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Prince William Board of County Supervisors Meeting — Joint Legislative Meeting, Monday, December 2, 2024

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- Official meeting video (Prince William County, Granicus): <https://pwcgov.granicus.com/player/clip/3581>
- Official Board of County Supervisors page (Prince William County): <https://www.pwcva.gov/departments/board-county-supervisors>

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[00:00:00] welcome to the Kelly Leadership Building in the Prince William County School System's headquarters I we're grateful to have you here we know that some of the delegates are unable to make it because of a I guess a late meeting that was called but we will continue and this will be taped so we're grateful to have everyone here in the staffs for our delegates and senators who have been able to make it I'm gonna turn it over to chair Jefferson so she can gavel in this will be an official meeting for the BOCS. All right thank you very much

[00:00:34] everyone for joining us. It is now 9:10 on Monday December 2nd and we are officially getting started. Wonderful thank you Chair Jefferson. I will start by first introducing myself we'll go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves. My name is Barbara Lateef, chair of the Prince William County School Board. Chair Jefferson. DeShondra Jefferson, chair of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors. Good morning Chris Shorter, County Executive. Good morning Occoquan District Supervisor Kenny Bodie. Good morning, Richard Jesse, Occoquan School Board.

[00:01:15] Good morning, Margaret Franklin, Woodbridge District Supervisor. Good morning, Lori Williams, Woodbridge District School Board Member. Bob Weir, Gainesville District Supervisor. Tom Gordy, Princeville District Supervisor. Erica Trennic, Princeville District School Board. Michelle Roble,

County Attorney. Wade Anderson, Division Counsel. Glenn Lupe, Legislative Affairs for Prince William County. Jim Counsel, Lobbyist for Prince William Schools. Lisa Zargapur, school board representative for Coles District. Victor Angry, Neap School District Supervisor.

[00:01:52] Tracy Blake, Neap School District School Board Member. Josh Thomas, Delegate, House District 21. Andrea Bailey, Potomac District. Good morning. Carol Flennard, Deputy Superintendent. Latonya McDade, Superintendent for Prince William County Schools. Thank you, everyone. I'm going to ask some of the staff for our delegates and senators to stand up and introduce themselves.

[00:02:17] I know they don't have a mic, so if they could speak up. We'll start with Amalib Najala. Do we have anyone else? Great. I think we have Abigail Spanberger's representative here as well. Great.

[00:02:56] Thank you. Anybody else? Okay. Well, we're very grateful to have you all here. Josh, looks like you have an outsized influence on today's proceedings. So you are speaking for the entire General Assembly today and representing all of them. So we're grateful to have you and really I'll just start off by starting with our presentation and then we'll take questions on schools and then we'll go to Chair Jefferson on the Prince William County Legislative priorities so our legislative priorities for 2025 just to give you a quick introduction on our school division and and remember everyone this is going to be recorded and posted I think both on the school website and on the Prince

[00:03:33] William County website for for our representatives to watch and the staff to see so some fun fast facts Prince William County Schools is the second largest division in the Commonwealth where the most diverse in the Commonwealth we're the 32nd largest school division in all of the United states and the 10th most diverse county in the united states our current student population is 74 minority 42 economically disadvantaged 28 english learners 14 students with disabilities

[00:04:06] and we have about 7 000 teachers 5 000 staff 4 000 other personnel a total of 16 700 we are the largest employer in the county and our student enrollment currently sits right around 90 000. just just to understand our funding and our cost per pupil we show this slide regularly prince william county schools among the divisions in northern virginia we are fifth as far as per pupil spending right around sixteen thousand three hundred and ninety

[00:04:41] with arlington being the highest at twenty four thousand six hundred and manassas park being slightly below us at fifteen thousand two hundred manassas city below us as well we have made some inroads in this effort but one of the things that the school division is really deeply concerned about is as there are new accreditation requirements coming down and labels on schools for being off track or need support we're wondering what the General Assembly and the Governor's Office will do to provide that need support and we hope that'll look like dollars that will help us move our per pupil spending up especially for our populations

[00:05:17] that are going the fastest, which are English learners and students with disabilities. Just some more facts about the school division. We have about 200,000 IT devices in the school division. We serve about 24,000 breakfasts and 56,000 lunches a day.

[00:05:35] 72,000 students are eligible to ride our 908 buses, and we log about 11 million miles a year. Our budget, around \$1.3 billion in proposed costs, \$11.7 million in square foot facilities.

[00:05:52] We have another \$481 million in construction and capital expenses this year. Moving on, just some highlights. We have been committed to energy and sustainability. We've spent about, since saving,

\$79 million in energy conservation and avoidance since 2012.

[00:06:12] We have bottle refilling stations. We are putting solar arrays on, another point for our legislators that is becoming a problem for all of Northern Virginia, and it is, Dominion is charging us very high charges for connectivity fees for our solar arrays, whereas NOVAC is not charging us anything, and so this is a real concern for Eastern Prince William, all of our schools where we're trying to do solar arrays, all of Fairfax and Arlington, Alexandria, and so we have some real concerns on this and so any help on these matters with Dominion and connectivity fees the charges are

[00:06:51] so high for example at Freedom High School if we were to put solar arrays on the building Dominion wants to charge us 1.2 million dollars and that eats into all the savings of going solar so we're moving a lot of those projects to the western part of the county and I think that is because Novak is not charging us and it's a real question about how can Novak not charge us and what is Dominion charging us and that's a real issue they're waiting on some judgment from the corporation commission but any any help on that but that's an important aspect for the work we have to do learning and achievement for all many of you have if you're not you should become familiar with our strategic plan the language we use is learning and achievement for all our goals have been 95% at the end of

[00:07:31] the four-year strategic plan is a goal of 95% graduation rate this past June we hit 94.3 very proud of that 60% of our goal our goal is to have 60% grads with graduates with earn at least one college career credential. Last year, we were 43.2%. So we're making progress there. Summer employment opportunities. Our goal was 3,500 students should have some type of summer employment opportunity. We hit 3,367 this past summer.

[00:07:59] So we expect to fully blow past that goal by next summer. Current formal business apprenticeships and internships. Our goal had been 500. We have blown past that goal at 763, And we're grateful to our entire community to support from the BOCS and all of the folks in the community who have stepped up to work with our schools, all the businesses and community organizations.

[00:08:22] One of the challenges that you all know we've been talking about for a number of years since the pandemic is chronic absenteeism. That has decreased across all groups over the last couple of years, and we're very proud of that work. but it is an ongoing effort and a real concern as we continue to face uphill battles both on per pupil spending but, you know, some of the changes politically we are concerned about, you know, the impact on our English learner students and concerns about, you know,

[00:08:56] making sure they attend school and have no fear of any issues. We have also very proud of the increases in the advanced placement participation and performance. That has increased across most groups and so that is another effort that we're making.

[00:09:16] So I want everyone to know that while we spend a lot of time and energy talking about English learners and students with disabilities, we are spending an equal amount of time on our students who are our general population students making sure they are having access to opportunities for gifted, advanced classes, IB programs, AP classes in our governor's school. Learning and Achievement for All, again, we talk about how many folks are licensed, our commitment to workplace readiness, how many students are earning credentials in our CTE programs,

[00:09:52] and all of those are going up. And we have 21 different CTE programs. We're continuing to add programs each year. And support from the state is critical to making sure those programs remain

successful so one of the the biggest achievements that that I think the the school division and I know every single school board member is extremely very proud of it and for our BOCS members who come to our tender graduation ceremonies many of you know we made a real commitment to trying to get as many students as we can to graduate we want to have with this last

[00:10:29] year we had a hundred percent of our students have a postgraduate plan they met with their counselors the school division with some of the monies we received over the last few years. We hired college and career counselors at every single high school and they've put in place making sure that every student has a plan for what happens after high school. Seventy-four percent of our graduates last year plan to attend a two or four-year college and this number is really incredible. We received 123 million dollars in scholarships for our seniors last year and that's a near quadrupling or tripling of the numbers from three to four years ago and that's real dollars in real pockets of real

[00:11:08] people in this county of your constituents and and they are very excited about this people will say you know we want to go to Prince William County Schools because they are committed to making sure our students have access to a you know a strong future and this is one of the ways where we can do that and we've spent a lot of time and energy and we want to see this number our strategic plan goal I think Dr. McDade has this as a at a crazy probably 250 250 million 260 is our goal for next year you know look you have to dream big and I and I think we will be getting very close to that and so we're gonna work really hard so and I and then I want to thank the BOCS for that too

[00:11:48] they have been very supportive on on all of those efforts their funding has increased to help us with those efforts as well to the school divisions so our legislative priorities very quickly we'll go through them and in your packet everyone has a folder it has the detail of our legislative priorities it has some information about the school division and some budget amendment forms and other things and I'll have maybe Jim council talk about some of that stuff that's in there as well but really quickly we want to strengthen Virginia's teacher pipeline so we support all legislation that would provide financial

[00:12:25] incentives to those who pursue teaching careers such as housing tuition we want to improve funding for school support positions you know this we talk about this every year but if you really want to make a difference for school divisions in the state the one thing you can do is remove the support caps we are still funded Virginia schools are funded at a lower level than we were in 2007 based on inflation adjustment and it is because of these support caps support caps are dollars that were dedicated to positions like counseling instructional coaches, instructional teachers, support positions for teachers. That money was all cut in 2007 in the recession and never fully restored. We get nickels and dimes each year, a little bit here,

[00:13:04] a little bit there. But if you really want to make a difference, if you're telling our schools that, you know, with the new accreditation requirements, you need support or you're off track, this change will dramatically increase the amount of dollars that Prince William County schools will get, as will all other school divisions. And you can make a real change. If we're running budget surpluses at the General Assembly I mean I think this is the the number one item I know all schools would would love to have you guys look at we want to increase options for elementary education endorsements support legislation that would change the elementary licensure requirements to allow practice exams to satisfy the content requirements for elementary

[00:13:43] education endorsement this allows us to help with our teacher shortage and really try to get more people into teaching early childhood development program staffing really important we want to increase licensure flexibility for those serving children under 2 to 5 we want to allow for teachers with endorsements to teach early childhood special education and that's really important while I tell you that our special education student population is growing our special education preschool population is really growing and that is really costing a lot of money and so we really need help in that regard support school construction renovation modernization support legislation that would provide state

[00:14:22] funding for and otherwise contribute to school divisions efforts to conserve energy natural resources through the expansion of renewable energy energy efficiency incentives and opportunities and again the Dominion interconnection fees are a massive issue for us moving on I will wrap up here sort of with our last slide which the last couple ones but some of the good news right so you know we we are the seventh best school division by niche rankings and there's a number of different companies that do rankings out there but niche is one of them seventh best in the DC metro area 14th best in

[00:14:58] the state when I started in 2017 we were 26th best that's right we made significant improvement and again I want to thank the Board of County supervisors who've taken their time to join us today their time and effort for their interest in our schools that their time and effort their staff spends on looking at our budgets and making sure that they're doing everything they can to support our schools we couldn't have got here without this I want to thank Delegate Chair Torian and all the delegation for over the last five six years the amount of money that has come to the school division the amount of resources has improved and that has all what I want you to know is we've

[00:15:33] spent that money efficiently we've spent that money with purpose and intention to improve outcomes and you see that here when you have outside groups looking at our division and validating the work we've done and then the next slide is just a list and again we have a copy of this in your thing of all the different awards our division is continues to win and and we continue to win you know at the professional development letter level with our teachers you know we have outstanding teachers our students are doing incredibly well they're achieving national you know rankings whether they're in the science fair whether in sports and then our sports teams are also doing well we're expanding our

[00:16:12] debate and speech programs and we're doing so many more things that many of you have asked us to do but many of these things cost money and and we continue to appreciate your support and continue to ask for more I will then turn it over so we have our our lobbyist our consultant Jim Council here as well we'll have a quick discussion and questions on schools and And I'll have Jim, if you want to offer any comments.

[00:16:41] Mr. Counsel? Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. You touched on what I consider our biggest issue in the upcoming session, and that is the support cap which we've wrestled with for years. Probably everyone knows that J-LOG did a very comprehensive K-12 funding study in the summer of 23.

[00:17:07] And in classic fashion, the General Assembly has now appointed a subcommittee to study the J-LOG study. So one thing they have acknowledged is that a lot of the proposals in the J-LOG study will take considerable time to study and implement.

[00:17:25] Because the recommendations in there with real ramifications to major changes like what to do with the local composite index. Rather, we should get away from a SOQ-based funding to something more long of per pupil.

[00:17:45] So what Prince William is doing to make this short and to deal with it in the short run is we have identified removal of the support cap as something that, along with J-Log, considered a short-term recommendation we think could be done in the upcoming General Assembly session.

[00:18:04] So we would urge support, and we'll be pushing hard to have that support cap removed in the next session. Thank you. Josh Thomas. Thanks. On behalf of, I guess, the whole General Assembly, yeah, you don't have to convince me that we need to ask Dominion to change a few things.

[00:18:28] So no problem. Absolutely, we'll be advocating for that. The support cap, certainly we've been made aware of that before. So Jim's been great about being very blunt about the need for that to change. I did have a couple of questions about your presentation, if that's all right.

[00:18:44] And if we don't have the data here, we can get another time. I really appreciated the slide on the AP exam, so it shows that we're addressing both ends of the spectrum. Yes. Do we know how those numbers compare to other school systems within the Commonwealth, particularly when it comes to the passage rate?

[00:19:02] I'm familiar with some school systems where they're way worse than that. you know, the school system's investing in the time to teach the class, but then the passage rate, call it a three or above on the test, is not great. Do we know how that compares to, say, Fairfax or Arlington?

[00:19:18] We haven't really done a comparative study with the surrounding districts, but what I will say is that year over year, the percentage of students that are achieving a passing score has continued to increase. So a point to note is that we, as well as enrolling more students in these courses, they're also completing the courses successfully.

[00:19:38] So this isn't a situation of more students getting in the course and not able to complete the course. So we're seeing both. We're seeing an increase across demographics in advanced coursework, but we're also seeing an increase in success rate and test takers. Perfect. Yeah, and I should have doubled down on that, because I want everyone to know our graduation rate improved in the context of more students taking advanced classes and doing better at the advanced classes than we had been in the past, and more scholarship dollars.

[00:20:05] So there's a number of metrics that show our rigor is continuing to improve, and then we're being rewarded for that rigor. And then for the college counselor piece, I forget which slide that was, do we know, I assume the student ratios have gotten better for how many students a counselor is counseling.

[00:20:26] Do we, we don't need it here, but can we just get what that ratio is and maybe how it's changed over time? That is actually a question sometimes we get. The ideal for high school, the National Counselors Association recommends 250 counselors to one student. We are right around 300 at the high school level.

[00:20:43] I think at the elementary and middle, we are achieving the recommended numbers. Yeah. And then does that counseling program, glad that we're pushing all different types of post-secondary education, is there also a track for the trades, the building trades, or any type of trade?

[00:20:59] Absolutely. In Prince William County, we've doubled down on career and technical education, and we have expanded that. As you saw, the number of courses have increased. We've got over 131 actual courses across all 13 high schools, across eight programmatic areas.

[00:21:16] But we have also increased our business partnerships. So today, we have 326 formal business partners that are supporting us in our efforts around CTE, and we have award-winning programs. So, yes, we are supporting, which is why the college and career counselor, so not just counseling, but career counseling is critically important.

[00:21:36] And students have an opportunity to have those conversations about which is the best pathway for them, not always being the traditional four-year college track, but whether or not they should go into a career straight out of high school, which is another reason that we're pushing the credentialing, making sure that students are not just getting college credentialing through AP or IB courses, but also that they're getting the CTE credentials so that when they graduate, you know, they have those in their back pocket because we know that their salaries go up exponentially if they have the credential in hand upon departure.

[00:22:09] So, yes, we have career counseling for CTE, and we are promoting students in CTE being credentialed upon departure from PWCS. That's outstanding. That's great. Last thing I'd just say is, or a question, love all the teacher pipeline expansion.

[00:22:26] I can tell you right now I'm aware of several bills that address that from members across the General Assembly. Anything that you can add that you think would be helpful on teacher retention? So for folks that have been around for 5, 10, 15 years, that the state could change something to help you with the retention piece?

[00:22:43] Because I know we've shed a lot of folks in the last five years since the pandemic. I would like for my human resource officer, because I know that she'll probably be a lot more eloquent on this than I will be. And I do think Dr. Donna Eagle is here. Is she?

[00:23:00] Okay. Donna, anything that you want to speak to on teacher retention that you feel like would be helpful?

[00:25:14] That was a great answer.

[00:26:41] Thank you, Donna. Any further questions, Josh? That was very helpful. Thank you. Talga Thomas, thank you so much. And then I think just I was told that I guess we're not videoing this. This is just being recorded by voice. Is that correct? know why that hi there's nobody looking at me in this camera then and then mr.

[00:27:00] shorter pointed out that I said 250 counselors to students 250 students per one counselor so anyways miss Bailey thank you first of all that was a sensational answer I appreciate that and welcome and to my colleagues question I noticed had the opportunity of sitting with two additional teachers this summer that was from another country and I thought that was amazing in this diverse community that we live in can you just put a snippet highlight that for us and

[00:27:36] how effective that's been for our school system no that's fine Donna you want to talk about it so we have our we work with participate to hire international teachers we set a goal in our strategic plan to have 350 international teachers representing the countries that our students in Prince William County represent. Right now, we, our students represent over 159 countries and over 170 languages spoken. And so the Participate program has been excellent for us in increasing diversity in the workforce so that our students are seeing educators, you know, from the same

[00:28:13] backgrounds that they have. And the research is clear on students being able to connect with individuals that are, you know, from like countries, from like backgrounds and ethnicity. So that program, I think we're almost at the 350.

[00:28:29] We're expected to surpass that number before, you know, by the time our strategic plan concludes, the first four-year strategic plan concludes. You want to add to that, Donna? To enrich our classrooms, but also once they go home, to enrich their classrooms.

[00:29:03] And so it has been a fantastic avenue for sourcing teachers. We use a lot of the teachers in our dual enrollment classrooms, I mean our dual language classrooms as well. The vast majority are native Spanish speakers, but we have teachers from really all over the world.

[00:29:20] This year, I think, in addition, Indonesia became a new source for teachers to participate. And I think we have nearly 20 teachers from that country. Each year right now, we always tell them we'll take as many as we can find.

[00:29:36] And so it's set up to where our principals get to interview them virtually. and it's a nice portal that's really just kind of like being across the table from them in the interviews. So I think we get about 120 a year, 120, 125. So in total, we're hoping to end up with over 600 in the division at any one time. And we're also looking for other partners. You know, one of the limitations, while I have the microphone, I appreciate it, is housing, okay? And so I can't say enough about housing and really what we need is we need an apartment building that we can fill

[00:30:13] up immediately. I mean we source so many teachers each year that we could immediately fill that apartment building. I know that there is interest in homeownership as well amongst our teachers and assistants there. The most immediate need though are apartments and there are school divisions all across the country that are building apartment complexes for teachers so that's something that that we're really interested in exploring.

[00:30:38] - Good plug. I have one thing to make. - Yes, Ms. Bailey, of course. - Just one last thing, I don't mean to hug the mic, but I want to take this opportunity to congratulate our superintendent for being superintendent of the year in our region. That's a big deal, that's a big deal.

[00:30:59] - Thank you very much. And so at this point, if there's no further questions, we'll, Ms. Zargarpur? - Not a question, just a comment. The new, Delegate Thomas, the new accreditation by VDOE is, Looking at something called 3E for high school, and that includes a little bit of the accreditation for high schools is going to include how many kids are going on in college, how many kids have a credential with CTE, and how many are taking the ASVAB and earning certain scores.

[00:31:31] So I forgot what the first E is, but the second E was employment, and the third E was enlistment. And so there probably will be a little bit of tracking. I just don't know if you're going to be able to compare-compare, but I would imagine you could. And I want to commend our division for having the vision for being able to set us up because I think we're in a great position to be able to continue that.

[00:31:51] The three E's is early college enlistment, right, and then employment. And so all of the things that were already in our strategic plan spoke to that. So when the accreditation changed for that particular area, you know, we're already pushing for those three E's already.

[00:32:07] The only downside is the timing of when this accreditation takes place. Like, there just isn't enough time, with it being this year that we're accountable for, you know, working with certain students who may want to enlist or students who want to select a career choice as opposed to early college, just the planning piece that has to go with that.

[00:32:32] But outside of the timing of implementation of the new accreditation system, all of those areas are already accounted for in our strategic plan and areas that we have committed to. Mr. Angry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[00:32:48] Just speaking to partnering, and it's probably going to give you the mic back here. Military spouses in the teacher program, I know there were those concerns about teachers coming from overseas, didn't have the same certification in the stateside. Has that been addressed?

[00:33:04] I heard a rumor that that was sticks or that teachers from the veterans, you know spouses teachers could now teach in classrooms bringing their certifications that they have or is that something that's still in the works generally Virginia accepts a fully licensed teachers from other states you know they have reciprocity with most all states I believe all states at this point but I know there's been some work in that area over the past few years so

[00:33:35] I think that that primarily has been addressed okay so I'll wrap up by just just saying, you know, the other major theme in our legislative priorities, which is consistent year to year, is we oppose all unfunded mandates. And, you know, we did send a letter with the other school divisions in Northern Virginia on the accreditation concerns from the Virginia Department of Education. And in that letter, one of our major concerns is funding for when you say we're off track or need support, what does that support look like? And I think it's important for the General Assembly to ask the governor, what does that mean? When you say need support, what is the Virginia

[00:34:13] department education going to do for schools and that's the real question we want to know because if you're not going to do anything then it's just another unfunded mandate for us and so our real concerns are that lastly I want to thank the delegation I want to thank the Board of County Supervisors we have made incredible progress in this school division one of the reasons it's becoming more costly to live here is because our schools are really good and it becomes a destination place so while we have success on that part it makes other challenges for our BOCS I know that makes it harder but it is something thing that continues to drive companies that want to come here, house here, whether it's Amazon. We are really working hard to do that, and we're thankful to all of you for the support

[00:34:52] to our schools. I'll turn it over now to Chair Jefferson. Thank you. All right, thank you so very much, Chair Lateef. I wanted to pick up on that thought about schools for a second. Education is the most important thing that we can invest in, particularly in a county like Prince William, where we are so diverse, where our students have different needs, we have to make sure we meet those demands. Education is what makes people want to live here, but it's also what makes companies want to do business here. So that is very critical. I'd actually like to start, I see that you have the legislative agenda. I'm actually going to turn that portion on to Glenn. I want to start with

[00:35:32] giving a little overview of Prince William County. So can we start with profile of the county? I don't know if that's the next slide. He took the clicker. I want the clicker. Thank you so very much.

[00:35:48] Y'all got some fancy technology up in this joint. Am I going the wrong way? Big one. Big one? All right. Here we go. So Prince William County, we are the most diverse county in the Commonwealth. We're also the second largest at close to half a million people.

[00:36:07] Diversity index, 73.7. Again, we're the 10th most diverse county in the nation, but number one in the Commonwealth. I love sticking that to Loudoun and Fairfax. Average household size, you know, 3.03. We also, we'll get into this a little bit more, we are a pretty affluent county, and we are also a pretty young county with a median age of 35.8.

[00:36:31] Population growth, we are growing. It is starting to slow as compared to previous years. But one of the things that we're facing, like other counties, is part of a housing shortage. And I appreciate, you know, the mention that there needs to be more workforce housing.

[00:36:47] That's something that this board is really taking seriously and that we're working on. Again, well-educated county, 44% of our population has a bachelor's degree or higher, and that's compared to only 34% with the rest of the nation.

[00:37:06] All right, budget. I am very proud to have worked with my colleagues on the Board of County Supervisors. We passed a unanimous budget earlier this year, and that was a huge feat for us. One of the things we did, and I'm going to skip actually to the second bullet, Data centers are a controversial topic, particularly in certain parts of this county.

[00:37:28] But we worked as a board to raise the computers and peripherals tax, or C&P tax, to \$3.70 per \$100 of valuation. That was the highest level we were able to go to. And because we did that, we were able to give more money to our schools, and we were also able to provide property tax relief.

[00:37:47] And I am going to say, as a result of raising the C&P tax, that has not prevented any businesses from wanting to come here and do business. So as you see, I love this slide, kind of a breakdown, where our money's going.

[00:38:05] You're welcome, Dr. Lateef. You see all that money going to school? You are welcome. You too, McDade. Thank you. Everyone in the building, you're welcome. All right. And this kind of shows, you know, as a percentage where our dollars are going.

[00:38:21] And so as you see, schools gets the vast majority of that. I'm just looking at mine, you know, safe and secure communities after that, health, well-being and environmental sustainability and government operations is only 6%. So we're running a really lean, mean operation here.

[00:38:36] So some budget highlights, big one again, education funding. Why do I keep saying that? Oh, yeah. As I said earlier, education is the most important thing that we can invest in. And that is what's driving growth in our county. We were able to increase year over year 13% or \$105.1 million.

[00:38:59] Another thing I'm proud of is collective bargaining for our police and fire. That's a huge thing. When you look at Northern Virginia region, we are competing against the federal government. We're also competing against other counties that are a little bit more well-funded.

[00:39:17] So making sure that we're working with our police and fire because, again, our first responders are everything. Another big thing, contributions to the housing trust reserve. This is critically important. The housing trust fund will allow us to work with developers to incentivize workforce housing as well as housing for our more vulnerable populations.

[00:39:40] All right, I am going to turn this over. Actually, now I'm going to go back a slide. I'm going to turn it over to our government affairs professional, Mr. Glenn Lupe, to take over our legislative agenda. My assistant, Mr. Weir, will have the clicker.

[00:40:06] Thank you, Madam Chairman, and now we're going to discuss the characteristics of the county legislative agenda as adopted by the board a couple of weeks ago. Just a word, though, about the dynamics of this session of the General Assembly.

[00:40:22] This is a short session of the General Assembly. It's not only a short session of the General Assembly. The governor is, in his last session of the General Assembly, is a lame duck, term limited out of, obviously, constitutionally. Even though there's a short session of the General Assembly, I think we can anticipate with resolutions somewhere between 2,500 and 3,000 pieces of legislation.

[00:40:48] And that's just our delegation. No, I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding. But given the governor's position and the short session, the third piece of the dynamic is the budget. On December the 16th, the governor will present his budget.

[00:41:09] According to the Virginia Association of Counties estimates that were presented a couple of weeks ago, we can probably anticipate about a \$1.5 billion surplus going into this session of the General Assembly of revenue exceeding estimates. I think when the governor and the secretary of finance presented their presentation to the joint money committees in August, everybody kind of put their cards on the table at that meeting that the governor was going to pursue tax cuts. And I think Delegatorian and Senator Lucas kind of put their cards on the

[00:41:46] table in investments in K through 12 as a top priority. So we'll see how all that plays out in the coming weeks. In terms of the legislative agenda, there's really six overarching issues that we boxed each of these subject matters into transportation health public safety the economy education and the administration of government and we'll get into each one of those subtopics that are in front of you right now in transportation enhanced funding and flexibility for improving

[00:42:24] roadway safety for all users enhanced authority for counties to deploy and administer photo speed monitoring devices this is a long-standing request within the county legislative agenda But this year, this same language is echoed in the Virginia Association of Counties legislative agenda.

[00:42:43] Removing ambiguous language regarding eminent domain, which is a subject that goes back to legislation that Senator Openchain introduced about three years ago. Restoring NVTa funding, restoring funding supplanted by the federal pandemic relief funds, and advancing enhancement and expansion of multimodal public transit.

[00:43:00] The subject of funding streams is a subject that is now the subject of a two-year General Assembly study. The second year of this study, in a study committee chaired by Senator Eben of Fairfax, is going to dive into the subject of funding streams for every transportation entity in Northern Virginia.

[00:43:22] The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, OmniRide, and VRE. And they're going to be looking under every rock for improving and creating consistent and predictable funding streams for all of those transportation entities.

[00:43:39] This year's agenda specifically requests a resolution to VEDA to conduct a needs and capacity assessment for truck-to-trailer parking on I-66 and 95 corridors. This is a subject that came up really

initially through Supervisor Gordy, putting his eye on some federal appropriations where the Congress, in terms of the current budget, is contemplating appropriating about \$200 million for this subject.

[00:44:06] Our county transportation department has raised this as a safety concern, a capacity concern, and VDOT needs to pay more attention to it. We had a productive discussion with Delegate Henson and Senator Rohn's office regarding drafting this resolution to the General Assembly.

[00:44:25] In terms of community health, obviously the Crisis Receiving Center has become a cornerstone project of the county's legislative agenda. This year, because of the designation of the facility receiving the designation of an institution for mental disease, It could impact the Medicaid reimbursement rates, which is a serious budget issue for the county.

[00:44:50] We've developed, I think, with the county staff a solid political strategy, legislative strategy, and a regulatory strategy to address this. And we'll be working with the House Health Committee, the members of the Senate delegation, as well as the governor's administration on this legislation.

[00:45:11] This is a subject that bridges our state and federal delegations, and we've had outstanding assistance from Congresswoman Wexton and Spanberger's offices and Senator Warner and Cain. We look forward to working with our two new House members and Senator Cain and Senator Warner in the coming year on this subject, but there will be General Assembly language that also seeks to address this subject.

[00:45:36] The remaining pieces of the puzzle on that page, the Juvenile Services Facility, Behavioral health workforce community capacity for services case management system all of those subjects are carryover items from previous versions of the legislative agenda we did include special language though regarding the telehealth services it seems like every session since the pandemic there's legislation to address telehealth services and expanding that as a resource for the citizens of the county and i don't think this session will be any different in terms of safe and secure

[00:46:15] community adequate funding for pre-trial services all of these bullet points are carryover items the 599 funding which could be under a microscope again transportation resources for tdos reclassification of public safety telecommunicators as a new item as a protected service category and this is included in this year's legislative agenda asking that the general assembly fully fund constitutional officers, and we'll be monitoring the study regarding the use of non-sworn personnel to help our police department.

[00:46:49] We had a productive discussion in the last week with Delegate Maldonado regarding this top subject in terms of establishing a work group to look at the damage threshold amounts that have not changed for accident reporting, which has not changed since 2007, and amending the Virginia retirement system to allow for the rehiring of law enforcement retirees.

[00:47:09] And we've had productive discussions with members of the delegation on that subject as well. The subject of the drug supply chain security issue has been a subject that's become rather obsessive with all of our northern Virginia brethren since the notice from the Drug Enforcement Administration and the FDA that this regulation was coming down the pike.

[00:47:34] So we have a bundle of bills requested to address this with the Board of Pharmacy and the Department of Emergency Medical Services. We'd like to thank Delegate Thomas for submitting those matters for legislative drafting.

[00:47:50] We look forward to working with his office on that as well with Senator McPike and others to address each of those bullet points because this is becoming a multi-million dollar issue for Prince William County. and multiply that by 95 counties throughout the Commonwealth, and it's becoming a very expensive proposition to be addressed by every local government in the state.

[00:48:12] Regarding the economy, supporting our efforts with George Mason, broadband and military communities partnerships are all important parts of this puzzle. We'll be closely monitoring the cannabis legislation, gaming legislation, housing and land use policies in the data center study.

[00:48:31] It'll be released on December the 9th. As a crystal ball piece of the puzzle, all eyes will be glued to the JLARC presentation, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission presentation of its data center study at 10 a.m. December the 9th.

[00:48:49] I think the crystal ball says we can anticipate probably 15 to 25 pieces of legislation resulting from that study, not knowing what direction JLARC is going to take that specific subject. Regarding the subject of affordable housing, the county is requesting a revisiting of Senator McPike's Senate Bill 597 that allows local governments to include affordable housing policies in their comprehensive plans.

[00:49:22] We've had productive discussions with members of the delegation regarding revisiting this legislation, which the governor vetoed in the last session. And we're going to have a request to expand the use of allocated workforce training funds that were presented to Northern Virginia Community College to work with our county fleet department to include building trades in the use of those funds.

[00:49:46] In terms of education, we also have reviewed that really monumental JLARC report that addressed the underfunding of Virginia's K-12 programs. The number came out to about \$1,900 less per student than the average across the country and said that we were spending less per student than Mississippi and Alabama.

[00:50:12] And I think that's the reason that that JLARC study did result in a new study group, which is going to present, I think, Senator Locke has her eyes on looking under every single rock to address the composite index, other means of properly funding K-12 education.

[00:50:32] There was a report issued at the Virginia Association of Counties meeting a couple of weeks ago, which put a dollar figure on this, which has not really been publicly discussed that much, and it amounts to about \$3.3 billion annually. Not a one-shot deal, \$3.3 billion annually to raise that threshold.

[00:50:53] So with that, we also echo the school board's request to repeal the support cap funding ratio, which goes back to when it was Governor Cain instead of Senator Cain, when that came about, and the General Assembly hasn't revisited that subject since. And we look forward to them doing so and echo the school system's request to do that under administration of government those initial pieces of the puzzle have not changed from last sessions of the general assembly but we want to bring attention to the tax policy issues that the general assembly will be confronting in the not

[00:51:29] too distant future there's two major joint subcommittees addressing tax policy right now The Delegate Vivian Watts has the Tax Policy Preferences Subcommittee, and Senator Lucas has the Joint Subcommittee on Tax Policy comprehensively.

[00:51:48] This will probably result in one of the most comprehensive collection of recommendations that the General Assembly has confronted in a lot of years on overhauling our system of taxation, and I

think that's going to end up making proposals to restructure the dynamic and the relationship between Virginia's local governments and that of the Commonwealth.

[00:52:09] So that's the reason we're going to be keeping very close eye on the outcome of both of those tax policy groups. And we want to echo the language in the Virginia Association of Counties environmental section of their legislative agenda in order to help the county meet its environmental sustainability goals.

[00:52:30] And this year, due to the increasing number of subjects that are bridging our state and federal delegation, we included a collection of federal agenda items for us to be monitoring and working with the new administration, the new Congress.

[00:52:45] Obviously, the political and legislative dynamics are changing rapidly, daily, if not hourly, in Washington. I think you can see by that collection of issues right there the number of federal issues that Prince William County has a vested interest in.

[00:53:02] And we look forward to working with our two new members of the House of Representatives and Senator Warner and Senator Cain's office to address each of those items. Thank you. And that's the legislative agenda going into the 2025 legislative session. Thank you so much.

[00:53:18] Before we take questions, I just want to recognize a couple of people who have come in. First of all, we have Congressman-elect Eugene Vindman. You see why I gave you a seat at the table? It's because I'm going to be asking a lot of things from you. Okay, it's Christmas. Merry Christmas. I also want to recognize Senator Danica Rome and also Delegate Michelle Malinata, who walked in at the right time as we're getting ready to mention you in the presentation.

[00:53:43] So Delegate Thomas, you are no longer alone. You no longer represent the entire General Assembly or entire government. So, you know, outside of local government. So with that, we will open up for questions. Delegate Thomas. Thank you. I will defer some of the other items like data centers to some of my other colleagues here.

[00:54:02] But when it comes to affordable housing and just housing policy in general, whether it's market rate or affordable, I do want to express back to the board that it is kind of a new day in the legislature when it comes to affordable housing. There are partnerships getting built literally right now at this very moment on the other side of the Commonwealth and throughout the last six months between the home-building community and the legislature to become much more creative and much more flexible on how to stimulate a rapid increase in the housing supply between the private sector and private-public partnerships, both at the federal level, whether it's low-income housing tax credits, or here at the state level with the HOTC credit, and to be even more creative

[00:54:41] with how we can assist local government in getting the type of housing when and where they want it. That said, I would just -- so while we continue that fight, I would just request from local governments to continue that same level of creativity. And I would also just put a little plug when it comes to the ADUs.

[00:55:01] I would also look at modular ADUs that can be mass produced and put in places. When you talk about needing whole apartment buildings for teachers that are just coming from a temporary period of time, there are 12 companies in the United States right now that can mass produce ADUs, construct them, and sell them for \$200,000 to \$300,000 as full homes, which is the exact target for workforce housing that we keep talking about again and again and again, regardless of the AMI, not to just really drill down into

the policy right here, but I would just ask the board to continue to be flexible in those issues as well as we try to replicate that at the state level.

[00:55:36] Oh, wait, I'm ready. So first of all, I want to say we are a growing county. Again, it's starting to slow, but we need to get people excited that we are a growing County that people actually want to live here. With that, we've actually been working with developers on workforce housing, particularly housing that you can buy. I came to Prince William County back in 2015 because this was the affordable place to be. On my Hill salary, making my \$2 an hour. You know, Hill staff are making \$5 an hour, really can't afford to buy.

[00:56:08] So one of the things we've been focused on is working with developers. And we have a number of units that are for sale that are in the \$300,000 range. You know, we just have to work to make sure that we're promoting it, that people know about it. But you're right. We are working to get creative. What are things that we can do?

[00:56:24] Because, again, it is a nationwide housing shortage. It's not just Prince William County. It's not just the DMV region. You know, we have a nationwide housing shortage. And even as interest rates have risen, home prices have not gone down. It's because we simply don't have enough supply.

[00:56:43] But, you know, we are going to lean hard on Richmond, on getting access to 2304, which would give us additional flexibility for creating an affordable housing, you know, like dwelling ordinance. And that's what we really need. So I'm putting back on you, bro. I'm putting back on you and the entire General Assembly, because we need that flexibility. And that's one of the things with being a Dillon Rule State. It's a mother may I, you know, a lot more jurisdictions can use access to that ordinance. Madam Chair. Thank you, Madam Chair. If I could just add it to that. That's great, great points. And thank you for the conversation around affordable housing.

[00:57:18] as was said it's a big topic here in Prince William County one thing I wanted to add to that is actually didn't deals back with some of the funding asks that we've already made schools a big one transit transportation is another big one because one of the struggles we found locally and I'm sure we're not unique in this is as we've talked about affordable housing and increasing the density around certain areas of the county that needs to to facilitate that then we have rightfully so constituents who are concerned about school capacity roadway capacity transit things like that so we're at a place where we are ready as as chair madam chair said to make those kinds of investments and make

[00:57:55] that kind of big push alongside development partners however without more help from the state to allow us to shore up our even our built-up areas in terms of infrastructure from transit and transportation and school funding especially it's harder for us to get there because on one end we're having a communication challenge with our constituents because they already see around them there's all these houses all this traffic why are you guys building more housing well on the back end then they don't see how the fact that we're trying to do this actually that help there's there's a quality of life in the long term because it helped stabilize those housing prices that gone up so much over the last especially five to ten years so any help that you all can

[00:58:33] give us alongside the nexus of economic development and housing which I know the general assemblies will be looking at this year but also education and housing Because frankly, we have a lot of legacy schools in this county that need help, especially in those areas that we want to build up in terms of affordable housing.

[00:58:48] But right now, we're just having, and the school division can speak to this as much as any of us could, those challenges of what do we prioritize since there's not enough funding around to do that. And Delegate Malinato. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Supervisor Bodie, for that, too, and my colleague, Delegate Thomas.

[00:59:06] So this is an issue we've all been struggling with quite a bit. You're right, it's not just the Commonwealth. It is certainly all over the nation. I just want to raise a couple of things, particularly at the intersection of education. So you probably are aware we passed the highest sort of funding for public education this session in recent history for Virginia.

[00:59:28] So we recognize those gaps that really intersect at housing and workforce and such. We will have, so for those who are new to and aren't aware, I serve as our chair for our Affordable Housing Policy Committee for the House Democratic Caucus.

[00:59:46] Now that our legislation, our pre-file briefing deadline has passed, I'll be putting together all the housing legislation, and as we release those, and I'll have them aggregated so people can see what we're working towards in 2025 for housing.

[01:00:04] The other thing to think about is that each year, we didn't do it in 2024, but we have an annual regional affordable housing. I know County Executive Shorter and others in the room were participants last year where we're bringing together the two cities of Manassas, Manassas Park, as well as the county, and we bring in developers, we bring in residents, we bring in folks in the housing space to really tackle sort of from a 360 lens from a regional standpoint because oftentimes we can pull on block funding and leverage some resources when we do it from a regional capacity.

[01:00:43] So that will be happening again in the spring. Hopefully March, we've got to figure out a date in March that works for everybody, but that's going to be coming as well. One thing that I would suggest to folks, and people have done such a great job this year, is getting to us ahead of our pre-filing deadline, But please make sure that even though it's passed, if there are things that we can't get into for next session, remember that our budget is biennial.

[01:01:11] So next year is the last year of our biennial budget, and we're going to be looking to build for the new budget. So I would say don't worry about the things that have passed. We can build towards the next session, and I think there are some creative things that we can do in the housing space that aren't just private-public partnerships, but go to tax incentives and some other assumable things in the housing space that we can focus on.

[01:01:36] Thank you. Thank you. Next we have Senator Rome and Supervisor Gordy. Thank you, Madam Chair. It's great to see you as well as to see everyone else who's here today as well. So on page 19 for the presentation, there was a part about due diligence of FOIA legislation, and I wanted to speak to that for a bit.

[01:01:52] So we put my bill in this past year that we sent to the FOIA Advisory Council, And that then created a work group to basically determine what are we going to do to basically figure out how do we prevent abusive FOIA fees in the first place.

[01:02:07] These being the sort of ones where we saw right here in the county a few years ago where we had a mother who wanted to see what happened to her daughter on a bus. I don't need to relitigate this,

but long story short, she's going to be charged \$8,800 for it. And that price was later brought down, but it should have never happened that way in the first place.

[01:02:25] And so on her behalf, I've been pushing and pushing and pushing this for years. So we've now had about five or six meetings of the work group. That work group has a policy that we're now sending over to the full FOIA advisory council that's going to be up for a vote some point in December, and then we will be introducing legislation based on that.

[01:02:44] The short version of this is it is based in part on precedent out of York County where they are taking the median salary of someone who works within any particular department, and that is the cap for which a FOIA fee can be charged.

[01:03:04] And there are ways to petition a court to go beyond that fee, but those are going to have to be in pretty much extraordinary circumstances or you're dealing with something rather significant such as attorney's fees. We kind of deal with that within the legislation as it's proposed right now.

[01:03:21] However, right now I only have a placeholder bill as I'm waiting for that final approval from the FOIA Advisory Council to come in. So just know that in terms of due diligence, we have done more than our due diligence over years of tackling this issue regarding that.

[01:03:36] Next thing, every year I work on school meals legislation. This past year I was able to bring you back a little extra money by increasing the reimbursement rate for school breakfast by an extra six cents. This upcoming year we're swinging for a little bit bigger for the fences. We got two things we're working on.

[01:03:52] Number one is to give you all a higher reimbursement rate for actually higher incentive rate. For CEP schools that fall in the 25% to 39% threshold for basically achieving funding in order for you to make it affordable to do it.

[01:04:11] And CEP by its nature is supposed to be affordable at the same time because you're not getting a reimbursement rate for that 25% to 39% threshold that's consistent with 40% and above. We're going to see if we can find a way to close the gap at the state level.

[01:04:28] The other thing I'm going to continue doing is pushing universal free breakfast. We know that the current administration does not support universal free school meals in general. We're going to see if basically we can at least meet them halfway on breakfast. Other than that, I'm going to, when it comes to Delegate Thomas' comments earlier regarding data centers, I'm reserving at least five slots in my legislative agenda that's going to be dealing with recommendations that come back from JLARC.

[01:04:55] And the long story short with it is I understand that we are going to have a lot of different bites at this. I understand there has been significant hesitancy from the county and from other players within the state government on this. At the same time, even though I've not been able to see what the JLARC report is ahead of time, I do know that at least based on the topics, they are looking at a lot of the bills that we had submitted in these last couple of years of how to corral an industry right now where you're having significant problems with land use especially in western Prince William we are having significant problems with our electric with our

[01:05:35] electrical infrastructure especially in regards to transmission lines right now and beyond that above ground transmission lines currently under proposal in my district that are already well to put it

mildly not popular among the people who live there we have major concerns about the impact on wildlife impact on tree canopy impact on stormwater management as well as impact on our state park and common robinson memorial state forest as well as the manassas national battlefield among other sites we have a whole slew of issues that have come up with this that we're going to

[01:06:11] have to address legislatively i do not expect the upcoming session to be the one where we knock every single thing that we want on the agenda out of the park in one year especially when we have an administration that supports \$35 billion with EB of more data centers just from Amazon alone, which is unsustainable and untenable.

[01:06:31] We do not have anywhere even close to the infrastructure to support that. And the larger concern that I have with this that actually I'm glad to see our congressman electives here for is going to be the national security concerns where you have with clustering so many of these within two localities alone.

[01:06:48] And we already saw a problem earlier this year out in Gainesville. we can talk about that one more offline later but the long story short on this is there are so many costs that are associated with this i just want everyone to understand that as we are approaching this it is not done with malicious intent of pointing a finger at the county for saying bad job it is done with the idea saying that we are not in a place where we can support well just bluntly for future growth in the county with where we are right now we have to get so much of this under control and my constituents in western Prince William particular are absolutely adamant

[01:07:26] that we do so thank you manager thank you and since real quickly on data centers I've mentioned this to the board and I also want to mention it publicly you know I think Mr. Shorter we should really look at doing a work session next year on data centers because it is such a important topic in our county not just land growth I mean land use but in terms of environment as you mentioned in terms of electricity and you know to be quite frank it's a problem that really does affect the Western and the county more so it's something we cannot sweep under rug because it's only a few districts impacted we have to have a real conversation about what this means if we're gonna be one Prince William County

[01:08:04] what does that look like and so that's something I'd like to explore next year doing a work session you know the board of county supervisors on discussing data centers but with that I'd like to go to supervisor Gordy thank you madam chair senator rome thank you for those comments appreciate everything that you've been doing to help bring some rationality to this to the data center development within the commonwealth particularly western prince william again in an area that's being completely inundated and saturated with these with this development and the impending power challenges along with it

[01:08:40] thank you for providing that leadership in the general assembly for us i also want to hit something on the affordable housing um last year we couldn't get it across the goal line because the governor vetoed the bill um supervisor franklin and i are are teaming up on this to work both sides of the aisle um so whatever we can do as we are working this uh this uh policy through the general assembly for us to get to 2304 and then to push it across the finish line um you know that's something that we're committed to do so look forward to a proactive partnership

[01:09:18] in this as we go through the general assembly session we believe this gives us the greatest flexibility to meet the affordable housing needs within the county and so 2304 uh is is essential to that so

appreciate your leadership and look forward to working with all of you on this um one other item on page 19 that it uh it's right now it's a monitor but i did have a meeting last week with prince william water uh in the issues related to water quality and water quantity are continue or bubbling up no pun intended um the uh the pfas the salinity and and granted the

[01:09:57] the conversation around salinity tends to go back to road treatments during the winter time which is a vdot issue so as we're monitoring this this is something that we're probably going to eventually probably take more of a proactive stance on as we begin to try to understand what the impacts are on and again as data centers come on they're going back to water cooling so what does that do to water quantity and then subsequently that to water quality so as we continue to work through some of these issues while we're monitoring it this year i believe this is the opportunity if

[01:10:35] If there is an opportunity for us as a county, if the state is looking at making some investments in studies, we certainly like to be a part of that conversation and be at the table. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you. Supervisor Franklin, then angry. Sure, yes, thank you.

[01:10:51] And thank you for that, Supervisor Gordy. And actually, I think we're working together on some of the water quality issues as well. And we were just speaking, and I think most members of the General Assembly are already aware that the specific issue with regards to salinity comes to a lot of the salt treatment that goes to the roads.

[01:11:09] And the unfortunate part is that there are not a lot of alternatives to use versus salt. But I know that's something that we want to push VDOT to continue to explore ways so that we can reduce what's going into the Occoquan Reservoir. So thank you for bringing that up.

[01:11:25] Affordable housing, obviously, we've talked about that a lot and obviously very supportive of the fact that, you know, Several years ago, the Board of Supervisors brought forth an ordinance that we're still working on, hoping to get passed. As many of our colleagues mentioned, 2304 to members of our General Assembly is going to be incredibly important in terms of us being able to have the most flexibility.

[01:11:51] But I also want to say that we do have a draft ordinance that I'm hoping to vote on, even if we don't get 2304 passed. And I think that's going to be important to still move forward. The one thing that I will mention with regards to affordable housing that we haven't talked about is immediate housing assistance.

[01:12:07] We have the ordinance that's going to help us create more affordable housing stock long-term, which I think is incredibly important. But we also need resources to provide immediate housing assistance. When the pandemic started, we put forth a program, the housing assistance program, that provided mortgage, rental, and utility assistance for those negatively impacted by COVID.

[01:12:31] That is something that I'm pushing for as a separate program for us to continue for those that are going to be evicted next week or for those that are facing some type of rental or mortgage or utility shortage in the immediate term. And so I just want to encourage our General Assembly to also maybe think about ways that we can partner on legislation that brings us resources for that.

[01:12:53] A couple other things I just want to mention. Several of us are part of the Virginia Association of Counties, and our number one legislative priority is that education JLARC study. And so to members of the school board, we are with you 1,000 percent, both in removing the cap and making sure that we can change the way we do education funding by formula.

[01:13:15] in the Commonwealth of Virginia. We know that the way in which we do it puts us at a disadvantage in comparison to even states like Mississippi. And so obviously this is a great county and we have great school systems and the Commonwealth has great school systems throughout, but we can have even better school systems if we change the way in which we do formula funding.

[01:13:37] Also, I just want to point out that our school system has done an incredible job. I only have one high school in my district, which is Freedom High School. We've increased graduation rates decreased truancy rates I think we have more students into specialty programs than ever before and it's because of the work that our superintendent our school board have done and because of the work that the school our board supervisors has put into in terms of funding and more funding than ever to our school board but let me just say that our school board can do even better if we change the way in which we did funding the commonwealth they deserve better they've done an incredible job you've heard that they are the

[01:14:15] number one employer in this county and so if we want to continue to rise and be one of the top performing school systems we have to make sure from a state perspective that we're giving them the resources just a couple more things transportation just want to hit on that very quickly one of the things that we haven't talked about is the fact that localities need more flexibility in how we mitigate our transportation issues so for instance if we want to get some traffic lights or or increase or decrease speed zones we have to get permission obviously from

[01:14:52] the commonwealth I think it'll be great if we can work with the CTB the commonwealth transportation board to look at their VDOT standards for speed mitigation particularly so that localities can have more flexibility in how we implement our own mitigation measures I know what the challenge is right if CTB reduces some of the levels by which localities have to measure up to get some type of resources from VDOT the challenge is that will trigger funding all across the commonwealth of which is probably unaffordable but whatever we can do to be creative in giving localities more

[01:15:31] flexibility in these issues I think will be incredibly important. One good example, Supervisor Angry and I have always talked about Cardinal Drive and how there have been several accidents resulting in death over the past couple of years on Cardinal Drive and people speeding, but when we do a speed study, VDOT shows that there are no real issues, but we know that there are, right, and it's because the standards are so high, and so just want to make sure that we're working hand in hand. I think we have an excellent partnership with our members of the General Assembly. And such as Dr. Lateef said, I just want to thank you all for the support that you've given

[01:16:07] so far and just want to make sure that on these top issues that we're continuing to work together. So thank you. All right, Supervisor Angry. Thank you, Madam Chair. And just to talk about those standards of VDOT, you know, there's a number of deaths that has to occur on a roadway before they take it serious. No one wants to tell anyone who's lost anyone that, oh, it's only one person that died, so we can't do anything. So the hard part of that conversation is really trying to get VDOT to a point where we can actually have some influence at boots on the ground level being here in the county for a cardinal drive situation that we need to be able to address that individually.

[01:16:47] So to my point, and thank you, Supervisor Franklin, for kind of leading me into it, is on the transportation. As we talk about these speed monitoring devices, we really need you all to get-- we need more authority in the simple fact that when you talk about school zones and construction zones, Cardinal Drive has neither.

[01:17:06] So we need to have some more leeway into making decisions where we can and can't put a speed camera. Now, I know we have police officers, but our police officers can do more. And we right now live in a technology age. Why aren't we doing more with technology that we have?

[01:17:23] This is a common thing that we could use technology to our advantage. So why we're not doing that, I don't understand. I think we need to really invest and look into that. Just kind of keeping to this point, I want to talk a little bit about the transportation. So one of the key pieces of transportation is our OmniRide bus system.

[01:17:42] And I heard Glenn speak about they're going to do a transit study about all transit. I just want to make sure that when they do that, They look at our OmniRide bus system as that priority. Right now, we are in a place where our well is run dry on a dedicated funding stream of this bus system.

[01:18:03] So we're really going to need Richmond to really look into a viable solution that actually invests into our bus system. Now, let me be real about this. We've been discussing a metro in this area for the longest. I don't foresee that happening anytime soon, if ever.

[01:18:23] I'll just put that out there. But we do have a VRE train rail system that has a bridge that's going to be put in by 2029, 28, 30, whatever that is. That can help us out here. But the reality is we have a bus system that will not fail in Prince William County. And we're going to need support and funding to make that thing grow.

[01:18:40] Prince William County is 348 square miles. We are one of the largest localities that when schools close on the east end of the county in its shining sun, We know that it snowed in the mountains, and that's what caused the schools to be closed because that's how big this county is. It can snow on one end and be sunny on the other, and that's the reality of this county.

[01:19:00] So one of the things I just want us to pay attention to is that we have a bus system that supports this entire county from the east to the west with two thriving systems of hubs that we really need to invest in. So I just want to put that as a high priority. The last thing I want to talk about is our drug supply chain, and you've seen this slide here.

[01:19:18] Now, let me just say in the reality, someone horribly dropped the ball on this, and I just want to put it like that. And we know that this has been a 12-year process to get rid of this drug system out of hospitals, meaning that fire departments were going to own this.

[01:19:33] We didn't do a good job, and I want to say Richmond didn't do a good job. Someone didn't do a good job of implementing this. We literally had last week to implement this with now an extension to April, but the reality is it's going to be implemented. Now, I'm not speaking just for Prince William, because Prince William, Loudon, Fairfax, we're large localities.

[01:19:51] We can do this. There's 95 counties in this Commonwealth, and I don't know how many cities and towns. And what we've done in this program to actually do this has hurt everyone. Now, as an executive of VACO, Virginia Association of Counties, this is something that's a Commonwealth issue that we really need to be addressing and look and see what we can do from Richmond to actually help sustain this or figure this out.

[01:20:16] And I know we're going to put this into place, it's going to happen, but there's a better way that we could have done this, and there's something that we can still do to help smooth this transition for other

localities that are in a much more dire situation than we are, even to the point of what we had to do to get ourselves situated.

[01:20:32] I really feel that Richmond has some work to do and smooth lining and transitioning that process. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you so very much. We're going to go to Supervisor Bailey and then Mr. Loop. Thank you, Madam Chair. Let me start with page number 20.

[01:20:50] Congressman-elect, your interest was impeccable, and thank you for being here with us this morning. But I wanted to just highlight on page 20 for you two things. One is the second bullet, Institution of Mental Diseases Designation and Regulations.

[01:21:09] My mantra is, as a champion of the CRC with my colleagues, is you heal minds, you heal the land. And so I want you to keep that in mind and make sure that mental health is not swept under the rug anymore in this land. And so the next bullet is the one about the Marine Corps-based Quantico.

[01:21:28] We have developed an extremely good relationship that has been improved and progressed with Marine Corps-based Quantico. We're lucky to have that institution in our county. And so if you would give your focus to that as well as we move forward, One of the things that we have been focusing on is, as you know, Quantico Town is on that other side of Quantico Base.

[01:21:53] And so to make sure that we are focusing on humanity and making sure that we are serving at a higher level with that township, I would appreciate the focus in terms of the security level there and how do we get those citizens in and off the base in a more progressive way.

[01:22:09] So just highlighting that for you. And then on page 14, yes, page 14, just want to, again, bring it to your attention, all of you who have really supported statewide, federally, and, of course, locally, the CRC.

[01:22:28] Elijah, thank you so much. The CRC, that will be an absolute service to our region. And so we thank you for keeping your focus on the Crisis Receiving Center. It's very important, not just to adults, but to our babies. And kudos to the school system for keeping the focus on our babies as it relates to the crisis receiving center.

[01:22:50] We appreciate the support. We had a little snag, as Glenn had mentioned, in terms of DMAS not providing Medicaid, saying that it was going to be a mental institution, not a crisis receiving center. So understanding the whole realm of what that means is important.

[01:23:07] But I just want to highlight that to say thank you to all of our delegations for supporting that entity. It will make a game-changer in our county. And then on page 13, as Glenn had mentioned and my colleagues had mentioned, most of us here on the Board of County Supervisors are in VACO.

[01:23:29] And one of the things that we really did focus on was the two things, really, was the speed cameras. Thank you to our public safety entities that are teaching us more about public safety. But that is a pinnacle focus that we'll have here in the county in terms of saving lives.

[01:23:47] We've had fatalities, and my colleagues have mentioned on Cardinal Drive. So if you could please make that a focus as you're governing, we would appreciate that. But in closing, just appreciate the legislative body for being here today to make sure that you hear us as we hear you.

[01:24:03] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you so very much, Mr. Loop. Just wanted to note regarding the subject of affordable housing that the governor announced about three weeks ago his intent to create a

\$75 million, what he's calling workforce housing initiative.

[01:24:19] And I assume and hope that he'll be outlining the details of that in his budget presentation in December. So we'll share, Jim and I will share the details since that seems to be a very shared concern. Yeah. So I just wanted to, since you brought up the topic of housing, you know, UVA, which owns the two hospitals, Haymarket and Prince William, you know, had housing issues in Charlottesville.

[01:24:51] And I want to just point out that one of the things we did at UVA, and they're one of the largest, and I served on their board as chair of their health system board. So we had major problems for housing nurses and security personnel and folks starting in their first jobs in Charlottesville. We took three properties, one near the hospital, one near the university, one near the research center.

[01:25:10] and we leased them for a 99-year lease at \$1, and we did an RFP to developers to build 1,500 apartment units. Whoever won the RFP would agree to build those units, \$1 lease on the land, but rent them at 25% to 30% below fair market value.

[01:25:27] And that's an effort that's undergoing right now with Charlottesville, and we're looking at those kinds of things even in Prince William County. Now, UVA doesn't have any land, but as a point of order for the county, if you have things like that, These are some of the creative, innovative strategies that we don't have to wait for the General Assembly to help us with.

[01:25:44] There are things we can do. And I want to work with, and DeShundra's been very helpful and Kenny on this kind of work for our teachers. Well, one I want to say, and really I appreciate working with the school board on making sure, and I know we have a meeting coming up next month, or this month, it's already December, on the 17th, you know, on making sure that the schools have capacity.

[01:26:07] I mean, we're going to have a conversation, I believe. We're going to talk about your CIP process, if I'm not mistaken, redistricting. Because as we grow, we want to make sure that we have the right infrastructure. That's critically important, particularly in Brentsville, where we have a lot of growth coming.

[01:26:24] And, you know, I know, like, no school has overcrowding. That's a huge concern, and people are rightfully concerned about their schools and overcrowding. So we want to make sure that we continue to work with you, give you the funding that you need. But also, again, you are aware of what we're looking at and what growth is coming to the county.

[01:26:40] If there are no other questions, all right, Zargarpur, and then anyone else? Going once, going twice. Yeah, I was going to have you wrap it up. So I'm just going to take down notes. So we're going to get Zargarpur, Williams, and then if there's no one else, I would really like to invite our congressman-elect, Eugene Benjamin, to speak before we close.

[01:27:00] So Zargarpur, on to you. So very quickly, in the county side of things, you're asking the state to address the lack of state hospital beds. And I know we've got the crisis center coming, but crisis is crisis. And we need something a lot more comprehensive.

[01:27:18] And I'm just going to make the advocacy for adolescents because having gone through it myself with one of my own children, when there's no place to put them, there's no place to put them. And if you have someone with suicidal ideation and they just send you home and with a cross your fingers, good luck, that's not good enough.

[01:27:34] We need a continuum of services. If the federal government has something they can do, that's great. It's got to be considered just as important as cancer, as heart disease, as anything else. Because these are children that already we have a lot of regulation on what we do with them in these spaces.

[01:27:58] And there's not enough. So that's my plea. There you go. Thank you. And you made some very excellent points. You're right, it has to be as important as physical health, cardiovascular health, and other things you mentioned. School member Williams. Thank you, Chair.

[01:28:14] I just wanted to take the opportunity to say thank you to all of our elected officials that are gathered here today. I think that these type of events represent a good synergy that we have had with the Board county supervisors and been fortunate to have with our other electeds at the state and national level and I think that's one of the things that sets us apart about this county is there a continuous desire to work together to support all of our residents and I'm very proud to be an elected official here in the county and be able to do that and as we've talked about housing and education and funding I just think it's a good time to be mindful about our

[01:28:52] approach and that the fact that we do not exist in silos so whatever we do at the federal or the stat or the state or the local level affects all of us each and every day my biggest plea will continue to be supporting our constituents who often aren't given a microphone to be able to express their voice and I think that that is what we've heard here a lot today about housing and funding and affordability we did a fantastic job thanks to the Board of County Supervisors increasing our teacher pay but yet our incoming teachers can't afford to live here by themselves, or they're spending the majority of their salary and they can't eat and they can't afford a car. And I think that's really important. And I bring

[01:29:30] that up because it is something that we all talk about, but we have every level of government represented here. At our federal level, we have not seen an increase in what is considered below poverty level or poverty level, I think since 1970s. And that triggers everything that we do down to the local level. I can speak as a parent, the CPE and not having to pay for my child's breakfast and lunch and snacks after school has allowed me to do other things. But if I had to do that as a single parent, it would absolutely take away other privileges that I would be able to provide for my child. And as a neighborhood mom, I've often had many, many children in my house

[01:30:07] supporting them with extra dinners and giving recycled toys. And that's a community effort, but we shouldn't have to be dependent on local neighborhood moms. We should be able to do that for our own children. And I just want to applaud each and every one of you here for your dedication to making those changes so that we can continue to grow as a county and that we can continue to provide better services.

[01:30:29] And I applaud and encourage each and every one of you for continuing that fight, and I hope that we can work together as the new administration comes in and we have different opinions and different pathways to the same goal. But I like that we are able to have these conversations and set good examples for our constituents, and I hope that we are able to continue this good work.

[01:30:49] So thank you. Thank you, everyone. And again, if there's no one else, I will turn it. Oh, wait, Supervisor Franklin, just sneak it in. Sure, yeah. Before we get to the Congressman-elect, I do want to just point out that this is the first time, at least since I've been here, that we had a member of Congress or Congressman-elect or anyone show up to such an important meeting, at least for our state and local.

[01:31:14] So thank you for being here and just wanted to point that out before he spoke. We've got to butter them up before we make all those asks. seven years I've been here first time. All right, so first of all, let me say thank you so much for the warm welcome, Chair Jefferson, for the invitation and for the introduction, and I already have a list of tasks, even though I'm still a private citizen until January 3rd, but I missed the school's portion of the briefing. I hope to catch up on that, and frankly, I see a lot of

[01:31:49] friends and colleagues here, but there are others that I have not yet met, and so what I want to do is i want to pledge first of all i'd love to meet you have a one-on-one conversation and my intent is to be interactive with you um and also be accessible so prince william county is the largest county in the seventh congressional district we only have in the southern congressional district the eastern side but i will also pledge to work closely with my colleague in the 10th sue huss to make sure that we move this district forward and improve the quality of life for all

[01:32:24] people in in Prince William County and in the entire district so you know we have not received our committee assignments yet but a number of the topics that were discussed and that are on the on the federal priority list are areas where I anticipate that I may be on a committee that will be helpful in in that regard I'm going to be very focused on infrastructure and improving quality of life, veterans issues, the military installations that are in the 7th Congressional District, including the one that's here adjacent to Prince William County.

[01:33:04] And I've put a couple of kids, one still in school at Prince William County. So I appreciate the quality of the schools, and I know that we can do more. That's all I have. I'm sure we'll have many more conversations, but thank you so much for having me, and happy holidays.

[01:33:22] Thank you so much, and I'm going to turn it over to Barbara Lateef, and I'll say a few words to close us out. Yeah, so I'm just going to wrap up by saying thank you, and thank you, Congressman-elect Miniman. This is a true honor for us to have you here. We look forward to working with you. We'll set up a meeting to onboard you on the work we do at the school division and the concerns we have from federal government stuff, so thank you so much.

[01:33:45] Thank you again to all our delegates and senators and their staffs for being here today. We really appreciate it. I'll turn it over back to Chair Jefferson to close out the meeting and gavel out. Again, I really appreciate it. All members of the Board of County, Supervisors, we're going to have to vote to adjourn the meeting. I'm already giving someone a side eye. Move to adjourn.

[01:34:02] Second. All in favor? Aye. Thank you, Supervisor Franklin. We're adjourned. Thank you, everyone. Have a great day. And there's still food. Please grab some food and ride on the way out.

