial First Aid Kit and fill it out. Gathering all the paperwork and filling out the forms may take some time, but it'll be worth it if disaster strikes. Once you complete the kit, you'll have everything you need in one place.

[00:00:38] You'll have gathered important documents like your ID and your Social Security card. You'll have written down the phone numbers and account numbers to your credit card companies, utility companies, insurance companies, and more. If you need to apply for disaster aid or contact your insurance company, you'll want this info on hand.

[00:00:56] Step 2. Find a safe space to store the kit and the documents you've gathered. ConsumerFinance.gov recommends that you make a copy and store the original and the copy in separate places. If it's digital, password protect it.

[00:01:12] And if it's printed or on a thumb drive, make sure to store it in a waterproof and fireproof container. Step 3. Make sure you understand your insurance options and the extent of your coverage in

case of a disaster. Renters, homeowners, and auto insurance policies generally don't cover all aspects of a disaster.

[00:01:31] You may need to look into specialized coverage like earthquake insurance and flood insurance. A weekend of prep now can save you months of frustration and lots of money if your property is damaged in a disaster. For more information on how you can protect your property and finances, and to download an emergency financial first aid kit before disaster strikes, visit consumerfinance.gov slash prepare.

[00:02:09] This is here for our neighbors who are in crisis. Our job is to meet people where they are and then help them find their own way out of that crisis.

[00:02:33] 1969 there was a family who lost their home in a fire and 13 churches got together to try and help them out and they formed acts 12 of those churches are still existing they're still supporting us and while it's true we're not a faith-based organization I always tell people we're a faith-filled organization because everybody who works here feels like this is where we should be this community already had a lot of needs they weren't always seeing you

[00:03:11] you can't necessarily see somebody in a domestic violence relationship. You can't see somebody who's suffering. And you might not even know that they don't have food. When COVID hit, that showed a spotlight on all of the needs that were already existing. And then it also let people know those needs are exploding. So we already had 600 families coming to our hunger prevention center every month. With COVID, that number went up to 950 families a month. So the grant from Prince

[00:03:50] William Economic Development, that allowed us to do a few things that we didn't think we would ever do. We were able to replace our old raggedy carpet with brand new vinyl flooring. We were able to replace an aging and somewhat failing HVAC system. So now when our neighbors come in for help, they walk into a space that is clean and fresh and welcoming that's going to help them with their physical health we know that but it's also emotional they're going to walk into a place

[00:04:24] and think okay this is comfortable i'm going to be okay here to keep people safe we had to make many changes with how we do things like other companies we had to see how we could do things virtually but in this business there's only so much you can do virtually you can't drive somebody to a safe house virtually. You can't put food on somebody's table virtually. They need to come in contact with us. We need to have a personal connection. So the grant enabled us to make

[00:04:59] sure our environment was as healthy as possible for when we had those personal interactions. In our mission statement, my favorite word is neighbors. NAACS is a community-based organization.

[00:05:16] We serve the greater Prince William area, and that's because this is who we know, this is who we are, this is who works with us. It's the staff, it's the volunteers, it's the community partners. ACTS is that community. That's what makes it work. That's why we do what we do

[00:05:33] and why we do it here. William County is an ideal locality for us and that's why we've

[00:06:12] been here for 19 years and hopefully, you know, for a long time to come. Today concludes the process that took over four years of searching for the right property, planning, construction I'd like to thank the great staff at Prince William County including everyone at the Department of Economic Development want to grow want to prosper in this location and staying in Prince William County is really going to allow

[00:06:43] us to do that commitment to making Coles District roadways and pedestrian

[00:07:30] facilities safer and efficient one project at a time through strategic is what I like to call it investments the design and construction of this project replaced the missing section of sidewalk near Parkland Avenue. The school zone for Yorkshire Elementary School was extended to include a new crosswalk, ultimately improving pedestrian access to the school. You will soon see the installation of updated streetlights that will improve the low visibility in the area as well. Thank you again for joining us today and I'm really excited

[00:07:59] to officially open this area up. It kind of shows you that actually different departments in the county can work together. We try to collaborate on a lot of different projects. As a walker and a cyclist, bicyclist myself, these kind of projects are needed to protect our residents as they walk and as they bike and to slow people down. So I appreciate all that who have been involved in this project and I hope this will again improve the safety for all

[00:08:37] those in our community surrounding this area. And it was a great safety project with a sidewalk attached to it. So not only is it a multimodal improvement, but it's a safety improvement that's needed in this area. Big to say that sometimes these small projects have some big impact, and this is one of them. This is a small project that's going to have some big impact for commuting traffic, as well as the community at large here in the Yorkshire area.

[00:09:14] Larcenies from vehicles can occur at any time, and in most cases it's a crime of opportunity that can easily be avoided. Reduce your chances of becoming a victim by practicing TLC.

[00:09:40] Take your valuables out of your vehicles, including firearms. Lock your vehicle, even if it's in your own driveway. Close all doors and windows.

[00:09:55] Additional tips include parking in well-lit areas and having a car alarm. Report all suspicious activity to the police department. If you have information regarding a case of auto larceny, please contact the Prince William County Police Tip line at 703-792-7000.

[00:10:19] Or submit a web tip at www.pwcva.gov slash police tip. I'm Danielle, and I'm a team lead in the GIS division.

[00:10:49] What GIS is, is Geographic Information Systems, and GIS can be used in so many different ways, and it deals with patterns and trends and you're able to take that data and it can tell a story. We're a behind-the-scenes agency. We do a lot of the web apps for other agencies to help them do their job more efficient and then the the public and the citizens of Prince William County they benefit from this greatly. If someone's coming into our office they need our help. I feel like

[00:11:28] it's very important to educate them while they're here to help them understand and walk them through the process. Prince William County is a county of people who care. We are here to help people and guide them. Building those strong relationships with our customers is so meaningful to us. I am very passionate about helping people. I love to help people and Prince William County has just, I'm in my 24th year here, and it has been a wonderful place to work.

[00:12:06] I learn something new every day. Not only do I learn from my customers, but I learn from my colleagues. The team to me is so important. I have a wonderful team. They are very high performers.

[00:12:22] They go above and beyond on a daily basis. I'm very proud of them. I'm very proud at how they help the public, how they help their colleagues. They always go the extra mile to help that customer get what they need.

[00:12:41] That is the most rewarding part of this job, is knowing that you're able to help someone, guide them, and give them what they need to solve their problem. I'm Danielle, and that's how I serve.

[00:12:57] For the one that wants to join the department, I would just say, just go for it.

[00:13:43] Put in an application. It's a really easy process. It's a really great group of people. The county takes care of you. It's a wonderful place to live and work. This job is very mentally and physically challenging, but it'll help you develop into the best person you can be.

[00:14:01] We're getting bigger every year. I think we had 40 runners sign up and then always more day of. I appreciate everyone coming out today. We do this all for our local athletes.

[00:14:40] Because we're getting bigger and bigger every year, we raised over $5,500 for Prince William County this year, and we are second in the state for most raised. Out of all the agencies, Prince William County came in second. Good job.

[00:15:07] Stay safe.

[00:17:01] www.pwcva.gov slash landfill.

[00:17:49] Restoration is a practice of where a stream may be out of balance or have a lot of problems, and we try to repair that stream.

[00:18:26] And a stream restoration project is a device, a mechanism for us to re-channel and reshape the way the water flows through the ground here so that we intercept more of the sediment and send less of it downstream to the bay.

[00:18:42] So what we did here to restore this channel is we reconnected it to a floodplain, restored the function of the channel, and created lots of habitat for fish and bugs and near stream habitat for birds and other types of animals. We broke the stream back when we began agriculture in the 1700s.

[00:19:05] We cleared the forest, we got rid of the beaver, and that enabled topsoil to wash down into the stream, filled up the stream valley. We identify impairments of the stream system and then we come up with a design to mitigate those impairments and improve the stream's quality for bugs and fish and animals.

[00:19:23] animals. Through restoration we are going to bring the balance back and we will do this by stabilizing the banks, reconnecting the stream to the floodplain, and by doing that we're going to prevent erosion, we're going to replant the riparian corridor which will actually buffer for pollution, and improve the habitat and protect infrastructure where it's needed. The most important message from stream restoration is that it's a long-term solution. We're not doing this to try to fix the stream and have it be complete next week. In fact, stream

[00:19:59] Some restoration projects are unlike many other capital construction projects in that the day that we walk off the site from construction, it's at a very weakened state. We rely on the vegetation growing adjacent to the stream and on the flood plains to help stabilize the soils and the banks. You know, it takes a while for that vegetation to grow.

[00:20:16] The willow that you see growing behind me, that did grow in over a matter of weeks. This is three years old behind me. We get some criticism about what we do here and how we do it. Every tree that's been cut will be utilized in the project itself. So it's not like we're sacrificing something just to get it out of there while using it as a tool to improve the environment.

[00:20:36] This is a project that's good for the fish. It's good for the fish in our local stream. It's really good for the fish down in the Chesapeake Bay. So we're restoring our local habitat here. We may get mussels reintroduced here. We're certainly going to get a lot of frogs and tadpoles and amphibians moving through our wetlands and our floodplain here.

[00:20:56] we got fish that are already looking for places to create new baby fish as they're swimming up Dewey's Creek. I would encourage people to get out and put their feet in the water. You know, there's nothing more satisfying as a stream restoration design engineer than coming back a year or two later and seeing kids playing in the stream, seeing people walking the stream, picking up rocks, flipping them over to see what they can find. You know, just, I think it's great to get out and just get your feet wet. Believe me, if you have kids, you're going to want them have a better future when as they get older and have a Chesapeake Bay that's cleaner. The process

[00:21:35] of doing a restoration is pretty extensive. You have the people who work for the county. We're the ones that usually identify the problems or we do watershed management plans with a consultant and identify stream problems. When that's done then we select the stream that we want to repair.

[00:21:51] When that happens then we get a consultant who will be our design consultant. The design process begins. So my involvement in stream restoration projects begins at the very start of the project, identifying the site, coming up with the reasons for impairment, studying the stream, and then understanding why the stream is impaired. I work with fisheries biologists, I work with geomorphologists, I work with landscape architects, I work with arborists, I work with floodplain ecologists, people with all kinds of different areas of expertise that that inform the design. When that is complete and the design is finished, the construction

[00:22:30] phase will get involved even before I get to that point. I have to do a lot of community service work. I have to spread the word to the citizens about what we're going to do and how it's going to benefit everybody. This is an amazing exercise where the engineers design a new shape for the stream channel to reflect a geometry that will minimize the flow of sediment by controlling the speed of the water that erodes the sediment and carries it downstream. Boy, when you start a stream

[00:23:06] restoration project, it looks like you're just ripping the place apart. You're bringing the big heavy equipment in and it looks like you're building another townhome subdivision. And so you might assume that you're doing a great deal of harm, but that's a necessary component of replanting the stream in a new location, restoring the stream banks in the floodplain, reconnecting the stream to the floodplain, I think we're doing a great deal of benefit, even though there is an initial harm.

[00:23:36] - This project had a forested canopy over parts of it. However, in some areas, it wasn't necessary to cut down some of the trees. But every tree that we cut down didn't leave the site. The trees that were cut down, in many cases pushed over, were used in the channel as part of the restoration strategy.

[00:23:52] We do try to minimize the impact of trees, particularly large trees that are within the landscape. But overall, we feel like the benefit of improving the restoration of the site and getting water back on the floodplain will offset the impacts to the trees. In time, we replant everything.

[00:24:07] We put down maybe at least 400 stems per acre of trees and monitor it as we do the monitoring periods to see the success of growth and survival. Consider it surgery. The doctor has to do an incision before the doctor can do the repair.

[00:24:26] So here we're seeing the initial part on the first day of development as something that's ugly and unattractive. But at the end of the operation, you have a much healthier spot.

[00:24:43] As a designer, I believe the best way to measure our success is did we meet the goals and objectives of the project. In this case, our project objective here was to reconnect the stream with the floodplain, stop bank erosion, and recreate lots of habitat for fish and bugs.

[00:24:59] And walking this site, it sure seems like we've met that objective. - We have to do monitoring for a period of five to 10 years required by the Army Corps of Engineers and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. We come out here every other year and monitor the success of the vegetation.

[00:25:16] We look at each stream structure that's built, and we do as-built surveys to make sure that the structure's integrity is still together. And after that five-year period, if the stream or any issues with the stream is taken care of, it will be signed off by the Corps and the regulators as being a successful project.

[00:25:35] We've created a place. We've created a setting which is rare in Prince William. Green open space not far from where people live in crowded subdivisions. This is a place for peace and quiet. This is a place for reflection. This is a place where the water running through the ripples gives you a different sense This is a special place surrounded by a lot of ordinary development.

[00:26:00] So I look for an opportunity for people to get into these stream valleys and experience these places. That's when I know that we'll have success, when people are using these places. Basically, it's about an eight-year process to restore a channel.

[00:26:19] And that includes identifying the problems of the channel, designing the channel, approving the channel design, and getting all the permits necessary. After that, then construction will begin and that process can range depending on how big a project is, anywhere from six months to four years.

[00:26:39] Personally, I stay involved with the project until it's complete. On this project, for example, I was out here in the field with the contractor throughout the entire duration of construction. This project began construction about four years ago and I was out here for part of the time during the entire duration.

[00:26:56] For projects that require a lengthy period of monitoring post-project, I'm involved with that. I'd like to make site visits to my projects afterwards just to see how they're doing so I can see it for myself. Our objective here is to restore the riverscape, and I want to see it through to make sure that we're accomplishing that goal.

[00:27:13] So we may be looking at 10 years' worth of work here on this one particular stream, and then we'll be looking at a couple of hundred years of benefits coming down the road. The cost for a stream restoration project can vary greatly depending on where you are in the landscape.

[00:27:33] Urban projects can be much more expensive. There's a lot more lateral constraints we have to be concerned with. The level of detail in the plans is often much greater for urban projects because we're

concerned about all these different issues within the corridor. There's property restrictions that we have to be mindful of. There are often easements that we have to be mindful of.

[00:27:50] And all that adds cost to the design because we have to make sure that our design is avoiding those types of constraints. i basically say it's a thousand dollars a linear foot so you're looking at a multi-million dollar over five million dollar project here that's what it takes to restore 300 years of excessive sediment deposition and unnatural erosion at this location so the economic benefits to a large extent are going to be here and downstream but this is not inexpensive this is expensive this This is not a cheap project, and it's still a worthy project.

[00:28:29] This is the best way for us to reduce the amount of sediment going to the bay that is required from Prince William County. So there's a lot of variability, but it's because every stream is unique to itself. It's not a cookie cutter operation. The funding source for these projects are usually helped out by a grant from DEQ.

[00:28:49] It's called the Stormwater Local Assistance Grant, or SLAAF. These grants are for the purpose of doing stream restoration or restoring or fixing our stormwater ponds. I think the best way for a Prince William County resident to get involved is to attend meetings, find out meetings where stream restoration or just really stream impact projects are being discussed.

[00:29:20] People like me are happy to come out and talk to you, talk to civic groups, to talk to Boy Scout, Girl Scout troops, whomever, whoever's interested to kind of foster that interest and streams. There are a lot of us out here who do this just out of the sheer love of it. Another great way to get involved is to volunteer your time. We're often needing people to come out and volunteer to take water measurements. Sometimes we need people to come out and help plant vegetation, plant trees, plant willows. You know, there's tons of stream work that needs to be done in the county. And really, if you're interested in helping out, there's something for you to do. Let me recommend that people pay attention to what's posted online here in

[00:30:00] Prince William County that's locally specific, the Prince William Conservation Alliance and other groups that have information shared about our local area and how we can conserve our green open spaces. There's a lot of green infrastructure planning being done by the county and by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. Sadly enough, the best way to get involved is not to go outdoors and to play in the woods, but to go to a dull, boring government meeting and speak out and articulate that you care about green open spaces.

[00:30:31] So you've got to have a recharge time to get outside and enjoy what's in the woods, get outside and enjoy these open spaces. And then there's really sort of the homework assignment. If you want to keep these open spaces, you need to speak up during the county's planning processes, during the state's road proposal processes, during the Northern Virginia Regional Commission studies, and articulate that this is important.

[00:30:55] We only get the government we ask for. If we don't ask for green open spaces, we're not going to get them. Every day, the Prince William County Animal Shelter cares for dozens of animals, each one looking to be adopted and given a forever home.

[00:31:26] It's a lot of work caring for all those furry friends and requires a lot of time, including time from volunteers willing to help find homes for all those fuzzy faces. So you might wonder, why volunteer?

Time is the biggest gift you can give anyone.

[00:31:43] you can give up a little bit of your time a couple times a week just to help them settle down and feel comfortable here, maybe teach them a few things that will help them get adopted, I think that's huge. I think it's important to volunteer at the shelter or actually volunteer anywhere to help us stay connected and stay human. All the animals they need care and sometimes there's not enough staff on hand and they can always use another hand to help care for them, and feed them and just give them love.

[00:32:15] Somebody to speak for them, they can't speak for themselves, so we need to be their voice. And how does it feel when an animal finally finds a forever home? Very fulfilling that we were able to help a family and an animal find a second chance.

[00:32:37] You know they're going to a good place, you know they don't have to stay here forever and ever, and it's very happy to see it on both the animal and the new owners. That is the best feeling ever because we know that they've been waiting here for a forever home.

[00:32:54] And to see them walk out the front door into a great home where they belong, there's nothing better than that. When an animal finds a home, it makes me feel emotional, makes me want to cry. It's a really good feeling knowing that they're looking back saying, thank you for my second chance. Become a volunteer today and help a furry friend find a forever home.

[00:33:30] Call 703-792-6465 or email animalshelter at pwcgov.org.

[00:34:17] I am Curtis Porter, chair of the Prince William County Human Rights Commission.

[00:34:58] Our mission is to eliminate discrimination and establish equal opportunities throughout our county. One way we accomplish that mission is through educating our community. It is our responsibility to educate and inspire the next generation of leaders so they can continue to strengthen and unify our community.

[00:35:19] Today I have with me some of our current and future leaders who are part of our Human Rights Student Leadership Council. Ray and Addie, as members of our community, tell us what unity means to you. Ray? Unity to me doesn't mean tolerating intolerance, but it does mean different people of different communities standing in solidarity together.

[00:35:45] And Addie? Unity to me means putting aside your political, cultural, religious views and joining together on one specific issue or cause. Abdullah, as a student in our community, what does equality mean to you?

[00:36:03] Certainly. So equality, I believe, is when we give everyone an equal opportunity to succeed. And what I mean by that is that I feel, unfortunately, in our 21st century world, A lot of people may feel left out, or a lot of people are viewed as less than by their authority figures based off of things that they cannot control.

[00:36:23] And so I believe that when we are all on an equal footing, ideally, everyone should have an equal or similar opportunity to succeed, to grow, to contribute to the bigger picture. And so that's why I feel equality is important and equality is necessary because ultimately everybody is trying to succeed and everybody is trying to do the right thing.

[00:36:42] I think when we truly have equality, when we achieve equality, it will be easier for people to do that. Okay, Isabella. Equality to me is accepting people for the way they are, not necessarily the way you

want them to be, and to take it a step further, embracing those differences and that diversity as a community and not being afraid of it.

[00:37:01] Ariel, what does equity mean to you as a student? Well, I guess that is a question that humanity has been trying to solve for its entire existence. For instance, in the Leviathan, Thomas Hobbes says that every man is born equal. However, some are born stronger or smarter than others.

[00:37:19] And for a society to work in harmony, we must use our differences to lift each other up. Equality is equity, meaning that no matter one's particular difference, everyone should have the same opportunity to achieve their goals. Nina? Equity to me as a student means giving each student the ability to learn in ways that best suit them.

[00:37:41] and by not generalizing the educational system, but by giving each student the individualized education that they need to learn and grow. Mike, as a future leader in our community, what does human rights mean to you? Human rights mean that we can advocate for what we are just most passionate about and what we love doing and how we can help others.

[00:38:03] Jalen? Human rights to me is the entitlement of everybody to be able to live and thrive regardless of their race, gender, religion, or any other factor that we come up with as society to discriminate against people. And everybody has the right to be seen as a human and is a valuable member of the nearly 8 billion people who call this rock-in-the-sky home.

[00:38:24] It's our responsibility to ensure that because even though it seems that these rights are given for everybody, they're not for way too many people. And would each of you tell us how you would ensure the progression and reinforcement of universal human rights? Nina? By educating those who aren't aware of human rights.

[00:38:43] It is crucial that we fully communicate with our communities how essential universal human rights are to creating a safer, kinder world as a whole. Our Constitution is built on the fact that the American populace is ever-changing.

[00:38:59] To ensure the progression and reinforcement of human rights, it is vital that adults have difficult conversations with their children about race, gender, disability, and other differences. So that as a society, we continue to grow and change, not receding into the mistakes of our forefathers.

[00:39:16] Jayla? The reinforcement and progression of human rights is, the key to that is education. And educating our youth and ensuring that we're not only teaching them how to be leaders in their communities, but also to communicate and to propagate equity inside of their communities as well.

[00:39:33] And if we don't do that, then all we're doing is allowing trauma to continue to both repeat and exponentiate over the course of generations. And Mike? The reinforcement of universal human rights and to ensure what we can do to make our community a better place is to make sure that we have great communication and awareness of our surroundings, which then also means that we could educate those who need to be educated on certain topics.

[00:40:02] Isabella? There's a Benjamin Franklin quote that says, Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn. I think that we need to go a step beyond teaching students about human rights in schools to getting them involved in community projects and organizations. When

students have hands-on experience working for the progression of universal human rights, it's more likely these values will be reinforced and longer lasting.

[00:40:26] Abdullah? Certainly. So with universal human rights, I believe that it's important to take a grassroots effort. And what I mean by that is we can start off by doing things similar to what we have here, such as create a human rights council or advocate for that in different counties and municipalities.

[00:40:43] Furthermore, voting rights are also a very important thing to begin with. Advocate people to go out to their polling places, vote. We can also educate people on their human rights. A lot of people don't even know what rights they have and how to exercise them. And we also need to offer more protections for people who are living in different countries or in different places that don't necessarily have full protections, for example, for gender equality or for education, fight for more human rights in those areas.

[00:41:10] Especially in today's world, I believe that human rights are important to really help people succeed and live a better life. Ray? Of course. I think that our education system needs to be updated so that the students of today can understand how our government functions. That way they can learn to protect their future rights and the rights of their children in the future.

[00:41:33] Eddie? I would ensure the progression of universal human rights by just simply being vocal about human rights and welcoming people into conversations and learning about human rights to make sure that it is upheld and continued to be advocated for. The next generation. Thank you for joining us.

[00:45:09] Good afternoon. It's two o'clock on Tuesday, April 2nd. Please join me for a moment of silence.

[00:46:43] Thank you so very much. All rise if you are able for the Pledge of Allegiance. all right thank you so very much um vice chair bode is just running a few minutes behind

[00:47:18] sorry okay all right we are now on to agenda item 3a approval approval of the meeting minutes from tuesday march 12th 2024 i would like to entertain a motion to approve agenda item 3a so move man second all right any discussion all right let's vote i i am not working we always have some technical difficulties i think it's moving this way vote

[00:47:56] unanimous supervisor bode absent from vote all right thank you very much we are now on to the proclamation and commendation portion of our agenda we have two proclamations the first is to proclaim april 2024 child abuse prevention month and the second is to proclaim april 21st 27th 2024 is national volunteer week do i have a motion to approve agenda items 4a and 4b so move manager second all right any discussion madam chair supervisor franklin sure for uh child abuse prevention month just want to recognize our social services department um particularly

[00:48:35] miss courtney tyranny who is actually retiring but she's been leading the effort um you know with along with our commission and her staff on child abuse prevention. We obviously have the Child Advocacy Center, which she has led the effort on and has become a war-winning facility.

[00:48:56] It is both fortunate and unfortunate that we have that facility, but obviously our ultimate goal is to eradicate child abuse here in this county. So thank you for all the work that you've done throughout your years of service, and congrats, and I'm sure you're looking forward to the next chapter.

[00:49:12] Thank you. Thank you. Let's take a vote. Vote unanimous. Supervisor Bodee absent from vote. And I'd just like to note that item 4B, we will acknowledge that at our 730 meeting.

[00:49:32] But Ms. Tierney and anyone from social services who would like, you know, Ms. Wilson, please join me at the podium.

[00:49:53] All right, this is to proclaim April 2024's Child Abuse Prevention Month. Whereas in fiscal year 2023, 2,164 cases of suspected child abuse and neglect reported in Prince William County, and whereas child abuse is considered to be one of our nation's most serious public health problems with scientific studies documenting the link between the abuse and neglect of children and a wide range of medical, emotional, psychological, and behavioral disorder, and whereas our children are our most valuable resources

[00:50:33] and will shape the future of Prince William County, And whereas Prince William County is committed to supporting families through programs that will prevent child abuse and neglect, and whereas effective child abuse prevention activities succeed because of the partnerships created between child welfare professionals, education, health, community, and faith-based organizations, businesses, law enforcement agencies, and family, and whereas displaying a pinwheel during the month of April will serve as a positive reminder that together we can prevent child abuse and neglect, and by doing so, keep children safe, and whereas prevention remains the best defense for our children and families.

[00:51:11] Now, therefore, it would be resolved that the Prince William County Board of Supervisors hereby proclaims April 2024 is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Would you like to say a few words? Good afternoon, and thank you, Chair Jefferson, and the members of the Board of County Supervisors.

[00:51:28] I'm Lori Wilson, Chair of the DSS Advisory Board, representing the Potomac District. And with me today is our Vice Chair, Idris O'Connor, the Fiasco District, and Christine Falls with the Gainesville District. Also, just want to recognize the Director of Social Services, Courtney Tierney, and our Deputy Director, Philistine Tolt, Lena Puriford, our Assistant Director.

[00:51:51] Thank you all for being here. The number of CPS complaints between 2022 and 2023 rose by 28% to 6,554 in 2023. The National Child Abuse Prevention Month theme we heard is doing things differently, moving from challenge to change, and it is in line and supports the Children's Bureau vision to promote equity in state and state child welfare systems.

[00:52:19] We want to support their goals to develop and enhance the child welfare workforce, to support kinship caregivers, to prevent child and children from coming into foster care, and to ensure that youth leave care with strengthened relationships, holistic supports, and opportunities.

[00:52:37] We want to thank you again for this proclamation, and we thank you for the support of the staff that do the work every day to support those children and families who are most vulnerable in our community. Thank you again for the proclamation. Thank you. Thank you so much.

[00:52:56] This way.

[00:53:39] All right. We are now on to the KSUN agenda. Are there any items anyone wishes to remove from the consent agenda or any specific questions or concerns?

[00:54:03] All right. I will entertain a motion to approve agenda items 5A through 5F. So moved, Matt. Second. Any discussion? All right. Let's vote. Vote unanimous.

[00:54:27] Supervisor Bode absent from vote. All right. Thank you so very much. We are now moving on to public comment time. Please note that public comment time is for items not listed on today's agenda as

a public hearing item.

[00:54:46] We will hear from, we have three people who are signed up to speak, and I will call speakers up. You each have three minutes to share your views and opinions on matters before the board. Please state your name, your magistrate district, or where you generally reside.

[00:55:03] We will close public comment time after the first 15 minutes of in-person public comments. First, we have Mr. Carl Gretton, then we have Ashley Studholm, and then Teresa Menz. All right, sir, you, Mr. Gretton, you may go.

[00:55:24] Hello, I'm Carl Gretton of the Gainesville District. There has been a statement that the projected tax revenue of the data centers has been reduced from $700 million to $100 million. Where is the $600 million reduction going to come from to pay for the school budget request?

[00:55:39] The solution is to make sure data centers pay their fair share and not to use the excuse of government contractors and equipment or reduce taxes for some other lame excuse. Advertise and increase the taxes to keep up with surrounding counties.

[00:55:55] Prince William County may now be third in tax rates for computer peripherals for local jurisdictions. Now that many data centers have planned the size and locations of the buildings, companies should have submitted load letters to Dominion. Please determine the source of power from the spreadsheet that the Planning Commission has developed.

[00:56:14] The answer cannot be as simple as the grid. If you receive the grid as the answer, then what is the capacity and type of input, and where is the electricity coming from? This answer should help determine what power facilities need to be developed. Should the Board of Supervisors get answers from JLM from where the power will come from?

[00:56:34] How many diesel trucks will be spread across the eastern seaboard to fill generators? How many small nuclear reactors will be built to service the digital gateway? How many solar facilities will be needed? Regarding Waterloo Solar, this acreage is a pinpoint for desired electricity.

[00:56:54] This facility will only generate 20 megawatts, whereas 26,638 megawatts will be needed in the area. Build nuclear reactors. Build elsewhere. This location is on the historical journey through hollowed ground.

[00:57:11] Plan for hail. Broken solar panels that leach cadmium, lead, and polyvinyl fluoride are hazardous to the environment. Diversify the buffer. Stipulate replanting dead vegetation. Plant a buffer along Route 15. Route 15 may be widened, and the current buffer may be eliminated.

[00:57:31] This is an industrial facility, and tax accordingly. Technology needs to improve to fit more productive panels on smaller areas of land. Eliminate the DI group. The Equity Inclusion Group sponsored a Zoom meeting in which you needed to register.

[00:57:46] The DI group is so out of touch with the registration process, does not even work, and the sustainability meeting is not open to public online. The Sustainability Commission is looking for two more full-time employees, FTEs. Transfer two FTEs from the DI group to the Sustainability Commission.

[00:58:03] The proposed 2025 revenue estimate on chart 40 has real property residential appreciation increasing from 5% to 5.5%. Here we go again. Citizens will need to pay higher taxes when we were assured total tax bills would go down due to the digital gateway.

[00:58:21] Here is one more statement from Prince William Digital Gateway proponents that is one more lie. Thank you. All right, thank you. Next we'll have Ashley Studholm. Good afternoon, Chair Jefferson, members of the board.

[00:58:39] My name is Ashley Studholm, Occoquan District, and I'm representing the Prince William Conservation Alliance, a grassroots conservation organization aiming to create equitable and sustainable communities throughout Prince William County. Three years ago, we started voicing concerns about the proposed data center development within the legislative boundary of Prince William Forest Park, Potomac Technology Park.

[00:59:05] We acknowledge that data centers had a role to play in modern society. Many of our programs are available online for all to see because of data centers that have been built. But we also recognize they need to be properly sited with adequate buffers and setbacks.

[00:59:27] Where data centers are located is still important. However, with the rapid increase we're seeing in this industry's demand for power, water, and land, we are concerned about the cumulative impacts on our electric grid, energy bills, water resources, and climate change goals.

[00:59:49] These impacts are felt not only here in Prince William County, but across the street, the state. It is because of these cumulative impacts that we are a founding member of a statewide coalition calling for data center reform, which has bipartisan support.

[01:00:08] While state-level action is underway, there is much we can do at a local level. The revenue potential for data centers is enticing for parks and schools and other programs, but we are already seeing that that promised revenue may be much less than initially projected, while aggregated impacts continue to mount.

[01:00:25] This leaves us wondering, in the end, will the benefits truly outweigh the costs? For the accounting to work out in the county's favor, we need a planning process to be clear, transparent, and predictable, and for it to account for impacts on our community's natural areas and climate change goals.

[01:00:45] To the latter point, the work of the Sustainability Commission in implementing the Community Energy Sustainability Master Plan is key to the planning process. We need transparency regarding power and water requirements of data centers. We need clear guidelines for the location, construction of data centers, including noise control provisions, adequate buffers and setbacks, protection of natural open spaces, and requirements for renewable energy that's much higher than 10%.

[01:01:15] These suggestions are not exhaustive, but rather highlight a few key elements for you as leaders to consider. By constructing clear guidelines and adhering strictly to them, we can ensure that applicants, planners, staff, and the community are aware of expectations and can work together towards sustainable solutions.

[01:01:34] Thank you for your attention in this matter, and we look forward to working collaboratively with the board to address these issues. Thank you. Thank you. Next up is Teresa Mintz, but before you speak, ma'am, I'd like to call up Cameron Hamilton, Matthew Small, and Oyan Johnson, if you guys can stand in line to speak.

[01:01:57] All right, ma'am, Ms. Mintz, you may proceed. Teresa Mintz, Potomac District. I want to thank law enforcement and first responders for all that they do for us. I also want to make a comment. There was

a citizen at one of our meetings, the last meeting of April, no, March, excuse me.

[01:02:15] She complained about the way the police are doing things. It didn't make sense to her. There was no accountability. Well, I just happened to be here in the board when this Democrat board last year or the year before, they were telling the police what to do and what not to do.

[01:02:33] They were micromanaging, and it was on full display. So the police are not free to enforce our laws because the dictators here say, oh, no, don't upset them. Okay, Chair Jefferson, has a staff given Supervisor Ware the information concerning the data centers?

[01:02:54] He's asked for it. Has he gotten it? Or has Supervisor Ware been ignored once again? Now, Supervisor Vega, my question concerns the Parson property. You voted for it, but why couldn't you vote for the 45 height instead of the 80?

[01:03:18] You said nothing about the height. And what hurts me is all of you up there can move on. You can destroy our county, and you can move on, and that's what you will do. I heard this opening about child abuse, but yet I know there's something going on for one of the citizens who's not getting any answers to her foster child.

[01:03:45] Why hasn't this been settled? No, I don't talk to the citizen about the issue. I'm bringing it up. Because when I see things like this, I call it a dog and pony show, okay? Oh, that's where I'm at. If you've got open borders, don't tell me you care about child abuse.

[01:04:03] You do not. You support child abuse. Because though our borders are wide open, we have a whole bunch of children. We don't know where they're at. We don't know who they went to. And I'm sorry, but we have evil people who want to sexualize our children.

[01:04:21] Yes, people can ignore me all they want. And another thing, when it comes to the Republican Party, we have many foxes watching the hen house. So no matter which party we deal with, we are literally screwed, okay?

[01:04:39] And another thing, why when we have promotions, why are we not hiring from within? Why are we going to Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Chicago? Why is that happening? So don't tell me we don't pay enough for our employees when the supervisors are getting 70%.

[01:04:59] Our county exec is getting $380,000 a year. Boy, I would be rich with that money. Thank you very much. Next we have Mr. Cameron Hamilton. All right, then Mr. Matthew Small.

[01:05:19] Good afternoon. Chairwoman and members of the board, thank you for having me. My name is Matt Small. I'm here on behalf of Northern Virginia Food Rescue. We serve all Prince William County and have a warehouse in the Gainesville District.

[01:05:39] I'd first like to give a heartfelt thanks to the Prince William County Board of Supervisors and their unwaiving support for our cause. I understand some of you have already completed food rescues individually, but for those who are not already familiar, Northern Virginia Food Rescue is a pioneering organization dedicated to combating food insecurity in Prince William County.

[01:05:56] With over 35% of our population faces challenges in accessing consistent and healthy food options. Driven by the understanding that access to quality food is a fundamental right, NOVA-FR operates the critical intersection of social justice and environmental sustainability.

[01:06:13] Annually, about $400 billion worth of food is wasted between harvest and retail markets, contributing significantly to landfill mass and greenhouse gas emissions. NOVA-FR intervenes in this cycle, recycling perfectly good food that would otherwise contribute to environmental degradation.

[01:06:30] The organization's efforts are deeply personal to all of our staff. And we would like to make sure that we share our mission about redirecting food from landfills and ensuring that our community has access to nutritional meals.

[01:06:49] NOVA FR encourages community involvement through various activities, such as our app for our food rescue heroes, volunteering opportunities, and donor-supported programs like our backpack program, which partners with area schools to provide children with meals outside of school hours. With a focus on collaboration, innovation, technology, and conviction, Northern Virginia Food Rescue invites everyone to join in their mission to tackle social injustice of food insecurity while also serving the environment.

[01:07:17] I encourage those who have not done already to download our mobile application. It's a valuable tool for deepening your involvement with our mission. Thank you once again for your support and our commitment. Thank you so very much. Now I have Oyan Johnson.

[01:07:47] Good afternoon.

[01:08:03] Good afternoon. My name is Ayan Johnson, Woodbridge District. I stand today as an advocate and a reminder to select members of the board of county supervisors and individuals within this county, within this county, who would like to forget about a child affectionately known as Bumpy.

[01:08:32] On August 28, 1955, a 14-year-old child by the name of Emmett Till was murdered. His mother, Mamie Till, famously said, let the people see. I'll let your microphone is off, ma'am.

[01:09:00] No, can you turn it back on?

[01:09:18] yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all. Prince William County spent their chance in 2023 playing a game of chess with my family's life. The goal in Checkers, though, is to ensure, I'm sorry, the goal in Checkers is to ensure that your opponent has no more moves. That's what Prince William County was doing. Your final move was on February 23rd, 2024, when Bumpy was adopted by another family. If that was your goal, congratulations, Prince William County, you have won. Yet our family was focusing on another game on the same

[01:09:54] board. The objective in chess is to deliver checkmate to your opponent's king, who we will refer to as Mr. Shorter. You're the king. Mr. Shorter is the king and under threat of being captured, and no other moves can remove the threat. In chess, the king, my husband, okay, Mr. Shorter is just the king in theory for the county, but the king, my husband, who I refer to is the most important piece, while the queen is the most powerful piece. The queen can move any number of squares vertically, horizontally, diagonally, combining the powers of rook and bishop. The queen's versatility and range of movement makes it crucial for controlling the

[01:10:34] board and executing strategic attacks. The queen is the most important, important, potent offensive force on the board. My dearest Bumpy, to my dear sweet Bumpy, in your honor we started a foundation. The Checkmates and Honeys Foundation is dedicated to advocating for foster parents who have the desire to adopt.

[01:10:56] We provide support and resources to foster parents, empowering them on their journey to provide permanent homes for their children in need. One way that Checkmates advocates for foster parents is by raising awareness about the importance of foster care. To my dear Bumpy, I say happy fourth birthday, and to the county, I say Checkmate.

[01:11:15] Thank you so very much. And next we have Mr. Cameron Hamilton. I will give you credit. You came at the right time. Better late than never. Thank you very much. Thank you all for your time.

[01:11:33] Thank you, Board of Supervisors, the Honorable Chair, everyone else here. I'd like to comment quickly on the matters at stake as it pertains to the budget for the county attorney, as well as it pertains to additional staff. I think that a good sense and audit should be considered when it comes to providing additional taxpayer dollars to increase the staff I think right now what we have to look at is the resources that are currently there to bear are we doing an effective job are we policing properly I think unfortunately what we're finding right now is that some of the policing methods that we're using right now are not really serving the constituents of this county

[01:12:09] not as they could be so before additional resources and before an additional tax burden are put on the constituents of this county I certainly believe that we should do a public audit to determine are some of the enforcement mechanisms and are some of the actual prosecutorial decisions ranging from this attorney's office appropriate? Are they adequately ensuring that individual offenders are holding the utmost that they can to ensure that the law is obeyed and to ensure that proper incentives are in place so as to ensure that we don't have repeat offenders? I'm a firm believer in the ability of the individual having their case advocated for and heard before court.

[01:12:48] We all believe in the form of governance here in this country that allows you to have your case individually heard. In this particular circumstance, now we have a claim from a local attorney requesting additional resources, and I just don't know that additional resources right now to enforce the law is the best course of action.

[01:13:07] I think instead we should have our prosecutors ensure that they're actually enforcing the law, they are prosecuting appropriate cases before we start putting an additional tax burden on the payer here. This county already pays pretty high taxes. Again, I live in Orange County, so we're a little jealous because Orange County taxes are a little bit less than what we find here in Prince William.

[01:13:26] But I just think that before we provide more resources and more infrastructure to our law enforcement agencies that are, frankly, doing their job to the best of their abilities, we should take a firm look at the Commonwealth Attorney to make sure that are they, in fact, meeting their obligation? Are they, in fact, holding individual offenders accountable under the law?

[01:13:45] Or is, again, putting additional resources on the back of the taxpayer the appropriate course of action? So I think what we've seen is, unfortunately, restorative justice implications are not really serving the constituents here. We have the argument that crime is dropping.

[01:14:00] It's really kind of a misnomer. Crime is only dropping because the prosecutorial actions to enforce it and to hold individuals accountable are not being appropriately addressed. They're not being enforced in the manner in which they should be. So that creates a false argument, a straw argument, if you will, that I think creates an imbalance.

[01:14:17] So people feel that there's a sense of safety, and there's really not. So I would encourage our constituents here, make sure that we are enforcing the law. Make sure that our prosecutor's office is actually holding offenders accountable for their actions so as to deter future lawbreakers. Thank you all. God bless you.

[01:14:34] And, again, I pray for God's providence and wisdom in your decisions. All right. Thank you. We do not have any speakers today for our remote comment time, so we are going to move on to agenda item 7A, that is the public hearings. We have one public hearing this afternoon.

[01:14:51] However, there is no presentation associated with this item. So I will open the public hearing on item 7A. We'll see if we have, give us a second to see if we have any speakers. No speakers signed up in person or remote.

[01:15:09] All right, we're moving this right along. Saying that we don't have any public speakers, I'm going to close the public hearing for item 7A. Do we have a motion to approve agenda item 7A? Madam Chair.

[01:15:26] Thank you. That's in the Coles District. First off, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our Department of Transportation in particular, Mr. Wyman. We've been working on this for a couple of years now, and so to finally see this come before the board is exciting, to say the least, for some of my constituents in this area that have been dealing with this issue.

[01:15:43] So I would like to go ahead and move it forward, but certainly want to thank everybody that has played a role in ensuring that we get to this point. And to the community who has been extremely patient throughout this entire process, we also thank you, and hopefully this is going to address the issues that they've been dealing with for quite some time. Second. All right.

[01:16:00] Doesn't sound like we have any discussion, so let's take a vote. Vote unanimous. All right, thank you. We will now move on to item 8, and that is county executive time.

[01:16:19] Mr. Shorter, the floor is now yours. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, members of the board. Just a few acknowledgments and announcements I wanted to quickly go through. First, on March 23rd, I just want to acknowledge our team at Housing and Community Development.

[01:16:38] We had our 14th annual Northern Virginia Housing Expo. And on that Saturday morning, you may remember, it was a lot of rain and bad weather. The event was full with folks coming out to learn about housing.

[01:16:55] There were exhibitors, workshops, and it represented vendors from not just Prince William County, but the region. So I just want to acknowledge the Housing and Community Development Team, Deputy County Executive Elijah Johnson. Even our county attorney was there as well.

[01:17:14] Manager also wanted to acknowledge our procurement team. So I learned that the procurement team hosted a vendor workshop. This was the first in some time to really introduce new vendors and engage current vendors on how to do business with the county.

[01:17:33] And with that, on March 28th, 42 new vendors attended the workshop. 52% of those vendors were new to our county and had not worked with us before. This is exactly the kind of work that we should be doing in introducing new vendors to do business with our county.

[01:17:55] And just want to acknowledge the procurement team, Deputy County Executive Quentin Haynes, for the leadership and really excited to have them continue on that path. Also wanted to acknowledge this Saturday the human resources team and 22 of our departments participated in the first ever career expo for prince william county and so that that expo started at 9 a.m on saturday and there was a line of residents and would-be applicants interested in

[01:18:30] employment with the county and so just want to express my excitement appreciation to them for the creativity for the leadership and for all the agencies that came out to host. I really want to just express my appreciation. 391 applicants came out to the expo. Of the 391, 49 were interviewed on site. One offered a contingent offer on that day, and seven will be contacted this week with contingent offer letters. This, again, is the

[01:19:07] exact kind of work that we want to see done here in the county and just want to again express my appreciation to the human resources team when i got there on saturday morning they were all super excited they had on their blue pwc shirts and uh and we were just really excited to host so many of our residents and others some coming from pretty far away for jobs with our county so just wanted to express again my my appreciation and for employees just two more announcements miss

[01:19:39] polinda gaines our drug court coordinator was recently named 2024 most influential woman in central texas i'm sorry central virginia you're not in austin anymore central central virginia Central Virginia by three community services. They recognize women each year for their accomplishments and contributions of improving the lives of people in Virginia, spanning from Richmond all the way up to Prince William. So just wanted to, Ms. Gaines, appreciate you and

[01:20:18] recognize you for the phenomenal work and for being recognized as the most influential woman here in central Virginia, not central Texas. Also, and finally, wanted to recognize our lifeguards at Chin Park Aquatic Center.

[01:20:33] So last month they helped a boy three years old who was having breathing challenges. His mother reached back out to the county and just really complimented us, in particular the lifeguards, on their professionalism, their care, their courtesy, in helping them during a time of need.

[01:20:56] So I just wanted to acknowledge the lifeguards at our Chin Park Aquatics Center. So thank you all for all the work you do. And with that, Madam Chair, that is all for me. Thank you so very much. Now we're going to move on to item 9A.

[01:21:13] I'm sorry, 9A. We're going to turn it over to the county attorney. Ms. Roble, the floor is yours. Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the board. This afternoon, we will have consultation and discussion with legal counsel and briefings by staff members pertaining to the acquisition of real property for a public purpose with the accompanying legal advice from counsel and briefings by staff members pertaining to actual litigation regarding specific matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel regarding land acquisition of property interest for the right-of-way on eight properties owned by Dumfries Purchaser, LLC

[01:21:43] for the properties located at 17679, 17681, 17685, 17687, 17689, 17695 Main Street, and 17740 Fraley Boulevard, and 3600 Point Center Court, where such consultation or briefing in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position, negotiating strategy, or litigating posture of the public body.

[01:22:11] This item is appropriate for closed session pursuant to 2.2-3711A378 of the Code of Virginia. So moved, Madam Chair. Second. All right. Any discussion? If not, let's vote. Vote unanimous.

[01:22:34] We're speeding through this. All right. So when we don't get happy. We will now move on to our budget work session, which includes two presentations. First, I will queue up, is our Commonwealth Attorney, Amy Ashworth, the Honorable Amy Ashworth.

[01:22:55] You got everything you need? All right, ma'am, the floor is yours. All right. Good afternoon, Chair Jefferson and Board of County Supervisors. As you know, I am Amy Ashworth, the elected Commonwealth Attorney for Prince William County and the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park.

[01:23:16] I am pleased to come before you today to explain the budget request that I made on behalf of the Office of the Commonwealth Attorney. I am hopeful that at the conclusion of my remarks, you have a better understanding of the 78 people that make up the Office of the Commonwealth Attorney, what we do, how we do it, and why the resources we are requesting are critical to keeping the community that we serve safe. As I said, there are 78 full-time employees of my office, including myself. We have 41

[01:23:55] prosecutors spread over six different divisions. The Violent Crimes Division, which handles cases brought primarily by the Violent Crimes Unit of the police departments that we serve. The Special investigations unit that handles cases involving gangs, large-scale narcotics investigations, and human trafficking. We have the special victims unit, which handles adult and child sexual assault and child abuse and neglect. We have a domestic violence unit and a juvenile unit that handles

[01:24:32] serious criminal charges committed by juveniles. We also finally have what we refer to as our line attorneys who handle everything else. Within our office is a separate program called the Victim Witness Assistance Program. There are 14 full-time employees, many of them grant funded.

[01:24:56] We have 11 administrative team members who do everything from answer the phones and open the files that the prosecutors handle through the proper disposal of those files at the end of the case. The 11 men and women who make up our administrative team pull hundreds of files each day that go into the 14 different courtrooms that we serve and then refile them at the end of every day as well as perform the countless other administrative tasks for the largest law firm

[01:25:30] in Prince William County. We have seven paralegals. These are individuals who have some specialized legal knowledge or experience who assist lawyers with the preparation of their cases. One paralegal paralegal is shared by the violent crimes, special investigations, and the line attorneys. One paralegal is shared by the special victims unit, the domestic violence unit, and the juvenile unit.

[01:25:59] Three paralegals assist with answering the thousands of discovery requests that we get for each of the cases that we handle. We have a paralegal that deals primarily with FOIA requests as well as assists the other paralegals, and one paralegal that handles the incoming motions that are filed each day for discovery, bond, continuances, etc. We just hired two investigators funded primarily by a DCJS grant and also by this county, and I want to thank you for that.

[01:26:37] We have one law clerk that does a lot of legal research and assists with the hundreds of expungement requests that go through our office, and an interpreter who helps us deal with the large Spanish-speaking population that we serve and also handles all of the U visa requests that are filed when people have been a victim of a crime. This is a group picture taken in front of the courthouse when we all wore purple in support of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

[01:27:07] As noted, 63% of our employees live here in Prince William County. 13% of them grew up here, went to school here, and have families that still live here. Nine of our attorneys have over 20 years' experience, and 14 of our attorneys are career prosecutors, meaning they've dedicated their entire legal career to the prosecution of cases.

[01:27:35] We are an award-winning and community-centered office, participating in many community-wide events, including the recruitment event that was held this past weekend. We were there recruiting heartily.

[01:27:56] And finally, a slide on what we do best, which is prosecuting the guilty. These are just some of the headlines from some of the cases that we handled in just this past year. Each of these headlines represents hours and hours of work by the entire team of prosecutors, administrative staff, paralegals, victim witness managers, all working tirelessly in pursuit of justice for the victims and their families.

[01:28:29] I'm very proud of the office that I lead and the employees, your employees, who are dedicated to their jobs and to their profession. They are the unsung heroes of the criminal justice system. They give up their weekends preparing for jury trials, and they answer the call 24-7 from the police departments.

[01:28:52] They arrive early to the office. They stay after hours to make sure that justice gets done, and they do it without getting overtime or making the large salaries that private law firms pay because they are passionate about what they do. Our team members speak eight different languages, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Farsi, and Mandarin.

[01:29:20] Our victim witness case managers are often the first people that reach out and make contact with a victim or a victim's family. They ensure that they are kept up to date with what is happening in their cases. They make sure they're notified of court dates, especially bond motions, so they can have input on whether someone is released.

[01:29:42] And they make sure that any immediate needs of the families or the victim are taken care of. We have phenomenal people working in these roles. I've seen them use their own money to purchase clothing for victims so that they have appropriate things to wear to court.

[01:30:01] They sit with the victims, often before and throughout a court case, often when there's no one else who is available or will sit with them. They help victims access financial and protection options that may be available.

[01:30:19] They are critical and often overlooked part of the process as their work is done entirely behind the scenes. Now that I've told you who we are, I want to get into what we do. Obviously, we prosecute criminal cases.

[01:30:38] There are three categories of criminal cases that we handle, felonies being the most serious. Felonies are the ones that go typically to jury trial in the circuit court. Misdemeanors are a little bit less serious. There are several classes. Class 1 and Class 2 misdemeanors can be punished with jail time.

[01:31:01] And then finally, you have traffic infractions, which typically do not involve jail, just fines. In fiscal year 2023, our office opened 12,380 files. Each file represents a set of charges against an individual.

[01:31:24] In total, there were 20,551 charges. When you compare that to fiscal year 2021, when I was last before you, we had opened 9,934 files, representing 16,838 charges.

[01:31:48] Now, aside from prosecuting crimes, there are many duties put upon the Commonwealth Attorney that aren't reflected in those numbers. First and foremost, we advise law enforcement on investigations. Not a day goes by that we don't receive a phone call or an email from a law enforcement officer looking for guidance.

[01:32:10] We are available to them 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We have a prosecutor assigned every day to the duty desk who sits up front and fields phone calls and incoming in-person questions from law enforcement.

[01:32:27] And we have someone assigned to answer an on-call phone after hours and on weekends and holidays to assist with any immediate needs. We also run the specialty dockets that are so incredibly popular and well-received throughout our community.

[01:32:46] The veterans docket, which I've heard you speak highly of, doesn't happen without the prosecutor who screens the cases, evaluates the charges, and makes the offer to incentivize the veteran to succeed. We also appear in court, each and every veteran's docket.

[01:33:04] The drug court, I'm proud to have been instrumental in starting this court and bringing it to Prince William County. But it also doesn't run without prosecutors who do the screening, the evaluating, and appear in court to represent the interests of the Commonwealth.

[01:33:20] well. We have the mental health or the control docket, which makes sure that those people involved in the criminal justice system who are also battling mental health issues are getting the treatment that's been court-ordered and are complying with that so that they can remain safely in the community. That docket doesn't run without prosecutors. And we have the early diversion program for domestic violence cases, which won the 2023 VACO Award for Prince William

[01:33:55] County. This program does more to stop domestic violence by addressing the root causes and working to prevent it from happening again. Additionally, every time a law enforcement officer discharges his or her weapon at a human being, whether it results in a death or not, my office is notified and immediately begins our own investigation with the assistance of the critical incident response team. We issue our own report to the police chief and to the public regarding this incident. This

[01:34:29] takes many hours watching the body-worn camera, watching the witness interviews, going over all of the evidence, as well as generating those written findings. And finally, the Code of Virginia very kindly assigns other duties and obligations to the Commonwealth Attorney, many of which you don't necessarily know about or hear about. In fact, when you're elected to this position, they give you a 72-page document outlining these duties that range anywhere from representing the Commonwealth, filing suit to recover monies paid in violation of the COIA Act, which I haven't had

[01:35:06] to do, to overseeing the destruction of evidence in cases that have been concluded. But most of these time-consuming other duties include handling all of the expungement requests, the extraditions of people who are arrested here but wanted in other jurisdictions, and the filing of civil forfeiture suits to seize profits of crime from those who engage in criminal behavior. All of this take a significant amount of time to make sure they are done and done correctly, in addition to

[01:35:39] the duties of prosecuting the crimes that occur within our community. Prosecuting isn't just about lock everybody up and throw away the key. It is about doing the right thing in every case, every time.

As prosecutors, we don't represent an individual. We represent the people. The people who have given us the authority to seek a just result in their name.

[01:36:14] And a just result is different in every single case. There is no one-size-fits-all justice, and that's why I'm before you today. I want you to know who we are, what we do, and why we do it.

[01:36:34] When a new prosecutor joins our office, they are provided with a handbook setting forth their ethical obligations as a prosecutor. This handbook was written and produced by VACA, the Virginia Association of Commonwealth Attorneys, which is the statewide organization of the 119 elected Commonwealth attorneys.

[01:37:01] A prosecutor's job is to pursue the truth and a fair and just result, not convictions. Our mission statement reflects our values to vigorously enforce the laws, pursue the truth, and deal openly and honestly with the community, law enforcement agencies, and victims of crime.

[01:37:26] I took office in January of 2020, two months before the world shut down due to COVID. At that time, we had 54 full-time employees, 29 attorneys, 10 victim witness personnel, nine administrative staff, four paralegals, and one interpreter.

[01:37:50] We were woefully understaffed. In January of 2021, I asked the county executive for 41 full-time employees. In his budget, he included two.

[01:38:07] I came before the board in March of 2021, and I provided you with the data and information to support my ask. We ended up agreeing to a three-year staffing plan that provided us with 24 full-time employees over three years.

[01:38:26] At that time, the 2020 pandemic had slowed the workload of our office considerably. There were also changes in the law and the courthouse environment, namely the Office of the Public Defender, whose impact was not fully apparent in March of 2021.

[01:38:45] And I want to talk about those changes for a minute. Discovery, what we refer to as discovery at the courthouse, is the evidence and information that the prosecutor is required to turn over to the defense in a criminal case.

[01:39:05] In July of 2020, this Virginia Supreme Court changed the rules that govern what must be turned over to the defense. Prior to that time, what was required to be turned over was very little.

[01:39:22] Of course, a prosecutor could turn over more and often did, but the required amount was very little. The new rule greatly expanded this requirement in felony cases, in cases involving juveniles. And because some of that additional information contained people's sensitive information, like dates of birth, social security numbers, there are now safeguards that a prosecutor must comply with when turning things over.

[01:39:53] The impact of that rule is that a significant more time is needed by attorneys and paralegals to answer discovery requests and ensure that we are in compliance with this new rule and also safeguarding witnesses' and victims' information.

[01:40:09] Jury trials. Effective July 1, 2021, a new law was enacted by the General Assembly that gave the option of whether to have a jury sentence someone if they are convicted to the defense.

[01:40:29] Previously, the prosecutor could elect to have jury sentence and often did because juries typically imposed much harsher sentences than a judge. Once the prosecutor would elect to have a jury sentence someone, the defense often pled guilty instead of going to jury and risking that harsh sentence.

[01:40:55] When this new law went into effect immediately, the very next term day, that July, we saw defense attorney after defense attorney requesting a jury trial. Why? Because the threat of that harsh jury sentence was no longer there, and it would be easier for the defense to convince one person on a jury and potentially hang the jury than to have a bench trial where only the judge needed to decide guilt or innocence.

[01:41:30] The result is that we have more jury trials scheduled and more jury trials that take place. In fact, the circuit court got an additional judge partially based on this increase. Juries take a lot more time to prepare for than a bench trial.

[01:41:47] And often we have to assign two prosecutors to tackle the workload in preparing and handling that case. Finally, you have the addition of the Office of the Public Defender. This definitely improved the quality of defense for indigent defendants, and I think that was their goal.

[01:42:10] But what it also did is increase the workload on our office. We have seen a large increase in challenges to police search warrants, police arrests, and the admission of evidence at trial. And we have also seen an increase in the number of trials, more people pleading not guilty, all of which increases the demands on our staff and prosecutors.

[01:42:33] The shortage of prosecutors is not just a Prince William County problem. This is a statewide problem. Prosecutors across the Commonwealth have complained to the General Assembly for years that we are understaffed, Mainly because the state only provides funding to localities to pay for felony prosecution, not misdemeanors.

[01:43:05] There are certainly important cases that are misdemeanors that need the attention of a prosecutor. DUI, domestic violence, stalking, theft, assault and battery are just a few. So in 2022, the General Assembly funded a time study to determine what the staffing standards should be for prosecutor's office and at what level each jurisdiction should be staffed.

[01:43:35] So I want to step back a minute and explain to you how prosecutors are funded in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As I said, the state only pays for the prosecution of felony cases. Those payments go from the state compensation board directly to the locality. The comp board decides, based on their staffing standards, how many attorneys and staff members they are going to pay for.

[01:44:05] When a commonwealth attorney's office, like ours, handles misdemeanors and traffic infractions, that is purely optional. We are one of the few jurisdictions that does handle class one and class two misdemeanors and any misdemeanor or traffic case in which a defense attorney is involved. Other jurisdictions like Norfolk and Virginia Beach only handle DUI and certain crimes of violence like domestic violence. As of June 29th of 2023, the comp board paid for 20

[01:44:41] attorneys, nine administrative staff, and five paralegals. And when I say pay for, they contribute the state amount, which if we paid people the state amount here in Prince William County, I would be unable to hire or retain anybody. So the county does supplement the salaries of the comp board employees. So of the 78 employees in my office, only 34 are funded by the comp board. Now the

[01:45:18] standard that they used to use, which they don't use anymore, but what they used to come up with this 29 and 5 was based on the number of felony cases that went from the district court to the circuit court and the number of felony sentencing events. This previous staffing standard created an incentive for prosecutors to send all of the felonies that they could up to the circuit court

[01:45:50] even if they knew the case should or would be reduced to a misdemeanor. So you had this inflated number of cases going to circuit court to increase that part of the formula that determined how much funding an office got from the state compensation board. It incentivized prosecutors to keep charges as felonies instead of working a case out for a misdemeanor, which is not a great plan if you want prosecutors to do the right thing. It also disincentivized specialty dockets where people

[01:46:29] were working towards getting their charges are reduced or doing other things to get their charges reduced, like paying restitution, like getting drug treatment, those sorts of incentives that we use to keep people on the right track. There was a lot of outrage about these perverse incentives, so much so that the comp board agreed to abandon the standard and to pay and to use the time study to determine a different way of figuring out how to spread the wealth among all of the jurisdictions.

[01:47:10] So, with the funding for a time study, the National Center for State Courts was hired, and they did an extensive statewide time study of all prosecutors in Virginia. Our office fully participated.

[01:47:29] It was eight weeks of logging every minute that we spent, both on in-court and out-of-court work. The result was new staffing standards based on the number of criminal cases charged by the police.

[01:47:45] I believe that you all received a copy of this time study. I know it was over 100 pages, and I appreciate if you've taken the time to look at that. So each time the police make an arrest here in Prince William County on a Class 1 or a Class 2 misdemeanor or a felony, our staff opens a file and a prosecutor handles that case.

[01:48:14] I wanted you to see what that looks like from 2021 through 2023, and these are calendar year numbers. and this data comes directly from the clerk's office data and is available on the Virginia Courts website. Now, this time study, the results of that tell us the minimum amount of resources we need as of 2023. 49 attorneys to handle felony and misdemeanor cases, 12 paralegals, 25 administrative staff, and they have no guidance on the victim witness personnel.

[01:48:52] This is the data that I used to come up with our budget request moving forward in 2025, 2026, and 2027. The standards say we should have 49 attorneys.

[01:49:07] We have 42. That is seven additional attorneys needed. The standards say we should have 12 paralegals. We have seven. That's the five additional paralegals we're requesting. They say we should have 25 admin staff.

[01:49:22] we have 13, and that is the request for 12 additional administrative staff. I hear from the attorneys over and over again that they have too much administrative work to do, and the numbers bear that out. We are asking for two additional victim witness staff and two additional investigators. I know that is a lot. I met with the deputy county executive. He told me that was a lot. He told me it was impossible. So I went back to my team, and I said, what are

[01:49:57] your absolute minimums. What do we need now? So here they are. We need all of the attorneys. That is simply not negotiable. We need at least four more paralegals so they don't have to share,

units don't have to share paralegals. And we need at least four more administrative staff and one more victim witness case manager.

[01:50:29] That is a total of 16 FTEs yesterday. In 2026, we have proposed adding the additional 10 full-time employees, which would be administrative staff, victim witness, and an investigator.

[01:50:50] And in 2027, we have proposed adding the two additional, which get us up to the 28. But I have to warn you that this is based on 2023 numbers. We don't know what 2024 and 2025 are going to look like.

[01:51:07] But if the trend continues, there will likely be more criminal cases filed, which will mean more need in our office. And I would expect new staffing numbers to come out from the comp board every three years. So by 2026, we should have additional data.

[01:51:27] So in summary, our proposed three-year staffing plan is 16, 10, and 2. In the CXO's proposed budget, he had eight this year and eight next year.

[01:51:44] This is simply not going to work. Your goal of a safe and secure community states you will provide appropriate staffing and resources to ensure public safety departments to ensure the highest quality of service.

[01:52:05] Our office, by Code of Virginia, is part of public safety, and we work closely with all of our law enforcement agencies to keep our community safe and to do it in a fair and just way. Without your commitment to fund our office at the level set by the State Compensation Board, we will be unable to continue to provide prosecution for all felony in Class 1 and 2 misdemeanors as we do today.

[01:52:38] What does that mean? It means we will only be able to handle certain designated misdemeanors, some of which are on this list, similar to our other sister jurisdictions, Fairfax, Loudoun, Henrico, Norfolk, Virginia Beach.

[01:52:58] This doesn't mean that other misdemeanors won't get prosecuted. It just means that the police officer making the arrest will have to handle the discovery and the trial without the assistance of a prosecutor. We've been asked by our staff to consider paying overtime to employees that document their hours and regularly exceed the 37.5 work week that they are paid for, and I guarantee you that would be all of them.

[01:53:28] We will not be able to get involved in cases where a defense attorney is present, leaving the officer again to handle that case in court against the defense attorney alone. And we will be unable to expand the specialty dockets and other diversion programs that could save taxpayer money and result in a more efficient system.

[01:53:57] Providing the resources allows us as prosecutors to continue the level of service that we currently have. It allows us to strive to expand those specialty dockets. There is a need, a very desperate need, for a first-time offender docket for things like shoplifting and other nonviolent offenses.

[01:54:22] It allows us to be involved in cases in which there is a defense attorney so that the officer isn't having to deal with the case by him or herself. And it allows us to focus more time and attention on the cases that matter. I know I have given you a lot of information.

[01:54:41] I want you to know that I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today and share this information in person. And I'm happy to answer any questions that you might have. All right, thank you so very much for coming here and explaining what your needs for your department are.

[01:55:00] I'm waiting to see if any supervisors have any questions. We have Supervisor Bailey. Thank you, Madam Chair. To the county attorney, we appreciate your detailed presentation.

[01:55:19] It thoroughly explained and gave a trending of where we've come from to where we are right now and for me and my one-eighth I definitely needed that as a reminder and I know that the state code has changed twice since I've been in the seat so I can't speak for anybody else in terms of their memory but that's where I remember so I really really appreciate the details that you gave in explaining on a lower level what all this meant we got your

[01:55:54] presentation before but but I appreciate the discussion before and I appreciate the details today the question that I had well it's not necessarily a question I really want the community to understand how important it is for your decision you and your staff's decision to bring in this veterans piece inside of what the county attorney's office does and it bonds with what the commander from the base has asked not just colonel brooks but the previous commander

[01:56:29] in terms of just having military folk live in our community so could you just highlight briefly your decision to do that because it's necessary just briefly yes absolutely so the veterans court actually was in place when i took office it was for low risk low need veterans who had found themselves accused of a crime. Excuse me, Commonwealth Attorney. Yes, ma'am. Please forgive me.

[01:56:57] My apologies to my county. Ms. Robel and I glanced at each other and figured out who you were talking about. What I did is expand the veterans docket to high-risk, high-need individuals, which allowed us to bring more veterans into the loop. Now, because we're talking about higher needs and higher risk that requires a lot more screening. It requires a lot more digging in to the case.

[01:57:28] It's not something that we can just look at and rubber stamp and move into the program. We have to make sure it's a good fit. But if you've not been able to attend one of their graduations and, you know, the veteran's docket and the drug court is a lot of hard work. It is not something easy and there are certainly people who say no thanks I'd rather take the conviction but once they complete those demands that are been made upon them they get the benefit of that and we're happy to do that in respect for what they did for our country and serving our country

[01:58:06] yeah and so ma'am sure I have two things more to say but I'll be brief one is the mental health piece as well. This was also something that the previous board collectively talked about with you as we moved into your needs as well as it relates to the different resources in terms of mental health. And so congratulations on the Divergent Award that you got from VACO. It stands to reason that that's the direction that we're going to in terms of your service as well. So then the last thing that i wanted to say or i wanted to ask you just so that i can digest this is when you talked

[01:58:46] about felonies and misdemeanors i'm not a lawyer i don't think anybody well bob's a lawyer so okay well anyway so huh i feel insulted oh i'm sorry bob so uh but i'm not a lawyer and so when you talk about felonies and misdemeanors you know understanding that difference as well and the level of service that you have to offer for that as well.

[01:59:11] Can you just bridge the gap a little bit for more clarity with that? So a felony is something that can be punished by at least a year in prison up to a lifetime in prison. And, you know, there were changes in the law during my administration that a felony theft used to be $200 or below.

[01:59:33] It is now at $1,000 threshold. So a lot of the thefts that were occurring would have been felonies previously or now misdemeanors. Misdemeanors tend to be less serious. They're punishable by up to 12 months in jail and a $2,500 fine.

[01:59:52] Misdemeanor cases take typically less time in preparing for court. Their discovery demands aren't as rigorous as the felony cases are. But, you know, felony cases are obviously more serious, have more serious impact on people in the community, and that's primarily where we focus.

[02:00:16] Where your numbers, just segueing on that, where your numbers were, you went from the $12,000, the $20,000 to $16,000 mark? Oh, that was the number of cases and files that we had opened in 2023.

[02:00:33] In fiscal year 2023, there were 20,551 charges brought by the police department against 12,380 individuals.

[02:00:51] Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. All right, quickly, before we go on to the next, I just had a question because you made me think about something. When you mentioned that prosecutors have to reduce the number of misdemeanors, that they prosecute possibly, Like what types of, can you give me any details of what type of cases would no longer be prosecuting if, you know, staff numbers don't improve?

[02:01:13] So there are hundreds of misdemeanors on the list. We would be, I have the list of cases we would be staying in. There are 32 categories of cases that we would likely stay in, and then the rest we would step out of.

[02:01:36] So is it helpful for me to provide? Just give a couple examples so that we can be clear. We would be staying in animal cruelty, arson, assault and battery, DUI, family abuse, hit and run, larceny, and sexual assault, stalking.

[02:02:03] There would be some reckless driving where there's an injury to somebody, but for the most part, we'd be out of those. Gotcha. All right. Just wanted to clarify. All right, before we go to Supervisor Weir, I mean, I think it's important, too, I just want to say this, that, you know, we talk a lot about community safety, and this is a big part of it, making sure that, you know, the people who keep us safe have the resources they need.

[02:02:26] And I know this is a tight budget year. We're trying to get, you know, people additional money. So, again, I appreciate you coming down here to explain, you know, what it is that your department needs. So, Supervisor Weir. Thank you, Madam Chair. Let me make it clear I'm not an attorney. My ethics are too high.

[02:02:43] This is an uncomfortable discussion for me. I understand what the General Assembly has done. I understand what the compensation board wants and all that sort of thing. But it's one thing to say that you need to have it.

[02:02:59] It's another thing not to provide any funding for it because that drops it in our lap. While I'm not an attorney, I am a budget walker. I do a lot of comparative analysis. And quite frankly, the comparative analysis for Prince William's Commonwealth Attorney's Office does not compare well with others from a cost standpoint.

[02:03:20] Since 2021, your budget ask has gone up 237%. That is not the case in other jurisdictions, and I can point, well, because it's the largest and best example, to Fairfax. Their budget ask this year is more than $4 million, excuse me, $3.5 million less than years, and your FTE will drop below your ask.

[02:03:43] At the same time, their cost per employee, just based on the salary numbers, seems to be significantly lower. There's probably a very good explanation for it. But, you know, when I look at Fairfax, when I look at Loudon, when I look at Arlington, and I understand it might be because they prosecute fewer crimes than you do, or a shorter schedule of crimes, shall we say, where maybe they don't pursue or they don't prosecute things like reckless driving.

[02:04:16] They leave that to the judge. That's almost fine with me. But, I mean, I'm looking at the growth over time, and it's gotten to the point where it's unsustainable for us. I mean, the ask this year is another $1.5 million over last year, and then you're in your FTE growth.

[02:04:38] We're not going to be able to sustain year over year over year. It's also somewhat interesting that the FTEs you're asking for and the FTEs that you've shown in your slide presentation are different than what we got in our budget.

[02:04:55] They're minor changes, but it doesn't give me a whole lot of faith, and I don't know who to ask as to why they're different. I suspect that comes from some juggling of the county staff with your budget request, and that might actually explain it. But when we get down to actual prosecutions, I think one of the biggest problems I have is that my office is inundated with calls from people who are victims and people who read the newspaper. And, you know, we've done a little bit of a deep dive into things, and we've looked at what we, quite frankly, call frequent flyers

[02:05:32] in our office. We've got people with 120 charges where, you know, 119 of them are null-prossed until they stab somebody. And we've got people that bring this up. Officers come into my office all the time and complain about the same thing. So with all of this money, it doesn't seem like to the layman or somebody outside of the Commonwealth's attorney's office that we're getting the bang for the buck that we really should be getting. Now, there may very well be a very rational explanation for it. However, when, you know, your budget ask is, you know,

[02:06:09] 50% higher than Fairfax, higher than Loudon's, and double that of Arlington. It's kind of hard to justify that ask, justify that FTE, given the numbers in the other jurisdictions where their FTEs are significantly lower or being lower.

[02:06:30] Now, I don't know why Fairfax suddenly dropped their ask by $500,000 this year, but your ask is 19% greater than last year's. And I just can't see that being sustainable by this county over a long period of time.

[02:06:47] And the ask will have to be something on the equivalent level next year on a percentage basis if you want to add that many more FTE. I am also curious why we have to give you two more cards. I think that's for the investigators.

[02:07:04] Yeah, we don't have any. See, there's a suitable, there's an acceptable explanation. I just would hope you wouldn't be giving it to additional prosecutors. I'm not sure what they need a car for to go back and forth to the judicial center. But that's where I stand on it.

[02:07:20] I'm going to do some soul-searching on this because I'm going to have to justify to myself and justify to the people in the Gainesville District the expenditure and whether or not we're actually getting the bang for the buck that we think we should be getting.

[02:07:35] And I'll leave it at that, Madam Chair. If I may respond. Yes. Thank you, Supervisor Weir. I appreciate you bringing up those concerns, and I appreciate the opportunity to address them. Number one, when I took office in 2020, it was apparent almost immediately how understaffed we were.

[02:07:55] And I wasn't surprised by this because I worked as a prosecutor there for 11 years. And, you know, I can't explain why this office didn't grow as the police department grew, as the population grew, as the courthouse grew.

[02:08:12] There were additions, maybe one or two positions each year, but it certainly did not keep up with where we should have been. And when I looked at, okay, how many cases are coming into our system right now? How many prosecutors do we have?

[02:08:28] And then I looked at other jurisdictions. I think the closest one in volume, right, cases coming in, was Virginia Beach. They had 44 prosecutors. We had 29 at the time, and they had 22 staff. And when I talked to the Commonwealth attorney down there and said, tell me how you do this, right, he was shaking his head at my number saying, tell me how you do this.

[02:08:55] And that is what started us with, okay, what do we need? And I came in January 2021 and said, the best numbers without having this time study, I was just guessing. I think we need 41. Of course, when I came in to the county executive and said I need 41 people, they fell out and said no. And so that's why I came to the board in March of 2021 to say, okay, what is our absolute minimum? And as I said in the presentation,

[02:09:31] things had slowed down due to COVID. I mean, the police were just not bringing in as many cases as they had previously. We are now back full up and running. As far as your office being inundated with calls and questions about cases, my office, I am absolutely available to you to sit down and talk about any particular case. Now, if it is a pending matter, I may not be able to provide too much information but if it's on past cases I'm certainly happy to do that in fact I've extended

[02:10:09] invitations to each one of you to come to my office have the tour sit in the courtroom and watch the prosecutors do what they do and that invitation stands there's our office is transparent and you know we may not make everybody happy all of the time but we are doing what we think is right. As far as these percentages, I'd have to look at Fairfax's numbers and Loudoun County's numbers. I know Loudoun County has significantly fewer prosecutors, but they also pay $15,000

[02:10:45] more. And in fact, I just lost a very good prosecutor to Loudoun, and I hope not to lose others. But there's a shortage of prosecutors across the United States, certainly in Virginia.

[02:11:00] we are lucky we only have one vacancy at this time and with the belief that we'll be getting new ones we have contingent offers out for people to start in July so we're lucky in that sense that we're not many offices have 10 vacancies and we don't have that problem here all right we're going to move on to Supervisor Vega thank you Madam Chair first off Miss Ashworth thank you for coming before this board today and also certainly want to thank your office for all of the work they do

[02:11:39] I think that out of everybody on this day as I've seen firsthand the tremendous work that your office does I've seen your prosecutors in action trying some of the most disturbing cases I would say that the general public probably will never really know the details about but you all do it I believe you know to the best of your ability with integrity and with transparency so for that we're certainly welcome. I want to be very clear that it's not that, you know, the board doesn't support the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office. It's more so trying to balance and juggle what the needs are, what the demands are. I appreciate the fact that you've mentioned a lot of the things

[02:12:17] listed in the community safety initiative. We received a presentation. One of the things on there also, though, I think it's important to highlight is that we were told we were also going to base it on the data. And so I think that that's one of the main reasons also why we want to have you among other department heads come before the board because it has to be supported by the data. And I'm going to kick my line of questioning off with the specialty dockets because you highlight them in your presentation and you discussed it also. Who typically initiates the development of those specialty dockets? Is it your office, the judges or another agency?

[02:12:53] It can be any one of us. Okay. And then the standards of those dockets, how are those developed? Those are developed by the Virginia Supreme Court. Okay. So they have certain requirements that have to be met for it to be an official specialty docket. Okay. And I'm assuming they're on supervision of some sort? Yes. Yes. Okay. We have been receiving a lot of information and a lot of praises with the veteran's docket. I have a concern though. With the veteran's docket, it seems like the requirements are more intense than other dockets. Is there a reason for that?

[02:13:29] What do you mean? In terms of how many times they get tested, drug tested, for example. If there's an FTA or whatever the case may be, are they prosecuted for that or is it just, you know, dismissed? Is the, if they fail to appear? Yeah, because you have other situations where folks are under supervision and they get, you know, charged with failure to appear.

[02:13:55] And no action is taken. And so where I'm going with this is if there is no action being taken on certain violations, does that not create more work for your office i i'd be surprised to hear that there's no actions taken um you know there's a lot of people monitoring each participant in these dockets and so there would probably be out outreach to find out where they are and what's going on but there are certainly um consequences when people fail to appear well and that's why i'm going with it because one of the things that supervisor we are mentioned was getting you know

[02:14:32] calls or folks that are concerned and it seems like the rate of prosecution for FTAs has diminished drastically and so that's why I asked the question if if they're actually being handled if they're actually consequences because if there are no consequences then it kind of sends a message right to the offender that hey you're going to get a slap on the wrist nothing's going to happen but then at some point or another you're going to find yourself in a position where they're going to have to come before the board before the courts again and then this creates additional work for your office, meaning your prosecutors have to be in the courtroom handling these things when it could have been handled the first go around. Are you talking about failure to appears on the

[02:15:10] veterans docket or just generally? Just generally. Yeah. So there is a lot of frustration about failure to appears. Our prosecutors often try to prosecute them, but the decider of whether somebody is in violation and purposefully failed to appear is up to the judge. Okay. And do you have a percentage of

convictions for FTAs? We don't keep percentages of convictions. Do you have any method of tracking? So when we talk about data and in terms of determining the needs of your office, do you have anything that we could use? We don't track convictions. For FTAs? For

[02:15:48] anything. So let me see here. I wanted to go in order with my line of questioning because I was going to ask, specifics. So moving along, do we know of individuals that, let's say, have been offered, for example, a first offenders program, and then they come back if they re-offend? Do we keep track of that? Do we know if they re-offend and how many times, or just generally speaking?

[02:16:25] Yes. If somebody is on a first offender program and they break the law, typically the court is notified by the local offenders program and takes appropriate action at the disposition hearing all right supervisor vega if you have additional questions you can put in submit for more time because we're going to move on now i do but okay we're going to year five minutes so we're going to move on to supervisor franklin thank you um just a couple of questions about the state compensation board um as i know we've um talked about this in the past and just want to make sure that i'm fully understanding of um how that how that operates and let me just start by saying i

[02:17:05] support making sure that you all have the resources you need um to to do your prosecutions um but so the state comp board funds prosecutions of felonies and the counties um usually come in to help with the salaries to that end does the the the comp board have the ability to help fund salaries at for misdemeanors sure so they fund they they have a set schedule of salaries right and then

[02:17:40] they pay that to the locality gotcha they but it's never it doesn't vary so somebody in wise county gets paid the same as someone in prince william county okay and they and i'm sure wise county has a different level of challenges with that particular formula um and i guess where i was getting at is obviously i believe the county should play its part in making sure that your office has the resources they need i also just feel that the general assembly in whatever manner they can should also step up because essentially some of these are state positions or

[02:18:15] state funded positions and i am always of the mindset that the general assembly should handle their business and the county should handle ours and i've had this conversation with members of the General Assembly and I would even say to this board it may be a situation where in the future if appropriate you know these are the types of things that need to go into our legislative agenda to the General Assembly to say the county can do our part and we will but we can't do it alone and we're going to have this conversation with regards to transportation shortly but I'm

[02:18:49] always of the mindset that the localities need the most help in making sure that we can take care of those that are running our county and providing services to our county so i guess that's more so of a comment but just wanted to understand a little bit more in terms of how the state comp board is actually run in terms of do they have the ability to give more and it sounds like they don't they don't yeah in fact there were budget amendments put in this year's general assembly to fund additional prosecutors and that was removed at the last minute and did not make the cut and so i

[02:19:27] would just say moving forward for the next session those are things that i think we need to talk about as a board it's not the most attractive topic we focus a lot on education which is important but things like this where you know to supervisor weir's point we're gonna have to figure out how to take care of this and can the locality do do it on do it on its own i think not so thank you. All right, we're going to go on to Supervisor Bode. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Ms. Ashworth, for coming before us. I want to

echo a lot of my colleagues in saying we appreciate the time, we appreciate the collaboration, we appreciate all that you're doing to help keep our community

[02:20:05] safer. That said, I was going to dive into a couple of questions that go in line with some of my colleagues already asked. Looking at some of our neighboring jurisdictions, as Supervisor Weir said, based on the study, you look at the delta between what the study said they need versus what we have your Delta is about 11 or 9 depending on how you count because the study says that we have a total 38 but your presentation that we have for 40 which I think includes those those funded positions that you talked about before Fairfax's Delta is 24 so they have 24 less than what the study says

[02:20:42] Loudon's actually above theirs by 13 Stafford's behind there's by seven and and Fokker's ahead of theirs by one. As we talk about not necessarily comparing ourselves, but really comparing ourselves to what you see those challenges are, because you said you talked to Virginia Beach, which have you, can you sort of give us more elaboration on why, you know, example Fairfax, which is, you know, even when you factor in those two cities, it's still twice our size.

[02:21:09] Why are they able to do more with less, it seems, or what the differences there might be? I think they don't. I know they stepped out of prosecuting misdemeanors for a while. I mean, I can look into that more for you.

[02:21:27] I haven't dived into why their office is different and how it operates differently. I got my hands full. I mean, I've got murder trials and rape trials that I'm handling that take up my time.

[02:21:48] And I appreciate that. Part of the reason why I say that is, again, our taxpayers are asking us, you know, why are we funding it such that, to see our viewers' point, should we fulfill even the county executives' ask for your budget, you're going to eclipse Fairfax County's number of attorneys.

[02:22:05] Just that number of attorneys, and then, like you said, then there's all the other paralegal and admin staff that need to flow through that. So, to me, it helps give us more of a foundation to have those conversations when we're able to say, hey, this is why we're going to be eclipsing Fairfax, as an example.

[02:22:24] What numbers do you have for Fairfax? So the numbers that I got from this study is that Fairfax has 28 state-funded positions, 21 local-funded positions for a total of 49, and their need per the study is 73, which is a delta of 24.

[02:22:44] Yeah. I don't know. I believed that they had more than we had. So I can certainly look into that, reach out to my colleague in Fairfax and find out.

[02:23:03] To your credit, I thought they had more, too, until we actually started looking through all the numbers in the study. So, yeah, that's Fairfax is a Delta of 24. We're only at a Delta of 13, I'm sorry, 11. Stafford's at a Delta of 7, and then Loudon and Falker are above theirs. But I appreciate that.

[02:23:18] And then my second question goes into what Senator Franklin was just discussing about the General Assembly. You're right that I know that in conference they got rid of the Senate-funded positions for assistant commonwealth attorneys.

[02:23:34] But it's my understanding that at least a conference report amendment was kept in for paralegals. That's right. What's your outlook there? Yeah, I don't think we qualify for any of those.

[02:23:51] We don't. Okay. Because that was going to be my other thing. If we were going to get those down the line, we may be able to wait in a holding pattern on some of what your ask is. But if we don't

qualify for those, then that's something else that needs to be talked about. The big problem is that, in my opinion, the state should be paying for the prosecution of misdemeanors.

[02:24:07] We're one of the few states that don't do that, and it should be. So I'm going to echo what Senator Franklin said, that we really need to step up our proactive lobbying efforts there. And my third and final question, Madam Chair, is just a very practical one.

[02:24:24] where are you going to put all these people? Because I'm serious, because we are already in a situation where we have the clerk's office coming to us about space. We have the judges coming to us about space. We have other offices coming to us about space. And yes, we have the master planning going on, but that's years out.

[02:24:40] And even under the county executives proposed, we're talking about 60 employees over two years. We go to yours, that's 28 people. How many conference rooms can you shove people in? Yes. So we are currently renovating the judicial center space. which is going to it's been reconfigured in a way that's much more efficiently used by people and the county so we used to rent office space on two separate floors of a building that you just can walk to out the back of the courthouse the county i don't know how they managed this

[02:25:14] but they switched the lease from the first floor to the entire second floor of that office building and the way that the Leesor redesigned it for us, there's a lot of flexible space in there that we can put cubes in.

[02:25:30] And our administrative staff, many of them come in at 6 a.m. and leave at 2 p.m. And it was their idea to say, have someone come in at 1 p.m. and do kind of the evening shift, right? When all of the files come back in, they've got to be updated in our case management system and put in for the next court date.

[02:25:52] And so their suggestion was bring somebody in at 1 o'clock until 7 o'clock or 8 o'clock and let them, you know, kind of cover that. And there's even been some talk about doing night court among some of the judges. Interesting.

[02:26:08] Thank you, Ms. Ashworth. Thank you, Madam Chair. It reminds me of the show Night Court. And that was a real thing in New York City, all right? Supervisor, angry. Thank you, Madam Chair. Hello, Ms. Ashworth. Hello. um it's good to see you always so i yeah i don't know if it's just me but i was so concerned when you talked about the state compensation board and the fact that uh i'm going to get this right so you said you got these numbers or the positions based on how many charges or felony charges that

[02:26:43] they it used to be right to be yeah so that just amazes me that that was actually more or less a program because you know i i think about all of the uh you know i look at it almost like how there was this and i'm not going to pick on my police but you know you always hear at the end of the month you give a ticket out because it helps with the numbers and and so there's some certain people get hurt they don't do that no they don't do that and i yeah that was a very old thing so they don't do that anymore you're 100 right but just the fact that this was a thing now even with this thing now that it's not a thing anymore this is why you're here otherwise you

[02:27:22] would be getting your people because this program existed to just just pretty much arrest everybody if you will or submit these charges up the channel okay i that's a real concern so i understand

the positions my question because i heard you make a statement and you said if you don't get to 16 then that's kind of like a non-starter like it like it's you know there's a lot of a lot of kind of moving pieces up here as you well know with budgets and you heard we got a tight budget this year so and I know you went from 40 whatever was it 41 or whatever that big number was you said

[02:27:59] down to 16 and that's can't that's that's it that's I mean you know when we started and we were at 29 um and in this I remember feeling a moment of relief when COVID shut us down for that short period of time, not because I like life-killing viruses, but because it was so,

[02:28:28] you know, the mountain of work was intense. And, you know, as, as, so it's just kind of slowly increased over the last three years. But we have, I feel like I've been kind of telling my staff all along, like, don't worry, it's going to get better. It's going to get better. Look, we've got this staffing plan it's going to get better and but I've still lost a lot of people to burnout I mean every time we interview somebody when they leave it's because of you know they they can't continue to work at this level I have had employees using annual leave so they can stay home and catch up

[02:29:07] on work which when I find out about it I say you can't do that we have employees that we take their laptops away because they are you can see the stress in their face and we say you have to take some mental health days you have to stay healthy or you're no good to us and you know so I know my team is watching today I know they are like you know help us because they love what they do they love their job and you know there were there were just a dozen roses

[02:29:44] sent to a prosecutor that handled a murder case recently but that doesn't you know that prosecutor isn't going to stay on board for a dozen roses there there there's other jurisdictions out there and we just have to find a way to help the load and and and thank you i'll just say this last thing because you know i saw the slide with the um public defendants office because you know there's there's a need there too kind of the same so i for me i'm really trying to find that win-win in between the both especially with every other department in the county that you know i'm trying

[02:30:22] to pull and stretch that dollar as far as i can and make sure you have what you need and and everyone else has what they need may not get everything but i just wanted to kind of question that 16 and see if there's any little wiggle room in there but so thank you thank you very much All right, thank you.

[02:30:40] Now we're going to Supervisor Gordy. Ms. Ashworth, good afternoon. Thanks for coming and sharing with us today. This has certainly been helpful, and I do look forward at some point getting over to your office and spending some time with you since you are in the Brentsville District.

[02:30:57] Yes. And we're sort of responsible for the buildings that you're in over there, so to try to better understand your needs there. a lot of questions today and clearly I think you get we're trying to figure out how to put a square peg through a round hole in terms of our budget and part of the challenge that we have is trying to understand you know I know for me and as supervisor we're talked about some of the the questions that we're getting and the conversations that we're having with police with constituents, with some of our business leaders,

[02:31:37] particularly there in that Sudley corridor, of what appears to be repeat offenders, people who are arrested, and then later on in the day they're back. And so the challenge is trying to understand, are we really being effective on the prosecution side?

[02:31:56] As we take a look at the numbers that you've provided, it's clear crime is increasing in Prince William County. That's not a single agency's fault. And in my view, if police and prosecutors are involved, we've already failed.

[02:32:12] We've failed to do what we should have done to keep our community safe. You're reacting to the failure. But I think there's also some things, and just one of the questions that I want to, just trying to understand where we are and trying to figure out how do we better solve these criminal challenges within our community, What do you see as the rate of recidivism and the rate of repeat offenders that could be sort of a driving some of these numbers and that we've got to do a better job of getting after these repeat offenders?

[02:32:51] And in our safe and secure community goal, too, that you have in your presentation, it says increase the use of diversion from the legal and the court system. And so the question I have related to that is, one, are you diverting people?

[02:33:08] Two, how are you diverting people? And three, do you find that it's actually being effective? And is this really an effective goal for our county, given the fact it doesn't seem to be turning the tide of crime backwards, but rather we seem to be continually increasing and exponentially increasing?

[02:33:25] And I'm a lot there, but I'll let you answer now. Thank you. So there are repeat offenders in every jurisdiction, right? There's, you know, you have a certain group that commit shoplifting or drunk in public, and we see them constantly.

[02:33:46] The police officers know who they are. We know who they are. The trouble is their crimes are so low level that, you know, there's no judge that's going to put them in jail for 12 months. We often at the bond hearings ask that they be held because, you know, look, judge, they've been released repeatedly and they're still committing crimes and they get released over our objection.

[02:34:09] Those are nuisances, but, you know, they're they don't tend to be, you know, they're not violent offenders that we're putting them out. It is impossible for us to know who is going to commit a violent offense and who isn't.

[02:34:27] It's impossible for us to know, you know, is this person really invested in making these changes and turning their life around, or are they just pulling the wool over our eyes? And so we have to rely upon our prosecutors to kind of weigh that out and figure that out.

[02:34:47] We often look at trying to make the victim whole if there's been damage to their property or property stolen or damaged, you know, can they pay restitution? Can they make that repair? And so, you know, that is something, those kind of repeat offenders that you're talking about are, you know, we're aware of them.

[02:35:10] Could there be a diversion program that kind of looks at those and says, okay, what is the underlying problem? Is it an alcohol abuse problem? Is it a mental health problem? Is it both? And what can the community do to ameliorate that?

[02:35:26] That's something we work with pretrial services. I can't tell you how many times I have people come in my office with great ideas about how to fix that. And I say, that's a fantastic idea. Who's going to do it? I mean, quite frankly, we've uncovered, we had an intern kind of unwittingly uncover a really large gang issue that I don't necessarily want to go into detail about.

[02:35:51] But we are looking at this, and it's like, what do we do with this information? You know, we're providing it to the police, but, you know, there's a lot that we just don't have the resources to kind of dig into and respond to.

[02:36:08] As far as, you know, what would work, I love the chair's idea of a youth summer job program. We saw juveniles committing crimes. That increased 80% from last year to this year. And, you know, our juvenile unit only had two people.

[02:36:30] we've now had to kind of co-op some of the line attorneys to come in and handle some of those cases. So, you know, our workload is entirely dependent upon what the police department does and brings to us. Sorry, Supervisor Gordy, you're out of time.

[02:36:46] If you had any follow-up, you're out of time. Okay, you're good. Okay. But when you come on your tour, I'll be happy to explain more. All right, Supervisor. No, I called him Gordy. I got his name right. I do that every once in a while. This time.

[02:37:02] Supervisor Vega. Thank you. I'll be quick. Great segue to my question, Supervisor Gordy. So we have the Domestic Violence Diversion Program. In terms of the data that I spoke about earlier, is there any way more specifically to this type of case, do we keep track of folks that have been allowed to participate in terms of whether or not they re-offend for whatever crime?

[02:37:28] Do we track that? Do we have data for that? We do on the diversion program, and I can get that to you. Yeah, that would be greatly appreciated. When we submitted our application for the VACO Award, I want to say it was like 99% success rate. But I'll double-check that and get that current information to you.

[02:37:45] Okay. Thank you. Supervisor Ware? Thank you, Madam Chair. Ms. Ashworth, I don't want this to make it sound like I'm telling you how to do your job. It's just I'm data-driven, so it's going to sound like that. That's not what I mean. Actually, I'm data-driven.

[02:38:02] I've kind of got an issue. If I were in your position, I would be tracking things like conviction rates and who comes back and ultimately gets convicted of something after their 14th or 15th null process, especially when you start getting into not necessarily the worst of the physical crimes.

[02:38:30] but when you have individuals who are null prostrate for multiple assaults on a Leo and it happens more than one time I mean maybe it's just me but I I suspect that the tendency would be for them to scale that up at some point in the future and what we're seeing is that these individuals or at least you know the circumstances that we're looking at the case examples that we're looking at are getting more violent over time. And it's almost like they're being emboldened by the null process or the slap on the wrist, or they don't get any jail time. They get a 12-month

[02:39:08] sentence with 12 months suspended, and then suddenly they're in court on a stabbing charge. And then suddenly everybody's, what can we do about this? I don't know if the record keeping or the data behind it would be helpful.

[02:39:24] I realize it's a burden, but if it gives you some sort of predictor or way to track what is and what is not a viable strategy going forward, my guess would be it would be worth the effort, just my two cents.

[02:39:47] Thank you, Madam Chair. And if I can respond to that. As I said in my presentation, conviction isn't necessarily tell us very much, right? It tells us that we could prove beyond a reasonable doubt that this person committed a crime. There are multiple. I don't want anybody to think just because a case is null

prost means it wasn't prosecuted, right? There are a lot of reasons cases could be null prost. We had a case recently of a young man who was under 21 driving home and hit a deer and called his dad because he'd hit a deer and wrecked his car and before his dad

[02:40:25] got there the police showed up and he being taught to you know respect the police and be honest told the police officer he'd had a couple of beers and oh that blue pill in my pocket is I think fentanyl that my friend gave me but I didn't take it so now you've got an 18 year old who's charged with DUI and possession of a Schedule 1 or 2 controlled substance. And, you know, is this somebody we should now make a convicted felon and put in jail? So in this particular case, the prosecutor

[02:41:00] let him plead to, I think, improper driving and null prost the felony charge. There are sometimes victims don't want you to prosecute anybody, and they refuse to talk to you, and they refuse to testify. There's witnesses who don't show up. There are multiple reasons that the evidence may not be sufficient. The evidence, we've had cases where the search maybe wasn't on the greatest of probable cause. And so, you know, there's always this, there's a reason law and order, right,

[02:41:40] where they say there are two sides to the criminal justice system. There's a reason those shows are popular and people think oh police officers and the prosecutors don't get along. Sometimes we disagree but the person who makes the decision is the prosecutor. I've heard this complaint about us not prosecuting assault and battery in law enforcement. I've heard it from the police and I've heard it from others. I have every time we have sat down and looked at the facts the prosecutor has always asked the police officer are you okay with if we work out this deal because an assault and battery on law enforcement has a six-month mandatory jail sentence. And very often

[02:42:20] the police officer will say, I don't think this person deserves six months in jail. It was de minimis. When we get these complaints and we go and we look through, invariably the police officer will say, well, yes, okay, I did agree to that, but now I'm unhappy about it or whatever. I myself in prosecuting an assault and battery on law enforcement.

[02:42:44] And I told the officer the other day, I think what this person did deserves a felony. And the officer was, you know, kind of like, well, okay. So, you know, we take, I was married to a law enforcement officer and a defendant broke his finger once in a fight.

[02:43:05] I know what they go through. In fact, I used to refuse to go to lunch with him because people were so disrespectful if he was sitting there in a uniform. So I have a great deal of sympathy for that. But we still have to look at each case on an individual basis and decide what's the right thing to do.

[02:43:26] And, you know, there are people who are going to be unhappy with the decision, and I'm happy to sit down and have that conversation. There are people who think our prosecutors are too tough sometimes, and so they come in and complain about that.

[02:43:44] And, you know, you just have to look at each case and try to figure out what the right thing to do is, and what that takes is time, right? You have to read the police report. You have to listen to the defense argument. You have to listen to what the victim has to say.

[02:44:00] And, you know, when you don't have enough time or you're burnt out and stressed out from the workload, that's what suffers. All right, we're going to go on to Supervisor Brody. I just want to say one thing, too. It's one thing to have the metrics how many cases are prosecuted.

[02:44:19] But when I went to the courthouse, I saw a bunch of prosecutors and their caseload. I remember you told me, oh, that's a light day. And I'm like, that's light? I understand the need for metrics. Unfortunately, we can't always easily qualify or quantify things.

[02:44:36] But with that, Supervisor Bode. Thank you, Madam Chair. And again, Ms. Ashworth, thank you for coming before us and having this dialogue with us. I guess sort of my final thoughts slash questions sort of go back to the ratios that were supported by the study.

[02:44:55] The suggested ratios for the study was one paralegal for every four attorneys, one admist staff for every two attorneys. Right now, you're obviously way north of those numbers. And it gets back to why, unfortunately, everyone's getting sticker shock about your ass because it isn't just the attorneys.

[02:45:15] You have all these sort of ancillary, much-needed positions that support those attorneys that, frankly, you're behind on on your existing staff. And I noticed in your presentation, the study didn't give any guidance on victim or witness type folks, which leads me to my question.

[02:45:32] Do you think that in the future there might be a supplemental study that looks at those needs? And I ask that, and this is my follow-up question, because you mentioned at the end that we're now seeing a lot more juvenile-centric crime. And as you know, a study was done a few years ago that looked at JDCs and things like that.

[02:45:51] And they put a moratorium on that. The question we always have in response to that, well, what do we do again with these juveniles that are going through these issues if there's no place to have them safely in a trauma and data-informed way to address their challenges? Where do you see this going in terms of, like I said, the victims and witness style stuff, but also the juveniles?

[02:46:12] Because, frankly, if we can't get those two things right on the witness and victim side, because like you said, if we can't get victims and witnesses comfortable enough to testify and to provide evidence, your job is infinitely harder. But especially on the juvenile side, when we always talk about left of bank, we can't get the juvenile side of the equation right.

[02:46:32] We're letting a whole other generation of folks, frankly, get down to a road where they'll meet you when they're adults. And that's, frankly, like Suarez or Gordy said earlier, frankly, where we failed. So where do you see this going? How can we support that? So I'm very excited about the Community Justice Safety Initiative, I think.

[02:46:52] Mr. Alexander's plan and explanation of it, that we need to get in front of the bank, frankly, when I heard that, I was like, thank you, right? Like, this is what we need to be focusing on. I would love to come back in three years and say, hey, guys, my numbers are down.

[02:47:08] Take away some of my positions. We'll always take money back. You know, there should be a study of victim witness. I know seven of them are grant funded, but they provide such a critical service.

[02:47:25] As I said, they're often the first one that reaches out to a victim's family. And, you know, there is no way of measuring except by how stressed out they are. We have our director, Tammy Thomas, here today to determine what do you need.

[02:47:41] And the juveniles, the whole point of creating the juvenile unit was to have some consistency in that JDR courtroom where kids are breaking the law and coming in. And we can say, you know, kids that

we know the adolescent brain, you break the rule, there needs to be an immediate consequence, and you have to be consistent, and it has to be increasing.

[02:48:04] So we know that. So now we put prosecutors in there so they can say, you know, Mr. Gordy, I just saw you here last month. You know, you committed another crime. Now we have to, right, and we have to do that. The problem, you know, no one saw that this age group was going to have this huge spike in crime.

[02:48:23] And then on the, you know, we can try to figure out what that juvenile needs and look at our community partners to try to get the services to prevent them from becoming adult criminals. There are going to be some, though, that graduate to the adult world. And by keeping an eye on them as juveniles, now we know what we're looking at.

[02:48:41] and we've had a few in the past couple of years that made that unfortunate graduation and it is a failure on a lot of parts but it just seems to me that the county resources weren't ever were neglected in that area for decades before this board ever came into existence and I'm hopeful with this board's commitment to those making those changes that we start to see the benefit of that thank you and supervisor bailey thank you madam chair i um and to your staff too

[02:49:18] i said thank you to you but to your wonderful staff who does an impeccable job thank you but the question that i have is your department is a lot different than most so do you ever have an opportunity to apply for and this this is out of ignorance that i'm asking this because i just don't understand to apply for grants in any kind of way we did yes so the victim witness gets grants for their staff we have we looked at applying with the police department for a witness protection

[02:49:56] grant that would provide assistance for people who are witnesses and have safety concerns we just applied for that dcjs grant i think that was the first one that we applied for 250 000 for two investigators and we got it and yeah you know as as i talked to other prosecutors across the state they do have grant funded prosecutors and so we are keeping a close eye out for those when they come up and absolutely intend to make those asks and hopefully get them that's great and i just

[02:50:33] ask that because I know you are pretty much from a strategic standpoint revamping a new vision for your office and I just that's an opportunity. Thank you Madam Chair. I also met recently with the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia the federal prosecutors. You know my office hadn't previously had a relationship with the feds and Jess Aber and I sat down and already we're seeing the benefits of that collaboration. We had a case recently that occurred in Gainesville

[02:51:06] and we went to the feds. They have much stronger charges. And so it made sense for us to step our charges back, null process them, knowing that the feds had just indicted and we're going to take over that case. So, you know, justice still happens and it's another agency that can do it and take it off of our, yeah. All right. Thank you. We don't have any more questions. Thank you again for coming to speak with us today and we look forward to working with you and as this you know budget season continues to play out we'll see what is

[02:51:43] we can do to make sure that your office has the staffing that they need or that you need to be successful thank you my pleasure thank you all all right so next up we have another presentation our next presentation item 10b it's a mobility funding work session and we have um mr bob schneider executive

director and phil parella i'm sorry chief executive officer coming to us from the potomac and rappahannock transportation

[02:52:13] commission known as prtc good afternoon first uh before we get into the transportation issue i did want to take the official step of thanking the prince william county fire department along with the volunteer fire department and ems i saw my good friend brian meisner out front earlier a of weeks ago we had a fire and it crossed the ravine over there on Dale Boulevard behind the

[02:52:50] Hilton Memorial Chapel we were out there with fire extinguishers and hoses but if not for their brave work and keeping that fire under control we could have lost part of our fleet our facility and so I'm very very thankful of the work they do and just wanted to put that out there and say thank you very appreciative I actually called supervisor angry to say are you on a fire truck on your way here just so I could find out whether I would greet him or not in a different you know form because I don't believe he wears a bow tie as a volunteer firefighter.

[02:53:18] But nonetheless, we'll get started. I know your time is very valuable. So Bob Schneider, Phil Pirella, Chief Operating Officer. All of you are very familiar with us as a commission or a service. Chair Jefferson, one of our passengers. Supervisor Franklin, former chair, passenger, et cetera.

[02:53:34] Did want to give you just a reminder of who we are and what we do. Our OmniRider is our brand name for PRTC. It's what we are best known for in our operational services. We have robust commuter service along I-95. You see where our routes go, traveling all the way down south of Fredericksburg.

[02:53:51] All of those services south of Prince William County are 100% grant funded. So they are provided funding through the I-95 and 395 programs paid for by the local and toll funded program. Local funding is for the Prince William portion of it.

[02:54:07] It is 100% toll funded south of Prince William County. We're on the street as early as 4 in the morning. We are on the street as late as 9 p.m. The federal government does not sleep in terms of the different types of services, but it's not just the federal workforce. We have lobbyists, we have attorneys, we have admin staffers that work in those offices, so it's not always a federal employee.

[02:54:28] One of our passengers is a secretary that works in one of the museums and works in the admin offices. So that's an example of the different types of passengers that we serve. Along the I-66 corridor, five routes serving Reston, Tyson's Corner, et cetera, All the commuter lots we serve are in Prince William County, outbound around 440 in the morning, slightly different schedule, using the entire length of the I-66 lanes.

[02:54:53] This is a lot more toll-funded as a program because of I-66. The I-95 corridors have the toll program. They're separated lanes on I-95 for a much longer time period. If you'll recall, I-66 formally opened with its toll infrastructure in November of 22.

[02:55:11] so it's a growing program in that area. We are omnipresent, as we like to say, and as you can see this is where we're heading in downtown. We have partnerships where we help serve with VRE and we connect with metro stations, but as you can see we are connecting in at LaFont Plaza so passengers can then ride throughout the district. They can travel where they need to. We're also serving LaFont so VRE passengers can hop on board our buses and have where we go or they go as necessary.

[02:55:41] You also know us for our local services right here in Prince William County, our local bus service within Prince William County, Manassas, and Manassas Park. New since the last couple of years has been the introduction of microtransit services. We have that in Prince William, I'm sorry, in Manassas Park, and then also in Prince William County in the Dumfries Triangle Corridor, which is the first time we've been able to offer services up to Supervisor Bailey's new offices in that location.

[02:56:06] So we have rideshare, transportation and management, as well as employer services programs. We're the only commission in the region that delivers any type of actual service. Our good friends at NVTC are basically a governing body, and they help manage the WMATA Compact.

[02:56:21] They don't deliver services. The other providers in the region don't have the role and responsibility we do, such as our good friends at DASH, our good friends at Fairfax Connector Arlington, nor do they have the TDM or Employer Services Group. They end up having to go outside for those kinds of resources, and they don't generate the benefits that we do from a fiscal standpoint.

[02:56:41] Who are we as an employment group? We have about 275 employees. 225 of them are subcontracted with Keolis North America. We have to subcontract our union services by rule. So that's just one of the processes.

[02:56:56] But also we get the benefit of a company like Keolis who then has multiple contracts and they can take advantage of volume pricing for health insurance. They can bring in volume pricing where possible for things like filters, parts. There's some advantages to that. In addition, we have 165 vehicle fleets spread across two different facilities.

[02:57:14] We have our Woodbridge facility, as well as our facility in Manassas. Each of them is about 20 minutes from where we sit right here. We're a full-service system. We are an award-winning system for safety. In the last month and a half, we've received two awards from the Transportation Security Administration, one for the Partnership Award, the other for the Gold Standard Award, which is for when you achieve a minimum of 80% in all category areas that they examined for safety and security.

[02:57:40] We're very proud of that. The first time we won that award was under Chair Franklin's leadership, so now we've won it under Chair Angry's leadership. So we're very excited. We're the first bus-only system in the DMV to win this award. We're the first and only two-time winner for certain.

[02:57:57] We are also community leaders and partners. We're not just a bus company. Seven years ago tomorrow, I started at PRTC. I got there and I said, we're going to be more than just a bus company. And the thing I was charged with was changing the culture because we were staring down the barrel of massive service reductions due to the failing motor fuels tax.

[02:58:18] That'll be a theme here today. But part of the conversation was we are going to be more than just a bus company and we're going to impact our community in positive ways. We're going to do things that allow us to not just transport people out of the county, but give people a really great excuse to stay and work in the county and grow the business and grow the economy and deliver the services.

[02:58:38] And we've been doing that through the pandemic, before the pandemic, and since the pandemic. And a couple of the images you see volunteer Saturday to help. We have drivers, supervisors, and staff out there cleaning up along the side of the road through Adopt-A-Spot. There we are working with the Hispanic community outside Toto's Market, working with children, business leaders, and we held our

first senior summit to really target and bring back transportation among senior citizens and the opportunities.

[02:59:03] We have representatives from police, we have representatives from Prince William, the Bluebird Tour Bus Company, and all those different activities to really try to bring those connections together. At the same time, you can go look at art and transit around the community, including every time you turn right into the McCourt Building if you travel from the Dale City area.

[02:59:23] We serve the community colleges. We serve the hospitals. We connect citizens into Furlazo building so they can register to vote, which was occurring that very day where we had our senior summit. It was also voter registration drive day. So a lot of different activities. And as you can see, we do take civilians and the military to work.

[02:59:42] But also we've added Sunday service for the first time in our history in the last two years. And we had one of our former passengers who had lobbied for decades to receive it. And she was too ill to come in and receive that recognition. But we provided a proclamation in her honor. so it's not just a question of are we are we transporting people outside of the county not anymore we are making a massive difference and now 40 percent of our ridership is occurring on our local routes within prince william county coming june 2024 it's a very exciting time for us it's a long delayed eastern prince william county restructure for the eastern side of services

[03:00:17] we got it launched right before the pandemic hit in 2019 on the western side which was great from the standpoint of we got it out before the pandemic but it took us a while to figure out what we did right and what we did wrong part of that was converting a low performing route to microtransit but the western service has boomed a great success along the liberia corridor even though people have to transfer less ridership is higher there's a dirty little secret in transit if you make people take inefficient trips they have to travel you get to count their trip twice but they don't ride with you very often so actually there's a penalty for us to be efficient in terms of the ridership trips but actually customer satisfaction leads to repeat passengers

[03:00:56] so the fact that we have increased our ridership every single year indicates we've had great success what is amazing for us about this restructure is even though we had it delayed just because of the pandemic environment we wanted to see where ridership returned we started nipping and tucking we started moving routes a little here a little there why delay what we know can be successful tomorrow and examples of that are new development trying to move routes closer and closer to minneville and principally and parkway knowing the courts district is coming those are examples of things we started doing long before it became something that opened we paid attention to the small area plans knowing there was going to be

[03:01:36] rezoning knowing there was going to be adjustments to service development uh the footprint in woodbridge knowing those things we started moving the routes two years ago so now businesses are popping up and they're like this is great we have a bus stop we knew and so we're proud of that and We work really hard to do that, and that's why we coordinate so well with all of the magisterial districts.

[03:01:55] In this particular case, we are extremely proud of the fact that we are targeting what has historically been an ignored low-income area. It is, as you can see from our data, 10% of the people live in poverty, 75% are non-white or Hispanic Latino origin, and that's for that entire map area.

[03:02:13] But what this does is when you take a good look and find out within a quarter mile of where we are this shows you the data now we're connecting in hospitals urgent care facilities nursing home pharmacy schools college university and never mind the 10 500 businesses that operate in prince william county all right we've just heard the data about affordable housing the number of residents that have increased we have seen our county grow every single year for the last 12 years and we're expected to grow by another 200 000 over the next 10 to 15 years so what we are doing is laying in the foundation for what will be more growth more success and more opportunity now let's

[03:02:51] get to the budget issue and this is something that most of you have heard i believe all of all but supervisor gordy and chair jefferson heard last year in this room because it was pretty much the same issue in the warning of what was the the declining motor fuels tax last month we gave the presentation about what we are expecting in terms of our budget knowing we would be here and what we want to do is really bring this together on three key issues. Number one, inflation impacts, what is happening with the motor fuels tax, and the end of COVID recovery funding. So first and foremost, let's call out the big issue. The bus service contract is seeing a jump of $9.6 million,

[03:03:30] and the immediate question is, what the heck is happening? Well, if you break that down very simply for that bus service contract, it's actually $4.1 million is the net, the total operating expense because we have new services that are 100% state-funded. These are new services that are expanding along the 66 or the I-95 corridors, respectively, as you can see. And again, 100% state-funded, so it's about a $4 million or net 7% increase for the organization. Still a very high number in an inflationary environment. So that's for our base services. If you were to include the new services, that's where you see that much larger dollar amount. Where does that

[03:04:10] money go? It's very clear. It goes into parts, materials, wages, and fringes, and insurance. There's 1% of what is considered just the natural overhead of running the operational expense. So that is what is driving the majority of issues. Insurance, parts, and materials. I learned a long time ago in fiscal management, you chase quarters and dimes. You don't chase pennies. We're dealing with quarters at 50 cent pieces and more here when we deal with wages, parts, and materials.

[03:04:40] We pay attention to everything, but when you really look at what is driving the issue for us, it's wages and materials in our area, especially related to market inflation. What are those market conditions? Wage inflation, this is not a secret.

[03:04:56] You've seen it for educators. You've seen this with police and fire. If you're a private sector business, you see the same exact issues. For us, a couple of different things have driven it, one of which is what is called step compression or wage compression. That is, when you start your job being as a bus operator, it took you 16 years to reach your top pay.

[03:05:15] That is abnormally long in mass transit. WMATA's, I think, was 21 years. Fairfax's was 14, 12. In this last neighbor negotiation, this went down from 16 to 7 years. So what that means is people are accelerating through the process.

[03:05:32] There was a strike about a year ago. It was about four weeks long, very uncomfortable, but we ended up with good resolution. So we are now feeling the effects of that collective bargaining environment. We've always been a collective bargaining environment, so it's not new. It's been that way for us since our founding.

[03:05:48] In terms of material supply inflation, one thing I want to point out, you may have seen this before from the other departments that you may work with when it comes to road construction or facilities construction. As you see here, this is what is construction spending in the United States, and this is from the Associated Builders and Contractors.

[03:06:06] This gives you a sense of what is the actual available spending or what is the demand for construction work. Then you see the labor supply in orange below it. In this instance, a delta is not good. We all took Econ 101 at some variation, supply demand.

[03:06:22] You have a tremendous amount of demand and a low supply for labor, which is driving inflation rates in construction. Why does this matter so much for mass transit? We compete for the same exact labor pool. As a matter of fact, Prince William County Schools right now is increasing their rate of pay.

[03:06:38] and adding bonuses for hiring drivers. So we are all competing for the same general pool of workforce. We are now going out to the ID1 corridor in the Shenandoah Valley to recruit drivers in. We have operators, driver-operator, parts staff members, supervisors driving in from Orange and Louisa in order to work.

[03:06:58] That is how far we're having to go in order to recruit available workforce. And that is what is driving wages, and we are not alone. We have seen the same exact issue with our friends at Fairfax, our friends at Alexandria. Also along the lines, we are seeing the same problem with parts.

[03:07:14] Again, data, December 2019, that was the national index for producer price. It is 27% higher right now, February 2024. What that means is the same things cost 27% more for the construction of a whole vehicle.

[03:07:31] In our individual case, we're not buying the whole vehicle. We're buying the expensive technology parts, sadly. things like turbos, circuit boards, large pieces of glass, all of those things that have really affected us. It is cooling for 2024. That is very good. We're being aggressive in our management of cost issues, working closely with our contractor, examining what is the balance of hiring more maintenance employees versus contracting out. It used to be contracting out was cheaper. Not anymore. Because you have such high demand, they are paying their technicians more. So if they're paying their technicians more we're seeing less value for sending work out at the same time if

[03:08:10] they're paying more we're losing technicians to that environment as well so it's working closely to balance that we've also been very aggressive and thankful for the board as well as ctb the feds for providing resources that allows us to replace fleet when you're replacing fleet they're paying for the lion's share of those new expenses instead of it being passed down to the localities in this since we've added new vehicles in the last 12 months, and we're adding more.

[03:08:34] We just placed a new order recently. So that will bring our costs down over time, so it's cooling. One of the questions at our last commission meeting was, what are peer cities or peer systems experiencing? It's hard to do a one-for-one, as mentioned. When we look at every other operating system other than FRED in Fredericksburg has access to WMATA.

[03:08:56] We don't have that. We do have VRE, but so do the other systems in the region. So what we did is pull together some operating expenses and the increase we could find for Dash in Alexandria, Fairfax

County, Loudoun County, and us. And so what you see is for Dash, a 10% cost increase for this fiscal year itself, plus they pay a WMATA share of an additional $58 million.

[03:09:19] So they have a significant increase. They pay more for their WMATA services than they actually do for their local services, and their local service is zero fare. Fairfax Connector, as we were doing the homework, we always knew they had a large mass transit budget. They're seeing a 22% increase so far.

[03:09:38] And I say so far because they just experienced their own work stoppage and strike, and they are yet to formally sign the agreement between their contractor and the union. So it may be more than this 22% increase over a two-year window. This dollar amount may exceed that.

[03:09:54] We don't know. But their WMATA share is literally a quarter of a billion dollars for their resources and expenditures. Loudoun County, also a 34% increase over a two-year period, and their WMATA share for this year is $21 million. This is while they're pulling services off the street.

[03:10:11] Because they've had WMATA and they've had a decrease in the volume of services, they are now reached a point where they have completely abandoned certain routes and are not going to restart them and have fleet available that is not being used. We have a 17% increase, but 10% of that is new state service, as mentioned, and there is no WMATA share for Prince William County.

[03:10:32] So that just gives you a general sense of operating expense with our peers. One thing we want to point out is if you look at our total service hours on the two bookends, 254,000 hours of service, you can see where the pandemic hits. You can see us collapse our services down, and you can see us increase our services directly tied to the increases at I-66 and I-95.

[03:10:54] So you can see that total service hours drive the train, drive the bus in this instance. But one thing I want to point out, if bus service costs the same in 2019 as it does today, what we do now is actually less expensive. If it were the same apples and oranges, the reason why is we have reduced our more expensive commuter services or local services, and we've created more flexible services.

[03:11:19] And that has been the difference. We've identified low-performing local services and converted them into those flex services. So you're getting more value for the same cost if you were truly doing apples-to-apples comparison. At the same time, looking at an apples-to-apples comparison, we've doubled the outside investment that we've brought in from state revenues.

[03:11:38] So those hours and those number of hours you see at that top line is genuinely driven by funds provided by the state through the toll payers. Bless you. A year ago, came in, we talked about the impact of EVs, the decline of the motor fuels tax.

[03:11:58] Here we are. Great examples that come from Marketplace, Pew Research Center, the Eno Foundation, all identifying the reality of what EVs are doing in terms of organizations that are reliant on the motor fuels tax, including the federal government and the Highway Trust Fund.

[03:12:14] There's a reason that the Infrastructure Act had to be passed to try to infuse cash into what is that declining revenue source. This gives you a history, really about a five-year history, of the motor fuels tax. Again, as mentioned, seven years ago, I was brought in to help stabilize the economics and immediately went to work in Richmond, heavily worked that summer, transit leaders to put in a tax floor so that we were no longer trapped with the ebb and flow of fuel prices.

[03:12:42] The irony in what we do is if we do our jobs well, fewer gallons get pumped. So there's a bit of an irony to that. So we want people to pump gas in order to get the taxes, but it actually goes against what our core purpose is. So step one was say, hey, can we get this, get a tax floor put in so there is less ebb and flow?

[03:13:00] That was successful for a few years. And as you can see, the actual revenues matched with the amount collected pretty closely. Then as the legislature took their seat in 2020, very successfully in getting the motor fuels tax index to inflation.

[03:13:18] This was a big deal because now it was no longer going to be about just getting a floor. But now you're talking about as costs go up and we get the cost experience and pass to us, we would have that benefit. And it wasn't just the transit leadership this time. The trucking industry came with us because of I-81.

[03:13:36] I-81, anyone who's made that unfortunate drive down to Bristol and beyond knows exactly the misery, and the trucking firms are impacted by that too. So that index gas tax really made a big difference. And as they were passing it, we started telling everyone to start working at home.

[03:13:54] and we all know the story. Don't have to repeat it. However, now what you see is you see that orange line going up, but that blue line's gone down. And that orange line going up and that separation is a very bad thing because that is the inflation index. That is the separation between what things cost versus the gallons that are being brought in. For an understanding of what the impact would be is if we could have gone back in time and indexed us to inflation and just kept a 3% growth in the motor fuels tax, a modest 3%, the revenues being brought in in FY23 would have been $31 million.

[03:14:31] We'd probably be looking at $35 million now with just that simple, modest 3% increase. So if you want to see what the impact of telework, commuting shifting patterns, the rise of EVs, more efficient engines, and the impact on your revenues as accounting for motor fuels, it is the dotted orange line and the solid orange line.

[03:14:53] That is the money that is proverbially left on the table as a result of the impact of the motor fuels tax. So the final issue to mention in this area is that we received $38 million in COVID recovery funding, which was fantastic. It prevented mass layoffs. It backfilled the fair revenues that we lost that typically we would receive from the federal government. I believe that year we were slated to bring in around $13, $14 million that year. So if we're backfilling those kinds of funds, it makes a huge difference. It really allowed us to kick the motor fuels tax can issue down the

[03:15:29] road. And we were here just last year. This is coming. It's been a known thing. Any presentation by CTB that you've listened to over the past five years, you've heard the similar warning. And here we are. The last amount of funding spent in FY 2024. So FY 2025, the motor fuels, I'm sorry, the COVID funding is gone. What is great is we knew this was coming. So this past year we worked very closely with our good friends at NVTC and this past year SJ28 a joint resolution between the house and the senate which did not require signature by the governor so we don't

[03:16:07] have to worry about fistfights between the general assembly and the governor's office this is a done deal highlighting a joint subcommittee to study long-term sustainable dedicated operations and capital funding as well as cost containment controls and strategies to ensure WMATA VRE and the transit systems underneath the umbrella of NVTC and PRTC, of which six of you are members of the commission,

so that we can actually fund mass transit. Because the reality is the wagon is hitched to a declining revenue stream. And that's just understood. It's not debatable.

[03:16:42] We're aware of that. I'm sure you've heard those issues. Just as inflation is impacting us, it's impacting road construction. Motor fuels tax funds us. Motor fuels tax also funds road construction so we're all in the same boat on this what's key is we're not just an also ran in this process as you can see we will be at the table to really discuss the funding implications coordination and governance as an organization so our technical staff will be at the table how of course the legislature infills because it is their ultimately their committee their their study group we expect to be an active participant we are very very much supporting

[03:17:20] for representation from the Prince William community to serve on that. I think there's even been discussion of delegatorian being a key member of this. So that would be advantageous for us as an organization. However, the reality is this is a two-year study because it's looking at billion-dollar questions, and it doesn't address our near-term. But we are here for a near-term issue. As you can see, there's the COVID recovery funds. There's the jurisdictional funding. Look in that middle column minus 10 million you see the subsidy grow 11.5 that is that is that balance

[03:17:54] sj28 can identify a long term fix for the region again not just us this affects this is why wmata had a 750 million dollar virginia only shortfall this is why fairfax connector has had to go into their general fund by an additional 30 million dollars city of alexandria has increased their transit subsidy by 10 million dollars out of their general fund so it's not a unique issue to Prince William County. On the contrary, our good friends at VRE, they don't have this issue right now because they still have, I think, about $100 million in COVID recovery funds that they're able to expend. So they're going to be facing this issue in a few years. This is just our year

[03:18:34] because of the nexus of these items. We do want to mention our proposed capital plan. As you can see, we continue to maximize state and federal revenues. So out of the 14-3 for capital revenue, 2.6 of that comes from jurisdictional subsidies, and that's the classic match funds required.

[03:18:53] And the breakdown of that for that $14.3 million, fleet. Fleet is the largest number. The other large number you see there is facilities, $1.1 million. The vast majority of that is earmarked to keeping the Woodbridge facility environmentally compliant and functional for our workforce.

[03:19:09] It's approaching its 30-year mark. We had to replace fuel tanks. That's what we're tackling this year. We have wash bays. Last year, we had a $2.5 million stormwater system that we had to replace. So those are the types of things that we are facing from an infrastructure standpoint. The big issue, the matzah ball, so to speak, is the unfunded balance.

[03:19:30] This year, it's $13 million, and it is driven by the end of the fuel tax balance. Over the past 10, 15 years, we've returned about $30 million in motor fuel tax funds because we prepare our budget starting in October, November, December, present the information January, February, March.

[03:19:47] So it's a really, really bad crystal ball from a distance. And then throughout the year, we evaluate our ridership just like we are going to do tomorrow. Every spring, we do a ridership retreat. We examine which routes are performing, which trips can be trimmed, and we bring that forth.

[03:20:02] And during the budget year, we work really, really hard to contain costs because at the end of the year, we take those savings and put them back in the motor fuels tax fund. Unfortunately, with things

like the CROC fund, which was passed with the indexing due inflation, There's about $6 million a year that is taken from Prince William County's Motor Fuels Tax Fund, sent to VRE, which then goes up to DRPT for the Long Bridge Project.

[03:20:28] So that's another area that it just reduces the value of the motor fuels tax much quicker, and despite our returning that $30 million, about that same amount will have been taken out for the CROC program. And as you see, you have the operations need and the unfunded balance.

[03:20:44] The good news is we've really identified what we think is our highest volume of inflation because we do have wage inflation market conditions, but also that labor contract of collapsing the number of years. Once they're collapsed, we won't have that occur again because it's been done.

[03:21:00] So just as our other peer systems had that occur or are going to have it occur last year and this year is when we felt it in terms of our budget cycle. Now what you start to see is you start to see where the motor fuels tax cannot, it just doesn't exist enough and it is flattened that second line of fuel tax collected those are not our numbers we did not create those they come from the department of revenue and that is their projections for the amount of money that prince william county will collect so of course there's stafford spotsylvania other numbers so if you look at our budget documents you'll see a bigger number

[03:21:33] but that's six jurisdictions the prince william county piece you and interestingly enough it's only going to go up by about $100,000 a year, every year, despite your population increasing year over year, your number of businesses increasing year over year, the construction you're spending to build bridges and move vehicles through all of those things, you're going to be experiencing that.

[03:21:58] So in summary, what are the six big issues? Inflation, significant recent impact, starting to flatten. Again, crystal ball begins in October. as we get closer to it we find a better sense of what's inside that item but the motor fuels tax evs and telework can still still continue to impact the gallons pumped the final 10 million of the 38 million dollars in coved recovery funds our service growth has come in the areas of state funded services so we're not coming to prince william to ask for those services and then what we've done is reallocate resources through and cost containment and flexible service and of course

[03:22:37] our fleet purchases we're using utilizing state and federal money and minimizing the match required at the local level so with that i would be very happy to answer any questions you may have all right thank you for your presentation um the first person is supervisor franklin yes thank you uh for the presentation and i think many of you have already heard kind of how i feel about um transportation funding but i do think it's worth um reiterating um but i will start by saying it It is true that a lot of what we're seeing in PRTC's budget, OmniRide, is due to inflation and also wages.

[03:23:17] We renegotiated the salaries and contracts for Keolis, so that obviously costs money. Then, of course, we've seen what's happening with the economy over the past several years. To me, those are the biggest factors, and those are things that, to a degree, with inflation, We obviously can't help him with the increase in salary and wages for our contractors.

[03:23:42] To me, that was necessary. But as we all know, most of our funding is tied to the fuels tax, the motor fuels tax. And the challenge with that is whenever you tie something to something that is variable, you can't guarantee the revenue stream.

[03:24:01] And so I've said this before, but we have to push the General Assembly for a permanent revenue stream for transportation, for local transportation. You know, right now we don't have to put in

any money going towards WMATA, but quite frankly, we still need a lot of help.

[03:24:20] We got help from the federal government over the past several years, but what happens now moving forward? Prince William County is going to have to figure out how to come up with the costs to keep Omni Rye going. But quite frankly, we really do have to figure out a more permanent solution.

[03:24:39] And I don't even think the locality itself can figure that out. I think it has to be done through our General Assembly and really pushing them to come to the table and really figure out a plan to permanently fund our local transportation systems. The motor fuels tax is not going to continue to cut it by itself.

[03:24:58] And quite frankly, it never should have been the only route. And so, you know, I've said this before. We'll have to figure out how Prince William County wants to come to the table with this particular budget. We obviously had a very fruitful and lively discussion at the last OmniRide meeting.

[03:25:15] But the whole point of kicking your budget down to the localities is for us to figure out, you know, which direction we want to go in with regards to coming up with the funding. But I am a little concerned about future budgets and if Prince William County can continue to be able to support this type of transportation funding without an actual permanent source.

[03:25:40] So I just want to kind of put that out there. Again, I've said it before, but I think it's worth continuing the conversation. And again, as we push for our legislative agenda to the General Assembly, this has to be one of the top priorities. Thank you. Thank you so much.

[03:25:56] Supervisor Ware. Thank you, Madam Chair. Whereas I was relatively gentle with the last presentation, I will not be with this one. And I will repeat the last words I said at the last PRTC meeting. For my one-eighth vote, the answer is no. I've seen a lot of pretty numbers. Thank you, your staff, for giving me the six-year back look. And I don't want to hear about how the COVID funds offset the revenues or offset the losses from the gas tax or offset the jurisdictional remedy or revenues because it

[03:26:31] didn't. What it did was it allowed you to grow your budget. It allowed you to grow your budget year over year to where you grew your budget by more than the subsidy that was received under the CARES Act or the ARPA funds. And now you're at additional 17.3% growth year over year for next year. And you want us to stick our taxpayers with another $13 million or two cents on the revenue tax or two cents on the real estate tax. It's not about your problem isn't revenue. And I've said this before about other agencies, your problem is a spending problem. This type of growth year

[03:27:10] over year, we cannot sustain. We can't sustain a 19% growth in the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office. And we sure as hell can't withstand a 17.3%, 17.4% growth year over year in your department. We don't have the money. I mean, we have squoze just about every drop out of the taxpayer residential stone that we can. And the money just isn't there. So you need to figure something else out because we're paying the lion's share of it granted we've got a lion's share of

[03:27:45] the unsubsidized routes but that level of subsidy just is not acceptable to me and i suspect it's not it's not acceptable to several other members of this board so something's got to change thank you madam chair all right do you have a response or do you want me to go on um our growth has been in 100 state funded areas so while it has it's what has kept prince williams tax bill low has been the benefit of the passenger fares paid through our customers at the fare box with them not commuting those dollar amounts weren't there so what what covid did is it offset that expense

[03:28:22] and preserve that line item so that we weren't draining the motor fuels tax to to backfill passenger fares we use the covid funds to do that and that's what allowed the proverbial can to be kicked down the road to this point otherwise we would have drained the motor fuels tax within two years after it all right i'm going to go on to supervisor angry thank you thank you madam chair i don't have a question i'm going to just jump right into um comments um since we kind of there

[03:28:56] right now if that's okay with you madam chair um so so listen board uh make no mistake we own the best bus system in northern virginia being omnivite prince vane county does yes we found a lion's share of that and yes this bus system will be successful because we are too far invested for otherwise so we're not having that discussion and and the my my only point to this board uh despite the the new budget request and funding here is that we know the well has run dry on mortar fields tech so we need to be discussing is how we're going to fund this bus system going

[03:29:35] forward that's a real conversation now let me just say we have is it four we've got spotsylvania Fredericksburg city of Manassas city of Manassas Park and Stafford five okay so we have five other localities rolled in this into this with us they have a little work to do and I know what they're bringing to the table isn't anything compared to what we have to bring to the table but this system exists and it's a very good system we've got a western facility now I will say for Princeton

[03:30:11] County we always talk about cart before the horse this bus system needs to go more routes and I know that you supervisor Gordon have been working on some routes outside in the Brentsville area looking at opportunities we want to say that we have everything that we need in Prince William County we've got some tourism we've got a battlefield we've got all this stuff we don't have a bus that runs out that way we don't have a bus that runs other locations even if the residential component isn't there yet we need to be looking at what do you want to do first put an infrastructure you want to build out these homes because you just heard about the course district and how we

[03:30:46] plan that bus route to be there these are all things that we need to have a real discussion about i know these dollars are intimidating to some and i get it it's it's county revenue but we need to figure out a way of how we're going to go about funding this system going forward and i've got some ideas but i'll say those to bring up as we get back into the rest of this budget the next meeting and so i'll just pause right there madam chair but thank you madam chair yes one thing i did misspeak mr weir is not here to hear this as i was when i responded about 100 that was for our commuter services prince william county did increase local services but we added

[03:31:21] sundays for the 52 sundays a year which are identical to our saturdays we added the microtransit service in the dumfries area and we did provide some minor increases in frequency in both the Manassas, as well as Eastern Prince William Courts. Just wanted to make sure, in my brain, I was thinking commuter services.

[03:31:39] I did want to put a fine point that there was local dollars spent, but that was for local services. All right, thank you. Supervisor Gordy. First of all, I just want to offer my condolences with your Tennessee volunteers losing on Sunday to the Purdue Boilermakers.

[03:32:01] So I know you're in grieving right now. So thank you for joining us. That's all I can do to hear. Exactly. Yeah, I'm going to go easy. Now, as a commissioner on PRTC, we've been through this discussion before, and I agree with everything that you've said.

[03:32:24] We absolutely have to find another source of revenue. But we're looking at a three-year gap, potentially, before we actually get to a solution and an approval from the General Assembly of what that could be. In the meantime, we're looking at somewhere in the range of close to $100 million from our budget going to fund PRTC's budget through FY 2027.

[03:32:55] And as I said earlier to the Commonwealth's attorney, we're trying to figure out a square peg through a round hole. And the budget increase from PRTC for Prince William County approaches 60%. and we don't have any other line item in our budget that's going up by that much that I'm aware of.

[03:33:15] So this is an outlier within our budget. It sticks out tremendously as a massive cost increase for us as a county. I did ask, and I just asked for you to reiterate the answer, if, for instance, you only receive two-thirds of what you've requested from Prince William County, What are your alternatives in terms of your funding?

[03:33:39] How would you address the lack of funding? So we've identified, what does that matter, that number you've identified? Roughly 30,000 hours of service is equivalent to about $5 million in savings.

[03:33:54] My apologies. Yes, roughly 30,000 hours of service is equivalent to about $5 million in savings. However, if those reductions come from commuter services, we would generally have to cut two for every one hour of savings because there's, generally speaking, depending on the route, there is state participation in that as well.

[03:34:14] So the savings wouldn't come directly to, every dollar would not come directly to Prince William County in that particular scenario. As I'm looking at the budget, I'm looking back at the presentation that you gave us at the commission, and I'm just looking at, you know, the different line items.

[03:34:35] There's admin, marketing, OmniRide Express, the local, the Flex, the Vanpool program, and the local capital match. So basically, operations is, everything other than operations is somewhere in the round, is about five and a half million dollars, or right about five million dollars, and everything else is pretty much operational.

[03:34:58] Is that correct? Correct. Okay, so really the only area that could be cut is, given the budget is mostly operational, would have to be on the operation side.

[03:35:16] Thank you. All right, Supervisor Pody. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Dr. Schneider, for the presentation. I know you obviously retread this ground quite a bit with the commission at our meeting last month.

[03:35:32] Wanted to reiterate what I said back then, what Professor Gordy just alluded to. In the current five-year plan, if we fully funded everything that PRTC was asking for, that's $92 million beyond the current fuel tax revenue to support that.

[03:35:48] That's a significant amount of money. That is obviously something that we're going to have to grapple with because I think we can all agree on this day is that we do support transportation. We support public transit. that we support, giving our folks multimodal ways to get around, knowing that we have, especially in certain pockets in both the east and the west, folks that, frankly, don't have access to auto-centric vehicular traffic throughout travel, right?

[03:36:16] We need to have transit. We need to have transportation. We need multimodal ways to do it. Now, the biggest issue here, as was said before, is we cannot be expected to fully fund PRTC requests year after year after year. We can't. That's unsustainable for us as a locality.

[03:36:32] And frankly, it's unfair to ask a single locality to do that. As more routes come online, we massage more routes to and from out of jurisdictions. We're undoubtedly now, we're functioning as a regional transit system. I've said that before at our commission meetings. And even though a lot of those are toll funded, grant funded, what have you, there is the question that comes, you know, a few years down the line.

[03:36:56] When those grants go away, are they going to be renewed or are they not going to be renewed? Then we'll be asked to pay for even more. So for us, to me, we have an immediate problem. We have a horizon problem, but we're not even sure the magnitude yet. So we really need to get our house in order in this coming couple of years.

[03:37:14] As was said, SJ-28 is a really big deal. Appreciate your work on that and appreciate our collaboration in VTC and the delegation. However, and to say it this way, it's overdue, frankly. We've needed to find dedicated funding for transit in Northern Virginia, especially for us, being that pivot point between Rova and Nova for years.

[03:37:37] Like we said before, you're going to see two, maybe three years or sessions before we get something that is going to be usable for us as a locality. So I think that needs to be highlighted as well. We have immediate needs to be addressed now. And I guess my question for you, Dr. Schneider, is beyond what's being asked for here, which is basically just, hey, Prince William County, hat in hand, can you please give us some more?

[03:38:02] Have you been thinking about other policy changes that some of which might be tough, might be unpopular, like going back to fares for local transit to help offset this, not just for our short-term pain now, but for the long-term? because i i completely understand we have pockets of need there are folks frankly don't have a lot of wiggle room to pay for it especially coming out of the pandemic but frankly there are bus systems out there that they help offset some of these costs by having fares paid and we're not doing that at all over a local route so broad question but sort of a focused question there certainly we spent a lot of time on that issue we quite frankly each budget year we have the same

[03:38:42] conversation about is this the year to reintroduce a couple of different things our ridership and for the volume of what we would collect and who rides with us so it's half fair for persons with disabilities generally students the elderly those on medicaid medicare in addition we have a very large number of pre-pandemic passes that were sold to prince william county agencies so really what you did is you funded other programs through the senior department or through the homeless department or social services so you would give them fifty

[03:39:19] thousand dollars so they would give us fifty thousand dollars we added all that up at that time was about a hundred and fifty thousand dollars between the different agencies that was just knowing that math pre-pandemic the secondary issue we run into is we have booming ridership right now on the local services and we're about to redo that eastern side of the county and generally we do that zero fare to give people the chance to experiment and ride so for this fiscal year we're not obviously never saying no ultimately it's a decision of the commission The other issue we're facing in the reality is we haven't run a dollar through our local fare boxes in four years.

[03:39:55] So the sensors work in terms of the driver pressing the button, but we're going to spend millions of dollars to repair the fare boxes that WMATA is planning to replace in the next year and a half. Those fare boxes are expected to cost us per unit of around $35,000 to $45,000 for local buses, for ridership that won't occur.

[03:40:14] So we look at it from a cost-benefit assessment analysis, conflict with drivers, all those kinds of things. Quite frankly, the better success, if we're going to examine fares, is to charge more for our commuter services because that's where the loss has been. The loss has been in our passenger fares related to commuters, and we went up this most recent fiscal year for the first time since 2017.

[03:40:36] But if we're going to examine which routes aren't performing, we would likely target commuter routes that aren't performing. And then we could take to the community the question, especially the commuting community, is it worth paying more in order to have these services be viable? One of the challenges that we discussed this in our ridership analysis, we don't have just pre-pandemic, we had some routes, it was the same 10 people five times a week.

[03:41:02] All 10 rode in together, all 10 rode home together at different times. So it was just a limited number of people. Now our scenario, we have 30 to 40 people riding that trip, but only 10 of them ride Monday, 15 or 20 ride Tuesday, Wednesday. So by the time you add it up, you have that 35, 40 people per trip.

[03:41:20] Half of them have torches on Monday and Tuesday. The other half have pitchforks the rest of the week. And so as we had our most recent round of service reductions last year, we got significant anger and frustration from people, especially consolidating the Lake Ridge routes. I'm sure you remember some of the nasty grams that people are fed up with those service reductions.

[03:41:39] And that's what we're gonna be re-examining one more time. It may be one of those items where because they're not riding in that many days a week that federal stipend we can increase that amount that we collect offset those expenses but it will never impact a person who only rides in a few days a week they won't really they'll never exceed that federal stipend and that's something that we've been discussing looking at our new ridership patterns we've seen a 10% increase of January over February over January we don't have March data and yet we start looking this week and hopefully have some prelim numbers but if we continue to see 10% increases

[03:42:14] that that return shows up at the commuter fare box which is the lion's share of our expenses in terms of that quite frankly what is more unproductive service that's what that's that's where we would steer to once we have high volumes of ridership it's absolutely worth charging a fare but the systems that have the highest ridership growth in the commonwealth are alexandria fredericksburg omni ride local charlottesville and richmond and all of them have one thing in common, zero local fare. And we're the only one that charges a commuter fare of those different

[03:42:48] systems. Thank you. Supervisor Bailey. Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to ditto what my colleagues have said already, just sitting on the commissions. We've talked about this quite a bit on the commission. I just had two questions. One is if it's definitely an issue that we've got to address, you know, and I see some of the programs that you've instituted over the last four years or four and a half years or or some that you've been waiting in the hopper for a very long time like the sunday ridership program and i'm assuming that that's one of the ones if we don't address

[03:43:27] this part this problem that you'll have to reduce uh going forward which is one that the community wants so i'm just putting that out there the other thing is with the new fleet that that you do you say you just ordered it the new fleet some delivered some ordered yes ma'am okay so So will that sustain us somewhat through the period of time until we address this issue?

[03:43:54] Or is that something that we have to readdress in the next couple of years or so? Because that's a cost as well. That's a high cost. The plan, as it's laid out through 2030, it funds all fleet purchases in those plans. And a lot of that, truthfully, is, you know, thank you to the local DOT for helping us get CMAQ funding, which allowed for a very low local share as part of that.

[03:44:18] And then, of course, when we have 100% state funding with new services, we're allowed to buy buses with that funding as well for 100% state. So that's some of the efforts that we've made. And, again, local DOT, Prince William DOT has helped us fund that. Thank you. And my last thing is I know that, which is something that's been discussed all over the transportation commissions, one of the things that's unknown to you is the telework piece.

[03:44:45] So that makes it even more difficult for you to sit down and give us a firm number. You're giving this to us as firm as can be, but that telework piece has not been determined yet. And so how do you propose to get around that as we're talking about this issue?

[03:45:05] So a couple of different things. One is increasing that per-trip fare, but putting a cap on it. So, for example, having an unlimited ride fare. I'm just going to make some numbers up, so this is not a proposal. the current federal stipend, I believe, $315. So for example, to have an unlimited ride pass for $300. That if we were to charge, again, a made-up number, nice and round, $15 per one-way trip, if a person isn't traveling in more than X number of times, they won't exceed the $300 if they buy the monthly pass. But what that does is that increases the revenue. Quite frankly, what's kicking Prince William a little harder in the teeth is Prince William County was very aggressive

[03:45:43] in funding commuter services in the 80s and 90s, especially the 1990s, and it was 100% funded. The state's policy, when it created the I-95 toll lanes, 395 and I-66, is they will not fund the new services. They're not going to fund anything that's already in operation. So that's why I-66, almost all the services out there are state funded. So everything you see out of university, that entire park and ride lot, built by the state, funded by the state. The bus is funded by the state. It's really a state-funded program, not the case on I-95, not the case of

[03:46:20] services that are operating on the Manassas side of 66. So there's a couple of routes that Prince William County started funding that serve Portsmouth Blot in the Coles District, for example, that was trying to serve that area of all those houses along Sudley Road and the apartment complexes. So when the new 66 program comes online, those routes are still 100% paid by Prince William County but have the lower ridership so that's something that we're examining internally of is there things we can do with the state sadly what ends up happening is we end up saying okay well let's just cancel the route for five years and then we'll apply back to the state and then

[03:46:56] it's a new route well what have you done to your viability of transit utilization in those five years what have you done to the culture of riding transit have you made Prince William County a less attractive place to move to if you're a federal employee relocating here those are some of the philosophical questions that we're struggling with and so part of what we're doing is having to have the conversation with the state again are there options there can we re-examine the fares and quite frankly we are still paring down

commuter services we have our ridership retreat was actually supposed to be occurring right now in which we go in as a staff we pull all the data

[03:47:31] from all of our services and we look at it agnostic of who pays because the first standard is does it perform then we examine what should or shouldn't make the cut and then we examine that in the relationship of budget limitations and what should or shouldn't be operated. There are routes that we have eliminated since the pandemic that were 100% state-funded, but they don't perform. A lot of the routes that are still 100% state-funded by Prince William County, 100% funded, are operating out of the Dale City Gemini lot up through Horner Road to Pentagon and to D.C. Montclair 234 up to Pentagon

[03:48:08] in DC because they are routes that have been there for 30 years. Yep. And Prince William County funds 100% of that. What has always helped keep it cost beneficial that there were, there was people standing 75 people deep with their, their smart card in their hand waiting to pay. Those lines are a lot shorter and the feds have not done enough to backfill that. And they're not doing enough to call people back in five days a week or four days a week. Instead, it's three days over two weeks we don't know which days those are and even another example is pre-pandemic we had a

[03:48:43] we were on Fridays we were 15 percent of service lower the rest of the week because we had a good ridership prediction of what service looked like Monday through Thursday Friday was significantly lower we can't even do that we'll have a Monday that looks terrible then the next Monday looks fantastic it's the telework piece it is the telework piece and what are the demands of the departments and the supervisors and until the federal government truly gets some continuity us vre other commuter service systems loudon counties they've just basically said we're going to shove everyone on metro and good luck now the last question not speaking for them but

[03:49:20] that's kind of what they've done the last question and madam chair i'll be quick the um the six million dollars that's committed for the long branch the long bridge yes ma'am yes is how is that commitment how long is that commitment is it till it's completed what what does that commitment look like as it applies to us i don't recall the full length of it but as long as the motor fuels tax is tied to inflation under the legislation there is a 15 million dollar total called the c rock i'm sure you've heard it in vre meetings many times capital rail operate was it

[03:49:55] the commuter rail operating capital investment fund c rock and it's the first 15 million dollars that comes out of the motor fuels tax, and it's from all the jurisdictions of NVTC, PRTC, by distribution of ridership. So Prince William County's share of that is approximately $6 million.

[03:50:12] So the first $6 million into the motor fuels tax belongs to VRE through that legislation, and then what they did is they then committed through their bonding process to provide that to DRPT, who then did the work to establish the Long Bridge and get that construction done.

[03:50:30] Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, ma'am. Supervisor Rear. Thank you, Madam Chair. Understandably, you're struggling philosophically. I'm struggling fiscally. And I don't think anybody, and I've been preaching this for quite some time, has really addressed the new post-COVID reality. And that's what it is. It's a reality.

[03:50:53] There's a newsflash for anybody that doesn't understand it yet. The feds are not going back, at least not to the level they were. Federal unions have already told the agencies, We're not coming back. It's a huge argument in D.C., which is a ghost town in many areas.

[03:51:12] That being said, you know, we've got a pre-COVID subsidy of $14.8 million, which grew every year except one. And here we are at 2025, six years, and it's grown by 124%, 59% over last year.

[03:51:36] And we've got a zero line item in the budget for this. We don't have any money programmed for this. So we've got to come up with $33.3 million, including the gas tax money, that we've got to program into our budget and we've got to find.

[03:51:56] So if everybody wants to meet this ask or some significant portion of it, you better start finding things to cut because that's how short we're going to be. this is not in our preliminary budget. And I'm not willing to raise the residents' taxes six or seven cents on the mill rate just to cover this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[03:52:26] Supervisor Gordy. Just to piggyback on what Supervisor Weir just said, I do believe that, and I said this at the VRE meeting, I believe that our economy is in a state of flux right now. I don't believe we can predict out what our future is going to be just simply because there's still transition.

[03:52:46] We're an economy in transition, and the feds, I do believe, are going to have to bring people back to work simply because they can't afford to maintain these buildings downtown, and they can't offload them. Nobody's going to want a building. Nobody's going to want to occupy.

[03:53:02] So the folks that I'm talking to in the feds are looking at how do they get people back, and the realtors are telling me that they're already starting to see the out-migration to counties south of us to start to turn back and that we may start to see people moving back closer to D.C. due to this change in requirements related to telework. Not to say that the people are going to be going in five days a week. They'll probably be three days a week. And it could be, you know, six days over 10 days. So you could have them or work five days one week and not at all the next

[03:53:40] five days next week so the i i think it's very hard to predict right now with just where we are um and with there there's just no certainty to to what this uh will look like just a couple years from now um but i but i do agree yeah we don't we we didn't budget for this was not in our preliminary budget so we do have some hard decisions um headed our way as we try to figure this out. And quickly, Supervisor Angry. Thank you, Madam Chair. And that's exactly right. That's why

[03:54:15] we're here, because we have not put the PRTC OmniRab budget into this budget, which is what we're here to discuss. But I want to also say this. It is very true. I mean, we more than likely should have had this conversation in about 2022, because coming out of COVID, we know that at ARPA CARES funding, at some point, we were going to come off our training wheels and have to get back to reality of what we're going to be doing here.

[03:54:44] So that's literally where we are right now, trying to figure out something that we probably should have been no different than the motor fuels tax and the well running dry on that conversation that we should have. But I'm going to say this last thing. The thing about these buses right now in Prince William County and OmniRide is that the future is different.

[03:55:02] So this is where you gentlemen come in and the leadership there at OmniRide to figure out the necks of the bus systems because it's not going to be heavily doing the same thing it did unless something changes. And right now it's clear that D.C. is having a problem, a bigger problem than us, and we know that the focus up there has been Metro.

[03:55:22] All the money has been really the bailout Metro, which has caused all of our bus systems to try to figure out how we're going to fend for ourselves. Going back to Supervisor Franklin's original point, which is why Richmond and the legislation need to get involved and figure out how they can help us with the bus systems. And really, I get the Metro and all of what's going on with that, But this bus system is more relevant than, for me particularly, than the metro.

[03:55:48] And let me just say this last thing, and I'll just be blind about it. We're never going to get metro running down here to Prince William County. We've missed that dollar amount, you know, five years ago. So every year, it's another billion growing on that thing, and that ain't going to happen.

[03:56:04] So what we need to invest in is this bus system and figure out how best to make it work countywide. And so I'll stop there. But, yeah, we're going to end with trying to figure out how we're going to fund all this. And thank you again for the presentation. Yes, sir. All right.

[03:56:19] I'm just going to say a few things because I know the troops are getting restless. And, you know, thank you for coming here and presenting this. I heard we're hungry. So I am obviously a big fan of Omni Riot because I do take it to go to D.C.

[03:56:35] And I am lucky to live in a community where it comes right through my community. However, I do realize that, I mean, the Montclair Express line, you know, we used to be 75 deep. Maybe we're like 25 deep, you know. Certainly with the changes in work structure, less people are using public transportation to get into D.C.

[03:56:55] I have a lot of concerns about these numbers. I do. I have a lot of concerns about these numbers because it's hard to justify the shortfall. Who's going to make up the shortfall? How much is Prince William going to make versus some of the other jurisdictions? because we do carry the lion's share.

[03:57:12] So that's a very big concern that I have. I do think it's time for us to look at where we are with public transportation. Where really is the need? Where can we make adjustments? I know with the Montclair line, the commuter ride has changed. It now starts in Dale City, which I assume hopes pick up additional riders.

[03:57:32] But I think that that's going to be the question we have to discuss, is where are we going to have to make the cuts? What is realistically PRTC is going to look like? And, you know, maybe it's also, you know, finding a way to re-engage some of the riders that, you know, you've lost.

[03:57:49] And I know it's hard. People want convenience. And they feel that, hey, you know, I'll just get on the express lanes and, you know, maybe suck up the costs because it'll help me get to work faster or home faster. But where I'm sitting at right now in this moment is looking at where can we find efficiencies with the service.

[03:58:07] Yes, we do need to push, I'll echo what everyone said, the General Assembly to dedicate a funding stream for public transportation. I think that's definitely needed, but they haven't done so already.

[03:58:24] And so as much as we keep pushing them and need to make that a legislative priority, it ain't happening anytime soon. so my suggestion is really to look at where cuts can be made where we can streamline service where we can make this more efficient because we have to be realistic so i do appreciate your time um thank you so very much unless you have if you want to have anything else you want to add i'm

[03:58:55] going to call on our transportation department all righty thank you now we are moving on to Mobility Funding Challenges with our Transportation Department and Rick Conazales.

[03:59:20] You ready? You have an entourage. I do. They're a great entourage. First, thank you to Dr. Snyder, Mr. Perala, and Mr. Stainsby for being here today and giving you this presentation.

[03:59:38] I'm going to stand up here. I'm here to talk to you about Mobility Funding Challenges, and obviously you heard the first presentation and you know why my presentation is being called Mobility Funding Challenges. But I want to say that before we even start with this, Madam Chair and members of the board, that we are the Transportation Department, and we have the Mobility Chapter.

[04:00:00] That means this is a multi-modal transportation network that we run here in this county. We have buses, we have trains, we have parking lots, we have roads, we have sidewalks, we have trails. We even have parking garages and pedestrian bridges now.

[04:00:17] So we are a growing, multimodal jurisdiction, and with that, this type of thing kind of happens. So I want to come up here first of all and say I'm not coming up here and talking against transit. I'm not against transit. I'm all for transit.

[04:00:34] We need to be for transit. It's the way that people get around within our jurisdiction, and it's the way that people get also out of our jurisdiction to their jobs, as we are a commuter-based jurisdiction at this point in time still. So we do need those services, but we do need to take a close look, like you have mentioned today.

[04:00:50] Our presentation's gonna reiterate a lot of the points you have made today already, and we'll talk through those points, and we'll talk through that. I will be presenting first, I will be presenting to you what we have, what the county's revenues really are in transportation, what we get on a yearly basis of local funding that we can use for what we do, what OmniRide does, what VRE does, and what we have to do as a region to make our network full.

[04:01:17] So this is not a presentation saying we shouldn't fund transit, This is just a presentation that tells you what we have. Then Megan will talk about what the transit needs and kind of reiterate some of what Dr. Snyder has been saying compared to the funding sources that I'm going to talk to you about today.

[04:01:37] And then Paulo will kind of end it up there, giving you some alternatives and some possible solutions that we may want to look at or explore in order to make sure that we can fully fund our whole mobility network. With that said, I'll start the presentation here.

[04:01:54] And again, like I mentioned earlier, I'm going to talk to you today about what we have, what currently comes into our budgets, what we have, what we've been able to save through the years. You know, as I mentioned many times, we are a jurisdiction that from our successes, we have created other issues for ourselves.

[04:02:15] And we'll talk a little bit about that as well. But we do want to show you where we're kind of at. First of all, the longest-running transportation local funding source has been recordation tax. We've had recordation tax for a very long time. My whole career I've been here, some of recordation tax has funded transportation.

[04:02:31] Our FY25 estimated revenue, and thank you so much from Budget and David and his staff who gave us a lot of these numbers to present to you today. I'm actually being a mouthpiece for their staff as

well today, so I thank you for that, David. But $5.2 million in what we anticipate coming in.

[04:02:50] What you see is what the uses that we're going to have for this money in this year. And you see there that, you know, the FY uses balance ends up with $961,000. We do have a fund balance back in FY23 of $16.9 million.

[04:03:07] That will probably grow this year as well. But we're talking FY23 fund balances because that's what we have a whole number for at this point in time. The fund balance is used to ensure some of the county's NVTA maintenance of efforts requirements because these are local funds. If you don't understand that last bullet, we're going to get into it in a couple slides.

[04:03:27] Mobility funding sources. Okay, so the next one is the 30%. Barry, you know, obviously NVTA was created, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority. 70% of their funding sources go to regional projects that the region applies for and the NVTA delivers.

[04:03:43] 30% of the source comes back to the county to do local transportation initiatives. We obviously, we've been very good at this. we've gotten about $21.1 million that we're estimating for this year. This has been a growing funding source. Obviously, it's growing because it's based on sales tax. And as you know, the sales tax has been growing. Not only that growing, but in the middle of the pandemic, we were also able to do sales tax on online purchases, which also increases funds. So it was very exciting to see that this funding source continues to increase.

[04:04:19] As you see, we do give $5.5 million off the top to VRE to cover their expenses for their local subsidy. And our fund balance is about $62.8 million. Obviously, we have about $20 million, somewhere between $15 to $20 million a year.

[04:04:35] You will have a little bigger fund balance there. And we are proposing in the budget this year that we fund the Minneville Road and Prince William Parkway project with this fund balance and try not to use as much debt on that 2019 bond project. I told you we were going to talk a little bit about maintenance of effort.

[04:04:54] Maintenance of effort is what we have to do. It's in code, and it's what we have to do to receive the NVTA 30% funding that we just discussed, the $20 million. What happened back in the legislation is that NVTA, the legislators in Richmond did not want us to supplant the funding that we were already spending on transportation projects with the money we were going to receive with the 30%.

[04:05:19] So they set this maintenance of effort that looked at the three years before the legislation and said, what was the spending, the local spending of a jurisdiction during that three-year time frame, and what was the average of those three years? That average was $25.8 million, which set our maintenance of effort number that we had to reach on a yearly basis.

[04:05:41] Now, we do use the 2% gas tax that we give to PRTC to get to this maintenance of effort. So again, about $17 million of this is going to come from PRTC this year. The other $7 million needs to come from local funding sources, and that's why I mentioned earlier that we've been a success story in getting funding from other places to fund our transportation projects, so we haven't had to fund as much locally.

[04:06:07] So in the last few years since that's been happening, we've been having trouble meeting this maintenance of effort, and we've had to make sure that we look at all our projects, expenditures to be able to get to that so it's just one of those things that year after year if we're not spending those local dollars the

recordation taxes because again the 30% the grant towards tax and the TOT that gets given by NVTA cannot count towards these sources it's purely local sources that come from us from from generated by the county good thing about this is that we talked about the CNI tax before and the CNI tax could help us towards this

[04:06:44] because the CNI tax and we'll talk a little bit more about the CNI tax later but the CNI tax which is the commercial industrial tax can help us meet these MOE requirements those count as local dollars so any expenditure we get from that fee or that tax will go towards that MOE and we'll be able to cover those be able to cover that on a yearly basis with no problem the last two the next couple sources are the grantor's tax which I mentioned and I do want to bring this to your attention because the grantor's tax is something that we receive from MVTA as well the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority but But most jurisdictions in the MBTA do not receive this money.

[04:07:23] For the metro jurisdictions, or the ones that are in the compact, this money goes directly to metro. And it was supposed to be for the entire region. And we and my staff and the legislative staff, you know, our legislative liaisons fought hard to make sure that Manassas Park, Manassas, and Prince William County got this money back and then did not get invested into metro.

[04:07:45] They were making an argument that, you know, our people use the metro system and we don't pay and that they were going to and we made a big enough argument that we were able to keep these funds now these funds has been a diminishing fund too grantor's tax obviously is based on sales of homes and and those kind of real estate transactions and those have been coming down but at a point in time this was about a 10 million dollar to 12 million dollar funding source dave at the at its peak oh seven eight seven eight to eight million dollars at its peak so uh we hope we're hopeful that this will continue to grow as hopefully our you know our our economy continues to grow like we know we've talked about some uncertainties but if it goes the

[04:08:25] right way that this will be a growing number here hopefully again we do have a fund balance of thirty one point five million dollars on under those funds transit occupancy tax this is a tax that is also from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority it was initially a two percent required tax that was going to be given to public transportation or used for public transportation uses and a couple years after the tax was established a couple years ago an additional 1% was added for any transportation use so now we collect 3% of the transit occupancy tax at about a 4.5 million dollar click

[04:09:01] estimated in this in this coming year and we do have a small fund balance like I mentioned this tax just grew it used to only give about two million dollars a year so we do have a fund a small fund balance of about 6.2 million dollars finally the last one we're going to talk about is the one that's been kind of head-on here, and we talked with, and PRTC and OmniRide has been discussing it, and that's the motor fuels tax, and obviously you see it in red there because you see that what we're talking about here today is that differential between what we give OmniRide on the motor fuels tax and what their needs are. Classically, as you know, and historically, this has been zero.

[04:09:38] The motor fuels tax has covered PRTC's and OmniRide's expenses. Actually, back before 2017, as you see in the first slide there, it actually used to cover both VRE and OmniRide. So that fund used to cover both of these agencies' operating expenses, and they have grown so much that here we are today, again, as was mentioned earlier, the CROC funds that go automatically from the gas tax out to the Long Bridge project, the 5.5 that we're giving

[04:10:09] a VRE out of our 30%, the $16.9 million that we're giving PRTC from the 2% gas tax, and now you still see that we have a funding deficit of about $16.4 million. The only reason PRTC is able to tell you today that it's only $13.2 million that we have to use is because they're using their projected fund balance.

[04:10:34] Dave will tell you that that's not good practice to use fund balance to cover operations, but that's what they're using to cut down that subsidy for Prince William County down to $13.2 million. I wanted to talk through this slide because we've talked through PRTC and their needs, and we wanted to talk through our needs and what we do here in the department for you.

[04:10:57] First of all, we looked at our proposed five-year plan and funding sources for the 2019 bond projects. Just those alone, you see the increase in need for those local dollars to pay debt service off for these bonds at a rate that by 2030, you're in $25 million a year.

[04:11:14] We can't just think about the debt service for 2019 bond projects because we already use this money, a lot of this money, for existing needs. We have state revenue match that we match $5 million to the state to get their $5 million every year for transportation projects.

[04:11:31] We locally match projects just like OmniRide does. As you know, we try to get as much money from other funding sources by being able to leverage our own local sources. And we use that money from these sources as well.

[04:11:48] We cover project deficits. The closest example I can remember is the $3 million that we just approved for the Summit School Telegraph Road Project to cover that. We do, as you know, the state is not funding safety improvements. Safety is, I think, the last thing on the state's mind.

[04:12:06] They're doing congestion. They're making sure that we're covering land uses, economic development. But safety is a very small part of their budget. We don't get a lot for safety projects, and it's a huge need. So a lot of the small safety projects you see around the county are being funded with these funds as well, including your photo enforcement program that just started.

[04:12:27] Local funds for projects that work outside of Funded Scope, I mean, we undergrounded the Route 1 corridor in the north side with $12 million of this money. And as we need local monies to continue to do that kind of work, as we're doing betterments when we're doing transportation projects that don't cover the betterments that you do with those transportation projects.

[04:12:47] These funds are going to be needed more to make sure that we're covering those needs. And finally, and I think this is one of the most important things to you guys, because the TRIP program is a discretionary program that you use to deal with your constituents and your transportation issues. This program, as you know, has been left kind of flat for the last few years, and it was even removed at some points in time during COVID when we were not sure what was happening.

[04:13:14] These funds come to fund the TRIP program. If you want to see that program increase instead of disappear, we're going to have to deal with other funding sources or figure out something because it's unsustainable at this point in time with the expenditures that we have. With that said, Megan's going to come up here.

[04:13:31] She's going to talk to you a little bit about PRTC's needs, PRTC's five-year plan. It will be a little reiteration, but what the key point that Megan is going to make to you today that you need to be paying

attention to is how that compares to those revenue sources and the amounts of those revenue sources that I just identified for you today.

[04:13:49] Thank you. Madam Chair, members of the Board, Megan Landis, Department of Transportation. So you've heard from OmniRide about the motor fuels tax revenue, their funding needs. You've heard from your Director of Transportation about other local dedicated transportation revenues and how it supports this Board's priorities.

[04:14:09] In these next few slides, what we're going to do is bring it all together for you, give you a comprehensive outlook on your mobility revenues and uses in Prince William County. This slide is a reminder about why we're doing this, why this conversation is so important.

[04:14:25] The motor fuels tax revenue, PRTC's kind of historic pot of funding, is no longer sufficient to support their budgets, not just in fiscal year 2025, but in all anticipated future budgets going forward. We are looking at some major funding shortfalls that are highlighted here on the slide. And it has triggered a re-examination of how we are funding mobility in Prince William County. So this table here is bringing together all those dedicated transportation revenues and uses that we have been discussing throughout this presentation. This is looking just at

[04:15:00] incoming revenue, not those fund balances that Rick had referenced. We're simply looking at whether the money coming in for transportation in a next fiscal year can cover the expenses going out for transportation. Now, as you can see, in fiscal year 2025, the county is projected to be able to fully support PRTC's jurisdictional subsidy requests, as well as the local transportation projects and programs that have been identified for fiscal year 2025. However, it's tight. And we also know that PRTC's jurisdictional subsidy is going to continue to grow at a rate that outpaces

[04:15:38] revenue growth, and we know we've got some debt service payments coming down the road. Now, fortunately, this county has a very strong record of fiscal management. You know that you've got a AAA bond rating. So you have built up some transportation fund reserves. This graph here on the left is showing you the breakdown of mobility revenue in fiscal year 2025. You're looking at about a total of $52 million. The graph on the right is showing you a breakdown of your reserves or your fund balances for these revenue sources, and you're looking at about $85 million.

[04:16:14] Now, ideally, these fund balances would continue to be used only for one-time capital expenses. It's best practice in fiscal management that you're using that not to support ongoing operating expenses through a transit subsidy.

[04:16:30] However, we are talking funding challenges. This is a resource that's available to you. So for the purpose of this analysis and discussion, it is included. If you look at the graphs on the top of the chart, you're looking at the projected breakdown of uses for your mobility revenue.

[04:16:48] There are a few assumptions that are baked into these graphs that I want to note. One, we're assuming that PRTC's jurisdictional subsidy request is fully funded each year. Two, we're assuming that VRE's subsidy request is going to increase based on projections that they've put out there. and three we're assuming that debt service payment schedule that was shown to you in an earlier slide we are not assuming any other increases to any other programs that are administered by dot your trip program orphan road program grant program we're assuming that all of those are going to remain flat we strive to be multimodal i think these graphs do a good job of giving you a

[04:17:26] visual representation of how your transportation revenues are allocated across the modes as you can see in fiscal year 2025 between prtc and vre subsidy the bulk of your transportation revenue is going to transit as you move out towards fiscal year 2029 you're seeing a little bit more mode balance that's because those debt service payments on the mobility bond projects are picking up but please keep in mind that is temporary once those mobility projects are done then it is going to shift back to the bulk of your revenue going towards transit these graphs here on the bottom are showing how much of those transportation fund balances that were shown on the previous slide

[04:18:06] would be needed to support future budgets as i said you are looking good in fiscal year 2025 right your incoming revenues generally covering all of your expenses going out that is not the case for future years i also mentioned it's not best practice to use those transportation fund balances to cover ongoing operating expenses these graphs illustrate why it's simply not sustainable and it really rapidly depletes your fund balances so based on projected transportation revenues based on your transportation fund balances we anticipate that the county could support

[04:18:42] full budget requests through fiscal year 2028. after that you will have depleted all of your fund balances and you're still looking at a nearly nine million dollar shortfall to cover the fiscal year 2029 budget so clearly funding all the county's mobility priorities is going to be a challenge however staff is always up for a challenge so in this last part of the presentation we really want to shift kind of into problem solving mode right that's why we're here assistant director paulo belita is here he's going to walk through some of the options for you

[04:19:19] thank you megan madam chair members of the board paulo belita with your department of transportation As Megan said, we're here to talk about potential solutions and also talk about scenarios of what it would look like if we partially or fully funded PRTC's FY25 subsidy request.

[04:19:35] So in talking internally with staff, if we were to implement potential solutions, we've identified certain elements we can implement. We could look at a full network redesign. This would look at right sizing and operations based on current travel patterns. We could look at an organizational performance review.

[04:19:52] We're really looking at ways to look at efficiencies in the operations of the agency. We can look at reanalyzing the subsidy share. Currently, Prince William County's share is 96%. We know that OmniRide's footprint in operations continues to grow, and it's been several years since this percentage has been looked at.

[04:20:10] We can look at a competitive solicitation for operations. We know that a big part of the budget is related to the current operating contract with Keolis. We discussed local bus fares earlier, local bus services. One option is to reinstate local bus fares.

[04:20:25] We know that the local bus service continues to grow. It's surpassed pre-pandemic numbers. We discussed some items earlier about fare boxes, for example. There's grants out there that could support this long term. We know that in certain successful local services like Richmond and City Alexandria, it is free.

[04:20:44] What makes Prince William County unique is we're a county. We have a larger footprint, and we have more routes and more services. The other option is to look at an operational growth cap, really

looking at a potential policy to implement a cap on an annual increase in the operating budget. For example, Wabata implements a 3% cap for Maryland and Virginia.

[04:21:03] Other potential solutions, as Dr. Schneider mentioned, is to continue supporting and lobbying the General Assembly for dedicated funding. It hasn't been said enough, fuel tax continues to decline. It is a declining revenue. We also want to look at other ways to fund mobility.

[04:21:20] We would support additional EV fees to really offset the loss in mortise fuel tax. This is an equitable way to support transportation. Another option that staff has discussed previously is a new local tax to implement a new tax dedicated for transportation purposes.

[04:21:37] That is the, as Rick mentioned earlier, the commercial industrial tax, the CNI tax. By code, it allows a maximum of up to 12.5% per $100 assessed value on commercial and industrial property. Out of the nine eligible MVTA of Northern Virginia jurisdictions, three have implemented this tax.

[04:21:55] Fairfax County, City of Fairfax, and Arlington County at the full $0.12.5 rate. By code, the revenues to be dedicated for transportation purposes includes transit, reducing any projects that reduce congestion or add capacity. As Rick mentioned, it would count towards the MOE requirement for MBTA's 30% funds.

[04:22:15] We did some projections in working with budget, what that could look like if we did implement 12.5 cent C&I tax. You can see that in FY26, it could generate $31.2 million, $35 million in FY27, $39 in FY28, and approximately $42 in FY29, just some high-level projections.

[04:22:36] We talked about some recommendations. We want to talk about some scenarios and options of what it would look like if we fully funded the subsidy request or partially funded the request. In this scenario, this is a partially funded request. For comparison purposes, we did want to show what FY24 looked like in the left column. You can see that the request last year was about $21 million. What we did in FY24 was dedicate all the motor's fuels tax at $17.6 million. We utilized 3.1 of the fund balance as your reserves, towards that with a total subsidy request of $21 million.

[04:23:12] In this situation, for option one, we'll call it, in this scenario, we're looking at partially funding the subsidy request. So the FY25 request is $33.7 million. We will continue to reallocate or dedicate the motorist fuel tax of $16.8. We would utilize $2.5 to $3.2 motorist fuel tax fund balance.

[04:23:31] We would then continue funding TOT, real estate wellness using our TOT funds. That's about $19.5 million in existing revenue sources. That still leaves that $13.7 million funding gap, or delta, based on the request. One option is to dedicate FY25 grantor's tax at $4.6 million and TOT tax at $4.5 million.

[04:23:54] That's $9 million in addition to the $19 million. So that still leaves a gap of $4.5, but this is what it would look like if you were to partially fund the subsidy request at $28 million out of the $33 million. Just to summarize that option, we are using partial of the Mures fuel tax balance.

[04:24:15] There's still $4.5 million unfunded in the request. Based on the accrued grantors and TOT tax, we're still able to advance some of our mobility priorities for the county. In this scenario, we don't impact or utilize MVTA 30% funds towards the subsidy.

[04:24:32] and the pie chart there shows about half of the funding for FY25 would go towards PRTC's subsidy. The last option... Members of the board, can you go back to that slide, please? Also, as you see in the second-to-last funding source, we don't go into the 30%, and by not going into the 30%, we can use the

funds to fully fund the cash as cash to capital, the Minerville Parkway project, which would leave us with no debt on that project.

[04:25:04] All right, in this option, in this scenario, we're fully funding the subsidy requests at $33.2 million. Similar to the first scenario, we would use our fuel tax from FY25. We would deplete the fuel tax fund balance at $3.2 million. That leaves the $13 million additional requests.

[04:25:23] So similar to the last option, we would utilize the grantor tax, the TOT tax. And in addition, to meet the delta, we would utilize about $3.8 million in NVTA 30% funds. So that's an option to fully fund the subsidy and what it would look like. And what that means, you are fully funding the request.

[04:25:41] You're utilizing grantor's tax, TOT tax, and NVTA 30% funds. You're still able to advance some of your mobility projects. It does have impacts to your NVTA 30% funding. It continues to deplete that moving forward. That is critical in funding future mobility priorities as well as potentially funding some of our bond debt service moving forward.

[04:26:03] In this scenario for FY25, you can see with this scenario, it's about 57% of the $52.4 million that's available in FY25. So it's just some scenarios, but I will give it back to Rick to wrap up the presentation. Before we move off that slide, what you see there is you're seeing that 68% of your local fund dollars that come to transportation are going to transit.

[04:26:29] So it starts becoming an unbalance and it starts affecting the program that you see as growing for the road projects, the sidewalk projects, the safety projects, your trip program, those kinds of things, this starts affecting it a little bit more. As you see, almost 70% of your funds or your local funds going to transit on a yearly basis.

[04:26:48] This is this year and increasing through future years. I do want to make, you know, you saw this chart earlier, but I did want to finish with this. Again, it's not to say we shouldn't fund transit or we should fund transit, we should fund roads or we shouldn't fund roads or, you know, we should skip the sidewalks.

[04:27:05] It's not at all that. It's just telling you, this is where your money is going. That's the amount of money you have. And as you see it, once you get to FY29, you've gone through over $100 million of fund balance. Let me say that again.

[04:27:21] Over $100 million that we as a county have been trying to save through the years by funding projects through other means that we wanted to have to be able to fund one-time projects, to be able to do all that stuff that I talked about earlier, all that is gone. and we have used all the fund balance and we will be using all our funding so like you said like we've said many times was said by you was said by our staff it's unsustainable we can't sustain this level of expenditure with the level of revenue that we're getting even with a hundred million dollar fund balance with that said we're open to any questions thank you very much all

[04:28:01] right thank you sir for your presentation we're going to start with supervisor bode thank you Madam Chair. Thank you, Rick, Megan, Paolo for the presentation. I also want to highlight that you guys brought solutions. It wasn't just, hey, this is a funding gap. It is what it is. You actually have solutions that we're working towards. I wanted to highlight that and uplift that.

[04:28:21] Thank you. First, for me, a comment after that is, to me, option two is a non-starter. And you all illustrated just now why that's the case. It's unsustainable for us. And frankly, it hamstrings us from

being able to fund any of our pre-existing mobility issues and initiatives, notwithstanding ones that we want in the future.

[04:28:41] So to me, we should not get in the stance of fully funding it if it's going to begin to erode our fund balance that much. And that's why 1-8th, all my colleagues chime in on that. My question, though, and I'm going to look over it as soon as we're vague at here in a second on this.

[04:28:58] If you go to slide 7, Rick, where you look at your proposed five-year plan. The lion's share, by the time you get to FY 2030, of that debt service is the 28 bypass.

[04:29:26] No, no, it's okay. Yep, thank you. Right. So by the time you get to FY 2030, you have $25 million in change of debt service, 18 of which is the 28 bypass, which is a big part of this conversation.

[04:29:49] That's, you know, a quarter of a billion dollars. Well, no, $25 million, and I would imagine it's going to escalate a little bit farther as we go down the road, right? Correct, and then de-escalate, and then come down, yeah. But we're talking about, you know, the next five years.

[04:30:06] PRT's budget for the next five years, our budget for the next five years, it's a pretty significant amount there that then flows on into our conversation here. So given the current uncertainty there is to the 28 bypass, knowing, because even though I wasn't at the conversation that we had, We've talked about, I know that our stance now, we're going to go back to Fairfax to try to get them to commit to their alignment. I hate to put you on the spot on this with this, Rick, but how likely is it that we're even going to begin to realize that debt service on that, knowing that we don't have a design or an alignment or a project that we have both sides that have agreed to?

[04:30:46] If the project moves forward, it might move down one year. If the sides don't agree, then we will have to have other discussions here at the board. Okay. I appreciate that. So to set the stage, Because the longer we've gone through this, knowing that we started going down the road, pun intended, with this project four years ago, and we're still four years later, and we still haven't had an agreed to alignment, and we're still here.

[04:31:10] I just wanted to leave that. But two, my next question is, Rick, for you, is talk to me a little bit more about option one and if it would make sense, knowing the conversation that we're having now, especially as it pertains to the state, if we could use this as a funding mechanism to fund most of PRTC's asks for the next two or three years, knowing that hopefully we'll be in a better place to have the state step in at that time to help fund the rest of it, given the legislation that's out there.

[04:31:47] And I think what you're seeing here, sir, a couple things, Madam Chair, members of the board, is that you're looking at a partial funding balance. I mean, there's other ways to break this down. You know, you can take a look at an option three that uses all PRTC's fuel balance and kill another, you know, $600,000 there.

[04:32:07] And then you're looking at basically what you're doing here is giving them all the grantors' tax and all the TOT tax. So out of the three funding sources that NVTA gives us, 30%, grantors, and TOT, you're basically now dedicating what we're doing here by partially funding them.

[04:32:26] You're dedicating your fuels tax, which has always been dedicated, but you're dedicating that fuels tax, which is a large sum of the $50 million you get to the county. Now you're dedicating your

grantor's tax, and now you're dedicating your TOT tax. So you're dedicating three of those major taxes I collected to PRTC.

[04:32:48] What you do in the next scenario is basically you're just saying, we could only get you the partial funding, so we'll have to cover the rest with 30%, and now you've gone into every single funding source to fund PRTC. So, I mean, it depends, again, how you want to structure this.

[04:33:07] David will sit here and tell you 200 different scenarios. These are just some examples that we wanted to give you, how you can partially fund it and say, hey, we're giving you all the grantors, all the TOT, all the gas tax. You figure it out from here. Or do we say we give them all the TOT, all the gas tax, and all the grantors, plus you start dipping into our 30%.

[04:33:31] And that's just for this year because next year, if we got to cover $2 million more, right, where's that going to come from? Again, 30%. So all of a sudden, you're depleting that even further. And again, like I mentioned, and that's why I mentioned in those graphics moving forward, it's just unsustainable. And I know I'm going to time out in chair, so I'll come back around later.

[04:33:49] Thank you. All right, Supervisor Weir. Thank you, Madam Chair. Ditto most of what Supervisor Butey said. And this is a strange day because you and I are seeing eye to eye and using the same words, unsustainable. Neither option one or option two works for me, and I'm pretty sure they don't work for you.

[04:34:10] but the only question I've got is if we adopt option one or option two where do you stand as a department in FY27 from an operational and a CIP standpoint or are you just completely hands tied at that point in time? What we see at that point in time in 27 is you see us dipping into our fund balances which again is something that I nor the budget office likes to do because it's not fiscal soundness.

[04:34:45] So eventually you're going to run out of... In 27, we run out of funds that are coming in, and we're dipping into funding. In 28, you're sitting there twiddling your fingers. 29. 29? No money? We're underwater at that point, sir.

[04:35:00] We're underwater $9 million. I'll just restate, for my 1-8s, the answer is no. You're back in the queue, Supervisor Bodie. Thank you, because it didn't seem like anyone else was jumping.

[04:35:18] So all else I'll say is I'm interested in at least some some modest investment under option one i'm not saying let's do the full amount of option one but i think that we do need to do something understanding that this is going to be a pain point for at least the next few years but again understanding that it cannot be we cannot be in the situation that you're you're looking at rick in terms of overall us just basically eroding all the money that you all have been saving over the last several years to fund our priorities and why say that um is again again affirming again oh and again again we should be committed to transit we

[04:35:54] are committed to transit we should not jeopardize too much so of our flexibility of our mobility spending right mobility funding um especially in the out years of the five-year plan we will if we start to fund too much we'll be underwater like like you said and i appreciate you giving clear data and clear projections on that um that all said i appreciate that our planning department walked in earlier because we have to have a much longer range conversation at some point on how we look at linking land use with transportation we did it with the comp plan but as we continue to look at you know projects not only in the Brentsville district we discussed

[04:36:32] before but in all of our districts making sure that we have transit oriented development that has transit that is oriented development as well we have to find some way to continue moving the fall forward on funding mobility holistically in the long term in a sustainable way. That said, I think we're at an inflection point here where we have to figure out how that looks.

[04:36:52] And that said, especially as we talk about more regional transit, BRT, I know I have conversations with you and your team, Rick, about that recently. We need to figure out a way to get our arms around that. Again, I don't agree with us doing option two or anything that completely erodes our fund balance over the next four years, but we have to figure out new funding streams to do that.

[04:37:17] I know at the commission, we talked about EVs. I know we have some bipartisan interest in that. The CNI tax is something that interests me. I would love to see us given some more nuance in the General Assembly on how to implement that tax, because we know that in other types of taxes that we can implement, we can parse things out based on industry type and business type. It's my understanding right now that that would just be a flat tax we have to do politically over everyone.

[04:37:41] to me that that doesn't seem right go on it's a flat tax for commercial and industrial property only so it does not hit our residents but it does hit our business community right regardless of what industry they're in so to me there should be some more nuance that we can request in the general assembly but i think that finding new funding sources for transportation is really the only way we'll be able to do this sustainably and i'll leave that now madam chair supervisor bailey Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree with Supervisor Bode when he says that I appreciate you bringing solutions because we've got to, we can't keep doing things the same way we've already, always done them.

[04:38:19] Thank you, ma'am. 29 is going to come and knock on our door. But the other thing too, Rick, I like the realistic picture that you keep telling us, don't touch my trip funds, but inevitably something's going to happen. I get it. I hear you, Dave.

[04:38:35] The other thing is, when you talked about the EV, you know, when we talk about sustainability and everything, but that's something that community has brought to our attention also in terms of the EV. So I appreciate you offering that as a solution to let them know that we do hear them as well.

[04:38:57] The other thing that I wanted to add, I'm just commenting, but the question that I wanted to ask, You kept bringing about, just give me an overall idea of what your fund balance is. You mentioned, no, the commercial and industrial tax. We've got to capture that as well.

[04:39:14] What you see there is a lot of money. It's $27.5 million that would be projected for this year to a growth of, when we talked about 2029 and having to run out of fund balance, we'd be looking at $42.7 million that we could use to generate that at that point in time that's looked at at that point.

[04:39:32] So the numbers that you see at the bottom there are the numbers that that C&I tax would generate at its full 12.5%. As Paolo mentioned to you earlier, it's an up-to tax. So that's another thing, as you talk about, Supervisor Bode, about how you implement that.

[04:39:48] You may not want to do it to all businesses, but what you could do is you can implement it in a phased approach because it's an up-to 12.5% tax. You can do it at $0.05 at first, then grow it to $0.10, then grow it to $12.5, whatever way the board would like to do. So I wanted to mention that just so you understand that as well, but that is what it generates at the full 12.5 that we are anticipating in the future years.

[04:40:08] And then the last thing that I want to say, and I'll stop, is the piece that you, the fact that the 4.7, what was that 4.7 that you protected in your budget? Paulo, help me. I can't go back to, it was at the beginning of your presentation.

[04:40:28] Oh, the grantor's tax? Yeah. All right. We'll talk a little bit. Where is it? The grantor's tax. So that was something that we protected from NVTA, from Metro receiving it from the NVTA directly. We were able to make it so the non-Metro member jurisdictions of NVTA, which were Manassas Park, Manassas, and the county, were able to regain this money or get this money from NVTA and not make it go to Metro.

[04:40:56] But at this point in time, like I said in option one, both of these taxes that you see here today, The first one that we worked hard to save and the second one that's mostly for public transportation are the two taxes that our budget office is proposing that we give to transit at this time to solve their issues.

[04:41:15] So it's $38 million. What you do, that's the fund balance, ma'am, at $31 million. What you see is the $4.7 up top. That's what we think we're going to generate this year. Okay. And then the $4.5 you see for FY25. So it's $9.2 million that you see that would be valued by those two taxes.

[04:41:33] Ah, I got you. Okay. Thank you. Yes, ma'am. Supervisor Gordy. Rick, Megan, and Paolo, thank you for the reality check. And I think that's, when I came in here, I was already worried.

[04:41:48] Now I'm scared, based on what you've told us tonight. I am going to push back on you on the C&I tax. Our small businesses in this county are already struggling, And we're already losing them because of the taxes being paid on property values imposed upon them.

[04:42:08] Because when you've got corporations on the distribution and the data centers offering $2 million an acre and all property values are going up as a result of that, our small business guys can't compete in that environment. And we're losing them as a result.

[04:42:25] So we might be cutting off our nose to spite our face in order to fund this C&I tax. So we have to really take a holistic look at how that now, granted, we could keep the taxes the same, implement the C&I tax, reduce some taxes, but get more money because that money's not shared with the school system.

[04:42:45] And I think that's your primary, you know, it's 100% funding from the C&I. But, again, I've got 5,000 acres of industrial land in the Brentsville District. That's more than the rest of the county combined.

[04:43:03] So I know where this money is going to come from. And I can tell you, our small businesses are already struggling. And they're already leaving the county or they're just going out of business. And I'm hearing this on a weekly basis. So we've got to be very careful about how we go forward with that tax.

[04:43:21] Again, thank you for all the hard work. This is a great presentation. Commend you guys on the work well done. We don't have an easy solution here. And all I know is that, yeah, we've got to find something else for PRTC because I know for mile 1-8th I can't jeopardize our funding streams for other mobility projects because we also have a lot of construction coming our way, a lot of residential and we are looking at how do we incorporate transit in the areas such as the

[04:43:57] Sudley Corridor with mall redevelopment and so maybe there's a way that as we start to look at these activity centers where we're looking to focus development as our planning department continues to highlight that 75 percent of development should be in our activity centers that we somehow include within our proffers something that would support funding for transit as part of our proffers within those and to further encourage that type of transit-oriented

[04:44:34] development within the community. I think there's a holistic approach to this, but in the short term there's no easy answer because none of the developments we're talking about today will even be built in the next three years even if they can get the funding the contractors and the developers can even get the funding due to current interest rate so this is still an out year solution that we would be talking about but it's the short term unfortunately there's no easy answer to this thank you all right i don't have any other people queued up so thank you so very much for this presentation i appreciate your time in coming here and doing this thank you all and

[04:45:13] Thank you so much. Just one thing, a special thanks to the budget office. We keep on getting compliments for the presentation. They did a lot of the hard work on this. So just my compliments to them as they're working through the budget, helping us being able to help us out with this. Thank you. Madam Chair, I'm going to take back my seeing eye to eye with him and point that to Sinclair, which is, which is usual. All right. We are moving on to supervisor's time. Before we begin, we have a few things to vote on and I'm going to do item 11A separately in case there's is any discussion on this one and then we will move on to our appointments and then to our five

[04:45:51] minutes for each one-eighth of this board um i gotta say things like that to amuse myself all right so 11 item 11a can i get a motion so moved men second all righty discussion supervisor franklin yeah so um i think i've said this before but um you know we've talked about making our meetings easier for the public to have access to so I'm not sure how moving the meeting time up makes it more accessible for the public particularly those that have to commute

[04:46:29] between Prince William County and either the northern or southern parts of our region so I will not be supporting this because I think it goes against the spirit of I think what we're actually trying to do thank you so I will answer that directly because I'm the one who made this so if you look around the crowd right now we don't have a lot of people and we also talked about you know ridership and community people commuting out of the county is down the reason why I made the suggestion was to bring us in line with the public comment time for our planning commission they

[04:47:04] start actually at six o'clock and I think you know coupled with the vote we took to end you know meetings again unless we decide to vote to continue on at midnight it makes it a friendlier schedule for people who want to come and speak one of the things i also would eventually like to discuss is when we know we're going to have a contentious vote um to have maybe public hearings on a weekend rather than you know having overnight meetings again that's just a suggestion that's something we're going to i'd like to discuss at a later point more in depth or perhaps even having

[04:47:38] quarterly public comment time on a weekend so that we are getting more people who maybe traditionally don't come who would like to stand up before the board you know and offer commentary insights you know or questions about things that they have so it's a half an hour shift I don't think it's a substantial shift but again looking out in this audience right now at two o'clock and then looking out, you know, when we get out, when we do our 730 meeting, I don't think this really

[04:48:11] is going to have a serious impact on people coming before the board. And, you know, we have mentioned that, you know, there are several ways for people to, you know, get a hold of us and to, you know, they can email us, they can, you know, do speak up online. But I think it's a half an hour shift.

[04:48:30] I'm hoping that it will make our evening sessions a little bit more manageable. You know, and again, I think if we're really going to talk about encouraging public comment, encouraging people to come

to board meetings, we should have a thoughtful discussion at a later time on having, you know, a weekend, perhaps a Saturday session.

[04:48:57] Motion passes. Seven to one. Supervisor Franklin voting nay. All right. No, it doesn't start now.

[04:49:18] In May. All right. So now we're going to move on to our appointments. So can I get a motion for 11B to 11G? So moved, Madam Chair. Any discussion? All right. Let's vote. Vote unanimous. All right. So now we're going to move on to supervisor's time. We're going to start with Gordy, go to Franklin, Vega,

[04:49:54] and then we're going to go over to Bailey Weir, Bodie, Angry, and myself last. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll try to make this quick. First of all, we'll start with notice appointments. I'm providing notice of my intent to appoint individuals to serve on various boards, committees, and commissions. I intend to appoint Thomas Murray to the Strategic Plan Community Advisory Committee. I also intend to appoint Scott Connolly to the Prince William Housing Board, and my staff has sent over the resumes and contact information to the clerk.

[04:50:24] Since I was last with you guys, I had great opportunities to participate in a few economic development events. One was the Celebrity School Ribbon Cutting in Bristow, as well as the SCS americom ribbon cutting with chair jefferson ses americom is the fourth largest satellite communications company in the world provides a lot of dod military support they just consolidated

[04:50:58] their north american operations into their piney branch campus off wellington road this is a very exciting um uh uh economic development win for us and we'll see up to about 200 new jobs high paying jobs being brought to the county uh because of this um uh establishment so very excited about that um also was honored to participate in the noakesville volunteer fire department banquet on march 16th um as they celebrated uh and recognized a lot of their uh firefighters who

[04:51:35] went above and beyond over the course of this last year. And my staff also was able to attend on March 20th Senator Danica Rome's Pedestrian Safety Town Hall. And given one of the charts that I think we might be seeing later, at least one that I've seen over the last couple of days, you know, this continues to be a major problem for us and something we must address.

[04:51:58] I just want to remind everyone that the bluebells are out. Bluebells are the flower, official flower of Prince William County. And they are coming into full bloom. And at Merrimack Farm this weekend, there's going to be a huge celebration of the bluebells.

[04:52:15] And also, just to remind folks that Burnside Farm tulips are out in full bloom. And Supervisor Bodie was able to go out. I was supposed to go tomorrow, but it looks like we're getting rained out. But nonetheless, it is a little taste of Holland right here in Prince William County.

[04:52:31] It's absolutely stunning to drive by there and just to see the crowds. So it's very exciting. A couple of other things, just comments I want to make. Continue to see problems with trash and dumping. Literally, one of our cases that we had recently was Bristow Corner.

[04:52:52] There was an abandoned house there. all of a sudden it has turned into a dump site and someone piled a bunch of tires onto the site either on Friday or early Saturday morning. And it just asks if the staff could find ways to better communicate to our constituents. A lot of this trash is stuff that can be taken to Balls Ford. And I took tires to Balls Ford on Friday. I took yard debris. I've taken boxes and appliances and all these things don't have to go on side of the road.

[04:53:24] They can go to the Ballsford facility and be offloaded into a proper place or to the county landfill instead of this dumping it on sides of roads and this ends up costing us and taxpayers more money to address this.

[04:53:41] So I think we need to do a better communication about how people can properly dispose of these things and also look at ways to enforce the laws on this issue. And then also the matter that we addressed earlier with parking, we continue to see with the proliferation of our data center development as well as the growth of distribution centers in Prince William County, problems of trucks and dump truck parking on roadsides in communities.

[04:54:16] And this is a problem that we're going to have to start to figure out a way to address here in the county because it is literally seeing 18-wheelers stacked up on Wellington Road. We see them on side roads and neighborhoods. And this is something that we're going to have to get after and to address.

[04:54:35] So I look forward to having further communications about that. And other than that, Madam Chair, that's all I have. Thank you. All right, Supervisor Franklin. On Saturday, March 23rd, I attended the Occoquan-Wiberidge-Lorton Installation Dinner for their volunteer fire service and had the opportunity to actually swear in their members who were being appointed to some of the various positions.

[04:55:04] And so I just want to thank them for the invitation and for the opportunity to participate in the ceremony. Last week, I also had the opportunity to attend two Iftar dinners, one at Dar El Noor Community Center and the other at the Masaru Mosque and obviously greatly appreciated the opportunity to celebrate the spirit of Ramadan.

[04:55:23] So thank you to both of those communities for having us. A couple of upcoming events, we do have Bike to Work Day on Friday, May 17th at the Woodbridge VRE and Dumpster Day on Saturday, May 18th at Fred Lynn Middle School. You can find more information on our Woodbridge District website, social media, And, of course, we'll be sending out that information over our listserv.

[04:55:47] So please go and sign up. And then a couple of notices of intent to reappoint Pamela Montgomery to the Library Advisory Board and Deja Redding to the Housing Board. And with that, I yield. On March 21st, first of all, happy April.

[04:56:05] It's crazy to think that we're already in April. I feel like we just celebrated New Year's. And so when Supervisor Franklin said on March, I'm like, why is she saying March? We're still in March, but we're not. So anyways, on March 21st, we had a town hall in regards to the 28 bypass. I would like to thank Chair Jefferson for being present.

[04:56:22] I was not able to attend in person as I was in Richmond coming from an event, but I was able to attend virtually. It was well attended where folks had an opportunity to address some of their concerns to our chair in regards to the bypass, the future of it, where it stands. And so thank you, Madam Chair, for being present.

[04:56:38] On the 22nd, I had a very productive meeting with Mr. Jeff Joyner, who's the president of Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center. I will say that oftentimes we are not aware of the partners that we have here in Prince William County and making an effort, I would say, to actually meet with these folks can be very eye-opening.

[04:56:55] It was very interesting and encouraging to hear the projects that they have in the works with our school division to try to attract more folks to the medical field and so I look forward to continuing to engage them on those topics and other topics. On the 23rd, I attended the Prince William County Art Council's Women's History Month celebration, I would like to thank Ms. Kim Miller for the invitation.

[04:57:18] And to all of the participants, I was in your district, Supervisor Bodie, and it was quite the program and it was very delightful. And so would like to thank again Ms. Miller for the invitation. Finally, on the 30th, we hosted our Coles District Annual Easter Egg Hunt.

[04:57:35] I would like to thank the families who made it out to the event. We were blessed with a beautiful day, and I know that the kids enjoyed themselves and they had a great time. A special thank you to the sheriff's office for being president and for doing child IDs for the children in attendance, and also to our police department for also being present.

[04:57:55] The kids always have a great time interacting with officers and being able to take a look at the cruiser and ask questions to the officer president. I will say that I wanna give a special shout out to Officer Booker because she was absolutely amazing and she was able to engage with the children and also for handling the Easter Bunny who was caught snatching eggs.

[04:58:15] She was there, handled it, and the Easter Bunny actually got to see the inside of Officer Booker's cruiser. And so with that being said, I hope that everybody had a wonderful Easter. Thank you, Madam Chair. Supervisor Bailey. Thank you, Madam Chair. Oh, that's funny.

[04:58:32] Good afternoon or good evening, everyone. It's dinner time, so I hope you're listening. March 21st, my team and I participated as judges in the Patti Elementary School Gauntlet Challenge. We had such a great time. It was amazing. Thirty fourth graders came dressed for success, conducting themselves professionally with their interviews and getting ready for the workforce as they progress in life.

[04:58:59] But it was so much fun at Patti. On March 23rd, my chief and I had the pleasure of joining Colonel Brooks and General Lukman, who's with the Marine Corps Museum Foundation, at the Marine Corps Marathon 1775K, and it was so much fun.

[04:59:16] Yes, it rained, it was cold, but we had a great time. Only thing we didn't have, I didn't get a chance to shoot the gun that day, but I'm not bitter, I'm not bitter. Thanks to my staff for attending Prince William Arts Council. We're Every Woman, and it was hosted by our very own Kim Miller, who is our poet laureate for 2022-23.

[04:59:36] March 26, my chief and I was honored to attend the roundtable that our own delegate, Luke Torian, Appropriations Chair for the General Assembly, brought to our community, and they talked about Virginia Family First and the investments they've made from the General Assembly and the budget for this year as it relates to education.

[04:59:57] It was great. March 27, I was also honored to attend the MVBIA Chapter Breakfast, where we continued to talk about affordable housing. It was a robust and great conversation. On the 30th, I had an honor of speaking at the Mansour Mosque Iftar dinner, and it was entitled Voices of Peace.

[05:00:21] And we really focused on unity, peace, and love in our community, and we had a great feast. we had a great feast on april 2nd uh each year i look forward to today the pinwheel in the garden bringing uh public awareness to the importance of preventing uh preventing child abuse we had a great time this

morning even in the rain so thanks to courtney and her team her excellent team and making sure that we're reminded of our children are definitely our future upcoming events on april For the 4th, I'll be honored to attend Dr. Kenneth D. Dunn, Colonel for the United States Marine Corps.

[05:01:00] He is retiring from Manpower and Reserve Affairs. He is my friend. He has been in the Marine Corps with us. And so, Kenny, thank you for serving our country. On the 5th, I look forward to attending the Dumfries Triangle Quantico DTQ Little League Opening Day.

[05:01:18] So I don't know about y'all, but we're going to have a good time. Lastly, please, please, please save the date for our annual PwC Mental Health Awareness Walk. That will be Saturday, May the 18th from 10 to 2 p.m.

[05:01:33] It will be held at the Locust Shade Park, come rain or come shine, but our rain day is going to be the 25th. And lastly, I just want to congratulate and acknowledge it is April is the Military Brat Month.

[05:01:49] And so to our military brats, of which I have one, I say we adore you. We thank you for your service as well. Thank you, Madam Chair. Supervisor Rear. Thank you, Madam Chair. Military brat must explain my behavior. Yes, it does.

[05:02:06] I'm going to try and make this quick. I'm going to give my notice to intent to appoint Rachel Ellis and Jessica Groves, the Strategic Plan Commission. I also want to remind everybody of the Affordable Dwelling Unit Ordinance meeting tomorrow night, 6 to 8 p.m. in Beacon Hall over at George Mason.

[05:02:27] I also want to give my notice that I intend to bring forth initiating a zoning text amendment regarding the data center opportunity zone overlay. Everybody should have a copy in their email from yesterday and a hard copy that's been distributed here, which takes me to two directives.

[05:02:53] Without objection, I'd like staff to provide a status update on zoning text initiatives outstanding from as early as 2016, and I've got a list of 24. Mr. Short, I believe you've already got that correct. Okay. Without objection to that.

[05:03:11] And then last but not least, another directive I'd like to direct staff to draft a resolution for the board's consideration at an upcoming board meeting to initiate a comp plan amendment for the following properties. 1600 John Marshall Highway, changing the I-3 portion of it to Parks and Open Space, And then changing 10844 Ballsford Road, 10830 Ballsford Road, 10824 Ballsford Road, and then the associated properties at 71110 Sudley and 10820 Ballsford from OMU to MU.

[05:03:51] and potentially removing the Manassas Battlefield Bypass, Route 28 Bypass, Sudley Road, Route 234, widening from Route 29 to Route 15, and the Heathcourt Boulevard extension from the hospital to Antioch Road from the Comprehensive Plan.

[05:04:14] Madam Chair. Supervisor Franklin first. So I guess we can take these in order because was that one directive or several directives? Two directives. Okay, so the first directive is? The update on the zoning text amendments that are in the works.

[05:04:35] In the second directive, can you just explain what it does? It creates a, allows staff to draft a comprehensive plan amendment for our consideration regarding one, two, three, four, six properties and a couple of road projects.

[05:04:52] Okay, and what you just passed out, I guess. Zoning text amendment. I guess I'm just asking for a layman's term of what you're trying to do. Which one first? The second one, particularly. The comp plan

amendment, it changes one parcel that is one-half industrial and one-half parks and open space to entirely parks and open space.

[05:05:14] It's across from a retirement community and next to a hotel site, and in my view, that shouldn't be industrial. And then it changes. And that's this? No. That's what I'm confused by, yeah. So you haven't gotten to this yet?

[05:05:32] No, that was the notice. Okay. That's not a directive. That's just a notice for next meeting. Okay. Okay. So the, I'm sorry, what you're explaining now are some parcels on land use, and then I think you mentioned some transportation items.

[05:05:49] Yeah, there's a couple of transportation projects all in the Gainesville District, or mostly in the Gainesville District, to be removed from the mobility chapter, Potentially, once staff delivers their report and their recommendation. Yeah, Phil, so in the directive is for them to come back with a resolution or for information on the impact.

[05:06:09] Staff to draft a resolution for the board's consideration. Yeah, I think I would rather have staff come back with an impact on, I guess, what you're looking to do on the comp plan and those particular transportation items and land use items.

[05:06:27] That would be part of their consideration in putting together the draft. Yeah, but I guess I'm not interested in a draft until we get the information back. The thing is, they're going to give us the information, and we also will have a chance to review the draft. And it's something, because it's a resolution, we will vote up and down on it.

[05:06:44] Right. It's something that, you know, we don't agree on. Right. And I guess for a directive, A, we don't usually make policy through directives. And then B, I would rather, and this is how we've respected, how we've done directives, is we get the information first.

[05:07:02] And then if you would like to have a resolution based on that information, then I think that is more appropriate. In this particular instance, and I've spoken to the county attorney about this, and these are, the properties are all in the Gainesville District.

[05:07:18] And I know why they need to be changed, or at least in my view, why they need to be changed. We'll be up to staff to support that or not support that. With respect to the transportation project, same thing. As we've just seen from the presentations we've gotten from transportation, we can't even afford some of these.

[05:07:36] Some of these were foisted upon us, in my view, as part of the development of another project. If it's, I mean, if you don't want to issue the direct, do it as a directive, that's fine. We can switch it to a resolution and we can vote on it. I would rather, I guess I'm objecting to the directive because I would rather have a discussion first based on the information that staff brings back and then decide if we, if, or if you would like a resolution.

[05:08:03] So anyway, there's an objection. Supervisor, I'm angry. I object to, and I'm, so the reason of this board, the eight of us is we vote on things for Prince William County. So we're not going to clean up individual districts because it's what it sounds like you're doing, clean up in your own way what you don't want the board to eventually at some point in whatever future have an opportunity to vote on things so i'm

objecting to this because uh again i think as we cross these bridges the board votes on these things and we don't lock them down so that they

[05:08:39] won't be voted on again i would i would argue that they will be voted on by the board this is simply a right then where staff puts the resolution together and we walk through it and i'll just say We put these in the comp plan for a reason, and so I remember many of these, and you just said addresses, but I think if you were specific to the locations, I know what we're talking about here, and I get them there in the Gainesville district.

[05:09:06] You represent the Gainesville, everybody represents the district, but how this board functions is the board votes on these things as they come up, so anyway, I object to it. I would simply note that the board has the authority to initiate a CPA. We are going down, hold on, Supervisor Franklin.

[05:09:23] Yeah, I just wanted to also clarify, it doesn't necessarily mean that I will vote against whatever the resolution is. I would just like the information first. All right, thank you. Madam Chair, do you have an alternate to get to that point?

[05:09:46] Madam Chair, members of the board, in response to Supervisor Franklin's concern, maybe the directive could be amended to say without objection, I would direct staff to review the following possible and list it and come back with policy and legal recommendations with regards to that.

[05:10:08] Then it could be placed on the agenda, and then the board can discuss it and then determine whether or not you want to direct staff to then come back with a resolution. Is that acceptable, Supervisor Franklin? That is acceptable. What she said. I'm not interested in the resolution. All right, because then we will get the recommendation, Because I assumed when we do the resolution, we would also be getting the information.

[05:10:30] A resolution is taking action. A resolution is taking action, but wouldn't they also give us the information or no? Because it sounds like he's looking for both, but we're not going to hold on. I'm happy with the county attorney's alternate. All right, then great. Well, then that settles what we are discussing now.

[05:10:46] And then we'll move on because we have run out of time for this. We'll move on to supervisor voting. Well, I actually have concerns about the notice of intent from Supervisor Weir as well on the overlay. discussion all right um what are your concerns because this is something okay what are your concerns well i think first i would like for him to explain again in layman's term what he's looking to do um and obviously we can go through the route of doing as notice of intent but i guess i'm a

[05:11:20] little surprised that we're doing it as a notice of intent so anyway if you can just explain what you're looking to do and particularly i'm not very fond of the process by which we're going about it either. Madam Chair, to address the question, this is a typical process in many jurisdictions, and I have done this in other jurisdictions. I have written zoning text amendments, comp plan amendments, even legislation at the state and federal level. In a nutshell,

[05:11:53] all this does, all this paper, is it eliminates the data center overlay district in its entirety and limits data centers to industrially zoned parcels with an SUP only, which means they won't be in B1 office or any other sort of zoning district.

[05:12:21] Everything will be with an SUP. It's what the board didn't have an appetite for in 2017. That's the stopgap measure of the overlay, and we will have the opportunity to take up its pros and cons when it hits the agenda.

[05:12:40] Madam Chair. Oh, hold on. Before I, no, I want to go to county attorney, because I want to understand what the correct process is on this before we get into further debate. Madam Chair, members of the board, your rules of procedure discuss how an individual board member can bring a proposal for a policy matter.

[05:12:58] And if you look at Section C, which is quorums and actions, and then you go to 5A, It says a supervisor shall announce their intent to seek board action regarding a policy proposal slash resolution at a future board meeting during supervisor's time.

[05:13:14] If at least one other supervisor present at the meeting verbally concurs with the announcement, such proposal will appear on the agenda in supervisor's time at the next meeting for board consideration pursuant to the provisions of this subsection 5A or at such meeting as may be specified by the board or other code provisions.

[05:13:35] Then it goes on to other options outside of a board meeting. So under the board's rules of procedure, during a board meeting, a board member can present their notice of intent on a resolution. It will appear, and I believe staff wanted to talk to the board about this issue.

[05:13:51] It says at the next meeting for the board or other such meeting, it would not be able to appear on the April 9th board meeting agenda because it was already dispatched yesterday. So we may have to look at amending the board's rules of procedure, but this is one provision that the board has enacted to allow a board member to bring a proposal forward.

[05:14:15] Hold on. I know that you've already, I'm sorry, Supervisor Franklin, but I have Bodie and Supervisor Bailey in the queue if you want to put your name back in the queue, but I'm going to take them real quickly. I also do want to say, you know, we're going to have to talk about getting this on the agenda.

[05:14:32] This is a notice of intent. i i do notice again we have people who want to speak on this and debate the merits right now i don't know if this is the best forum for this because we need time to go through this review it and ask questions properly so i i just want to ask board members you know as you question what is you know we will have a discussion on this so i i just want to make that clear and this i don't particularly find this the right time but i will let the two of you speak so supervisor bailey

[05:15:02] first thank you sugar level old time for dinner now i know that that um that bob any of us not just you bob but any of us have uh the the leniency to make a notice of intent in this fashion according to our rules of procedure but i would like to have more of an in-depth in-depth discussion madam chair in reference to this so that you know i can understand from my one-eighth what bob's intent is so that I'll know how to vote. That's, that's clearly what I'd like to do. And so

[05:15:41] understanding that he is well within his right to make this right now. I just want to understand. And so, and so that's another thing we're going to have to, and I will discuss with Supervisor Weir and with Chris Shorter and, you know, County Attorney about when we will schedule this on the agenda so that we can go through the proper procedures in terms of every, that way people have time to read this they have time to talk to different constituencies and then we have time to have a formal discussion on it because it

is a weighty topic um and i know that there's going to be robust discussion and i'm sorry supervisor bode because you were in the queue but then you

[05:16:17] your name was removed i don't know if you took it out or if it i didn't both times it's happened so okay i'll do the supervisor bode then supervisor franklin and then we're going to move on sure no i was just actually getting a raise not speaking of the merits of the resolution itself the process there because i agree the now that we have agendas being dispatched on monday for the next week we couldn't it wouldn't make sense to me to then try to shoehorn this in for next week um so i i just wanted to raise that and also again knowing how weighty of an issue this is and how dense having a zoning text amendment offered from the dais would be i think that we need more time i

[05:16:53] think we should not take this up until may which makes sense to me as the next logical and that is a discussion yes we're going to need to have about the board procedures because this is not enough time obviously because it's been dispatched for our next meeting but it also sounds like you know we will need time to really think through this and to read through this so supervisor franklin the supervisor gordy sure um and this is one of the reasons why i oppose that particular provision um for the rules of procedure because you're just putting additional um challenges on staff and this is the perfect example of why that wasn't good policy so that's number one number two um this is

[05:17:32] yeah this is an important topic getting rid of the data center overlay district and doing it as a notice of intent um i think uh you know the reason why i want to have this discussion now not necessarily on the merits but you issued a directive um which i actually agree with the directive about having staff follow back up on where we are with some of those recommendations on the data center overlay i agree with you on that and that's why i didn't object to that but i also think that's more appropriate to have them come back to us with those with that information and recommendations and then from there if you want to decide that based on their

[05:18:10] recommendations and the information they bring back if that's not good enough or if it is good enough you want to take some of those recommendations and put it into a resolution to me that is the most appropriate way to go about public policy making and so I don't know what the rules of procedure are around a note if something is done through a notice of intent but I'm against you know getting rid of the overlay I think that we could look into whatever some recommendations that staff may bring back to figure out how we can provide more oversight over certain provisions within the overlay and quite frankly i'll be honest i'm not even comfortable

[05:18:49] going forward with the notice of intent but i'm not sure that there's anything we can do with regards to that but i don't think that's a good way of making policy and i don't know um if robo if you miss robo if you want to weigh in but i do want to say this with the rules of procedure that's something as we make changes we are going to their unintended consequences and there are other things that we're going to have to look at and rectify but i will stand very firm that i do appreciate and i appreciate the work of staff to move up the time that we can dispatch the agenda and dispatch the board packet because to me that's about transparency giving people additional time

[05:19:29] to read through the agenda and the items that we were we are going to discuss it gives obviously the board members and our staff addition you know additional time but it's i think that's good policy giving people more time to look through things review things rather than just a few days before the board meeting but with that I'll go to Supervisor Gordy just to make sure we're following procedure I do

support this and for many reasons and I do look forward to our debate I do look forward to our discussion on this we need to have it we absolutely need to have it and we need to

[05:20:05] have it as soon as possible um because we are quickly um going to find ourselves in a place of the next shoes to drop are starting to drop um and that is power lines coming through our neighborhoods um and it's and it's not just in our part of the county they're also coming from possum point so um we need to have this conversation soon and so i know it's not going to be next week um but it's something that we need to have and i'm going to i'm sorry i'm going to cut this because we're getting on this issue and we really need to go through no no we need to go through

[05:20:45] supervisors time we have we can what is your okay what is your question yeah just allow me to ask the question i'm not ready to debate i'm not debating i just want to understand from you what will be our next steps in terms of this that that's why I let my so we madam chair yes I'm sorry mr. shorter yes thank you very much what I'd ask for the board's consideration on given the discussion we've had around timing is if

[05:21:21] if we can if we could given that the agenda has already been dispatched for next week the April the April 16th and April 23rd meetings are both meetings that deals directly with our budget that I would like to bring this back with staff on May 14th the next meeting where that's all right I think that that is fair then on May 14th we will bring this back as an agenda item and we will have a fuller discussion and I suspect between now and May 14th is enough time

[05:21:57] for everyone to read through this um i also think that you know i know planning staff has thoughts on this as well so i i think i would like for them to be prepared to also do a presentation um if that is feasible and you know it also gives us time to talk to our constituents and different other constituencies other you know stakeholder groups about this um you know i will say again I am looking forward to reading through this.

[05:22:28] I'm looking forward to hearing from people. I'm really looking forward to having a thorough discussion. Yes, and before I say that, I will, you know, I would like for Mr. Zerubel, since you have the mic, I would like to put a pin on this discussion and continue Supervisor's time. Madam Chair, members of the board, when this comes back before you, any action the board take would not remove the overlay district.

[05:22:53] All the board would be doing is initiating a zoning text amendment, which then would go through the full process of going to the Planning Commission with a public hearing coming to the board with a public hearing so if this is on the May 14th board agenda and the board votes to approve it the board is not removing the data center overlay district at that time it's starting the process which it could morph and be amended as it goes through the process it may not and probably will not come back verbatim as what's proposed all right and I appreciate that and again I appreciate your clarification I think that that

[05:23:30] That will allow all of us now to move on to Supervisor Bodie. Thank you, Madam Chair. Back on the 21st, I was able to attend alongside Supervisor Angry, the Committee of 100 Affordable Housing Program.

[05:23:46] It was a really good program. I appreciate the conversations that were had there. My staff attended the Affordable Housing Program at Furlazo. Could not be in two places at once, but I wanted to thank staff and commend them for putting that on. I hope that we can do that again in the future. On the

26th, I met with a couple of my constituents who also are appointees to our Occoquan Reservoir or Chesapeake Bay Advisory Committee, and we talked about RPAs and the current situation of the Occoquan Reservoir. Would love for us to have future conversations about how we can be better

[05:24:21] about protecting the reservoir, especially as it pertains to enforcing RPAs and other violations along the riverbank there. On the 27th, I also attended the NVBI breakfast. On the 28th, I attended the Daryl Noriftar dinner. And on Saturday, as Supervisor Gordy mentioned, I was able to go with my wife and our youngest, who turned one yesterday, to the tulips at Burnside Farms.

[05:24:45] Really great experience. I always encourage folks to go out there. I actually bought a passport. My wife and I bought a passport, so we can not only go there now during the tulips whenever we want, but also when the sunflowers come out, We can go there for that as well. It's very beautiful. Really, really encourage everyone to go out there as they have the chance.

[05:25:03] Looking ahead, on the 13th of this month, we have our Occoquan District Dumpster Day at Oakwood Pool and Oakwood Drive from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. So please come out. And I wanted to just cover two final things. One, I think it's time for us to take another look at some point in the near future, the Target Industries list.

[05:25:24] On one side of that coin, we have the data centers as a targeted industry. I think now they are a much more mature industry than when they were first added. And I think that we should have a long conversation about whether or not they should have the incentives they currently have as part of being on that industry list.

[05:25:40] And so I look forward to that discussion. But on the other hand, I know that we should also look at maybe adding some new industries to that list as well. We've had talks about agritourism, agribusiness. We also started talking about maritime businesses and those kinds of industries. We also know there's a whole microcosm of new industries out there that have been added to the mix ever since we last omitted that list.

[05:26:01] I can talk about clean energy. I can talk about nitrogen. I can talk about drone production, other things that we should be talking about on incentivizing more diverse businesses in the county. And I think we should begin talking about that in the near future. So no directive right now, but I wanted to put that flag down today so we can have much more pointed conversations about it in the near future.

[05:26:23] And finally, I have a directive. Without objection, I am directing county staff to bring forward for the board discussion and potential action the findings of directive number 23-11, which is on the business professional occupational license or B poll tax, which was transmitted to the board of supervisors by staff previously.

[05:26:41] I'm requesting that the most recent presentation responses directive be placed on the board agenda in collaboration with the county executive and chair jefferson subsequent to subsequent to budget adoption but soon enough thereafter to give the board and staff time to property develop discuss and draft potential changes to the b poll ordinance solicit input from the business community and public thank you madam chair thank you supervisor angry thank you madam chair um let me just pick up from uh the veterans treatment docket because we had a little discussion about that. So last week I attended Spotsylvania Circuit Courts Veterans Treatment Docket. And

[05:27:21] why that's important is because, as you heard a little bit today, and I'll just kind of clarify, at Veterans Docket, when you get many of these veterans who have come out of whatever situation from the military, find themselves making decisions that they deserve a chance at, we have a system now that allows them to go through a program. And that program It's going to last from nine months to a year or two years.

[05:27:47] The graduation I went to on Thursday last week in Spotsylvania was a really good one because the individual that was graduating, you know, it was just a heartfelt speech that she gave, and so I really appreciate it. So Judge Regal, I think is his name, he manages that docket there.

[05:28:07] And, of course, we have Judge Jarvis and Judge Baird that handles the Prince William docket. And so I enjoy making those rounds to hear these veterans' story. And it's one thing that I've always taken with me from the military is to look out for veterans.

[05:28:22] And so I'm very proud to be there. I just wanted to bring that up and really congratulate that program. And it's bigger than just Prince William County and Spotsylvania. Loudoun has one. Fairfax has one. There's a whole list on the website you can go. If you find yourself with the opportunity, they have these graduations pretty much monthly or the sessions that you can go sit in the chamber and just listen to the progress that's made and understand how well and effective and important that program really is.

[05:28:47] So I just wanted to say that one. And I want to thank Kimberly Sparks, who works for the county. She's on the Human Rights Board there, the division. And so she leads a program for Human Rights Student Leadership Roundup or session.

[05:29:05] And so they – I don't know how long that course is, but I was able to speak to the kids, some seniors, some sophomores, and just talk to them about their future. And it's a great program, so I want to thank her for really leading that up. And if you have a chance to be a part of that, I recommend you do so.

[05:29:22] I will just end by saying that upcoming things, what I think folks need to pay attention to, first of all, PRTC has their bus road deal where the bus drivers compete in these courses with the buses.

[05:29:38] That's going to be at the Western facility. So if you're out there, that's going to be starting Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. So anytime you go out there and check it out, it's a really cool thing to watch these bus drivers do some amazing stuff with those large buses. And so it's quite a treat.

[05:29:54] And you heard Supervisor Gordy talk about the Bluebell Festival. I'm going to pop out there Sunday and get my share of that. Now, I know this is going to be happening next Wednesday and Thursday. We've got a board meeting if we can say it then, but I want people to put on a calendar that the indoor sports facility discussion is going to be coming up.

[05:30:11] And so the first one is going to be over at the Pat White Center in Ben Lohman. And that's going to be from 6.30 to 8.30. So hopefully if you can come out and be a part of that discussion and understand the need for this facility.

[05:30:30] And then the next one is going to be on Thursday, April 11, 6.30 to 8.30 at Freedom High School in the cafeteria. and enter through door 30 for that location, okay? I think, Madam Chair, let me just peek here. Oh, and then also next Saturday, we're going to have, actually this Saturday, I'm sorry, not next Saturday.

[05:30:49] So Saturday here, Yorkshire is having their installation of office, so Yorkshire Volunteer Fire Department. So just want to congratulate them in advance for that. And Madam Chair, that is all. Thank you. All right, we are, I'm just going to mention a couple things so that we can go into our closed session, because I really, you know, want to make sure that we start the next meeting on time.

[05:31:12] So I'd like to announce my notes of a tenth of point, David Peterson, to the Historical Commission. That's the only notice that I'm giving today. And I would like to say to the rest of the board, I know we're going to have some spirited discussions ahead of us.

[05:31:29] You know, maybe we'll have more people sitting in these chairs. Maybe we will have a need for a Saturday meeting. I don't know. But we are definitely going to have some spirited discussions if today is an indication. and I, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Is there something?

[05:31:45] We're having a discussion on coming in on Saturday. Oh, they're already having a spirited discussion over here. We have some serious issues ahead of us that we have to discuss, that there's going to be disagreement. And I will say, you know, it's not that, you know, I want to have those discussions because as we think about how we as a county are going to grow, as we think about how we are going to look like over the next several years, we've got to have the serious and hard discussions.

[05:32:13] but i also want to make sure that we have the time in place the proper time in place to have those discussions um so with that uh we are going to um we will now convene for our closed session thank you all right any discussion all right not let's vote yes yes Yes, ma'am.

[05:32:48] No problem.

[05:33:03] Supervisor's time. We all...

[05:33:24] All right, so then, thank you so very much. It passed. Madam Chair. I'm sorry. I thought they were going to fix it. I'm sorry. Yeah, they're going to change it.

[05:33:42] All right, we are going to reconvene at 7.30. No, no, we had a motion. We had a motion. Okay. All right, report out. Okay. Madam Chair, I have a motion, please. Yes. I move to authorize the execution of agreements for the acquisition of property interest on eight properties owned by Dumfries Purchaser LLC for properties located at 17679, 17681, 8587, 89, and 95 on Main Street, 17740 on Fraley Boulevard,

[05:34:18] and 3,600-point center court in the amount of $2,400,000 in conjunction with the Route 1 Fraley Boulevard project in the Potomac District. Second. Discussion?

[05:34:34] All right, let's vote. Vote unanimous. And now we will convene at 730. Thank you. To grab a seat.

[05:35:12] All right, everyone, thank you, and welcome back.

[05:35:30] Welcome back to the board chambers. it is 7 32 and we will begin the evening with the recognition of item 4b which is from earlier today the item was voted on at the two o'clock session and item 4b is the resolution to proclaim april 21st to april 27 2024 national volunteer week and if i can have paige thacker with the virginia cooperative association or any other representatives meet me at the podium i'd appreciate it thank you

[05:36:05] this proclamation is for national volunteer week april 21st through april 27 2024 Whereas National Volunteer Week was established in 1974 to celebrate the impact of volunteers in their respective

communities and inspire others to serve, and whereas volunteers across Prince William County serve the community with pride and commitment,

[05:36:44] continuously enhancing the quality of life in Prince William County and supporting the county's strategic vision to be a community of choice. And whereas Prince William County agencies, including the Clerk of the Circuit Court, libraries, Area Agency on Aging, Prince William Health District, Sheriff, Police, Animal Control, Adult Detention Center, Fire and Rescue System, Social Services, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Office of Criminal Justice Services, and Virginia Cooperative Extension Prince William thrive with volunteer participation, increasing the number of residents who are touched by the quality of life services and programs.

[05:37:20] Whereas in 2023, 2,650 Prince William County volunteers gave 89,659 hours in support of our programs, the value of their time is equivalent to 46 full-time staff and equals over 2 million.

[05:37:42] And whereas individuals and groups play an essential role in building a successful, strong, and vibrant community for providing a critical role in the quality of life and well-being of our residents, now, therefore, be it resolved that Prince William County Board of County Supervisors hereby proclaims April 21st to April 27th, 2024, its National Volunteer Week, recognizes and thanks all of our dedicated volunteers who leave their time, talent, voice, and support to causes they care about and to urge all citizens of Prince William County to consider volunteers.

[05:38:13] hearing the mic is yours if you'd like to make comments thank you madam chair members of the board ms roble and mr shorter um it's my pleasure to lead the effort for the to recognize those who volunteer in prince william county for the 2024 national volunteer week proclamation i'd like to clarify there was a small data error and the total volunteers for the county is actually 2,923 so and then 234,487 hours, so my error in data manipulation, so I apologize.

[05:38:53] But nevertheless, the enthusiasm, skills, and experience that volunteers bring to our agencies is invaluable. It's important to note that these 2,900 volunteers represent multiple generations and the diversity of the community. Our volunteers are distinguished veterans, teens, adults, youth, parents, grandparents, and working and retired professionals who each share their time and expertise, assisting county agencies in meeting performance measures, your strategic goals, and which strengthens Prince William to be that community of choice that we seek.

[05:39:28] Thank you to the over 500 volunteers that support the public safety quadrant of government, assisting fire and rescue, criminal justice, services, clerk of the circuit court, the ADC, police department, animal control, and the sheriff's office.

[05:39:43] The over 2,100 volunteers that serve the health, well-being, and environmental sustainability quadrant, agencies like libraries, aging, parks, historic preservation, social services, the health department and Cooperative Extension.

[05:40:01] The volunteer time they've given in the past year is the equivalent to almost 120 full-time staff. The value of their volunteer time is almost $7.5 million in the correction of numbers. So there are many benefits to volunteering.

[05:40:18] It can create a sense of purpose where people can learn new skills, develop confidence, reduce stress, improve mental health, build community boost happiness and those volunteers make a significant difference in the lives of individuals and families and therefore make a positive impact on our community

we're grateful for our volunteers that they choose to invest their time back in difference william county and we thank you for honoring them tonight we have volunteers from cooperative extension we have master financial education volunteers master gardeners 4-h leaders and youth

[05:40:57] parent education facilitators as well as volunteers from the libraries historic preservation office of criminal justice services and the medical reserve corps from the health department here to be honored for this so thank you and thank you to the volunteers who came to make this possible thank you

[05:41:39] Both Supervisor Angry and I have declarations we have to read before you get into your presentation.

[05:42:00] So before the board receives the presentation on the school board's FY25 budget, I need to declare a personal interest in this matter. My wife is a school employee. As a school's employee, my wife and I are members of the group which is affected by this matter. I'll be participating in it because I am able to do so fairly objectively in the public interest.

[05:42:17] All right. Before the board receives the presentation on the school board's FY25 budget, I need to declare a personal interest in this matter. My wife is a special education instructional aide with the schools. As a school's employee, my wife and I are members of a group which is affected by this matter.

[05:42:32] I will be participating in it because I am able to do so fairly objectively and in the public interest. Thank you, Madam Chair. All right, and thank you guys so very much for reading your disclosures. We are going to item 13. We will move on to, well, 13A, which is a presentation from our school board chair, Dr. Barbara Lateef.

[05:42:52] This presentation is on the school board advertised budget for fiscal year 2025. Dr. Lateef, the floor is yours, sir. Good evening, Madam Chair Jefferson, Mr. Vice Chair Kenny Bode, members of the Board of County Supervisors, County Executive Shorter, Councilor Roble, and members of the community.

[05:43:15] As chair of the Prince William County School Board, I am pleased to present the Prince William County School's fiscal year 2025 budget and the fiscal year 25 through 29 capital improvement program to you all tonight. I'm here with my colleagues and I will introduce them. We have Lori Williams of the Woodbridge District, Erica Trudenik of the Brentsville District, Mr. Richard Jesse of the Occoquan District, Mr. Tracy Blake of the Neabsco District, Vice Chair Lisa Zargarpur of the Coles District, and Jen Wall of the Gainesville District. I think we're just missing that. I think we got it

[05:43:49] Right, good. Okay, and then we have Superintendent Dr. McDade to my right, and Mr. Shaquille Youssef, our Chief Financial Officer. As you know, the development of the budget in CFP is almost a continuous process. We will start working on the 26 budget after you all approve the 25 budget.

[05:44:06] Most recently, the Prince William County School Board has approved this budget that we are presenting to you all tonight on March 20th after having a number of public meetings, public hearings, markups, and work sessions. We appreciate the collaboration with the Board of County Supervisors and look forward to our conversation tonight.

[05:44:23] To help facilitate the conversation, you have each received a number of documents. These include the presentation we'll discuss tonight, the fiscal year 25 proposed budget book, 25-29 CIP presentation, the markup approved by the school board, and the presentation of the budget by state category.

[05:44:39] Tonight's discussion is an important step in the process, which culminates in your approval of the budget on April 23rd. Dr. McDade, Mr. Youssef, and I will answer your questions once I complete the presentation. For more detailed questions, we'll be happy to prepare a written response to share with the entire Board of County Supervisors.

[05:44:56] The budget for the Prince William County Schools is driven by our enrollment and our demographics. We used estimates for enrollment for this budget. Our final budget numbers for each school year are based on September 30 enrollment each year. Once we have those numbers, we will make the appropriate changes to school and central department budgets in October.

[05:45:14] The budget resolution we will ask you to approve identifies a budget for all funds. In this way, we can make adjustments between departments and schools based on these final enrollment numbers. As it has been the case in recent years, the state budget is not yet set. We have based our budget on the governor's proposed budget. Once the final state budget is approved, we will return to you for any necessary amendments and or adjustments that may be needed. It is important to note that the final budget may also have additional expenditure requirements, which we will need to accommodate. Prince William County Schools' first priority is

[05:45:49] our strategic plan, and we continue to put employee compensation and other compensation recommendations at the forefront of the work we're doing. As you've heard from me in the past, Prince William County Schools builds a budget which is designed to meet the needs of our student in the context of our strategic plan, Vision 2025, Launching Thriving Futures.

[05:46:13] Our overall operating budget and debt budget this year will be $1.78 billion. Everything we do as a school division centers on our strategic commitments, learning and achievement for all, positive climate and culture, family and community engagement, and organizational coherence.

[05:46:32] These are our four guiding principles in our strategic plan. I will detail our investments in each of these commitments tonight. The new funding which makes up our budget this year focuses on strategic investments and improving compensation for our employees. Attracting and retaining the highest quality employees is the only way we can successfully meet the commitments to our community and our children.

[05:46:52] As you see, moving on, we'll discuss the budget itself. I wanted to give you an update on some of the key drivers for the budget. So the next few slides will detail our demographic and enrollment trends over time and our cost per pupil.

[05:47:08] So if you take a look, and many of you know this data, but this is important for the public to remember, we are the second largest school division in the Commonwealth with 92,000 students. We have about 13,000 full-time employees and another 4,000 part-time employees. We serve students with 170 different home languages.

[05:47:26] As you all know, we're the 10th most diverse county in the country. And among the diverse population we have, 22,500 students of English language learners. We have over 12,000 students with special needs and over 30,000 economically disadvantaged children.

[05:47:47] As you can see, our student enrollment is there by ethnicity with our Hispanic student population as the largest number at 37% and continuing to grow. we look at our student enrollment trends and I've come to you each year with increasing trends but this year will be one of the first years where we

are seeing a decrease and we're at 92,105 we expect this fall and then projecting out to about 90,768 to 2028 so we're really decreasing slightly or remaining flat and plateauing which we have yet to experience as a school division over the last two decades our student membership categories continue to

[05:48:27] reflect the numbers and continue to grow in these specific areas. Students with special needs are at 13 percent and that continues to grow and over last year. English language learners is 25 percent, economically disadvantaged at 33 or 34 percent and this is based on 2023 enrollment. If you go to the website for the VDOE our English economically disadvantaged is up at the 39 percent as of today and so these numbers fluctuate and we continue to try to put out the most accurate data and make our budget based on these numbers. Our cost per pupil over time,

[05:49:05] you've seen this slide over and over again. Since 2009 in the recession, we were spending on an adjusted inflation rate per pupil 10,776. This year, we'll be spending 11,678 on an adjusted inflation rate. Unadjusted, we're up to $16,000. Our cost per pupil continues to be lagging behind our neighbors. Our cost per pupil spending is lagging behind. So we are third from the bottom on this chart of all the districts in Northern Virginia. We have increased each year, but everyone

[05:49:44] else is increasing as well. They are committing and investing in students and education. If we were to fund our students at the level Loudoun and Fairfax do, which is about $19,000, almost $20,000, we would be spending another $320 million per year if we were to do what they're doing. And so I think it's just important to keep this into context as we're trying to catch up with our neighbors and, you know, pay our employees more and have the ability to recruit and retain strong staff, they are as well. Our strategic plan is broken down into four major categories,

[05:50:23] and these are where we've invested our increased revenue this year. And if you take a look at the four categories, they're learning and achievement for all, positive climate and culture, family and community engagement, and organizational coherence. I'll give you some highlights in each of these categories. For learning and achievement for all, we're spending a significant portion of that money's on teacher assistance and special ed, hiring 125 teaching assistants there and another 23 teaching assistants at our kindergarten level. We are also adding reading specialists and administrative interns throughout the school division. Under positive

[05:50:59] culture and climate, we're spending about three million on international faculty, which helps us address our teacher shortage. We're continuing to invest in that program, which has worked very well over the years for us. Our artificial intelligence scanning system that we've implemented for security and safety at all high school and middle schools, we're investing another $3.6 million in that program. We're investing in IEP case management specialists and stipends to help support our special education teachers. And what the board is really sort of excited about and came about

[05:51:33] through markup is we're investing in a telehealth service that is available for all students division wide and a coordinator for that program and it is a virtual telehealth program that will be investing in a number of school districts in the region have done it over the last couple of years and around the country with really good success and we're very excited about that program and that adds to the work that you know supervisor bailey and all you have done with the mental health programs and the crisis receiving center that you guys are building here in the in the in the county so we're excited about that and that's at 1.5 million we really believe that's a

[05:52:10] that's a really good deal social workers we're adding five and then again on our commitment to safety and security contracted school security officers we're adding 10 more and another five armed community safety officers that will be patrolling across the division family and community engagement. This number looks low this year because you all have helped support this category significantly in the last couple of years. Last two years, we hired 97 parent liaison officers at all schools. And so this year, we're just adding a social worker and a parent liaison to our new,

[05:52:45] our global welcome center that is in Manassas in the Brentsville district. And then we're adding other services for translation and interpretation. And the CIP also reflects some increased spending in this category for the renovation of the Global Welcome Center. Under Organizational Coherence, really excited about adding Assistant Director of Student Activities at every high school. This is really important because, as you all have seen, we have been extremely competitive sports-wise, academic-wise, whether you're looking at spelling bees, science fairs, math

[05:53:20] competitions, debate competitions. Our sports are doing really well with the state championship football team and a runner-up state championship basketball team, and we've done really some tremendous stuff. Adding these positions will help us increase opportunities, provide support for the high schools to have more of these efforts and programs that allow our students to take full advantage of their potential. Under, for our bus drivers, we're doing a driver sign-on bonuses, Bus driver attendance we're adding, attendance we're adding, and we're replacing the radio system for the bus system for improved efficiency.

[05:53:58] And all those help support our bus driver shortage and the massive transportation system we run on a daily basis. And we're adding some data analysts to help us with the metrics as we continue to commit to improved student performance across the division.

[05:54:15] On our compensation highlights, I think it's really important to understand we're doing a 3% step increase for all employees, a 2.2 COLA. Additional to that, we've added enhancements to all the teachers and staff in the 12 to 20-year category are going to get a little bit, they're getting I think another 3% on average for their salaries to help us remain competitive and improve recruitment because we really were lagging behind our regional peers in that category.

[05:54:46] And that becomes, on average, a 6.1 raise across the board, and then that's on top of the 2% we did in January with the state helping us with some increased funds for salary increases, which we matched, and we did that in January.

[05:55:04] That will continue forward. And then health insurance premiums, health insurance costs have increased for both us and the county, and we self-insure together. We've been very proud of the fact that we've kept our premiums very low.

[05:55:20] Three years in a row, we didn't have an increase in the premium at all. Compared to other school districts, we're seeing, I think Loudoun was up to 8% on a health care increase premium. We're only at 3%, and so we're very fortunate that we've been able to work with you all on keeping these costs down. In our capital improvement plan, you can see in this slide highlights some of the efforts we're making in the new 25-29 capital improvement plan.

[05:55:45] Some of those highlights are division-wide security upgrades, HVAC upgrades, additional classrooms in Noakesville, window replacement programs in Coles and Gainesville, HVAC at Garfield.

Occoquan we're building under construction, the Net Zero Elementary School, Potomac Shores will be getting, Potomac will be getting a new elementary school as well, and the Woodbridge Area Elementary School, long needed, and I'm grateful to Supervisor Franklin for helping us get this off the ground, is under construction right now.

[05:56:17] Very excited about that. I include this slide every year. It's important to know that Prince William County and the school division work together in a joint audit committee. We've had no material findings for the schools in the past six years. We continue to have a high-quality financial management program, and we contribute to the AAA bond rating that you all receive from the rating agencies.

[05:56:39] And I think it's important for the public to be reassured that we take very seriously the taxpayer dollars and our commitment to spend it responsibly. Each year, we've received commendations and certificate of achievements from the Government Finance Officers Association, the Association of School Business Officials for excellent financial reporting and budget management.

[05:57:00] And so, again, that's to reassure our public that we are committed to sound fiscal responsibility. So looking at our proposed operating and debt service funds, our revenues have increased this year by about $137 million, and that's coming from the state budget and from your all projected what you're going to do with the budget.

[05:57:21] And we have kept this as a conservative number because, again, this is based on the governor's proposed budget, not on what passed the General Assembly because we're still not sure what's going to come through final settlement between the governor's office and General Assembly. But as you see, this year we're at about $1.6.5 billion. Next year it'll be almost $1.8 billion. That's an 8.4% increase. The big drivers, again, of this, what we're going to use the increased revenues for will be for compensation. So thank you all for helping us get to a higher compensation for our teachers and staff that really helps us dramatically

[05:57:57] remain competitive with our regional partners and then our commitment to you know the growth in our student population continues to be the students with special needs and English learners which have higher resource allocations that and requirements based on both needs and federal law requirements. Moving on, this is our budget by funds. I just have this up there for information.

[05:58:25] This all in with all funds included is a budget of $2,025,286,000, and that's all funds included. And in summary, you know, the implementation of our strategic plan continues to be the main driver for the work we do in our budget, and it continues to build on prior year commitments in the plan. We still remain behind our peers in per pupil spending despite our increased resources and our student needs continue to increase and rise based on the demographic shift of our student

[05:59:02] population. We continue to have critical unfunded and underfunded needs with our growing diverse population and the division is you know proud to say that we continue to operate within the revenue sharing agreement which is an agreement that provides certainty and allows us and you all the flexibility of timely budgeting and making sure that we get to have enough time to plan for our needs moving forward. So with that folks I'm happy to answer any questions or concerns you may all have. Well first yes I want to thank you for coming down today and thank all the members of

[05:59:38] school board who are able to attend. You know as I've said school funding schools education truly is one of the most important things we fund. It is an investment in our future but it's also what makes

people want to live here and it's what makes businesses want to come and relocate here it's having a strong talented workforce I'm gonna start with our first question it's gonna be from our set of questions it could be from supervisor Vega I get to go first thank you madam chair dr. Lateef welcome I want to welcome also the newly elected school board members welcome also to the

[06:00:14] returning school board members dr. Lateef we have a decline in enrollment do Do you have any explanation as to why this is? What are the factors? What are the issues causing a decline in enrollment? Sure. So our decline in enrollment is impacted by two major factors.

[06:00:31] Our birth rate is decreasing for the county, and then second, outward migration. And so these are the two driving factors for the decrease in enrollment. And when you say, did you say outward migration? Outward migration, people leaving the county.

[06:00:46] Okay. And then how do you guys track that? Is it? So we base our projections and enrollments on a number of data points provided by the state in different agencies, and then on our own local population trends and where we're going.

[06:01:03] Okay. I know you didn't mention it here, but as a mother of two kids that attend principal and county public schools, I often get the emails of truancy issues. Sure. What is the school division doing to address those issues, and do we also have an explanation as to why we're having an issue with that?

[06:01:20] Sure. So, you know, you may be reading nationally in the newspapers, there is massive problems with absenteeism nationwide. What I'm excited about is the fact that we knew this was happening two and a half years ago. As soon as Superintendent Dr. McDade started, this was one of the first things we targeted as a problem coming out of the pandemic. And that was an issue with absenteeism. Everyone else is noticing it now, but we really projected it, noticed it back then. So we've been really committed to putting together a program to

[06:01:56] improve student attendance. And that comes with letters coming home to the families, reminding families, engaging with families at, you know, the principal level, the teacher level, to making sure they understand, you know, it's important to attend school. And so we've been committed to that. And this year's attendance and absenteeism has improved over last year at the exact same time almost across the division in almost every grade except maybe one maybe 12th grade that we've seen improvements in absenteeism and that's been a commitment and I'll have Dr.

[06:02:29] McDade answers more specifically on that. Last year our quarter two at this time our absenteeism rate was 25 percent and now we're down to 17 percent still certainly not where we want to be a lot of what we've done has been around educating you know what constitutes chronic absenteeism missing more than ten percent of the actual school year sending out notifications more timely you know in the past we had where every school individually just sent sent their own letters in certain instances some schools maybe didn't send them within the five or ten day you should get a letter every five or ten day now we have a universal system in which we send that we have better tracking systems now schools do incentives we do division-wide

[06:03:09] incentives getting students involved in that parents involved in that and then our parent liaisons play a big role as well in, you know, bridging the gap between home and school and making direct contacts with families. In some instances, we even do home visits. So we've been putting out an all-out effort to do it. Of course, you know, attendance is driven by the home, and so we've done our part to try to

make sure that we're educating families on understanding the importance of attendance and what constitutes chronic absenteeism and truancy, and then putting in regular communication systems. Thank you. You mentioned issues with 12th graders that's a little bit concerning to me because we're talking

[06:03:46] about seniors they're supposed to be graduating where are we in terms of our graduation rate is there a way that we can measure that for this upcoming class we do have so right now our graduate our graduation rate at the end of 23 was 91.7 percent which was flat but what we have in place right now specifically is an early warning system that we did not have in prior years which allows us to track students that are on cohort and off cohort meaning that you're on track to graduate on time with your cohort we are doing one-on-one conferences with students who are off track and we have tiered supports for

[06:04:22] them throughout and that gets monitored about every five weeks in schools regularly once a week but they get reports from us showing which students are off track and then their counselors and trusted adults within the school have one-on-one communication with those students to help them get back on track we also offer credit recovery through multiple ways for them to recover credits. So we have much better systems for progress monitoring than we've had in the past to make sure that we're catching students before it's too late. Thank you. And then the last question I have for now is, can we talk a little bit about the Evolve system? I know that the division spent a lot of money. As a parent, I was excited about seeing this additional tool deployed.

[06:05:02] However, we have seen reports of, you know, weapons still making it into schools. We still continue to have a lot of issues with drugs. Is there any additional information that you guys can provide in regards to how this is working if it's working do we need to revisit it it is thank you for that question it is working well now wherever we had a situation where we haven't had guns get into school by students so that was the big driver for why we implemented it but also we do recognize that there are other weapons that can get into schools like knives and we've had situations where that has happened where that has occurred it hasn't been due to a faulty system but human error because we do have individuals that are

[06:05:42] manning those machines. The machines do not capture everything. If we put it on the highest level of sensitivity, then it would significantly delay the time that it takes for a large high school, you know, 22,000, 2,500 kids to get into the building. So we do recognize that small objects could get by, but the larger objects, you know, really large knives and guns, those kinds of things it has been successful in in mitigating that risk in terms of you know vapes which is a problem vapes and drugs it doesn't detect those kinds of things um it's mainly enforcing it's

[06:06:19] mainly being used to enforce for weapon detection all right supervisor franklin sure yes thank you um thank you for um dr latif you and the school board uh presenting tonight um and just also want to just highlight the elementary school that's coming to woodbridge um coming into office that was one of the first I think phone calls uh Lori Williams who's our school board rep uh kind of made to me about the importance of that and and of course working with you um and Miss Williams to get that off the ground I think we have a groundbreaking on April 11th so we're really excited about that and it's going to help to clean up that corridor also so I just want to uh offer

[06:06:57] that also just want to say you know our pass boards have been committed to making sure that the school system has the resources uh that you all need I know our chair is committed to that as well and several of my colleagues I do want to highlight that while we have a great champion in the General Assembly Luke Torian who is also committed to making sure that you all have the financial resources you

need you know there was a JLARC study that came out that basically said the way we do our funding formulas here in Virginia basically guarantees that we get less funding than most other states around the country and so would love for you to talk a little bit

[06:07:35] more about what impact that usually has on your budget as obviously you come to the board ask for financial resources you know I'm going to be supportive in all of your asks but I just wonder what more the state can be doing particularly in the wake of this JLARC study and saying you know all of our school divisions around the commonwealth could be receiving much more resources if we were using a different funding formula so if you can just talk a little bit about that and what impact that has on you all, I think that will be helpful.

[06:08:07] Sure, sure. I can start by that. So great question, Supervisor Franklin. So, you know, just to give you an example, we were funded, if you take a look at the slide, in 2009, you know, on unadjusted inflation rates, we're almost at the same number, right? We haven't really increased.

[06:08:23] And part of that is by the funding formulas that the state uses. And we just, we aren't funded as well as other states, and that's been noted in the J-LARC study. I will tell you that the budget that the General Assembly did pass, bipartisan-wise this time, so in the original governor's proposed budget for all K-12, there was a $300 million decrease over last year.

[06:08:46] But in the new budget that the General Assembly passed, it's a $1.2 billion increase in all K-12 statewide. So that's a $1.5 billion swing. Now, we don't know what's going to end up happening, but the General Assembly has been committed to having the JLARC study drive their increase in funding for schools.

[06:09:07] For Prince William County, that can be a significant number if that budget gets passed. And that's why we'd be coming back to you to tell you about, you know, what's going to happen with that. We just don't know. You know, it would be difficult for me to predict here and tell you I have no idea what's going to happen. But the good news is that I do think even the governor's office, the VDOE, does recognize that there is, you know, the JLARC study came out and we are behind.

[06:09:31] And so there is a commitment there. And Chair Mentorian and Chair Lucas have both been committed to K-12 spending. So that's really, we're very excited about that. And look, the county has been extraordinarily helpful. So our budget's about 45% from the county.

[06:09:49] Is that right, Mr. Youssef? 45% of our funding is coming from the county, about 45% from the state. It's pretty much like that. Is that about right? From the county.

[06:10:06] Yeah, 47-47, and then the rest is from feds. And the fed number doesn't really change a whole lot each year. But it's been increasing. So we're very grateful for the county, for the support of schools, because you've helped us be able to make a lot of the investments we have in the strategic plan.

[06:10:21] And that has impact. All right, thank you. Supervisor Weir? Thank you, Madam Chair. Dr. Lateef had hoped we'd get off on a better foot than last year but you sent me the 2024 summary not the 2025. Bad way to start. Let's start with the revenue sharing agreement. I think everybody up here knows that I'm not a big fan of it and I understand that the school division likes it because of the certainty and the timing involved with it but I would suggest that it potentially short changes our students. If you look at the

[06:11:00] other jurisdictions and you wonder why our per pupil spending is lower than other jurisdictions is because we give you a smaller percentage than other jurisdictions. But that's dictated by the revenue sharing agreement, food for thought for the rest of this board. And that's particularly important if we're going to assert that part of the problem lies with the state and lack of funding at state level.

[06:11:24] That requires the local boards to make up that difference. And as long as we're locked into a revenue sharing agreement, that's not going to happen. Now, perhaps since I don't have the 2025 executive summary, yet again, I do not have the nine fund balances that you're required to give the board by statute.

[06:11:46] We had this argument last year, and I thought we were going to get that squared away so that I've got the nine buckets that I can look at and determine whether or not they match up with the rest of your budget request. I don't need it tonight, but I would like it within the next week if that's at all possible.

[06:12:08] I've looked at the budget. There are a number of things. Did we not send it, the budget, by category? I did share it with staff at the county. It has to be shared with us. I haven't seen it unless I missed it.

[06:12:24] We'll make sure you get a copy, sir. I'll take care of that problem. That being said, I've gone through the budget, the larger one, and I've got any number of issues with it. I'd like to kind of look at that in context with the different budget categories.

[06:12:41] I do have one specific question, though. you are including CPS positions as part of your risk management or your risk department. Is that a DSS position? Is that a school division position?

[06:12:58] Who's funding it? And does it have investigatory powers? Mr. Youssef.

[06:13:13] So that particular position, while physically sitting in our risk management, is being funded 50% by the state and an equal share between county and schools, and it primarily is available to us to expedite some of our CPS cases.

[06:13:37] Is one sufficient for an entire school division? For now, we'd take the one, but obviously we'd need more. More to come on that. We've only got a minute 43 left.

[06:13:53] Noting the declining enrollment, your projection of at least a plateau, two things. Can you delineate what impact that's going to have on your CIP, what impact it's going to have on your future budget asks, and if that decline or plateauing will in and of itself raise your per-pupil spending? So the first question again, Mr. Weir? Is that going to have an impact

[06:14:27] on your CIP? And I'm going to have a follow-up to that. Yeah, absolutely. I mean, of course, the enrollment projections dictate, you know, how we plan on building schools, where we're going to build the schools, and when they come online. The second part was how is it going to impact your budget, and will it necessarily increase your per-pupil ratio if enrollment numbers continue to drop?

[06:14:53] I'm assuming the answer is yes and yes. Yeah, I mean, yes. Then the last thing is an offer on my part. So just on the per-pupil, so again, one of the things, if you saw the theme of one of the presentations is our increase in the type of students is our English learning students and our students with special needs. That's a big driver of our resource allocation, and because much of that spending is federally mandated, that is one of the main drivers to increase our per pupil costs. And, you know, look, we're continuing to commit to investing in our teachers, and that also drives up the cost as well.

[06:15:33] The reason I ask all of this is I'm actually willing to make an offer. Quickly, because you're out of your time, and then you can put in additional time. I would like a number from the school division as to what it would cost to seat a panel to look at a boundary adjustment for every school in the district, middle, high school, and elementary.

[06:15:54] Because I'd rather find $500,000 or $1 million outside of the revenue-sharing agreement, task you guys with doing that study and adjusting the boundaries such that we don't have to spend another $250 million on a school that we otherwise might not need and if you could get me that number I would really appreciate it in the next week or so thank you understood all right next we're going to go to Supervisor Gordy thank you madam chair Dr. Lateef thanks so much Superintendent McDade thank you for being here I've had the honor of sitting with you guys and sharing a little bit of my heart of some of the

[06:16:33] challenges that we're facing in the Brentsville district first of all I just want to tell you how grateful I am for what you're doing on the English learning. We've had a very robust discussion about Unity Read, the challenges there with dropouts, and it's stemming from English literacy.

[06:16:57] And what we're seeing in the Sudley Corridor is we're seeing an increase in poverty in this area, And one of the leading indicators of this is lack of high school education and the inability to speak English.

[06:17:13] But what we're also learning is that they can't read Spanish either. So we literally are having to go back to almost to a kindergarten, first grade level for some of these students who are in high school here because they never received an education in their original country.

[06:17:31] And so this investment in this is critical, I believe, as we are addressing the only way I can call it is an inherited problem. But I know when I was on a parent advisory council and we worked through each of our school budgets, you know, the student comes with a set of money attached to them.

[06:17:54] right? And so if your child was in special education or if they were in gifted or if they were in ELL, they received an additional set of money to come along with that child in order to help support those programs in the schools. Can you speak a little bit to what that's looking like today given this growth in this need for English learners and potentially what percentage of

[06:18:23] Well, we know that it's 36.3 now is Hispanic, but what percent of now the students are needing this specialized education within our schools? Right. So we have about a little over 22,000 students who are English learners, and we have increased the amount of support that we've been provided.

[06:18:46] And you're right. We do need wraparound services and supports for full families, especially newcomers. So we are limited in what we can provide to the full family, but we do seek to have our parent liaisons provide supports on what resources are available throughout the county. We've also been bolstering our adult ed programming so that we have supports for families that are seeking a GED, and even newcomers who may be overaged, and what we call overaged and undercredited, meaning that they're coming into the school system at like 17 and they don't have the credits that they would need to successfully graduate.

[06:19:22] We know that they can stay beyond the year of 18, but they will not, right? And so we have alternative pathways for them as well, as opposed to just only looking at the traditional pathway of scheduling them for the number of credits they would have to take if they were incoming as a freshman.

[06:19:37] So we're looking at all of those supports. We also have graduation coaches now in our schools like Unity Reed. We have Unity Reed, Freedom, and Garfield, which has our highest percentage of L students, and they each have graduation coaches that are now working directly with students and families.

[06:19:55] So we have a number of supports that we put in place, even in the way that we are scheduling our English learners and making sure that they are not taking courses that are not credit-bearing that would further hold them back. So we've put a lot of things in place, but certainly there are more supports that are needed for the family that goes beyond what the school system can provide.

[06:20:18] Outside of adult ed and English learner classes that we could potentially offer, English classes that we could potentially offer with the right amount of funding, there are additional supports that are needed for families that are coming in new. And I think Dr. Lateef talked about the Global Welcome Center, that we're adding a social worker there, renovating the Global Welcome Center, which actually is at Unity Braxton right there by Unity Reed.

[06:20:42] So we put a lot of investments into our families that are English learners, but I agree with you in terms of the whole family support, more is needed, and I do believe that we are ill-equipped to address all of the needs that the entire family has.

[06:20:58] Yeah, I really appreciate the proactive effort that you are taking to address this, um deputy county executive uh johnson and i spoke about this on friday and and just look we're going to have to have a whole community effort um not just schools not just county but we need the churches we need other groups because i mean a lot of these uh folks don't want to deal with the government um and so we need people who can make those connections uh so that we can begin getting after these challenges so that we can start to address the poverty levels and the because this

[06:21:37] will continue to decline if we don't take proactive steps in addressing it the second yours your time is over yes you can put in for additional time i got more questions the only thing i'd also add i know dr mcdade i don't know if she mentioned but you know we've invested significantly in pre-k as well and we continue to add that each year and that's been one of also one of the driving increases in costs. And so we do know that if you take those populations, get them in pre-K, you know, dramatic improvement in success over the next 10, 12 years. I mean, it really is, research has shown that over and over again. Supervisor Bode.

[06:22:12] Thank you, Madam Chair. As the second half to Supervisor Bode, appreciate the- It's been a long, so for everyone, I once, maybe twice got their names confused and it'll never die. Dr. Lateef, Dr. McDade, everyone else, appreciate you all coming out here, appreciate their presentation i have a couple of questions i'll try to be brief because i have a lot of them um the teacher shortage and i saw that in your one of your first slides dr latif you talked about the investments being made in the teachers um and how we still have a lot of road to travel there one of the things that was expressed to me as a concern was potential compression along the way because i know that a lot of a lot of work that's been done over the last few years to help boost

[06:22:51] those early and sort of early mid um teacher positions because we know we train them up three years in and they get poached by Fairfax, Loudon, Arlington, what have you. So I know you've been doing work there, but then the pain I've heard from is coming from the other side, those upper mid, not your late career teachers, but your sort of mid-mid teachers. And can you talk about what we're doing there and also to really just work on the workforce? Because we can have the best business in the world,

but there's just simply not enough people to join the workforce. How can we really work on that? Yeah, I'll let Dr. McDade. Well, so just so you know, in the mid-range, that 12 to 20 year we're adding I think it's about 3% on average increase over where they are now on top

[06:23:31] of this year's race so that that's really one of our big commitments in this budget and and has been one of the guiding forces in in budgeting for this year I I think you know we continue to try to do more on other aspects you know trying to keep health care premiums down trying to improve other kinds of benefits and so that's been one of the commitments in in the work we've done as well I'll let Dr. McDade answer some more.

[06:23:55] To answer your question about the fact that we are graduating less students out of our colleges of education, so the pool is not as great, we've been doing a lot of work around Grow Your Own. So currently now, all of our high schools, 12 of our 13 high schools now have our Grow Your Own program where our students who are aspiring to teaching through Educator, we work with Educators Rising, so we have quite a few students that are interested in those programs, and so that number has grown significantly.

[06:24:26] We want to have all 13 schools, and we're already at 12. We also were one of the first, well, the largest school system in the Commonwealth and one of the trailblazers to take advantage of the grant that was made available to have a teacher residency and apprenticeship program, and so we were one of the first to do that in Virginia, and we currently have both a teacher residency as well as a teacher apprenticeship program and then you heard Dr. Lateef talk about our participate program which is our international teachers and we set a goal to hire 350 international teachers and we're already at about the 300 mark so

[06:25:05] we've been doing a lot of work internally to kind of build our own pipeline as well as making sure that we are retaining talent so when you what we heard we originally had the lift so you were spot on in that that middle group is where we have the least you know the biggest gap and so to close that gap we put a lift there and invested more so that that increase could be higher to get parity with Fairfax and so we heard from some teachers about the 12 to 18 and so we expanded it to 20 so now it's 12 to 20. We also lifted the cap on years of service so you know so that teachers are not losing years coming into Prince William

[06:25:44] County and we are making that proactive for those teachers who came into Prince William earlier when the cap was lower so those are some of the things that we've been doing to remain competitive but at the same time continue to recognize that we have to build our own pipeline because the pipeline's not strong coming out of our colleges of education. Appreciate that and my second question then goes into on the capital side the guts of our schools you know we have a pretty big disparity in when our schools were were were built out um that's obviously a reflection of the growth the massive growth we've had in the county over the last 20 25 years but i know we had a great discussion last week about this dr bays but i wanted to ask you publicly so you could talk about that

[06:26:23] what we're doing to really look at the schools frankly we have some of the oldest high schools in the region in prince william county schools that were built in the 70s 80s what have you but we also have schools that were built within the last 10 10 years so how are you looking at providing that equity in those older schools that frankly were built decades and decades ago?

[06:26:42] Some of that goes, speaks to renovations and the renovation work that we've been doing, whether it's fenestration projects, whether it's additions, and even some of the general maintenance things

that we have to do, whether it's turf and field, et cetera. So we have, for the first time ever in Prince William County, we've contracted an external partner to do a facilities index assessment to give us the quality of every building with kind of like a color-coded red, orange, green in terms of the condition of the facility.

[06:27:12] And we've been using now that index to drive our capital improvements, to prioritize those buildings that are of highest need first and making sure that that equity is there in the way that we are approaching capital improvements. So we're really proud about that. But unlike some situations where if you have a really old structured high school that's large, you can't just replace it because, you know, where do the students go when you're building?

[06:27:37] um and so we what we've been trying to prioritize is the renovations of that so you'll see a combination within our capital improvement plan of both renovations as well as new construction thank you so much all right next we're going to go to supervisor bailey thank you madam chair um good evening everyone first of all let me um congratulate the new school boards those returning and those that are new welcome aboard we're going to have some fun that's all i got to say but welcome aboard and I want to congratulate our school superintendent for being superintendent of the year for the for region four that needs to be

[06:28:14] acknowledged because I believe you came in and everything was by a fire hose but you are fit for the bill so thank you so much for your good work for our for our community I want to go back to one of the things that chairman Lateef you mentioned about and this is the slide pupil poor per funding per pupil and I remember when we first started these types of presentations when you would come and update us and we were at nine thousand dollars per student and so for the school board and for the superintendent and her staff I want to

[06:28:54] congratulate I know we're not there according to your strategic plan madam superintendent I don't think but we're getting there but I just wanted to highlight that and acknowledge that because that shows a level of investment from our board and partnering with your board i think it's critical for the parents liaison uh uh officers that you have that's that's a new program or is that a returning program it's a new program brand new so i wanted to ask uh is there a compatibility and i kind of remember it started in 22 maybe latter part 22 doesn't matter but the question that i have is is there a help there

[06:29:33] As it relates to something my colleague said about truancy, are they aiding with the truancy piece at all? Yeah, I mean, I think Dr. McDade mentioned that earlier, that the parent liaisons are helpful with truancy. Okay. They're helpful with communication, translation, interpretation.

[06:29:50] They're engaging with the students, the faculty, and the administration and with the families. Okay, and then the other thing that I just wanted to highlight was the mental health initiatives. Ms. Huebner has been fantastic, and that's one of my heart.

[06:30:10] And I remember we came to a meeting with y'all, and she talked about the initiatives that she was invoking with mental health. So what's the next step for that? I appreciate the highlight on CRC, but what's the next step as it relates to our babies, their anxiety, fentanyl, things like that?

[06:30:30] Can you just kind of give us some idea in terms of that as it relates to funding? Let me have Dr. McDade answer that question. I mean, I'm happy to answer, but let's hear from her. So we talked about the

$1.5 million investment in telehealth so that we have mental health services that are provided virtually for all.

[06:30:47] It'll be accessible to all families. The other thing we did this year in our budget is we did add an additional drug prevention specialist. That's what I was looking for. Yes. So we did add that along with a human trafficking specialist. And then we added the five social workers.

[06:31:06] So we've been adding additional supports just to make sure that we have the bandwidth to support our schools. Certainly, we could use more, but having a drug prevention specialist was a big step forward. We already have one.

[06:31:21] We needed additional support, so we put those things in place. And I do believe that the telehealth will be a big game changer as well because it will be accessible to everyone. To everybody. So in addition, thank you for that. In addition to that, I want to go to the basic history of the revenue share agreement, and I know they're probably up in heaven flipping out about this, was by two best friends, John Harper Jr. and Betty Covington.

[06:31:50] And everybody knows who Betty Covington is. It's no big deal. Everybody knows who Betty Covington is. And they put together the revenue share agreement, and it was controversial when it started, but it has been historically an aid as we go forward in supporting our children and supporting our school system.

[06:32:08] And so John Harper was a very good friend of mine, and I'm a big proponent of the revenue share agreement because it shows a staple of our investment in our future. And so I just want to put that out there because most people don't know the history.

[06:32:25] You just see a revenue share agreement and you don't know where it came from. What came from two people that lived here in this community, one in Dumfries and the other one in Southbridge and Dell City at the time in Victor's District, and they wanted to make a greater investment in our school system.

[06:32:41] So just want to give that a little history lesson to have something to gnaw on when you think about it. And then the other thing, and I'll stop after this, is food insecurity. I think we did a yeoman's job with the board and with the school board during COVID when food insecurity just was over the top.

[06:33:06] So do you see that as still an opportunity in the school system? And how can that be helped? How can we partner with you in that? Yeah, you know, I mean, sure. You know, just on the revenue.

[06:33:22] Go ahead, Dr. McDade. Sure. Yes, it is definitely still a need. And we do have families that are food insecure. We currently have families, a number of schools, don't have the exact number i would have to look it up to share with you but we do have a number of schools that receive boxes that where they take food home over the weekend because we are trying to support food insecurity and certainly um the support a lot of our support comes from our like our food rescue from our different uh county-wide entities that support our schools and partner with us to provide meals to family outside of the school day so we do our part for during the school

[06:33:59] day but then we have to have external partners that support us to provide um you know food boxes to families to go home over the weekend and certainly they're limited as well so it more support i think to our partners really would be helpful to us because then they in turn serve our families great great

and and the last thing i want to say we're out of time you can resubmit oh i'm sorry i wasn't watching thank you all right supervisor angry i'll come back thank you madam Sure. Good evening, everybody. Good to see everybody here. Thanks for that, Latif.

[06:34:32] So on slide six, I'm just curious, because this is the cost per pupil for students, right? And so you used a term, you said, do what they are doing, meaning like Fairfax.

[06:34:48] Is it slide six? The whole Fairfax and Loudoun, that $19,000. What exactly does a cost per student? So if we get more into that, what does it get a kid? Or if it's less, I mean, I'm just, I don't, you know, is there...

[06:35:06] Sure, you know, so the per pupil cost is a reflection of the investment the school division is making on all students, right? So what's baked into that number is teacher salary, right? What's baked into that number is programs. Baked in that number is, you know, the cost of running the school and all the different investments that the school makes in the students.

[06:35:27] So, for example, you know, like, you know, in Fairfax and Loudoun, they might have, you know, so we have one, just give you an example, in our high school, one director of student activities. That person's in charge of making sure all the sports are running, the debates running, science fairs are running, like all the different things is in the school of 2,500 students, right?

[06:35:46] 2,800 students at Woodbridge, 2,800 Colgan, you know. And so we have one person doing that job. In Fairfax, they may have two or three assistants in that school. And so you'll see in a place like Fairfax or Loudoun, there's a larger, you know, participation in things that maybe we don't do here as much in debate speech in National History Day.

[06:36:07] You can take a look at a number of different things where that makes a real impact, right? How many students participate in the science fairs? How many sports activities do they have? Are they able to field JV teams in all sports, right? We're not able to do that because we may not have the staff to do that.

[06:36:24] So that's an example of the kinds of things. We're, for the first time, I think, this year, Dr. McDade, we're paying for all students to take the SAT. I think that's the first time we're doing that, right? And so other school divisions have done that for a long time, right? So we're making those investments now.

[06:36:43] If we were to fund our per-pupil spending like Fairfax and Loudoun does, which are really strong districts, right? So they're considered some of the top districts in the Commonwealth by every metric, right? Whether it's graduation rate, SAT scores, they do strong work up there.

[06:37:01] You know, we would spend another $300 million to get to those kind of numbers. And thank you for that because, I mean, so I want to really say something. I don't want to alarm anybody because I think I said in 2019 and I don't want Supervisor Ware thinking I'm agreeing with him. But I don't want the revenue sharing agreement to be that thing in the room that we think is the end of the hour because, true enough with what you said, if there's more money out there that we should be giving you all to grow to the point of what you just said, then I think we should be looking at that.

[06:37:33] And I'm not saying get rid of revenue sharing agreement. I'm saying even what does that look like for to get to these numbers and to get to what we're talking about. So, Supervisor Angry, there's

nothing that holds you all back from funding us above the revenue sharing agreement. I mean, there has never been at one point, and if it's in your desires, right, which it seems to be, we'll take it as a floor.

[06:37:55] I just want to say because, you know, when we talk about 57.23% of every dollar going to the school system, I think we stop there. That's where we stop, and we don't. The agreement doesn't say you have to stop, brother. But wait, I know we give a little extra, not because we're talking budget here and your budget.

[06:38:12] I know we give a little extra outside of that for a couple of other things. And to that point, I want to commend you, Dr. McDavid, for the human trafficking, the drug prevention, the CPS liaison, because we just heard from our Commonwealth attorney that if we can do something better with our kids, maybe they wouldn't need all the personnel they need to do a lot of our youth issues that we're having.

[06:38:32] So I think the schools play a huge part in that. I don't have a lot of time left, so I don't want you to answer that, because I want to ask a question for you, just one question. And it's really on your bus drivers and your bus system. The thing that's frustrating me the most is that people, parents are driving their kids to school, and that traffic is a nightmare.

[06:38:52] But here's the deal. You guys have that under such a good system that it's a nightmare for, like, 15, 20 minutes, and then it's all gone. But I think it's a long time. It is a long time, but I think there's definitely something better we can be doing, And with your buses and getting kids back on those buses, and I'd just like to hear if you really are looking into that and what can we do to help you with that situation?

[06:39:16] Because this is every school. Yeah. I'm really grateful for that question because we just embarked upon having a transportation expert come in and do a top-to-bottom review of our transportation, and they found a lot of things that we need to correct for greater efficiency.

[06:39:34] One of the things in terms of, and so we'll be putting some corrections in place to get to greater efficiency with our buses, but I will say that the bus driver shortage did impact us significantly where we were doing more double runs.

[06:39:50] Now, we've decreased that, but we still have some, and so there are some things we need to do internally, but I will say in terms of helping us, we have now, we're at a point where we have fulfilled filling the vacancies we have we do need more bus drivers hired and so if we could add additional bus driver positions that would be a great help for us we are more competitive with our salary with bus drivers now and then now that we're doing this is the first time we're doing the sign-on bonus which to be competitive with other jurisdictions that are also doing the sign-on bonus we do believe that we would be able to staff more drivers if we had

[06:40:29] more positions for bus drivers thank you you know I would just add you know if I don't know if this takes away from your time but but but you know the the the the county board you guys have really stepped up and funded the schools really for the last four years right like I'm we're not here to complain in any way right I mean there are challenges on your side there's challenges on our side we need to tackle them together I think we've had a great relationship over the last few years on doing that. You know, if you were to ask me, you know, if you look at, Mr. Angry, you've said, what can we do more for the kids? You know, there's so much we can do, right? Just our

[06:41:07] counseling ratios. We're still not at the ideal counseling ratio that high schools should be at for, you know, 250 students per one counselor, right? We're at 300. We can get that number down. That helps more students, right? I'd love to see that number be at 100, right? That would be great.

[06:41:24] There's a whole industry that's evolved, like there's people pay money to these outside college counselors to help their students get into college, right? It's becoming an arms race for, you know, those that have and those that don't. And the public schools, I think, in many ways can do much more, and we're not doing enough in certain areas, and we have a lot more to do.

[06:41:43] But, you know, again, there's nothing in our agreement, the last I checked, that said you can't fund over the agreement level. So I just want to be clear on that. Is that right, correct, counselor? No worries. No worries. All right. Thank you, Supervisor Cordy.

[06:42:01] All right. Thank you for talking about the bus drivers, and thank you for putting that driver sign-in bonus, I think, or sign-on bonus. This has been a problem for quite some time. And anyone, drivers, there was an article today how even in the trucking industry, they're starting to become more dependent upon autonomous trucks.

[06:42:27] because there's not enough people willing to drive. So you guys are getting after it and trying to get ahead of that and getting competitive. But for us, particularly in the Brentsville District, we have a lot of roads through rural areas.

[06:42:44] And so, you know, to go from one child to the next, you've got to travel a long ways. The challenge that we have, and we've had this conversation, is right now, based upon the data that we have, we have 5,200 homes being proposed for development in our district alone, and only 248 of those have already been approved.

[06:43:10] So we have this massive amount of residential development that's heading our way. Supervisor Weir brought up the idea of providing funding to take a look at the boundaries, And the challenge that we have is a lot of the land that is being targeted for development all is zoned to the Noakesville School, to the Brentsville High School, and to Marsteller Middle School.

[06:43:36] And those schools are already in a bad place in terms of enrollment. But we also know that there are schools out there that have capacity. So could you speak to a little bit a couple things? Number one, how you're taking a look at the potential development growth in terms of boundary changes, Number two, some of the challenges that we've had to better align planning from the schools with the planning for the county, to make sure that we're getting more dynamic data rather than just a point in time look at whether or not a development would have an adverse impact on the school,

[06:44:15] but rather look at the totality of what's happening in the area. If you could speak to that, and then how are you balancing out development growth with what you see as birth rate declines? I know it's a lot packaged, but it's a big problem for us, and I know it's going to become a big problem for you guys.

[06:44:34] Right. So I don't think there's been many districts in America that grew as fast as we did in the last 25 years, right? So we built, I think, under the prior superintendent, 25 schools were built in 15 years in one term.

[06:44:49] And so, you know, part of the problem was we grew so fast we couldn't keep up with that growth, right? We are seeing a little bit of a plateau right now. I think the way we do our planning

currently is based on approved projects. We're happy to look at other ways, Supervisor Gordy, on how to do that.

[06:45:08] We try to abide by best practices that are done in the industry regarding these projections and building. And sometimes we could be off. I don't think we predicted, if you went back four or five years ago, we didn't predict this plateau coming so soon.

[06:45:24] I think we predicted that we'd continue to grow. And so it is challenging, right? And so part of it is that birth rate, part of it is what comes in. You know, many times, if you have 4,000 projects or homes in the pipeline, they may not all get approved. I mean, you might have lines of citizen comments out here saying, you know, they don't want them.

[06:45:40] And so, you know, it might happen, it might not happen. So we try to do our best, and we're happy to work with you, your staff, Board of County Supervisors, with our staff and the superintendent on ways to do that better. And, you know, if there are things where we can do, I think the school board is not opposed to looking at ways to address, you know, capacity issues on a case-by-case basis and certainly across the division as needed.

[06:46:04] I think we're open to all those ideas. Again, we have a really strong staff that does this work, and I know Dr. McDade's taking a special interest in making sure that, you know, we're trying the best we can. But we'll work with you on this. Yeah, you know, the biggest complaint to development is the impact on schools.

[06:46:23] Yeah. And if they're looking at a school, if the development does, if they can see that there's a plan for schools, people are more willing to accept the development. If they see that it's just going to an overcrowded school, they will line up out there.

[06:46:40] So it's kind of, you know, the chicken or the egg, right? But if we have a plan, if we have something in a CIP, or if we had a plan that says, yes, this is where we are now, but this is the plan. And, oh, by the way, this school here, and, again, we had this conversation earlier today.

[06:46:58] If there's no schools in the CIP, I can't get a developer to proffer. But if there is something in the proffers or in the plan, we can get money out of them for those schools. And so, but without that capital project out there planned, I can't do anything for you.

[06:47:18] And so it's sort of help me help you help me get this right because the growth is going to come. But it helps me to be able to say we're addressing the schools.

[06:47:33] We've got a plan to address this. I will pick up your thoughts because you're out of time, so you need to wrap. So thank you for the conversations that we've already had and for continuing to work with us on that. Thank you. And please pass the collection plate.

[06:47:50] I'm going to pick up on his comments, and, you know, I'm trying to enforce time here because I know we have a lot of other speakers, and this is a very important discussion. So that is a problem. We have a lot of development coming, a lot of applications, particularly in the Brentsville District.

[06:48:09] I see hands up out there. And we've got to manage that growth, and that's one area where we have to really work with you guys closely. I've met with Superintendent McDade to discuss this. But I do want to dig in a little bit on redistricting because that's something that has to happen.

[06:48:27] You know, we've got to balance out our schools. You know, it's not right if we have schools that have five trailers. You know, and I know we have some additional schools, you know, like elementary schools are going to be rebuilt. So I just wanted to see where you guys are, number one, with redistricting.

[06:48:43] And number two, you know, how do we work together for areas where we know, like Brentsville, where we have high growth? You know, how do we get ahead of that? Because it takes a while to build a school. You know, y'all don't throw them up overnight. And so I want to see how we can, you know, have discussions about what the applications we're looking at and maybe how we could start projecting and planning for that.

[06:49:08] Yeah, I mean, Madam Chair, these are all great points, great questions. And among the issues we deal with regularly on the school board and the capacity issues, you know, we, again, like I said, this is not something that the school division is not used to with the incredible growth, I think this might be the first two years in a row we haven't done a redistricting. Maybe we did one last year. I don't know. Because every time we build a new school, we redistrict, right? So every time a new school goes in, we do the lines to try to balance capacity. I mean, when I first got on the board, we built the Jenkins Elementary.

[06:49:45] That redistricting impacted 17 elementary schools. It was chaos, that meeting, right? But we did it, um and and so so we we use the new construction as a as a you know the main the main thing we do is to do the lines but certainly that is something that can be looked at you know even outside of new construction and that's something the board will certainly entertain well then what triggers it i mean obviously building a new school coming online but what what triggers the redistricting so it's it's been we've not redistricted outside of the um having a new school yeah and and you

[06:50:21] know, again, with the plateau that's happening now, we, you know, we are seeing some areas have some increase in population. And so that's why when Supervisor Gordy asked me, like, you know, if there are new things coming on and we're near a school that might have capacity, I think it makes sense to look at that redistricting right there at a case-by-case basis for sure that might impact that. All right. Thank you so much. I'm going to move on to Supervisor Bodie. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the discussion. To shift things a little bit towards what's in the proposed budget on our side we have the new office of youth services that this CX was put out is going to be in collaboration with you all what did a

[06:50:59] uplift that is something that's me I think a good thing especially with what we've been talking about around truancy around those wraparound service for not only students but their families as well just wanted to get your take on that and if we're gonna have touch points if we do approve with this budget you know two years three years down the road where we can get recommendations from you all how can beef up that office in our capacity to better serve you i mean we're happy to um to meet with um with your staff to to find ways and we already have strong partnership um to make sure that you

[06:51:35] know we're in lockstep with what you're proposing in the budget and what what we're doing in providing you with data that shows what the needs are on the school district side so that you know how to better resource and support on the county side so we're i'm 100 we're 100 on board with collaborating in that effort and making sure that there's alignment between what's happening in schools and what's happening in terms of the community appreciate that and i'll shift back into the the bigger conversation again about capital spending school facilities growth what have you because as you all know the elephant in the room is the 14th high school and i know we had a great

[06:52:14] discussion about I understand why the decision was made to push it back and to and to downsize it but again back to something that supervisor Gordy was alluding to it makes our job as soon as difficult where we get a report back through our planning process from the school division that says hey we recommend that you guys don't approve this land use project because there's not enough capacity in schools then we hear on the other side well we're also going to push back a school and downsize it. I understand where you guys are coming from with that, but with us, to Senator Gordy's point earlier, it makes it harder for us to have conversations with our

[06:52:50] community because, frankly, as a board, we have major housing challenges that we need to tackle in the next few years. We're at that inflection point where people get more and more priced up because we're not approving enough housing. So it's hard for us to talk about that if every time we have a land use case come across our desk, we, nine times out of ten, get a recommendation of not approving it because there's not capacity so back to the point would love to have better collaboration with you all on how we can do that i know i put a directive out uh two months ago to restart that joint committee on capital um but i wanted to ask you more pointedly how can we better

[06:53:26] help support you in your capital needs to make sure that as we continue down this road of needing especially around our activity centers and our small area plans which all of us have at least one if not two in our districts we're not only helping you uh address your capacities but also the land acquisition side of it too because in i have a perfect opportunity there where we have a high school that's in my small area plan but there's no there's no middle school or elementary elementary school site alongside that so how can we do a better job at being handshaking with you all and back to the conversation earlier looking at opportunities for going above and beyond the

[06:54:03] revenue share agreement to support you all in that regard. So Supervisor Bode, I mean, I appreciate the question. You know, I think we should step back and take a look at the history of how we got here, right? So, you know, we grew really fast in Prince William County, and there was a lot of, and we grew at a time, also the laws changed on proffering, you know, where we could actually demand a lot more. Now the laws are different on proffering, and that makes it much more challenging for us. So that puts you guys in a different position. But I can tell you when I

[06:54:34] became chairman in 2018, I inherited a board that was absolutely against approving any project or saying, because we were over capacity everywhere, right? So there was like this blanket statement, as you see in the impact statements, that said, dude, we're not for it because it increases capacity. Now, we've re-looked at that because capacity isn't the same across the county, right? So that's changing, but that's taken a lot of work on the part of the board to kind of get there because there has been this political and sort of, you know, momentum in this

[06:55:11] county against, you know, and so one of the reasons we might be plateauing is also that in that mid-2010s that we said, look, let's just kind of halt some of this construction. Let's stop this. Now we're feeling that in our enrollment, right? So if we're going to ramp that back up, We're happy to work with you all.

[06:55:30] Again, our planning staff is really good. Superintendent McDade, I think, will be happy to work with you on how we can come up with ideas that we can present to the developers saying, if you are going to build this, here's what we'd like to see. I don't think that's something we can't do. We certainly can work with you all on that.

[06:55:46] Do it the right way. We have to be very careful of not going outside the law on the proffering request because if we do that and they say we're conspiring to do that, that becomes problematic. We have to be very careful and do that with counsel at all times, you know, from my understanding. But I have no problem.

[06:56:02] So historically, we have this proffer issue. We have this political sort of change. And so the school board is willing to work with you all. You know, look, enrollment's an issue for us too, right? We don't want enrollment to just drop off the cliff, right? We can't be closed. You know, the biggest problem, you know, I go to national conferences with school board, school board members.

[06:56:22] They're closing schools. They're shutting them down because enrollment's dropping across the country. I mean, the American population is slowing, right? And so there are certain areas where they're just consolidating. They're closing schools. Nobody wants to do that. I mean, you imagine the lines outside.

[06:56:37] If I had to close a room, that citizen comment time, that would be chaos. So we're not in the business of trying to build schools that we can't fill up, and we're not in the business of trying to close schools. We're just trying to do the right size. It is challenging. We're willing to work with you. We have no problems with that. We recognize your challenges, your concerns, and we want to be helpful for that.

[06:56:56] Appreciate it. Thank you. All right. Supervisor Rear. Thank you, Madam Chair. First off, thank you for getting me the data at the dais. It's helpful, but it raises a question. You know, I'm looking at the facilities budget, and you're dropping at $500 million.

[06:57:15] Now, nobody out there, I'm happy they're dropping half a billion dollars out of the budget. But it's coming out of facilities. And, you know, I'm going to continue to beat this horse. You know, one of the things that the people who sit up here and the people who sit on your board have to understand is that at some point in time in everybody's career on one of these elected boards, pick your cliche, rip the Band-Aid off, you know, bite the bullet.

[06:57:45] You're going to have to do something you don't want to do. And I would argue that it is well past time to the school division, in conjunction with this board, set some money aside and look comprehensively at where our boundaries are, both in terms of where the future growth is going to be, what we think the lower birth rate is going to be, what are your demographics, does it support the lower birth rate, what are our needs going to be, not next year, not two years, but 10 years down the road.

[06:58:15] And there's an ancillary benefit to that that I think everybody glosses over. If you look at some of the boundaries we've got, and believe me, some of them were politically motivated. I can think of several in your district. If you start from one corner of the county, I don't care where you start, and you re-boundary every school, and you make them into what you're supposed to make them to the extent possible in terms of compact districts, that solves a lot of your transportation issues.

[06:58:49] It cuts your transportation dollars. It allows you to sink more into instruction. It streamlines your administrative costs. There are so many benefits to doing it. It's just getting over the hurdle of getting it started.

[06:59:07] And if it takes seed money from us or hell, us funding at all outside of the revenue agreement, I mean, I'll carry that flag for you. And since Supervisor Angry is not willing to say it, I am. You know, revenue sharing, I'll just reiterate, needs to go.

[06:59:26] It's nothing more than a shield for the board, both this board and your board, to hide behind so that we don't have those public discussions and debates about our students and how we're going to fund them like they do in every other jurisdiction. That's just my personal opinion. Thank you.

[06:59:43] I have a note in my notes about the Bob Weir question for tonight, and that was the $500 million. Do you want to answer that, Shaquille, real quick? Supervisor Weir, last year we had approved budget, and this is a budget-to-budget change that we had to reflect of almost $512 million, which was fairly significant in our construction fund.

[07:00:12] And this year, as we went to build our... That's an understatement. As we went this year to build our budget and our CIP, and by postponing or deferring the 14th high school, we were able to use that budget authority and repurpose it to our new CIP for this year.

[07:00:35] So it's basically a budgeting exercise that we've done. But that creates a problem in the future, if you're going to ramp everything else up and then have to reinsert that $500 million. Yes, the budget for the 14th high school was about $280 million.

[07:00:53] And it does, in the short term, in the near term, save us some debt service because we sell less bonds but you're absolutely right down the road as we add the new school back we will have to increase our budget all right next we're going to actually go to supervisor um vega and then angry and bailey thank you madam chair um one last question i think um earlier this year i attended the battle at the bridge vex robotics competition over at woodbridge senior high school i will say was my first time attending i was extremely impressed with everything

[07:01:32] that I saw. And it's not the first year. I've had emails sent to me in previous years, but I guess you never really pay attention until you go and see it for yourself. And mostly because I felt that this is a school division, a responsibility of the school division. But ever since my attendance to that one event, and I shared it with my colleagues here, that we're hosting regional events, which is impressive. And again, what I saw there, I recommend that all of my colleagues at one point or another go. The question I want to ask is, and perhaps you already included this

[07:02:07] in your budget, and it's probably in the weeds of it, but if not, can you share if you guys have budgeted or planned or allocated for a space for them? Because the setup, the takedown, and it's a one-woman show, and she relies solely on volunteers. It takes two days to set up, another two days to take down and again we're hosting regional competitions i think that it's imperative that we as a school division as a county look into fully funding and allocating designated space for something so significant and important in my opinion as this program do you guys have anything

[07:02:46] that you would like to add have you looked into it what can i say to these folks who are emailing me and thanking me for going but also saying are you going to allocate any funds for this which again i feel that it should come from the school division but i don't know if you guys have taken that initiative or not. Sure. I mean, Supervisor Vega, I mean, my kids have been involved in robotics for the last 10 years, and it's a terrific program. I will tell you that, you know, 15 years ago, the school division with their Spark Foundation set a goal to invest in robotics and robotics competitions, and it has grown, and you see what you see now. We're still trying to get 100% participation with all schools. Not all schools have robotics teams, right? And while it is, you

[07:03:22] know, you've met our person who runs a robotics program. We do rely on the volunteers, the parents, the PTOs they do a terrific job at these schools and we're just trying to encourage more of them to do it I know some of our school board members have brought this up of having at least a place to have storage facilities you know we you know that if you guys are building some sort of track facility or indoor facility or arena type thing those are those are things that certainly we could share you know share and possibly as far as you know using those for even our commencements rather than going up to George Mason and paying them all that money for them but there are certain things we'd be doing but but we're even doing

[07:03:59] another thing i don't know if you haven't seen this we did it for the first time was the drone competition indoor drone competition we did a unity read one of the first divisions in the country to do something like that and that was i don't know if that was regional but there was we invited whoever was doing that we had a five or six of our schools involved in this drone competition and and so we you know we are trying to do cutting edge we have this underwater sea perch program that uses the pools to do underwater robotics programs, which we've been doing for a long time.

[07:04:29] So we are doing that. You know, look, I'm not opposed for you guys giving us money for facilities. I'm not opposed for developing programs to ask for more money. Dr. McDade? Supervisor Vega, we did add an additional robotics person in the budget so that Carol is not just a one-man, one-woman show.

[07:04:48] And then we also increased funds for supplies by $250,000. And we've increased support to robotics year over year, but you are correct. We do not have a facility that we can use for the competitions, and it is taxing when it's time for them to practice and move around equipment.

[07:05:07] It's a lot of equipment, so that is a need that we currently have in the system, and we do not have a space for it, and we haven't funded a space for it. And I would just add, you know, we also have to balance that while we do invest in those things, We have other programs we have to invest in as well, right?

[07:05:23] So it's, you know, the debate program, you know, all these other programs trying to get more schools to participate in science fair, more activities, more orchestras at the elementary level. There's so many different things we're really trying to invest in. So it is, it does require an investment, but we're on it.

[07:05:39] We'll work with you on that. Thank you. I mean, I would suggest to our county executive to look at perhaps we have so many vacant spaces in this county with folks not going back to work in person and working remotely. instead of, you know, spending additional monies, if you know where I'm going with this.

[07:05:56] Right, right, yeah. I think we can get creative. Repurpose old facilities. Exactly, exactly. It would save time, it would save money, and I think that we could accommodate for all of the needs that we have. Pre-K space, that'd be great, too. I have a whole list, Supervisor Vega. Well, that was specific to my question.

[07:06:11] You're getting me fired up here. Thank you, Madam Chair. All right, I'm going to give it to you. Like, you came here to ask for money and to ask for more. All right, so, Supervisor Angry. Thank you, Madam Chair. I do think that is the purpose of a multi-use indoor sports facility could really provide a use or a need for that.

[07:06:34] So I have one question and two comments. And so in the interest of my five minutes, my one question I'll go to first, and it's back on the whole buses and cars driving to school. So I recognize and will acknowledge that you have specialty programs at schools, various schools.

[07:06:50] I don't know if it's all schools. So I know that is a major need. And so folks who do drive their children to school in those situations, it's because they could live on the other side of town and their child be in a specialty program across the county.

[07:07:08] So is a specialty program at every school, or what does that program look like? Just about. We have about 14 or 15 actual career and technical education specialty programs like agriculture, you're talking about like auto tech, culinary, et cetera.

[07:07:33] And almost all of our schools have at least one or more. Okay. I don't know if you know the number of this, but what does that look like for cars? How many students are enrolled in something like that? My job is buses. Yeah.

[07:07:48] We can probably help you with those numbers. We can try to figure it out. Yeah, I mean, it goes even further. We send students up to Thomas Jefferson, right? There's about four times, probably 200 students at TJ from Prince William County. We send them to the government school, then all the other stuff.

[07:08:04] Yeah, and then some students drive on their own, sure. So we could try to figure that out. But I do think that, you know, shoring up our bus service, our transportation services, making it more efficient, making it more timely, would decrease the number of cars on the road that are transporting students.

[07:08:20] And the reason I ask that because, you know, I've already gotten some comments that said the world is going to parents are just driving their kids to school and buses are going away. I know there are a lot of communities and a lot of neighborhoods and a lot of families that don't have an option to drive their kids. I watch a little four-year-old kid walk past my house in a stroller early in his life, and now he's four with a backpack walking to school.

[07:08:41] And so I know there are people who need a bus or walk to school, so I know this is a thing. So here's something that just gets me. Like I grew up on a breakfast program actually was, you know, in the 70s and 80s when school goes, you know, go to school and have breakfast because you learn better on a full stomach or something in your stomach.

[07:09:04] I would have thought that by the 70s to where we are today, we would have solved that issue. And so I'm getting to, I love what you're doing in the schools. I love how you handled the transportation issue with cars coming to school. But I really just thought schools would focus on school.

[07:09:20] and thank you for doing what you're doing. But what I'm getting to is that I would love to see a day where we really solve the meals problem and the food problem so that it's not an issue for the schools to really invest in an entire program to focus on how you're going to feed children so they come to school not hungry.

[07:09:38] I went to school hungry, so I know what that looks like, so I don't want to go to school hungry. I don't want any kid to go to school hungry. But I would love to see something that really is outside the schools so that you all can focus on school and really solving all these problems that we're talking about,

even the cost per pupil and what those programs look like to help our children be better so that they don't go to jail or don't end up in the system and be productive in society.

[07:10:05] So that's just a statement, not something for you to really answer. I see that, and I really want us to do more. We're trying to figure that out because you really solve your own problems. And like I said, you've done well with how I understand how the kid gets a number to come out for the car, how you have a whole system of the kids getting out of school, which is pretty incredible.

[07:10:27] And the same way you do with your meals. You don't just do breakfast. You do lunch. And in most cases, you're talking about sending boxes home with families. That's impressive. That's a lot. You really evolved to that. I applaud you for what you're doing. I just wish there was a way we could take that from you so we could get you folks in our school and really getting our kids to be in society with positive dreams.

[07:10:51] And I do have the numbers to the question earlier about the number of schools that we actually serve. So we have currently, with our community partners that provide food for over the weekend, we have 42 schools that receive about 20 bags every other week of food.

[07:11:09] and we have 44 schools that have social workers that have reached out for support. So the need is growing, actually double the schools now to this point. That's literally creating a whole new purpose for our school system.

[07:11:26] I think that's important. I mean, from your lips to God's ears, Supervisor Angry, I mean, if you add in the fact that we're doing mental health in the school division, we're doing, you know, we have nurses in every school. I mean, schools are no longer just a place for, you know, I mean, we have to do all these things, and we're not really funded to be a health care system, right?

[07:11:43] Well, that just proves another point, because then that's what we need to be focusing on, getting that to where it needs to be. And again, I applaud you for what you're doing. I just wish there was another way that we could actually put that in its category so your category could be education and positive dreams, if you will.

[07:12:03] So thank you. All right, Supervisor Bailey is next. Thank you so much. Excellent point, Supervisor Angry. I was just sitting here thinking about that. I agree with you, and thank you for the data, Madam Superintendent.

[07:12:20] I want to just end by saying this. I'm so grateful for the air of transparency. Thank you for the meetings that you have with us, and I think times are moving so quick. I don't know if they're quarterly or if they're mid-year, but we meet a lot more than previous years, And that's very, very important in terms of the sphere of transparency and making us accountable also to the community when we are trying to explain what's going on.

[07:12:53] Because that's not our responsibility. Our responsibility basically is to give the money. But we have been partnering over the past four years, four to six years. And that's great. I think it's great. So I want to just encourage you to keep doing that with us, please.

[07:13:10] It's not just during budget season that we talk. Even, Dr. Lateef, when you come to the joint audit committee meetings, and really the board was kind of jealous. You got a clean slate. We didn't. You got a clean slate. But, you know, in that it's partnering as well.

[07:13:28] And so we really appreciate that because there are answers that our parents and our grandparents ask us that we need to address. And so those meetings help us to address that. So thank you. all I wanted to say thank you madam supervisor Bailey I just wanted to say it to that point of collaboration I really want to extend my appreciation to County Executive Shorter and his entire team we do work very closely together we remain in constant communication and that has been really impactful for us in the school system so I just want to publicly thank the staff here for all of

[07:14:04] their communication collaboration and support and let me note since the our representative from the great Potomac district Justin Wilk is also here I didn't get a chance to introduce him earlier Mr. Justin Wilk that's my school board member yeah well that is it thank you so very much for coming and doing this presentation and for answering all of our questions you know as I've said you know I enjoy the dialogue with with each of you it is my commitment again to get you the

[07:14:41] money that you need, and hopefully a little bit more, Dr. Lateef. Hopefully. I'm getting a look over here. Yes, I said it. Yes, I said it. Because strong schools are the most important thing, you know, that and public safety, community safety, are really the two most important things that we strive for. And I say our budget is a statement of our priorities, and those are things that I really, you know, during this term, want to make sure that we prioritize. So thank you very much for your time thank you to all the school board members who are able to join

[07:15:12] us all right thank you thank you thank you all thank you so all right once so we are while we're letting them leave I just want to let you know we're having a

[07:15:38] few problems with our live stream all right as they exit I am going to we are

[07:16:16] gonna move on to public comment time and I'll give the instructions please note that this public comment time is for items not listed on today's agenda as a public hearing item we will hear in-person and remote public comments we will begin with in-person public comment time right now we have five speakers who are signed up I will call each of you up five at a time each speaker will have three minutes to share their views and opinions on matters before the board we ask that speakers state their name and their magisterial district or generally where they reside at the beginning of the marks we will close the in-person signup list after the first 15 minutes of in-person public comment times time so

[07:16:55] We have Chrissy Falls, Steve Amato, Alicia Glass, Alan Glass, and Teresa Menz. You guys can go up. Again, Chrissy Falls, Steve Amato, Alicia Glass, Alan Glass, Teresa Menz.

[07:17:13] The floor is yours, ma'am. Good evening. My name is Chrissy Falls, and I reside in the Gainesville District. Before I dive into the important matters at hand, while I do sit on the DSS Advisory Board, I want to make it abundantly clear that tonight I stand before you not as a board member, but simply as a concerned citizen and advocate for victims and survivors.

[07:17:34] Tonight's discussion revolves around the critical budget presentation of the school board. Within the budget lies the allocation of three pivotal positions that warrant our utmost attention. Some of you have already hit on that this evening. These positions aren't numbers on a page.

[07:17:50] They represent a commitment to safeguarding the welfare and safety of our most precious assets, our children. Firstly, I urge you to consider the inclusion of the CPS liaison in the proposed budget. This liaison acts as a vital link between our schools and Child Protective Services, ensuring swift intervention in cases where children are at risk.

[07:18:10] In a time where child welfare is paramount, this position isn't just desirable, it's imperative. Secondly, I ask that you support the addition of the second human trafficking specialist. Human trafficking isn't a distant issue. It's a harsh reality that threatens our youth right here, often luring them through online exploitation and by local gangs.

[07:18:33] By bolstering our resources to combat this crime, we not only protect our children, but also send a clear message that our community stands united against such horrific acts. Lastly, let's not overlook the importance of a second drug prevention specialist.

[07:18:50] I've witnessed this devastating impact of substance abuse on our youth. As someone who has been advocating for these subjects since 2016, it's great to finally have a superintendent that listens, and I hope you will too. By investing in proactive measures, we safeguard our children's health and future while also mitigating the social and economic costs of addiction.

[07:19:13] It's encouraging to witness our county's renewed focus on children's welfare. April being Child Abuse Prevention Month serves as a reminder of the significance of these additions to the school system budget. It underscores our collective commitment to providing a safe and nurturing environment for our children to thrive.

[07:19:30] In closing, I urge you to view these positions not as just budget items, but as investments in our community's future. Let's seize this opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of our children and demonstrate our unwavering dedication to their well-being.

[07:19:46] Thank you. Thank you very much. Next, we have Steve Amato. Good evening, Board of County Supervisors.

[07:20:14] Madam Chair, I'm Steve Amato from the Occoquan District. As you all are continuing to work through the FY25 budget build process, I'm providing feedback and a recommendation from fellow citizens to you for immediate support.

[07:20:31] Just three cents. Just three cents is the reduction I'm advocating for in the proposed FY25 real estate tax rate from .966 to .95. Over the past five years, the county real estate taxes paid by property owners has significantly increased.

[07:20:56] Though the tax rate has been not high, assessments have driven those taxes extremely high. The past two consecutive fiscal years, the budget for the county has generated large amounts of surplus.

[07:21:16] I've addressed you all on this before. For example, FY22, the surplus was $75 million. FY23, $64.7 million. $139 million in revenue surplus in the past two fiscal years.

[07:21:36] None of that was provided, refunded back to the taxpayers. Over $70 million of that total surplus went to the school districts. And last year, fiscal year 23, many agencies in the county, the government, the school district employees, and all county supervisors received raises.

[07:22:05] For FY25, the property tax assessments are very high again. By imposing high real estate tax rates, the board may not have demonstrated judicial responsibility with these large surpluses, especially at no type of refund back to the taxpayer.

[07:22:25] According to a recent Freedom of Information and Privacy Act request, which I received the response, for FY24, the food and budget tax, a.k.a. meals tax, is estimated to generate $42 million, $2 million more than an FY23.

[07:22:46] That tax passed on to all the citizens. during the march 12th board meeting at 2 p.m a supervisor stressed this meeting is to hear from citizens on what we want in the budget i'm recommending this it's just three cents of reduction just three cents i hope you hear and take action thank you thank you sir next we'll

[07:23:18] have alicia gloss good evening alicia gloss coals i want to speak about the budget and how it relates to our safety because safety is very important to me here in Prince William County. Fully funding our police so that they can do their jobs is just as important as making sure our Commonwealth Attorney's Office is properly prosecuting criminals to keep them off the streets for our safety.

[07:23:48] The Commonwealth Attorney came before this board today and asked for a lot and she admitted it was a lot. She started with 29 employees and has increased it to 71 and is now looking to add an additional 16. Our murder rate in Prince William County doubled last year, but she thinks the solution is to add more staff and blame our police department. She wants to add a shoplifting diversion program, which is going to lead to more theft when criminals realize they will get a slap on the hand and the businesses are going to bear the burden of that theft. They have already had to start locking up Tide, baby formula, and cosmetics. I don't see how this is good for the

[07:24:28] community and businesses are the customers who shop there. I agree we need diversion for some crimes, but when you have all of these specialty diversion programs and a Commonwealth attorney that chooses to focus only on diversion rather than prosecution, you're going to get a constant pleading down of case after case and repeat offenders leading to a complete bog down of our justice system. That's what's happening now, and it's going to lead to more violent crime. I caution this board to continue to question the Commonwealth Attorney and what she said today. Because a more

[07:25:03] than doubling of the Commonwealth Attorney's Office staff and now requesting an additional 16 more should not continue to result in less prosecutions, rise in crime and murders, and blaming her lack of prosecutions on our police department. I also want to take a moment to speak about the data center tax rate. According to the budget, 62.4 of our taxes come from the real estate tax, us, the homeowners. Taxpayers shouldn't have to bear the brunt of the tax burden. Data centers need to pay

[07:25:38] their fair share, so this board must give the taxpayers relief and vote to increase the data center tax rate. We as taxpayers see that the budget will never be reduced, only increase year after year. So we must have relief. Data centers here in Prince William County are not paying their fair share compared to other counties. This must be addressed. Most of you have voted for all of these data centers. So now you must do what is right for the taxpayers and vote to increase the

[07:26:13] data center tax rate. I also want to wish everyone a happy Easter and remind everyone the reason we celebrate easter is our savior is risen thank you have a blessed evening alan gloss good evening alan gloss coles chair jefferson prior to you taking office you said that you were going to move speakers from the back of this room to the front of the room when are you going to honor

[07:26:46] that commitment i don't know why well i do know why chair wheeler blamed covid on the reason why she pushed the peasants to the back of the room so we could yell at you and not actually look at you in the eyes. It's disrespectful of us having us back here. We should be in the front addressing you. We've spent time, we come here giving you our time to address you. I appreciate you bringing us back to the front of the room. As you are going through the budget markup, I want to bring up a couple things to your attention. This is your opportunity to lower taxes on the people. Not

[07:27:21] once during Queen Willie's reign of terror did this board lower taxes on the people. I remember the leaps that each one of you took to say that we didn't raise taxes last year. You're right, you didn't. But you knew fully well that the people would pay more in taxes because the taxes were tied to the market value of their property. Everyone paid more last year, the year before and the year before that. Some hundreds of dollars, others thousands of dollars each year. This year

[07:27:55] is the last year the legislator has given you to reset the data center tax rate before it becomes recoupled with the personal property tax rate. This board has advertised the peripherals tax rate at $3.70. I encourage you to set it no lower than $3.70. I know there are a few of you who feel that you owe the data center folks for getting you reelected and looking at your financials from last year. That's absolutely true. They showered you in money for your votes in favor of data centers anywhere they could put them. You do owe it to the rest of us though to make their tax rate

[07:28:32] at least equal to what other jurisdictions in neighboring counties are making them pay. Don't screw the taxpayers by not taking advantage of your last opportunity to raise data center taxes before it gets retied to our taxes. So three things, lower our tax rate, raise the data center tax rate, and get rid of the garbage Wheeler policy of putting speakers in the back of this room

[07:28:57] and bring us back to the front thank you thank you now we have theresa men's i agree with everything alan gloss just said okay i want to thank law enforcement and first oh theresa men's potomac district i want to thank law enforcement and first responders for all they do food for thought decrease residential and personal property tax increase peripheral tax to three dollars and

[07:29:33] 70 cents the highest average highest advertised so we can get close to what other counties are charging okay since the democrat board advocates for racist and social justice i recommend everyone watch mark levin's program on march the 9th to 2024 life liberty and levin this program is a real eye-opener and tells you just who joe biden was and is so this democrat board needs an eye opener to reality, because I'm sick and tired of hearing you about just racist and social justice

[07:30:12] and DEI crap. Sorry for my language. Our mainstream media doesn't report news. They are the extension of the Democrat Party. Sad people can't think for themselves and realize that. America is in trouble. Our leaders are advocating for the new world order. John F. Kennedy, before his assassination, warned that there were people who wanted to make every man, woman, and child into slaves.

[07:30:40] Open borders is the enemy to America. And George Soros is doing all he can to destroy America and the world. And the Democrats are helping. Unfortunately, so are a lot of Republicans.

[07:30:58] Because we have many Republicans, they might as well be Democrats. Okay, and we are getting election interference. Now, I want to say to you, Supervisor Ware, just stay strong.

[07:31:13] Sorry, you're the only one I have confidence in. You think I've got confidence in any of these people, including our county exec? No way. No way. There's things I don't understand, and I realize that, but I know when I'm being played. I know when I'm being played, okay?

[07:31:31] And I'm sick of it, and I'm sick and tired of Supervisor Ware not getting all the documentation he needs to address things because this man is protecting us the rest of you are not you're not you're the enemy you are the enemy oh gosh I cannot believe that citizens don't realize the corruption that's going on yes just think about being slaves and if you think it won't happen to you guys you may be in for real surprise because if it was up to Joe Biden this whole Democrat board right here

[07:32:07] you wouldn't have a seat at the table learn that march the 9th mark levin tells it all and he shows videos of joe biden i can't believe you vote for a racist all right thank you very much ma'am we um do not have anyone signed up for um remote comment time so with that we're gonna move to move to adjourn second our next meeting y'all is tuesday april 9th at two o'clock um any

[07:32:40] discussion before we adjourn i hope not let's go non-debatable you can't talk after the motion's made oh i'm talking i'm sorry i haven't voted yet you all can be seated thank you



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