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Prince William Board of County Supervisors Meeting, Tuesday, April 22, 2025

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- Official Board of County Supervisors page (Prince William County): <https://www.pwcva.gov/departments/board-county-supervisors>

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[00:23:36] Good evening, everyone. Let's get settled. It is 7 o'clock on Tuesday, April 27th. We are going to begin with a moment of silence. Thank you. All rise if you're able for the Pledge of Allegiance.

[00:24:12] I see a sea of red. We are now on to public comment time today. I'm awaiting the list. For those of you who have not spoken before, I will call you up. You'll go to the back. You have three minutes to speak and I would ask that you please look on the um television as a timer and when you get up there please state your name clearly um and where you generally reside so it would be

[00:24:51] dechandra jefferson potomac magisterial district so I have barry bradden ben baldwin iene johnson I love you I mean thank you for the pronunciation um and mitch nason uh good evening board members please adjust the adjust the mic because we can't hear you so well okay good evening more members I'm speaking on behalf of the hornbaker industrial park so what would I have the additional

[00:25:29] two minutes along with the five this is not a public hearing so you got your three minutes and I ask folks to sit down because fire marshal come on fire need everyone to take a seat if you're not speaking okay my name is barry braden uh we built the hornbaker industrial park overall for Hornbaker Road and University in 2000. And I'd like to speak basically against the proposed tax rate that we're looking to implement now because the data centers in the

[00:26:07] county, which I'm all for, they have driven our tax assessments through the roof. We have a 10-acre heavy industrial lot at Hornbaker, the tax assessment has gone up \$8 million in the last five years. The tax itself has gone up 200%. We're at a point now that we're going to probably have

[00:26:39] to wind up selling this to a data center. We currently have 48 tenants that are renting from us in this heavy industrial zoned area just for storage of cars from tow companies and other commercial businesses. With those businesses, we have approximately a thousand employees that are going to wind up having to leave the county. And I know that the tax rate's pretty

[00:27:11] much set in stone, but I'm hoping that somebody will at least think about this tonight because the tax rate itself, even with the one and a half cent decrease, the taxes on that one lot alone have gone up another \$10,000 this year. The assessment jumped another \$400,000 on one gravel lot, a flat lot, fence around it, some individual fencing, no buildings, no nothing,

[00:27:48] \$9 million now. So we've got to do something with this. Is it worth that? It's worth that to a data center but it's not worth that for heavy industrial so I'm hoping that that somebody will at least look at what it's doing to the businesses here not only the residents but you know the business as well and again I'm for the data centers I'm for any business in the county been a member of the commercial development committee for 25 years so add that to all the

[00:28:25] rest of the taxes that we have and you know we're almost taxed out of the county thank you for your time thank you I apologize if you're in line if you're one of the speakers I called up you can actually stand in the back but everyone else needs to make sure that they're seated um so next speaker good evening Ben Baldwin from Coles uh when I look at this budget and hear about the actions of the Democrat majority on this board I'm often reminded of the parable of the scorpion and the frog once again the majority has gone through all this pageantry to say how they're cutting real estate taxes while at the same time our real estate assessments as you've just heard

[00:29:01] continue to go up dramatically. Because of this shell game that means the average real estate tax to residents is actually going up by \$273. This is a con that has been perpetrated on residents of this county for years and you've had a chance to fix it and you haven't. Instead of that you're doubling down on irresponsibility. The school board comes to you with their budget request and we can fund it, which is all well and good, but apparently that's not good enough. The majority on this board decides to give them \$20 million more than they requested. Now, the schools aren't dumb, so they're going to take that money and add it to the \$101 million in cash reserves that they already have.

[00:29:39] They never say no to more money, and yet they're a better steward of the taxpayer dollars than you are. Now, the Republicans on this board did try to save you from yourselves. Supervisors Vega, Weir, and Gordy had reasonable proposals that would have fully funded the budget and saved the residents of this county money, but you wouldn't do it. Eliminate positions which have gone unfilled for months on end? Can't do it. Lower real estate taxes, so that way rising property value assessments won't actually increase our tax burden. Trim 1% from what we give to the schools when we're already giving them more than what they requested. Impossible. That would mean having

[00:30:17] to make hard decisions and governing instead of pawning off responsibility and playing budgetary shell games. Now, this is fiscal irresponsibility from people who honestly should know better, but then again, I am reminded of the parable of the scorpion and the frog. You're Democrats. You can't help yourselves. Spending other people's money is in your nature. Thank you.

[00:30:37] Next speaker, please. May I use it, please? Thank you, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. Thank you, ma'am.

[00:31:37] My name is Aine Johnson, and I am from the Woodbridge District. Proverbs 27.1. Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. another Tuesday is never promised. Three minutes given is three minutes wasted if I assume I can return next week. I made that mistake of saying that the other week I was here. So I'll not give myself the arrogant luxury of thinking God will allow me to return. Every three minutes I speak is for Bumpy, to leave him footprints, to tell him a story of family, to remind him he was never not

[00:32:11] thought of. My little boy, he was loved. Even though he was my foster son, he was loved. But the arrogance and pride of others, specifically here in Prince William County, Department of Social Services and select members of the board, was a direct target on my family. To you, Mr.

[00:32:30] Shorter, I know how you sign off your emails and the breadcrumbs you leave so someone will know how to contact you. To you, Andrea Bailey, you did not have to exchange pleasantries with me to gain access to information about my family. Conveniently, after your husband, and I'm particular about that, I don't like when people speak about my husband, but I'm speaking about your husband, received and read emails about how DSS mishandled our family while supporting Bumpy.

[00:32:55] You never spoke with my family again. Your interaction turned into a politically correct passing, merely a nod. To you, Margaret Franklin, you are our supervisor. Woodbridge, I've said that for nearly two years, but you have never met with our family.

[00:33:10] I will never understand the level of indifference, the disrespect of hearing wrong, knowing wrong and choosing not to address it, you have access to any of the county's attorneys if you truly wanted to sit down and have a conversation that would not cause you any liability. To you, Michelle Roble, your behavior is dismissive and a poor reflection of the county.

[00:33:31] There is no reason for you to be so disgusted with me and slam the door in my face. My husband and I were pro se litigants. Yes, you did. I don't need to do a FOIA request so that you can actually remind yourself, but you did it. Throughout the entire process, my husband and I were pro se litigants fighting for Bumpy. But when we filed to adopt him by law, we were required to retain an attorney for adoption proceedings. The only time we retained an attorney. I really do, and I don't mean this tongue-in-cheek because the Lord has to work on me. I pray for you. To Elijah Johnson, I believe you're on the front row. A handshake is a sign of respect. You shook my

[00:34:06] family's hand, and yet you handled the meeting behind closed doors like a social gathering. How many high fives were exchanged or profanities and nicknames were blurted out, both you and Mr. Shorter conveniently concluded, conveniently concluded that referring to me as a guinea pig, you practically empathize with me.

[00:34:25] So you finally figured out that it was actually said, but you practically empathize with me that that was a term of endearment. And I quote, oh, Ms. Johnson, it wasn't like that. It was simply a way to say we were going to use your family as a test, a model, a guidance for the county. To this day, we have gained nothing from your tests.

[00:34:43] Our mission still remains the same. Thank you. Next speaker. Madam Chair, members of the board.

[00:34:59] Oh, that works today. Madam Chair, members of the board, executive county staff. Mitch Nason, I'm a resident of Stafford County, but a 20-year veteran of your fire department. I'm also president of the Prince William Professional Firefighters, representing all the red shirts in this room. Hundreds of firefighters working to protect the community tonight and hundreds more at home.

[00:35:18] over 800 professional firefighters dispatchers support staff including retirees like some of those that actually helped stand our union up 45 years ago they're standing and sitting was in this room today i come to before you to in one hand to say thank you for the investment that's proposed in this year's budget it's monumental as we move through the second phase of our collective bargaining agreement and it also shows that a significant investment in public safety that's that's well made. I spoke to you last week about the importance of potentially including some money for cancer screenings, and in doing so, I shared that we had five members diagnosed in the past

[00:35:57] three months. Unfortunately, here I am a week later to say that we've had six members diagnosed in the past 12 weeks. And when I advocated for that, I suggested that the study that's finding these is just for career firefighters. It's not covering our volunteers who are very deservative of these same types of screenings. It's not covering our earliest hires. It's not recovering our retirees. So that's what I wanted to come to speak to you about today is to say thanks for what's proposed and maybe consider putting some additional funding in for that. Unfortunately, I think some information has potentially been shared that at times vilifies the fire department

[00:36:31] and questions the investment being made. And the only thing I would ask is that if there's one person to vilify, maybe it's me to call me a failure. 18 years ago last week, we lost a brother in a house fire. And when we did the report the year afterwards, we said that we would never forget.

[00:36:51] And in that report, we said that we need to have four-person engine company staff innning all throughout Prince William County. Here we are in 2025, almost two decades later. I've spent every year since then coming in these chambers, and I failed to move this board to make that investment. And so while this is a historic investment being made this year, there's much more to be done. Prince William County is hundreds of firefighters behind where we need to be for both the regional and national standard, and so to entertain anything less than that is a disservice to the citizens that we serve. And I don't believe that any member of this board

[00:37:29] would do that knowingly at all. And so I would ask you all to consider our brother Kyle as you go through deliberations this evening. Consider those members that have been diagnosed with cancer for the past six weeks and those to come and just in closing thank you very much for your deliberations this year every year so it's actually gonna be my last testimony before you all retire in july so thank you very much thank you so very much and thank you to everyone who

[00:38:04] came out and speak today next we're going to go on to agenda item number four and that is county executive time sorry sorry what oh no oh we i'm sorry i forgot yeah we have one person i'm sorry We're going to turn it over to Supervisor Bailey, as we've got remote.

[00:38:28] I'm sorry, no one? Okay. Back to you, Madam Chair. All right. Maybe I can predict the future after all. Anyways, we are going to go on to agenda item number four, and that is county executive time.

[00:38:46] Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board. Just a few items before we continue the agenda. There was one directive issued last week. That directive was to draft a public art policy. for board

consideration. This directive was assigned to our Parks and Recreation Department as well as to my office and to the county attorney. There were no directives closed at the last meeting. As you may recall last week, I mentioned that we recently held our career expo. Supervisor Vega asked some follow-up questions, which I wanted to respond to as I

[00:39:22] promised last week. As I said, this was the third career expo, the largest one to date. In March of 2024, we had a career expo with 500 people attending, 28 hires from that event.

[00:39:39] In September of 2024, we had an expo with more than 900 attendees with 17 hires to date. And the most recent expo held on April 12th of this year, we had more than 1,130 people attend that event with more than 11 contingent offers pending so far.

[00:40:04] The next Career Expo is scheduled for October 4th of 2025. And so I believe that answers, Supervisor Vega, your questions. And, Madam Chair, that is all for me. Thank you, Mr. Shorter, for that. Would it be possible for you to email that to us? Absolutely.

[00:40:19] Thank you. All right, anyone else? All right, thank you so very much, Mr. Shorter. We are going to go on to Agenda Item No. 5, Madam County Attorney, the floor is yours. Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the board. We have no items for closed session this evening. All right. Hopefully that'll help us from getting out of here at ODAC 30. So we are going to go on to agenda item number six, specifically 6A-1. You guys may not see that. Hold on. I don't mean to slow your roll here, but the surrefs are angry and I,

[00:40:58] we have to read our usual. Madam Chair, before the board considers and votes on the levies, fees, budget items, CIP, and five-year plan, I need to declare a personal interest in these matters. My wife is a school's employee. As a school's employee, my wife and I are members of a group which is affected by these matters. I will be participating in these matters because I am able to do so fairly, objectively, in the public interest. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:41:25] Madam Chair, before the board considers and votes on the levies, fees, budget items, CIP, and five-year plan, I need to declare a personal interest in these matters. My wife is a special education instructional aid with the schools as a school's employee my wife and i are members of a group which is affected by these matters i will be participating in these matters because i'm able to do so fairly objectively and in the public interest thank you madam chair all right thank you guys so very much so what we are going to do it for everyone else on your agenda says 6a as one resolution i'm actually going to break it out we are going to do

[00:42:01] the real estate property tax levy first then we'll do the fire levy and then we are going to do the rest of the items in 6a so um for the first part i would like to get a motion um to adopt the fiscal year 2026 real estate property tax levy so moved madam chair second any discussion supervisor weir Madam Chair, I'm going to again opine and explain my opposition.

[00:42:38] What we're doing is not sustainable. It's \$200, \$300, \$200, \$300 year over year over year compounded. And I don't want to hear about averages. And I can give you a very stark example. My offices run averages for virtually every neighborhood in the Gainesville District, and I'll pick one here.

[00:42:59] Regency at Creekside, single-family homes. Age-restricted, no kids in school to support. And their average tax bill this year is going to see an increase of \$774. Thunder Oaks, \$499.

[00:43:15] Heritage Farms, \$477. I could go on and on and on, and it's not just single-family homes, it's townhouses as well. And what we're ignoring is the natural growth in the taxes that should come as a result of new construction or upgrades.

[00:43:38] There's one I didn't mention whose taxes are going up significantly more. It's Crossroads Village Townhouses and the town of Haymarket. They're going up \$1,393, but that's because they were only partially built in 24. So now you're getting the full load in 25.

[00:43:57] That's the kind of growth you're supposed to see. not the several hundred growth year after year after year which compounds itself as time goes on we are going to price people out of this county all right i don't see anyone else in queue so let's go ahead and take our vote oh i'm sorry supervisor i don't see now my screen is not loading hold on i'm sorry supervisor um gordy yeah my screen is not loading okay thank you madam

[00:44:30] chair um thank you uh supervisor weir for those comments um yeah it as um and i also want to thank Mr. Braden for coming out tonight. He's just one voice of many in the Hornbaker area and other industrial areas of the Brentsville district, which has over half the industrial land in Prince William County. Our small businesses are struggling and where they're starting to struggle, just as Mr. Braden said, they're putting up the for sale signs and guess who's coming along and buying up

[00:45:09] the land. And of course, they're running the price up on the land, which further exacerbates our problem with the valuations. Land now is going for data at about \$4 million an acre. Our small businesses cannot sustain this. They are the ones who hire people. They are the larger employers.

[00:45:31] The data centers don't employ people anywhere near the level that our small businesses are employing. And now we see entire swaths of the Hornbaker area going under contract and being sold, and we're losing these businesses because there's nowhere to go in the county. And I did some calculations, and just thinking about the \$20 million that we're giving the schools that will sit idle in their checking account, that equates to almost \$219 per household in this

[00:46:04] County. \$219 per household for that \$20 million to sit idle. That's a lot of money. That's two weeks' worth of groceries for many of these families. That's a lot of money that could be injected into our economy to create more jobs. That would then give us a greater tax base, but instead the money will sit, it will do nothing, and it will only serve to hurt our families uh in uh prince william county um i wish we could i wish we would have done better by our citizens

[00:46:41] by our businesses um with our our property tax and um but i i cannot support it at the level that it is and um but and again i appreciate those who've spoken up uh in relation to the impact that this is having all right thank you so very much my screen is kind of working so but let's go ahead

[00:47:05] and let's move forward with the vote motion passes five to three supervisors vega weir and gordy voting nay thank you so very much i would like to now have a resolution to adopt fiscal year 2026 fire levy so move manager second any discussion all right there doesn't look like any i want to just say i appreciate all the red shirts for coming out here today

[00:47:42] you know obviously you know this board stands with our first responders and thank you for all that you do to keep our community safe supervisor weir once again madam chair the fire levy has been bastardized to the point that it no longer serves the purpose it was supposed to we're using it as a slush

fund to fund many things that it's not intended to fund and i actually agree with supervisor angry i know that's hard to believe but this was our opportunity to address that issue

[00:48:14] and once again we failed supervisor bode yeah thank you madam just very quickly appreciate the dialogue we've had this year especially leading up to this this uh this meeting about the fire levy the fire and rescue system um not going to opine and and pontificate too much other than saying that i hear some of my colleagues who have concerns um i think that we should be taking up uh uh this issue and just sort of fire rescue system as a whole uh and the finance and budget committee um i know i've gotten that request here and there from a couple of folks so just

[00:48:48] want to flag that for the county exec for us to discuss at a future finance and budget committee meeting. We know that we have challenges. We know we have issues. We know we have needs in this community, especially as it pertains to our first responders and our fire rescue system. I said it before and I'll say it again. I'm not comfortable this year in stepping back from some of those commitments, especially knowing tariffs, other financial uncertainty, but I'm more than happy have those discussions in the future thank you madam chair all right i don't see anyone jumping

[00:49:24] in queue so let's go ahead and take a vote motion passes five to three supervisors angry vega and we're voting nay all right thank you so very much and now i'd like to get a resolution to adopt fiscal 2026 personal property tax levies business professional occupational license tax levies motor vehicle license tax levies personal property tax relief special district levies

[00:49:57] and parks and recreation fees to support the fiscal 2026 all all funds budget so moved madam chair second any discussion all right don't all jump in at once let's go ahead and vote motion passes seven to one supervisor vega voting nay all right moving on to 6b i would like to get

[00:50:30] a motion to adopt the fiscal 2026 stormwater management fees solid waste futures fees land development application review and inspection fees land use application zoning rezoning and special permit fees building development fees fire marshal fee fire marshals office fees to support the fiscal 2026 all funds budget so move madam chair second any discussion all right let's go ahead and take a vote motion passes six to two supervisors vega and we're voting nay

[00:51:10] all right on to 6c resolution to budget appropriate fiscal 2026 all budget all funds budget and adopt the fiscal year 2026 through 2031 capital improvement program so move madam chair second any discussion supervisor we're again madam chair to me this budget is an abomination an abomination filled with bloat and spending unsupervised spending unaccountable spending to the tune of several hundreds of millions of dollars millions of dollars that our residents are going to pay and our businesses even the data centers are going to pay and we've got no plan for

[00:51:48] the spending and we just handed 40 million not 20 40 million dollars over the school with absolutely no oversight request or authority to look at it is one of the most unconscionable actions i think I've ever taken from I've ever seen from a fiscal standpoint and it will not stand we cannot sustain this supervisor Franklin yeah I think it's important to highlight what some of this will actually benefit for those members of the public you can obviously go to our website and pull up some of this information but I do want to highlight some programs including the juvenile services

[00:52:26] Center, the Homeless Navigation Center on the eastern end, putting efforts towards the Homeless Navigation Center on the western part of the county, several of our fire and rescue stations, our

public training facility, Powell's Creek Crossing, as well as the Occoquan Greenway, the Neabsco Greenway, Fuller Heights, Helwick Park, and so, you know, we can talk about over bloated spending, but these dollars goes towards real projects that our constituents and our residents actually use.

[00:52:58] So I think it's important to actually put real programs behind some of these dollars so that our constituents don't think that we're just approving nameless projects that won't benefit the public. So there are many more included in this, including Old Bridge Road and Gordon Boulevard intersection, Neabsco District Park, which is in my district, artificial turf up in Helwig, Callison Park improvements, and a lot more.

[00:53:26] I can go on and on about how important this is, so thank you. Supervisor Bailey? Thank you, Madam Chair. In addition to what Supervisor Franklin is saying, I also want to just say that these are projects and programs that have been lying in the Harper for years that we haven't been able to support.

[00:53:45] And so as we go forward in allocating funding for this, we've utilized our CARES Act fund, our ARPA fund. We want to thank the agencies for how you've expedited that, but used it in a very pointed way. But these are older projects that because of the infrastructure and because of the needs and the growth in the county that we have procrastinated on prior to 2020 to get things done.

[00:54:12] And so we're now at a point where we can support our citizens by allocating funding that we've incurred here recently, since 2022, for these types of projects. Supervisor Rear?

[00:54:28] Madam Chair, I would simply respond that many of those projects are not funded with tax dollars per se. They're funded with bond dollars. They're funded with federal grants. They're funded with any number of other sources. And it still does nothing to excuse the rapid growth in FTE that we're approving and paying for.

[00:54:47] And we don't even have the people there. This board over the last five years has added 585 FTE. And we've got 370 vacancies as of April 1. And we just added 115 more.

[00:55:05] Somebody needs to get this trade in order or we're going over a cliff in the next couple of years. Supervisor Franklin. Yeah, thank you. As the county exec mentioned, you know, we just had a job fair where over the next several months we are hoping to add to those openings and the FTEs.

[00:55:27] So, again, these projects are critically important. They directly benefit our constituents, and I think it's important to put actual projects behind these names. This isn't Doge. We're not bringing that to Prince William County. we have a county of half a million people and we need the services uh to back it up all right thank you let's move forward with our vote motion passes six to two supervisors vega and we are

[00:56:01] voting nay all right i see people already jumping in the queue for 6d i'd like to get a motion to budget and appropriate the fiscal 2026 school budget so move madam chair second all right supervisor weird then franklin i've already said it madam chair we're turning over 40 i think i believe the actual number is 43 million in unaccounted for funds with no plan for their spending no accountability by this board no accountability by the school board and they still haven't told us what the 40 million dollars starting balance they have in their balance their

[00:56:39] balance in their in their budget is for that's 83 million dollars on top of any reserves they're sitting on i would ask the school board with all that money why did it take so long to get teacher benefits and pay up supervisor franklin nobody and even with the money that supervisor we're just mentioned

they still don't have enough in their reserves to account for their budget their budget is about 263 million dollars they have a reserve funding of about 100 million which means if there were an emergency right in this moment they still don't have enough money uh to to move

[00:57:15] forward so look i do trust our school system i trust our superintendent i think she's done an excellent job along with our school board and showing us exactly where the money goes particularly towards programming we are modernizing our schools expanding school sites as well as programming and I have no doubt based on the increased graduation rates the decreased truancy and dropout rates particularly in my schools in the Woodbridge district so I think we need to continue to support the school system especially as we see what's going on in the federal level who knows if we'll even have a Department of Education within the next couple of years.

[00:57:54] So we're going to have to step up as a locality to make sure that our school system is taken care of. And as I've always stated, until the state starts funding education at the levels that they should, it's really going to continue to fall on the county to make sure that we're supporting them.

[00:58:10] Supervisor Brody. Thank you, Madam Chair. Just going to dovetail and sort of highlight and uplift some of the things that Supervisor Franklin just said. it's only a couple years old, that J. Lark study that's been mentioned a couple times showing that our state has chronically underfunded our education system. Chronically. Especially in a community like ours where we have some of the highest needs populations for our school division.

[00:58:33] Like Supervisor Franklin just said, we also have uncertainty about threats around the Department of Education. We don't know how that's going to shake out over time. To me, when the feds are stepping away, when the state still has to get its act together, we are the last line of defense. To me, it's time for us to step up, and that's this moment right now.

[00:58:51] You know, it's been talked about that this money is just going to sit on a shelf and that they're not going to do anything with it. You know, I'm sure that the school board and the school division, the superintendent, will come together and come up with a plan for some of these funds. But also, as said by Sue Ezra Franklin, they need more reserves and they need to be able to step up if some of these funding streams that they rely upon for some of the most at-risk students that we have.

[00:59:15] Title I funding, right? We have meals programs that are at risk. We have all these things that are currently potentially on the chopping block at the federal level, funds that the school division relies on in order to keep its lights on and everything like that. So I continue to support the school system.

[00:59:31] I've said so before. Appreciate Ceres or Vega and some other folks who have brought this up a couple times around the revenue sharing agreement. But again, to me, the time to alter some of the terms of that is at a discussion table with them, with them at the table, with them as participants of it, and not just about them, which often happens at this dais.

[00:59:50] So I'm committed to the revenue share agreement as of right now. We have some discussions around that. Again, that's another topic for the Finance and Budget Committee. I look forward to those conversations. Thank you, Madam Chair. Supervisor Bailey. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate my colleagues' comments.

[01:00:07] I am also committed to the revenue share agreement. And with the funding that we provide for the schools, We've been able, over the last two to three years, address our curriculum for special needs in

our county, which we could not do before. We've also been very focused on cost per pupil, where we were number 49 out of 50 states, I mean, in the county, of addressing cost per pupil.

[01:00:33] Number 49 here, and that's unconscionable. And we've moved up to number 42. That's still not good enough. We are a county that supports our citizens, supports our students, the next generation. And we must look at the next generation.

[01:00:49] Not only has this school superintendent, with her board and with her staff, won honors and awards, but she's also been able to address something that has not been addressed in a very long time, and that's the military kids that come to our schools. And so we are a purple award-winning schools in our county for how we've invested in making sure that the military child, as they are integrated in our school system, is provided for.

[01:01:16] So I think that this funding is apparent. I think that this funding is needed. But I think the other thing that we need to do from an accountability standpoint is do what we promised we were going to do, which is sit down with the school board and, as my colleague said, talk to the school board about what our concerns are and how we need to move forward for the next budget cycle.

[01:01:40] And we've not done that yet, and I think it's only fair to them that we do so, so that there's a voice to the complaints that we are making. Supervisor Rear, then Gordy. Thank you, Madam Chair. Predictably, this has turned into a political issue, and it's not. It shouldn't be.

[01:01:56] This is an accountability issue, a fiduciary responsibility issue, fiduciary responsibility that we as a board collectively have. Are they underfunded by the state? Probably.

[01:02:12] But we're not the school division's only source of funding. They're funded by us, they're funded by the state, and they're funded by the feds. Only to a minor degree by the feds, is my understanding. And if there's any threat to the federal funding, I would suggest it's coming from the school board chair making political statements in his run for lieutenant governor.

[01:02:33] Maybe if he kept his mouth shut, maybe we'd have a better chance of keeping those federal funds. But we can't continue down this road. Giving them \$40 million means we have to give the CXL an additional \$30 million simply because of the revenue-sharing agreement.

[01:02:50] You want to give them \$40 million extra? Fine. Get rid of the revenue-sharing agreement so we don't have a wasted \$30 million on our side of the ledger. Supervisor Gordy. Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple of points. I appreciate Supervisor Bailey talking about our military kids.

[01:03:08] However, I would remind that they receive impact aid from the Department of Defense for every child that's in our schools that is part of a military family. And when I worked on Capitol Hill, we not only did it for schools, but we also did it for special. We created a program for special needs children, and so we expanded that program.

[01:03:29] When the school board came to us, it was clear that they presented a budget that was based on a number, not on a requirement. They said they got a number, they built a budget to that number, but it did not fully fund their budget.

[01:03:44] But with the revenue-sharing agreement, the money that went from \$950,000 planned to over almost a billion as a result of the revenue-sharing agreement, \$23 million more fully funded their budget, met their requirement, leaving an additional \$20 million above their requirement.

[01:04:09] We are fully funding the schools, but they also have an extra \$20 million. And that's the part that I want the public to understand. We're not here to cut the school budget. I want them to give us a fully a budget built on their requirement, not based on a number so that we as a board can ensure that we are fully funding our schools.

[01:04:33] But here's the other reality. The projection of the next five years is a five percent decline in enrollment. Meanwhile, the budget is expected to grow by 20 percent over that same time. So for me, and I appreciate Supervisor Bode's comments about having this conversation, because I think this is a critical conversation that we need to have with the schools, is tell us how, during a time of declining enrollment, it is justified that we maintain a revenue-sharing agreement that has a 20% increase in their budget.

[01:05:14] So help us understand the real requirement, not this arbitrary thing that's based upon a revenue-sharing agreement, Because we as a county can't afford to do this anymore. We have needs in our county. Our citizens are struggling financially. And again, that \$20 million is unplanned.

[01:05:32] There is no plan that the school systems has presented to us on how they will spend that money. But that \$20 million represents \$34 million of taxes because of the revenue sharing agreement. And again, that's \$219 per household.

[01:05:51] And again, that's an average. For some people, that's a lot more. But that's a lot of groceries, that's a lot of things that families need in this county. When everything else is going up, for \$20 million to sit in a bank account. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[01:06:07] All right, so I want to address a couple of issues. You know, Supervisor Rare, when you said it's turned to a political issue, it's not. It's not a political issue, it's about our principles. And I said that during our markup. Our budget is a statement of our values. I have always defended revenue sharing, and I'm going to continue to defend revenue sharing.

[01:06:26] Because our schools, our schools are what drive up our poverty values. Our schools are what make businesses want to come here, relocate here. It's our schools. That's number one.

[01:06:41] And I also, I don't want to fault our schools for budgeting up to what they believe that they will get. I don't think that's fair. And I don't think that declining enrollment is a perfect indicator for how much they need. We have, I mean, we have a growing population.

[01:06:59] We have also a growing population with special needs. We have older schools that are in need of renovation. We are going to need new schools in our county. Our schools have a lot of needs, and for years they were not getting the funding that they needed or deserved.

[01:07:17] And so we've got to make it up. I have also always said that revenue sharing is the floor and not the ceiling. We can implement categorical spending, but we are not going to get the level of accountability or the level of control that some of the board want.

[01:07:38] We're not going to get that. And our schools are very thankful that we have revenue sharing because they know exactly how much, or they know exactly how much they're going to get. They have a guarantee. There are other school boards, other school districts around the Commonwealth that wish that they had revenue sharing as well.

[01:07:58] But, again, if we are serious about schools and giving them what they need, then we're not going to cut revenue sharing. We're going to continue it. Because, again, it should be the floor and not the

ceiling. I don't see anyone else in queue, so let's go ahead and take our vote.

[01:08:19] Motion passes 5 to 3. Supervisors Vega, Weir, and Gordy voting nay. All right. Hold on. Next, we're going to move on to 6C.

[01:08:36] And that is the Budget Appropriate and Transfer Fiscal Year 2026 Transit Special Revenue Fund. May I get a motion? Madam Chair, before there's a motion, I have a question. For this item, does it include, there was a, I guess, a hole is not the right word for PRTC's budget, but there was some additional funding that we talked about.

[01:09:03] Is that included in this particular item? Or can you give an overview of where we are with that? Thank you, Supervisor. So, no, this includes the funding that was essentially initially presented at the proposed budget, which fully funds the PRTC budget.

[01:09:24] We have received no additional requests at this point outside of it. So this includes the expansion of routes? It does not. It does not. No. Okay. So I'm assuming that's coming up in FY27, perhaps? I don't know if Victor wants to.

[01:09:40] I got a call about that from a delegate. That's why I'm asking. Right. So this was just the executive director's budget put forward, which basically is his flat budget. The enhancements that we were looking at are not in here. And what you're talking about would be that C&I tax that we haven't implemented or investigated yet, or as of yet.

[01:10:02] I don't know where we are with that. Thank you, Supervisor. So we intend, based on requests from the chair of the committee, to include CNI as a discussion item on the next committee agenda. So on May 13th, we will talk about the CNI tax, give some additional information on how the tax can be applied.

[01:10:24] There has been some question about taxing districts versus countywide, and we want to make sure that we answer those questions as well. But the budget request from PRTC is fully funded in 6E? It is. Okay. I just wanted to make sure. Thank you. Supervisor Bode, did you have a question?

[01:10:41] Did we have a motion and a second? I wanted to discuss it. No. Move back. Second. I did make the motion, but she had a question. Shall I repeat, Madam Chair?

[01:10:58] Yes, please repeat. Okay. For approval, please. All right. Supervisor Bode, are you still in? Did you have a comment? Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll just be quick. I've said this. I'm a broken record. Regardless if it's CNI or some other way or districts or whatever it is, we need to come up with a more dedicated and enhanced funding stream for transit in this community.

[01:11:18] We've talked about growth. We talk about how quality of life is important to us and our residents. Well, traffic sucks. It does. Traffic sucks in this area, not just us. It's a regional issue. However, we have an opportunity. We were given an opportunity.

[01:11:34] We continue to have opportunities to invest in transit. I know that a lot of folks come to us a lot about transit-oriented development, about smart growth, about trails, around mobility, around bike and pedestrian enhancements and what have you. Until we get serious about funding those things with a dedicated funding stream that is beyond the TOT and grantor's tax, which we know is not a sustainable source over the long term for our transit and transportation needs, we need to get serious about it.

[01:12:03] It's talked about a lot that, you know, well, some parts of the county can't support transit. You're right, but we have innovative things that we've been looking at as a community around that. Microtransit,

paratransit, some of these other very innovative things that we know will not only help improve the quality of life, they serve as alternate ways for people to get around, especially those folks who have mobility issues, may have only one car for multiple people in a household.

[01:12:26] But most importantly, we know economic development also follows transit investment. We know that when we have a robust transit system, businesses will want to move here because there's ways to get their patrons around, There's ways to get their workforce around, and people aren't just stuck in traffic. They have options.

[01:12:41] So I just wanted to say that. Thank you, Madam Chair. Supervisor Rear. Just want to note, apparently the answer is you've got another tax on the businesses like the meals tax. All right. I don't see anyone else in queue. Let's go ahead and take our vote.

[01:13:04] Motion passes 7 to 1. Supervisor Vega, voting nay. All right. We are on to 6F.

[01:13:20] That is to authorize. Resolution to authorize amendments to the position, classification, and pay plan in accordance with the county's adopted composition. Compensation policy. Can I get a motion? So moved, Madam Chair. Second. All right. Any discussion? I don't. Did you have anything, Supervisor Vega? Because I know your screen is down. All right. Let's go ahead and take a vote.

[01:13:49] Supervisor Vega. Oh, okay. Motion passes 6 to 2. Supervisor Vega, and we're voting nay. All right. We are on to 6G, and that is to authorize continuation of the hiring incentives plan for hard-to-fill positions with recommended changes and authorized changes.

[01:14:15] to the incentivized retention period for the adult detention center sworn personnel. Can I get a motion? Move for approval, Madam Chair. Second. Any discussion? All right, let's go ahead and take a vote. Vote unanimous.

[01:14:37] All right, thank you very much. And on for 6-H, I would like to get a motion to move this forward. So moved, Madam Chair. Second. Any discussion? All right, let's go ahead and take our vote. Vote unanimous.

[01:15:02] All right, thank you. And now we're moving on to 6-I, and that's a resolution to adopt a fiscal year 2026 to 2030 five-year plan. Can I get a motion? Move for approval, Madam Chair. Second. Any discussion? Supervisor Rear.

[01:15:18] Madam Chair, I don't know what the purpose of doing a budget summary and five-year plan is because we don't live up to it. You know, if you look at the budget summary for FY27 contained in the FY26 through FY30 five-year plan, We've already given away more money than this to some people.

[01:15:40] If you go all the way back to FY23 and you look at what's projected for FY27, we move the goalposts every year. In the case of general revenue, we've moved it \$341 million. In terms of county general revenue, we've moved it \$146 million.

[01:15:58] And in terms of county operating expenses, \$165 million. And it's actually less than the FY25 actual for FY27. I mean, this is a joke. And the reason we're given is, well, we have to have this to plan next year's budget.

[01:16:20] That's why we end up with the real estate tax rate in February. And we're told we can't cut things because it impacts the five-year plan. Bullshit. Language, please. This changes every year. This

thing is meaningless. We don't stay within the confines, and we increase it hundreds of millions of dollars in every category year over year.

[01:16:44] This is a useless exercise. Supervisor Franklin. Sure, yeah, thank you. I do appreciate the purpose of the five-year plan and kind of the budget that we hope to go along with it.

[01:17:01] Again, a number of different items included here that are incredibly important, fire and rescue. We mentioned before juvenile services. We talked about all this, the homeless navigation center, land acquisition, parks and recs, things of that nature. So, you know, this is incredibly important to kind of help us move towards a guide of what we should be funding and what we should be prioritizing, and quite frankly will be a failure of leadership for us not to.

[01:17:31] Supervisor Bailey, then we are. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and to our staff who really diligently take the time to guide us through this document. We really appreciate how you do that, and if we didn't have it, then it would be an act in futility, but our staff is always diligent in making sure through communication to making sure that through the numbers that we discussed with you that the guide is guiding us appropriately.

[01:18:00] So to the staff, we really appreciate the hard work that you put into getting us there. Supervisor Rear. Thank you, Madam Chair. I've given you the look forward, and I'll give you the look back. Since FY21, when this board took office, You've raised the real property taxes by 89.23%.

[01:18:23] You've increased the general fund revenues by 111%. You've increased county expenditures by 100%. And you've increased school funding by 119.9%. We cannot go down this path much longer before we go off the fiscal cliff.

[01:18:45] And if nobody has the economic sense to see what's coming, we're all going to pay for it. And we're going to pay dearly for it. Supervisor Franklin. Yeah, I mean, I just want to point out, and I do appreciate the discussion, but I'm never going to apologize for giving schools more money.

[01:19:05] I just want to start there. Particularly here in Prince William County, second largest jurisdiction, we're the 10th most diverse in the entire country. And just going on about kind of how our budget has increased is because our services have increased, because our demographics and our population has increased.

[01:19:23] You know, we're not blindly putting dollars behind this budget without any reason or rationale. We have a growing county. Our county is larger than some cities. Just came back from New Orleans, almost larger than New Orleans. This is a real budget here.

[01:19:39] We have real services that we have to provide to our constituents. And so, again, not going to apologize, particularly on the school front. And look, the reality with the real estate tax rates is, you know, we're pushing to increase on the data centers to bring in more revenue.

[01:20:00] You know, we've decreased the real estate rate every year for the past several years. Assessments have continued to go up, so you've seen probably higher bills. But certainly it's not a problem when you go to sell your house. So we have to be realistic about what we're talking about here and put it into full context.

[01:20:20] I get the frustration amongst some people, but we have to understand that, again, it comes down to this being a growing county. And quite frankly, Prince William is in a much better position than

some of our colleagues in other jurisdictions. While they're raising rates, we're not, okay?

[01:20:38] And we have money that will continue to flow in over the next several years. So I feel very confident about the direction that this county is moving in. And our residents, and I hear from members of the Woodbridge District, they're happy about what they're seeing when they drive down the street. Thank you. All right.

[01:20:55] I see that you're back in Kewaer, but you've already had your two times, so I'm going to go to Supervisor Bailey. You had one? Thank you. You had two. It was behind the picture. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to say to what Supervisor Franklin is indicating, One of the things that we always do a spot check to make sure that we are in good fiduciary standing is our AAA bond rating.

[01:21:23] And Michelle knows that that's something that I ask about every year. But that's critical in making sure that our citizens understand that we are a healthy county. And so we are not expending money frivolously, but to attain and keep that triple bond rating, We have to do some very technical and strategic things to protect our fiduciary responsibilities.

[01:21:48] And so Michelle and her team, and county exec, I'm not taking anything away from you, but your entire team, very, very focused on making sure that as Prince William County is spending money, that we are managing money appropriately.

[01:22:04] As of today, Michelle mentioned to us two weeks ago, she's still focused with her team, focused on making sure that we maintain that triple-A bond rating. Because what that says to the people that we borrow money from, that we're good, we're healthy.

[01:22:20] We did that through COVID, and now we're doing that with the unrest, the duress from what's happening nationally. So that's something to be proud of and to be the second largest county in this state. We are a good county, spending our money wisely, maintaining our financial reputation.

[01:22:42] Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm sorry. All right. Thank you so very much. I just want to go back again to principles. I know that different people here had different ideas of what they wanted to see in the budget. You know, certainly we all had to make compromises, and that's okay.

[01:22:58] You know, it's a discussion. You know, we have to come to some kind of agreement. We have to come to some kind of consensus. Not everyone's happy with the budget, clearly. But I'm actually proud of what we've come together and what we're doing. We are lowering taxes.

[01:23:14] It may not be enough for some people, but we are taking steps. And I would rather have incremental progress than make drastic cuts. We see how well that's working in Washington, D.C., and I ain't bringing it here. But again, I also want to go back to schools because we have a revenue sharing agreement.

[01:23:31] And right off the top, our schools get 57.23% of our budget. And I'm okay with that. I'm actually more than okay with that. In order to be competitive, we have got to fully meet the needs of our schools.

[01:23:50] Like you, Supervisor Franklin, I ain't apologizing for that one. That is my hill that I'm going to die on. And I respect the fact, Supervisor Weir, that you came up with, you know, you put a lot of time into your budget in meeting with offices and meeting with people and discussing what you would like to see.

[01:24:05] However, for me, that budget didn't represent my principles. It didn't represent my principles. I hear where you're coming from. I know that you're very concerned with spending. But we are on a good track. And I do think in the years to come, we can do more to alleviate the residential tax burden.

[01:24:27] We can do more to phase out the meals tax. We can do more, but we are not there yet. And I'm not. I'm not going to pretend that we are. And I'm not going to sit here and pretend or act like we are failing our constituents. I've said this time and again.

[01:24:43] I'm a single mom. I know what it's like to live off one salary. I know what it's like to live paycheck to paycheck. I know what it's like to live in one's means. And I think that we're doing that. We have differences. But at no point, I didn't think that this budget was political.

[01:25:00] It's about principles. That's it. It's about principles. So with that, we're going to move forward with a vote for 6-I. Motion passes 5-3. Supervisors Vega, Weir, and Gordy voting nay.

[01:25:24] All right. We are going to move on to our final item before we do supervisor time, before we go around the horn. I'd like to get a motion to move forward with 6-J. So moved, Madam Chair. Second. All right. Any discussion? All right. Seeing none, let's go ahead and take a vote.

[01:25:44] Motion passes 6-2. Supervisors Vega and Weir voting nay. All right. Thank you very much. We are going to do Supervisor's Time. We're going to move around the horn. I'm going to start with Supervisor Gordy.

[01:26:00] Madam Chair, all I have is just want to, since we didn't do Supervisor's Time really last week, just recognize all of our families that celebrated Easter on Sunday and wish everyone a late Happy Easter. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[01:26:21] Supervisor Bailey. Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, let me just say Happy Earth Day to everybody. And just on the 10th, we visited Patti Elementary School and participated in the gauntlet exercise that they have at the school. Me and my staff had a ball.

[01:26:36] Well, my staff had a ball, not me, but we had a great time. We do it every year. And then on the 14th, we visited the Virginia Women's Support Center, which is a center established by Frances Robbins, who really takes care. She's a visionary leader that is dedicated to empowering women and families in our community.

[01:26:56] And it was absolutely a sensational thing to see how she's providing for our new moms within our communities. And I met an amazing middle schooler who came with her mom to make a donation to the Virginia Women's Support Center.

[01:27:14] That was one of her projects for her school. So I think we are really investing in our students in the right way. their giving back to the community. How about that? And then on the 16th, we supported Supervisor Franklin for the Neabsco Park Regional Kayak Launch. Was that Victor? No, that was Supervisor.

[01:27:35] That was Vic. I'm sorry, Vic. But congratulations to you, and it was a great experience. On the 22nd, my staff attended the Outstanding Educators Ceremony, which is presented every year. That honors our teachers and our administrators under the wonderful leadership of Superintendent Latonya McDade. And so I'm very proud of the things that are being accomplished within our county for our students. And

then on the 23rd, which is tomorrow, we'll be doing the Lake Ridge Celebrity Luncheon. How about that? Which is always a fun time for all of us.

[01:28:13] And between the 25th and the 26th, I'll be attending the VAICO Virginia Association of Counties to talk about what happened in the General Assembly and how we can support our county even more. And an invitation to all, we'll make sure it's on our website and you get the information for May 10th. We'll do our annual mental health walk for the county at Locust Shade Park. Thank you, Madam Chair. Supervisor Rear? Thank you, Madam Chair.

[01:28:44] There's quite a few tales being told tonight. We're not a growing county. Anybody looks at the numbers it's pretty clear we plateaued our neighbors are already losing population there's out migration in Fairfax and even Loudon's worried about it Arlington seeing it as well and I think it's evident for any number of reasons in the school population numbers dropping whether it be out migration aging of the population lowering the birth rate whatever things are changing and we're certainly not lowering taxes if we were lowering taxes you wouldn't see an average increase of 270 280 dollars if we were lowering taxes Regency at Creekside wouldn't be

[01:29:20] paying an additional \$800 on average in their neighborhood. Reducing the rate is meaningless. It's a two-part equation. It's rate and assessed value. And if the assessed value is running or growing at a higher percentage and you're reducing the rate, you're actually increasing taxes. And tax bills right now are rising at a rate doubled that of inflation, if not more. Assessed value is a paper asset. It's meaningless unless you sell. And particularly onerous for those on fixed incomes, many of whom have lived in their homes for decades, are fully paid out and would like to

[01:29:55] stay here, would prefer not to move, but because of the tax bills, some are being forced, and I know quite a number that have left the state. And one of the reasons that this is happening is because we're not benefiting from the data centers. Is the money coming in? Absolutely, hundreds of millions of dollars, but we're increasing spending at a rate greater than the data center dollars coming in. The result, the gap in that funding has to be paid by the residents and the businesses of this county and because of some of the practices we do funding fees that don't exist 300 and some

[01:30:31] right now and probably more before the end of the fiscal year we're going to generate yet another ridiculous surplus at the end of the fiscal year except this year I'm going to suggest that both the fy25 and fy26 be returned to the real property owners or at least a portion of it so that we can make some good come of the over taxation supervisor franklin yeah um just want to kind of going back to the budget, just want to kind of recognize something that our budget

[01:31:05] actually provides for and protects, the Child Advocacy Center. Recently, they were visited by an accreditation organization and has announced that Prince William County Child Advocacy Center will be recommended for approval for accreditation of our Child Advocacy Center. It's one of my first budget items when I came on board. So this recognition reflects commitment to the excellence in child advocacy, trauma-informed care, and multidisciplinary collaboration to support children and families affected by abuse. These are the types of things that our budget supports.

[01:31:43] On lighter notes, I also want to just highlight some of the events that I've attended. Public safety, our public safety employees, I did a visit with them last week. I'm also shadowing some of our emergency management employees on tomorrow.

[01:31:59] I attended the adult recovery court for the veterans court on last week, their graduation. And also, I spoke about the importance of affordable housing to the black realtors. On the 12th, I also attended the 25th anniversary of Bethel AME Church.

[01:32:16] And also on the 13th, I participated in the panel discussion alongside Delegate Josh Thomas and Phyllis Randall, Chair of Loudoun County, Board of Supervisors, on the impact of data centers. So we've been having this discussion with regional reps as well as other individuals who've been pushing for more oversight of the data center industry.

[01:32:41] I also participated in the Parks and Recs ribbon-cutting at Neabsco Regional Park. This provides for new accessible parking lot, a kayak launch, and a new historical marker. So thank you to my colleagues who came out to that, Supervisor Angry, as well as Delegate Roja Henson and representatives from Congressman Vindman's office.

[01:33:02] Also, we'll be hosting an affordable housing roundtable on tomorrow, and then we'll be doing Bike to Work Day on May 15th at the Woodbridge VRE station, and also we'll be hosting Dumpster Day at Fred Lynn. And I think I have already issued the directive with regards to the soil mitigation fund.

[01:33:23] So you all have that. And then also, notice of intent to reappoint Dexter Montgomery to the Industrial Development Authority. And you all may have the resume for Tom Smith to Prince William Water. If not, we'll get that to you all.

[01:33:39] Thank you. Thank you. Supervisor Vega? Thank you, Madam Chair. Just very quickly. I'm sorry. Hold on. No, no, no. I called on Supervisor Vega. I'm doing, so I'm sorry, Supervisor Vega. Sure. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[01:33:55] I thought you were doing one side and then the other, as you do most of the time. But anyways, I'm ready for my supervisor's time. First off, I want to thank the hundreds of taxpayers that emailed this board to include my office specifically, hoping that your elected representatives would actually do something meaningful to reduce your tax burden.

[01:34:15] Folks, what you saw right now is a beautiful display of political theatrics at the expense of your pocketbook. The budget process has been a very lengthy process. It didn't start today. It didn't start last Tuesday. But my colleagues up here felt the need to put on a show for you all.

[01:34:33] Because that's what happens when your back is against the wall. That's what happens when the taxpayers of this county email you every single day asking you for some relief. And you provide none. They have to give you a reason as to why this budget is a good idea.

[01:34:50] They have to give you their justifications as to why it's okay for your bill to rise another \$273. It's insanity. It's ludicrous that at a time when they talk about the federal government and the layoffs, your local government, the government that has the most significant and direct impact to your quality of life, to your children's quality of life, and to your pocketbook, decide to stick it to you one more time.

[01:35:17] But you know what I find the most appalling? That they want to insult your intellectual ability to understand this budget and this process. You all have been very thorough in your emails to us. You know what this budget is. You see the pork. You see the overspending. You see the waste.

[01:35:34] You're no fools. But they want to sit up here and act like you don't know what this budget entails. And if you're angry here in Chambers, if you're angry at home, I'm angry with you because just like

you, I feel the pinch. It's easy to spend other people's money.

[01:35:50] It's easy to do that. But when it's your money, when you have to adjust your personal budget, then you want to be cautious. Then you want to be fiscally responsible. Then you want to be prudent. I'm sorry to the taxpayers of Prince William County because when this county could have led, they decided to stick it to you one more time.

[01:36:09] They can tell you that you're getting relief. You're not getting relief. Your tax bill is going to go up. And depending on what part of the county you live in, it's going to go up even some more. They want to pat themselves on the back up here for giving you a \$22 savings on your car tax bill?

[01:36:25] That's laughable. In many ways, it's disgusting. There is no compromise, folks. Make no mistake. Because a compromise means that you have to give and you have to take. There was no compromise made during this budget process. A balanced approach? What is balanced about this budget when your tax bill is going up, when you have to pay more money?

[01:36:44] for folks living on a fixed income, for folks coming to these chambers asking us for relief, remember who voted to raise your taxes. Remember that. And remember who keeps fighting for you every single year. I'll also remind you all that they talk about funding for schools. Look who's been in the majority for all these years. Why are schools not fully funded? I've asked time and time again, what does it mean to provide our children with a quality education? And they can't even answer it, because it's another political slogan. Let's look at the numbers. Let's look at test

[01:37:20] scores. Let's look at why enrollment rates are dropping. Let's look at it, folks. And you ask yourselves if your elected representatives are being honest with you, or if they're being disingenuous. I am sick and tired of speaking in platitudes. I am sick and tired of trying to act like this board is doing something on behalf of the taxpayers, when in reality, their votes indicate otherwise. If you're tired, I encourage you to get in the fight starting today, not next year when the budget cycle begins, but today, because if you want your voices to be heard, you have to get involved now, not tomorrow, not next year, now. I appreciate the folks that showed

[01:37:58] up today. Mitch, you're going to be missed, because maybe you and I have not seen eye to eye on everything, but you're relentless, and I know that you come from a genuine place, and I know that you fight for what you believe in because you're passionate about that and that is commendable but you have people up here that want to fund things that want to do things when there is no real purpose to it we didn't lower your taxes we didn't negotiate the rate we went along with what county staff proposed and people rubber stamped it and we're going to call it out every single chance that we get so again if you're tired I'm tired with you do something about it but most

[01:38:35] importantly since they want to get political about it remember when you go to vote remember your local government has the most meaningful and significant impact on your life than the state and that the federal politicians folks we got to wake up because as supervisor we are said this is very much sustainable thank you very much unsustainable supervisor bode yeah thank you madam chair um just a few things um so for one thing it said a lot that we provided

[01:39:09] nothing there was no negotiation that you know we just rubber stamped everything and that's not the true that's not the case at all um we first raised the computer approvals tax to 415 matching one of our regional peers which was not in the county executive's proposed budget number two we lowered the

vehicle tax i agree 100 it's not nearly as much as we would hope but we talk about not going by based on averages people with cars that are larger cars and more expensive suvs and trucks we'll see an average of \$70 of relief. That's meaningful to some folks, especially as we deal

[01:39:45] and grapple with possible increases in used car valuations next year. The meals tax. I said it last week and I'll say it again. I was one of the biggest folks that are resistant to lowering the meals tax because it's a diversified tax stream. We hear every single tax year that we need to have a diverse stream of taxes to make ourselves as economic resilient as possible and again as far as my district is concerned at least a quarter of the folks that pay that meals tax come from outside the county that's one of the very few tax streams we have that isn't being

[01:40:21] funded completely by the people that live here i negotiated i compromised i was willing to go down on that tax there's a lot that's talked about of hey the folks really want to see a tax relief tax relief tax relief. Well, to me, some of that is actual concrete tax relief. But number two, I still get notes and requests from our constituents in the Occoquan district every single year. If you're willing to put more money towards the schools, I'm willing to pay a little bit more. If I want to see you do things around transportation, community services, the homeless,

[01:40:58] the public defender's office, I'm willing to pay a little bit more out of my pocket every single year to make sure those things are taken care of. We see that we are dealing with population changes. I will not deny that. But at the same time, as Madam Chair said, we have some of the highest levels of need in our school division out of any other division in the Commonwealth, even ones that are larger than ours. Second, it's not like this is a zero-sum game. It's not like we're just sort of keeping things steady. Our school division, as some of my colleagues have said, has been underfunded even on this county level for decades. We're not throwing money into

[01:41:37] a hole. We're not throwing money into the void. We're putting money and investing towards one of the biggest investments we can make, which is our children, our teachers, our school communities, and the people that make sure that when we send our kids to school every single day, they're getting a world-class education. People talked about test scores and how things are going with that. Well, I can tell you that in some cases, we have improved since COVID. Instead of take more time, more investment, more collaboration with the school division as opposed to just running to cut their funds. As Supervisor Franklin said several times throughout this conversation tonight, it's easy to attack an ephemeral budget that you just say is this thing that is more and

[01:42:17] more spending, it's more and more bloat, it's a bigger government. It's much harder to talk about cutting specific programs that people realize and rely on in order to survive. It's a lot harder to talk about the school division we actually talk to teachers in this in this classroom and talk about how they are still short on teaching staff they're still short on teacher assistant they're still living sometimes two or three teachers in the house to make order for that to survive and that's pre-everything else that's happened we have teachers we have firefighters we have baristas we have police officers who live in other counties because they don't make enough yet to live in this

[01:42:52] county yes there's a balancing act we have to make in terms of the the cost and quality of life that we provide, we also know that we're making up for lost time and lost expenditures and lost investments in this county. I look forward to the day that the data center industry, some of our other big giant corporations are able to pay their fair share. I look forward to that day. That day is not here yet, but I

can attest to the fact that every single person on this board cares and they fight for what they believe in. So just because we're not running to the taxpayer and giving them short-term relief doesn't mean we don't care. I know acutely that every single dollar that comes

[01:43:29] out of your pocket that comes to this government is something that you could spend on something else. I also know those investments are how we come together as a community to help hold up the least of these and make real investments in the future. Thank you, Madam Chair. All right, Supervisor Angry. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to start by first congratulating our veterans docket and that being judge jarvis and that crew if it's one organization that i'm very happy to fund is what we do for our veterans docket and that opportunity um now let me switch

[01:44:04] here to talk about this budget uh so right now i'm the uh believe it or not longest serving supervisor on this board making me the senior person here um supervisor time is my five minutes that's when I get to talk to the people. But I'm going to spend that time talking to this board because it has been my biggest frustration ever in the fact that we're a dais and it's eight of us and we're supposed to be working together to talk to each other. The public gets to watch us. We're a fishbowl. They get to watch us on TV, watch us in the chamber, but we're not here to talk to them.

[01:44:37] We're here to talk to each other. So let me just start by saying when I chose to separate that C&P tax. It would pull data centers out from personal property. It was to find a way to lower the car tax for our citizens because that is the most craziest, absurd tax I've ever seen that you buy a car, pay taxes on it, and every year continue to pay taxes, which makes no sense.

[01:45:00] So that was my goal in doing that. It wasn't to raise data center tax. All I've heard up here is how we want to just take an industry and continue to take from them. If we haven't learned anything from Loudon or Fairfax, that's literally what they did that put them in the situation they're in right now. We should be talking as a board about how we're balancing this budget. Now, I'm going to speak to a lot of what you all said up here, and the point I have is this.

[01:45:25] There is cut that we can do in each department in this county. Every one of you have an individual department that you're focusing on, but collectively, we, the board, are supposed to be talking about how we're going to cut that together because the balance needs to be we've got to get people back something seriously and that was my focus here we're going to raise that data center tax i want to give it all back to the people lower that residential lower that car let's find the balance it didn't really work because look at the budget we created it's one that literally got down to scraping pennies on the things that we wanted somewhere in here folks next year we need to do a

[01:46:02] better job of looking at every department across this county and finding the cuts that we can make to get that balance back, to give more back to the people for the opportunity that we've created. Now, we are half a million people in this county. That's a lot of people. There are needs and services. I understand that.

[01:46:18] We have to find what those balances are for those services. Everybody can't get everything, and there's a lot that we can do collectively to make sure that there's some form of balance between our citizens and our services and what that looks like. It may not be 50-50 even, but right now it's way out of tilt.

[01:46:35] I will agree with you, Supervisor, well on that. But there's a way that we up here collectively can have a better conversation and better dialogue about how do we get there. I gave you my proposals. Everyone has their what they want to support, and everything's all the greatest thing ever. All these departments are great.

[01:46:51] I got it. But there's things that we can do to make sure that we get the citizens back. One hand, we've got talking about helping the citizens out. The other hand, we're talking about giving departments funding more and more. So it doesn't work that way, folks. We need to find a balance. I'm just going to leave it there.

[01:47:06] I don't want to get into the nitty-gritty. So I hope that our next meetings from now on, we can focus on us on this board and not so much about talking to the people. They can watch this on TV. They got citizen time or public comment time. They got three minutes to talk.

[01:47:22] We hear what they say. But we need to be talking better as a board, and I don't think we're doing that or have done a good job of that. Thank you, Madam Chair. All right, thank you so much. Before I get into my remarks on the budget, I would like to first announce my notice of 10 to appoint R.J. Ziegler, Reid Clark, and Jim Rafferty to the Tourism Industry Advisory Board.

[01:47:45] You know, you're right. Politics has been adjusted into this process, but it hasn't been from me, and it hasn't been from very many board members. The whole point of this process is for us to talk, to come to an agreement, or come to a compromise.

[01:48:03] And for the people who aren't happy with the process, maybe your budget, maybe your ass didn't reflect the direction that we're moving in in this county. And screaming and yelling and putting out emails and slandering and denigrating your colleagues, that doesn't work.

[01:48:25] A lot of you said you didn't like that with the passport, but here you are doing exactly the thing that you don't like. And each and every one of us on this board does pay taxes. We pay the same taxes that we are asking other people to pay.

[01:48:40] I don't want to lose that point. We are paying those same taxes. My bills are going to go up and some are going to go down. And there is nothing wrong with compromise. My gosh, hasn't anyone learned how to play nicely in the sandbox? Do we not understand we're not going to get everything we want? On markup, some of the things that are most dear to me, some of the programs that I want to fund, I was the first person to say, we don't have the money, let's remove it. This process is about our principles. It's not about partisan politics, but some of us

[01:49:18] have made it about partisan politics because they want to do their campaign speeches from the dais. And I'm sure they're going to be fundraising emails coming out next. That is now how I wanted this process to go. I want us to have real dialogue. And if you want to call the tax decreases that we did measly, well, it's costing the county. It is costing us revenue. This was a balanced process. And I will stand by that. It was balanced because we have a lot of economic uncertainty ahead of us, and that is not because of something that I voted for. We have a madman

[01:49:57] in Washington who is taking a chainsaw to our government, who is injecting uncertainty, who is not collaborating with our allies. Bye, Bob. Our stock market is up and down, up and down, up and down in just one day, and I'm supposed to take advice? I'm supposed to agree with everything?

[01:50:26] I have principles. All of us have principles, and we are supposed to discuss our principles. Taking our toys and walking away is what children do. And I am embarrassed. I have worked very hard to bring bipartisanship to this board.

[01:50:45] And I am embarrassed that some people didn't get their way, and now they're crying over it. Tough luck. This is about principles. We disagree.

[01:51:01] We have partisan differences based on how we see the world. I don't think that our government, particularly our local government, is filled with waste and abuse. And I appreciate the leadership of Mr. Shorter and your team and everyone in county government.

[01:51:19] I appreciate the work that you guys do day in and day out. And I don't like when our staff is attacked. I don't like when it's questioned, oh, when someone's telling our clerk who I see, I'm the only one with an office in the McCourt building. I see our staff here early in the morning and late at night.

[01:51:35] I see people running around and getting their job done and trying to make our lives just a little bit easier. So I'm not going to take any of this lying down. we also have an audit process we don't have all this waste and abuse that people are clamoring screaming about i don't see that but i also don't want to live in a world where there's this dark clouds hanging over us where people are attacking reporters and academic institutions i didn't vote for that and i'm not going to vote for that in prince william county so people are mad and saying that we're injecting politics in this it's the people who are doing it's the people who want to

[01:52:15] do their campaign speeches right here for this dais. So I am frustrated and embarrassed. It's not in the process. It's in the people and the personalities of how folks are acting. You didn't win me over. You didn't win over the majority. We didn't rubber stamp anything because we did not agree with everything that Mr. Shorter said. We did not agree with the budget. We did reduce taxes.

[01:52:37] We did raise the C&P tax. You didn't get what you want. This is life. This is America. Try harder next year. And with that, I would like a motion to adjourn. Move for adjourn. Second. Let's go ahead and vote. Motion passes seven to zero. Supervisor Weir absent from vote. Thank you everyone. Our next meeting is on Tuesday, May 13th.



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