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Prince William Board of County Supervisors Meeting — Work Session, Tuesday, March 10, 2026

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[00:00:06] all right everyone it is 2 0 1 on tuesday march 10th we are going to begin with a moment of silence

[00:00:15] all right thank you all rise if you are able for the pledge of allegiance all right we are going

[00:01:03] to roll right into agenda item number three and that is public comment time while we are waiting for the sign up list if you are new here you will go to the back of the podium you will have three minutes to speak and i always ask that you begin by stating your name and where you generally reside

[00:01:23] looks like we have two people we have martin jeter and we have sharon richardson okay good afternoon chair jeff jefferson members of the board my name is martin jeter and i live in the aqua district um when it comes to parks i'm not too proud to beg and since it's funding season

[00:02:02] i'm here to beg for a park and that park is davis ford park as you see on your screen there the green area right off the davis ford road and near the aquan river now this park just a little history that was a sewage treatment facility for the aquan forest community for many years for environmental reasons it was decommissioned in the 2007 time frame and turned over to the board of county supervisors that same year the board issued a directive to form a committee to decide on the free use the future use of this parcel

and that committee came back a number of months later saying that the best use for this would be a passive use park. That makes a lot of

[00:02:40] sense because it is a 57-acre parcel of heavily wooded, for the most part heavily wooded, beautiful parcel. And so a couple years later, the Service Authority, now Prince William Water, finished their remediation and declared it safe for the public to use. It's just been sitting there ever since.

[00:03:00] It's been sitting there since around 2010, 2012. So what I'm asking for today is some money in the CIP for the actual operation of this park. Now, we wouldn't need as much. I know you have so far some funding in there for the Neabsco Park, \$5.2 million.

[00:03:20] We wouldn't need anywhere near that much for this park. This already has a gravel parking lot from its previous use, has some roughed-in trails. Midco can supply volunteer labor, including me, to help build out the trails and open this park. So we get the trails, throw down a port-a-john or two, and throw open the gates.

[00:03:38] So we're looking for some money for that. We have a master plan process starting for this park, actually this month, and that should be completed from what they tell me by the end of the year. So we are looking forward to getting this park open as soon as possible. People have been waiting a long time.

[00:03:54] And just to give you an idea of how popular it is, Midco had a park walk event two years ago, and you can see it was in January. It was a little overcast. It was threatening rain or snow, windy, and we had a turnout of well over 100 people at that event.

[00:04:13] And the people that were there included Supervisor Bodie, as you see here, numerous other folks from environmental organizations and historical organizations. Kenny and I are trying out some new hand signals here for the future. But in any case, we're asking for money to open this park.

[00:04:33] Folks at this event thought this was a great idea, a great use for this park, the passive use. And the cell tower in the background, don't look at that. That's still owned by the service authority, and you can't really see that once you get back into the park. We're in the parking lot area here.

[00:04:48] So, in any case, we're hoping for funding in this cycle to get this park open soon. Thank you very much. Thank you. Next speaker, please. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, Madam Chair, Madam County Attorney, Mr. County Executive.

[00:05:13] My name is Sharon Richardson. I live in the Occoquan District, but I am also the Woodbridge District Representative, for now, to the Parks and Rec Commission. And I know later today you're going to have a work session on the referendum process for parks, libraries, and indoor sports facilities.

[00:05:32] And I am just here to ask your support for that. I am also a county government employee, so I realize there are tons of competing needs for the budget that you all will be ultimately approving. But I would like to ask that you seriously consider supporting the referendum process.

[00:05:52] As you heard from Mr. Jeter, we do need more parks, more trails, more open spaces. It would be fantastic to have an indoor sports facility of some kind. I go out and talk to parents of children in all sorts of sports, basketball, track and field, and not just on this end of the county, but the other end of the county.

[00:06:14] When you talk to parents, they really want this. Our residents want it. and done well it could be a great form of revenue potentially for the county with sports tourism and other things so that's all i

wanted to say i thank you for your time and attention and i really hope you can find it in your hearts to support the referendum process thank you all right thank you so very much do we have anyone for virtual all right we don't have anyone for virtual so this ends public comment time. I'm going to move on to agenda item number four, and that's county

[00:06:54] executive time. Mr. Shorter, the floor is yours. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Nothing for me this afternoon. Madam County Attorney. Thank you, Madam Chair. No items for closed session. All right. That means we're all really excited for the work sessions. Mr. Shorter, if you can queue those up. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Members of the board, good afternoon.

[00:07:14] I want to welcome Sarah Frey to come on up. She is with PFM Advisory Financial Advisors. They work with us very closely on all things debt management and has certainly worked very closely with us in our relationship with the bond rating agency. So, Sarah, I will turn it over to you.

[00:07:34] Thank you. Good afternoon, Mrs. Chair, members of the board. I'm happy to be with you today. As Mr. Shorter mentions, I am with PFM, the county's financial advisor. We've had the pleasure and honor of serving as the county's financial advisor for 25 years. I personally have been advising the county for 24. So we assist the county with the issuance of its debt, restructuring of debt. Along with that comes credit ratings and other financing strategies. And I'm here to speak with you today about the projected increases in the county's debt. So the county's debt is

[00:08:12] projected to increase over the next several years. So I want to show you the current debt, show you the projected increases, talk about what's driving that, and look at debt affordability from a few different perspectives. As you know, debt is one component that the rating agencies look at when they assign credit ratings to the county. So we'll talk about the credit as well. I have a few related recommendations and open it up for questions. So starting with just an overview of the county's existing debt. So at the end of this fiscal year, June 30, the county will have \$1.19 billion of

[00:08:49] debt outstanding 78 of that was used to fund school projects um that's 930 million outstanding for schools i wait i apologize because we have two people who needed to read their coia statements yeah so yeah thank you madam chair we went flew through so so much of the agenda we got here a lot sooner than we thought so madam chair before the presentation discussion about items 6a 6b and 6c on debt capacity general revenue estimates and the referendum process i need to declare a personal interest in these matters. As a school's employee, my wife and I are members of a group which is affected by these matters. I will be able to participate in these matters because I'm able

[00:09:28] to do so fairly, objectively, and in the public interest. Thank you. Madam Chair, before the presentation and discussions on items 6A, 6B, and 6C, and debt capacity, general revenue estimates, and the referendum process, 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 and in the public interest thank you madam chair all right thank you and i apologize for that it's okay um all right so i was just given an overview of the county's existing debt as i

[00:10:07] mentioned 1.19 billion dollars outstanding at the end of this fiscal year 78 of that debt was used to fund school projects. As you know, the schools issue debt annually, typically through the Virginia Public School Authority. That debt is secured by what's called a full faith and credit. So in other words, the general obligation pledge of the county, so paid for by the county. 22% of the county's current debt is used

for county projects. That's \$260 million. The majority of those are for roads and county facilities, but it also includes public safety, parks, and libraries. The graph on the

[00:10:45] right shows the annual debt service, so the payments you make each year on the bonds. In fiscal 26, your debt service payment totals \$152 million, of which \$120 million is for schools. You can see from the graph the county does repay your debt rapidly, which is a best practice. It also keeps your total debt costs down and recycles capacity for future projects. So here we take that \$1.19 billion of debt outstanding in fiscal 26 and show the projected increase over the next several years.

[00:11:21] So if you look at the graph, the columns in green are the existing debt. You'll pay that down a little bit each year, and then the new debt is shown in blue. And what we've layered on here for the county debt is some bonds that have been approved at referendum previously but have not been issued yet that are planned to be issued.

[00:11:39] And then we've layered in the debt related to the proposed CIP, the county's fiscal 27 to 32 CIP. For the schools, we've also layered in their proposed fiscal 27 to 31 CIP. This year, their CIP included two scenarios.

[00:11:58] There was a scenario A and B. We're using scenario B, which is the lower of their two. It does not include the cost of the 14th high school. So this is the debt that's associated with the proposed scenario B for schools layered in. And so we're showing that over these next five years, the schools are projected to issue \$815 million in bonds.

[00:12:19] So you can see from the graph, the county is projected to add more debt than you are paying off. That \$1.19 billion in fiscal 26 is projected to increase to just under \$2 billion by fiscal 31, so up to \$1.94. That's over a 60% increase in your outstanding debt in five years.

[00:12:39] So I'm going to talk about what's driving that and then look at the affordability from a few different perspectives. I'll say from the outset that even with this increase, you are projected to remain within the debt limit set forth in the principles of sound financial management. But if the growth in debt service materially outpaces the growth in your revenue, we are concerned about potential negative credit pressure and the implications on your credit ratings.

[00:13:04] So the next two slides will talk about what's driving the projected increase in debt. Both on the county side and the school side, it's a relatively high issuance in the near term. On the county side, the largest projects included are just the Judicial Center expansion.

[00:13:24] That's planned with \$200 million in debt over the next five years. The countywide space project, \$220 million in debt. Three fire stations totaling just under \$100 million. For the schools, they have renovations across multiple schools.

[00:13:43] Three elementary, one middle, and one high school totaling \$365 million in planned debt issuance. They have renovations and replacements across many schools. The biggest ticket item within those renovations is HVAC replacements at \$179 million.

[00:14:01] And they also have planned two new elementary schools totaling \$130 million. And the schools describes the cost that they're facing now, higher construction costs than they have in years past. So this graph is designed to put what I described as relatively higher debt issuance into perspective.

[00:14:22] So we're showing the annual amount of new debt issued for each year for the past 10 years compared to what's coming or projected over the next five. So you can see over the past 10 years, the annual debt issued by the county averaged \$118 million.

[00:14:39] Schools have issued consistently each year. The county has issued more modestly and periodically as needed over that period. And then what's projected over the next five is really higher debt for both the county and the schools. so the average new issuance over the next five years is projected to be 285 million so here we're showing the projected cost of that debt in other words this is the annual debt service payments that you would make the green again is the existing debt and then layered on is the same

[00:15:14] assumptions we had for the new county and the school issuance so debt service is projected to increase an average of nine percent a year that is faster than the county's general fund has grown over the past 10 years. Over the past 10 years, the average growth in the general fund was around 6%. Obviously had much stronger growth in the past three, ranging from 8 to 12.

[00:15:41] If we look at the projections in the county's five-year strategic plan, that general fund revenue is estimated to grow at a strong 6%. There's a lot of data center revenue driving that, but what I want to caution here is that if those projections hold, your debt would be growing faster than your budget. So in other words, your debt service will consume an increasing portion of your budget. It will limit flexibility and consume, limit flexibility for other county needs and services. As I mentioned earlier, you are projected to remain within the debt limits set

[00:16:19] forth in the principles of sound financial management. You have three main debt affordability limits within those policies. One measures debt outstanding relative to taxable assessed value, that max is 3%. You have a limit on annual debt services total revenues at 10%. But what we're showing here is the third metric and we're showing that one because over the next five years it's projected to be the most constraining of those three debt metrics. That is debt service relative to the general fund and fire levy expenditures. This is really designed to show the debt service

[00:16:54] and then the funds that actually go to pay that debt service. So your policy limit there is 13% and because that's a max hard limit expenditures could change at any time the way we look at this is with some sensitivity so assume that there is a decline in expenditures a 10 percent decline what would that ratio be that's what you see in orange so under that conservative assumption the 10 percent decline in those expenditures in fiscal 26 you're at 8.2 projected to increase to 9.8 in

[00:17:25] fiscal 31. So again projected to remain within the limits but these limits themselves were not designed in and of itself to maintain the county's credit rating as I'll talk about again. You could have negative credit pressure even if you remain within your adopted debt policy limits. The projections I showed you are based on the bond referendum that I previously approved in the proposed CIP. It does not include any additional debt, such as debt the board may consider for

[00:18:02] future bond referendum. That's not included in the projections here today. So again, debt is one of the drivers that the rating agencies consider when they assess the county's credit health. So I want to spend a few minutes discussing the county's credit ratings. I'm just beginning with a reminder of what credit ratings are at a high level. So credit ratings measure the risk to the investor, so both in terms of willingness and ability to pay. Higher credit ratings means lower risk to the investor of the bonds defaulting. And higher credit ratings to you equals a lower

[00:18:39] borrowing rate. The three main rating agencies are Moody's, S&P, and Fitch. And in 2010, there's a newer bond rating agency, KBRA. We are monitoring them, discussing it with county staff to see if at some point in the future there may be value to adding them to your credit ratings but at this point we have not made that recommendation. So the county maintains a triple A from Moody's S&P and Fitch which is a remarkable testament to the strength of the county's economy your finances

[00:19:16] and your management. You received your first triple A 22 years ago and you have enjoyed the triple A from all three of those major rating agencies for 15 consecutive years. We are one of 13 counties in Virginia with that elite status and one of 55 counties in the nation with that distinction.

[00:19:39] Each rating agency applies their own criteria for how they assign ratings. All three of the agencies look at economy and demographics, and they all three look at the debt and liability burden that we've been talking about today.

[00:19:55] For them, the debt and liabilities does include your pension payments and your other post-employment benefits, your OPEB benefit funding as well. But as you can see from this chart, how they assess and how much weight they give to each component differs by agency.

[00:20:12] There are two points I want to make here. The first is that certain of these factors are difficult for you to directly control. So, for example, some of the demographic factors, population growth, institutional framework, which is the legal environment in which you operate, you have very limited control over those portions of how your credit is assessed.

[00:20:34] And then secondly, these criteria are subject to change at any time at the rating agency's discretion. They do make changes, significant ones. I'm going to circle back to that in a few slides and talk about a significant recent change from Fitch, which impacts how the county is assessed.

[00:20:50] so here highlighting the county's strengths and some of its challenges as described by the rating agencies in the most recent review which was in October of last year so back in in the fall so across the board the county has the highest possible marks for the strength of your management and the tremendous financial planning that is embedded in the county's culture particularly in the last few years your revenues have shown tremendous growth and diversification your wealth levels are strong. Your funding for pension and those other post-employment liabilities are also

[00:21:29] very strong. Your geographic location at times has been a credit strength and at times is a credit risk as your economy is impacted by the federal government and related employment changes. Your reserves are stable but they're not strong relative to peers or relative to medians and I'll show you some figures on that in a few minutes. Your debt levels are moderate. Your debt levels throughout the Commonwealth are elevated compared to the nation because here, relatively unique in that

[00:22:02] the counties fund the schools, not the case nationwide. The rating agencies, both S&P and Moody's, have also noted the economic output and growth within the county lags the nation. So certainly, again, the county's credit is very strong with the triple AAA, the highest possible credit ratings. But there are a few potential areas that could put negative credit pressure on the county going forward. And so I want to dig into those a little bit more. So these are

[00:22:37] yellow flags, if you will, areas of caution to monitor. So Moody's and S&P are both watching your reserve levels. Again, they lag medians, and I'll come back and show you that data in a minute. S&P noted in the last report that the county's population, as it grows, it may have expenditure pressures on the

county, so that's another thing they're monitoring. And then both S&P and Fitch are watching your debt levels. S&P has specifically noted that the rating could be pressured if new debt issuance outpaces your budgetary growth. So that same dynamic we talked about

[00:23:13] earlier, the debt burden is growing faster than the revenue, they said that could have negative credit pressure. Fitch also stated a 10% increase in liabilities could lead to a downgrade or negative rating action. I want to spend a few minutes just on your Fitch rating in particular.

[00:23:32] This is the one that I mentioned back in 2024. There was a significant change in how they assess local governments. So they have moved to a model-driven approach to ratings. So there is less room for analytical judgment than there was in the past. And so here we summarize the key components of your score back from the last review in the fall. And within the model, again, there are only a few levers that you can directly control. In some of these components, you score the highest possible. For example, financial resilience. Some of the demographic factors

[00:24:11] score really well. The two places within the score that bring you down is your population growth compared to Fitch's rated universe. And then your economic concentration brings your score down here. So at your last review, you scored a 10.16. To maintain the AAA with Fitch and their model, you have to maintain a 10.0 or higher. So they categorize that as a low AAA, and you're getting closer again to that cutoff of 10.0 as a hard cutoff under their new methodology.

[00:24:48] This next graph is a graph that I don't like, but I thought it's important to show to you. Nonetheless, so this is your most recent Fitch score compared to the most recent Fitch score for the other 12 AAA-rated counties in Virginia.

[00:25:05] So your score is among the lowest of those AAA counties in Virginia. And again, we're showing it next to that cutoff of the 10.0 to maintain the current credit rating. So something to be careful and monitor, certainly.

[00:25:24] And then, as I mentioned, I wanted to come back to reserves. So here we're showing the way that Moody's evaluates reserves. So they're looking at all the different buckets of reserves, if you will, that they consider available. In other words, if something unexpected comes up, these are funds that you as a board, they believe you could redirect if needed, and they measure that against total revenues.

[00:25:50] So by the way they measure it, in fiscal 25, your reserves totaled just under 27 percent. Compared to the peer median, and those peers are also AAA, similar size localities, that peer median is 43, and the AAA nationwide median is 48%.

[00:26:13] On the right hand, we show how Moody's scores this subcomponent of the credit rating. So they have, obviously, again, AAA overall, they have subcomponent scores for reserves to be AAA for reserves in and of itself.

[00:26:30] They're looking at 35% or higher, and fiscal 25, you are in that AA range of 25% to 35%. So with that information regarding your credit rating, you might ask, what's the value of your current credit ratings?

[00:26:48] In other words, hypothetically, if you were to be downgraded, what would that cost? So based on the planned debt issuance over the next five years, a downgrade would cost the county an estimated \$1.1 million per year. If we present value that and put it in today's dollars, that's \$18.3 million.

[00:27:08] So any increase in debt service costs would divert budget dollars from other county services. I would also note that when there are credit downgrades, there is headline, there is ramifications from a PR perspective that can also be a difficult pill to swallow.

[00:27:25] So given all that information, I wanted to end with a few recommendations before opening up for questions. Your principles of sound financial management were designed to give you room to accommodate a breadth of projects and to do so even if the budget and the tax base decline.

[00:27:47] As I described earlier, increases to your debt levels could negatively impact your credit ratings even before you hit those max policy limits. The critical component we recommend in order to maintain your current credit ratings is to manage the debt service growth relative to your revenue growth.

[00:28:09] So again, if the debt service material outpaces your revenue growth, we foresee negative rating implications. That may mean re-evaluating, recalibrating capital spending year over year once you see where actual revenues come in.

[00:28:25] And it may mean, as we spoke about earlier, we're at the precipice of this higher period of projected spending on both the county and the school side. So if it's the board's will, you might consider evaluation of the overall debt capacity and how that's allocated between county and schools and balanced over time.

[00:28:45] And finally, as we think about key rating drivers, where you do have control, more direct control over them, reserves is an area where, at a minimum, they should be maintained. If you are interested, we, along with county staff, would be happy to talk to you further about how much you might increase those to get up towards those median levels and to get even stronger within that category, but at a minimum, maintaining those.

[00:29:15] With that, I'm happy to answer any questions you have. All right. Thank you so very much. I want to jump in, and this is an excellent presentation, one that we really need to think about this budget season. I want to go to slide 18. I'm sorry, 16 first. Because it's saying moderate debt, I'm sorry, the economic output slightly below the national average. Does that mean, I just want to get more clarity around what that means. Is it talking about our revenue compared to other similar sized jurisdictions or what we're seeing around the nation? What is that exactly?

[00:29:48] So that language came from the S&P report, and the way S&P looks at that is they measure gross county product per capita relative to the U.S. GDP per capita. So when you look at the national GDP per capita, the county in and of itself is 64% of that national level.

[00:30:09] Okay. Slide 18. And I know that these are things that we don't control, like population trend. Is our population growing too quickly? is it growing too slow is that having an impact on how much again we're spending how much revenue we're taking it i just want to make sure i understand that one and um looks like population size and economic concentration yeah and i'm just i'm flipping for the the exact data here so the way um this this new model works with fitch is they compare your trends relative to every credit

[00:30:47] they rate. So you're kind of stacking up against them. So your population growth was 1.1%. So that did lag the national median. So you were at 1.1% population growth. It was lagging what they're seeing for national growth. All right. Because I only have, well, a few more minutes. Can you talk about, well, I am interested in knowing what we can do. I know I've had conversations, my staff and I, with

David's Claire and some others about even looking at our surplus and putting more of that into reserves but what are some ideas to boost our reserves because i think that's something

[00:31:23] we really need to talk about and discuss now um because i don't want to have this discussion you know when it's too late when we're slipping below credit worthiness or you know our triple triple a um bond ratings one of the agencies yeah well i i don't know i'm looking back if anyone wants to talk about where that funding may come from um to boost the reserves i know there's a couple different ways to look at it and I know there was some recent discussion about how much you would need to increase your reserves in order to hit those medians so if we just wanted to get

[00:32:00] I'm going to go back to the Moody's to that fund balance slide so if we were just trying to get up to that triple a range within the Moody's scorecard it's 180 million dollars roughly in terms of actual dollars um and even even higher if you want to get up to the peer median or the triple a median so those are those are real dollars all right thank you very much i'm going

[00:32:35] to go over to supervisor angry thank you i'm kind of sticking with this slide um is that i think 18 that was the one that you used what is that okay maybe it's is it 19 what am i writing here it's the one where we're like lowest on the um it's 18 yeah here 19 so oh that is yeah so I'm just I don't know if you said it but um when were we better than this like uh what year like if you can tell me when we were placed higher and then what started happening that maybe we were doing

[00:33:14] not so great from this board's perspective that dipped us all the way down this low yeah so again this is a new methodology from Fitch and so they previous to this big change that happened in 2024 they did not have this this specific of the scores to come out when you were initially rated under the new methodology they were a bit more favorable in how they assess that economic concentration and then they've tightened up on that methodology and really what's dragging the county down within that score and brings your score down relative to the peers

[00:33:54] is that economic concentration which I'll describe that it's a little bit of an odd or complicated calculation they do but they're looking at income generated in the county so not who lives here and works elsewhere and brings it home but actual income generated in the county by economic sector And they compare that to a national median.

[00:34:20] So, for example, they look at the construction sector, the economic sector, the government sector, professional services, and see. And so they say if you differ significantly from the national median for those sectors in terms of income, then you're more concentrated.

[00:34:38] Okay, so the government sector, I think that's what you termed. So we just, I don't know if that's the term you said, but we just got a presentation. And we know that a lot of federal jobs got cut, and we know that that could be, that's definitely affecting Prince William County, which was born as a bedroom community.

[00:34:57] Now, because of that, so we need to find another way to shift that category to kind of fill that void? Is that what, I mean, I guess my overall question is how do we get out of that bottom to the last and get back up to hopefully number one on this list?

[00:35:13] Very competitive, but I just, I don't like being that low or that close to losing this rating. Yeah. And in here, I mean, this factor is, again, one that's more difficult to control directly. What this score is

showing is you have more government professionals, more education, and less professional service in the national economy, which is why you're scoring low.

[00:35:37] So I think continued diversification of the economy will help that particular component of the scorecard. I think here, controlling that debt level, you can see you're strong, but as they said, if it goes up 10%, that's going to knock you down even further.

[00:35:58] So I think that one, and this one is different from Moody's and S&P. The reserves here don't really count for that much, honestly. you have a low reserve and you kind of get the highest score within the the fitch um so the the fitch score is a little bit harder to control um i am you know one of the things that has you know it's a 10 point scale and you can see some communities all the way up there at 13 and 12 and 11 and 10 and they are getting a bonus point in a 10 point scale which is huge within this

[00:36:31] methodology and that is based on um the total tax base um relative to your population so if your tax base continues to grow at the pace it has not for fiscal 25 and maybe not for fiscal 26 i'm optimistic that growing the tax base can get you one of those bonus points and really boost your score that's why you see some a lot higher here thank you so that's something that i think could control and help that. Because I was going to ask, what are they doing, right? So sound like

[00:37:05] those 10 points. Okay. All right. Thank you. Supervisor Vega. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the presentation. I was too slow to get in the queue first, but I wanted to kick off discussion by asking you to highlight the importance and the meaning of having a triple A. I know that you briefly mentioned it in the presentation, but just real quick, why is a triple A rating important? Well, it's really, you know, it means that of all the credits that you are the highest, most credit worthy. So for investors, the lowest risk of defaulting, it means when you go to

[00:37:41] sell bonds, you get the lowest possible borrowing rate on that day. So it lowers the cost of your debt overall. It helps in times, particularly of financial stress. And so you can see over time when the markets are a little bit choppy, investors want to buy those safer credits, you would see even more value for those high credit ratings in those types of periods, the more difficult, more volatile market conditions.

[00:38:08] Thank you for that quick refresher. Supervisor Angry, you stole the question out of my mouth, but I just want to expand a little bit on it. I understand that this is a new rating mechanism. However, it's still concerning that we have other jurisdictions be at the higher end, in particular to this graph that you're showing Prince William County being the second largest county in the Commonwealth we had a presentation earlier today where you know we thought that we were perfect without flaw and here we are right um seeing the realities of um where we stand at least in regards to our bond rating and so is there is there any indicators that could um give

[00:38:43] us more more I guess understanding as to why we're so low on this graph in comparison to other jurisdictions yeah we we can go through the data again i think the biggest ones where compared to a lot of these is the economic concentration is really pulling you down i think some of the others on the list have a better score you can see that kind of yellow mid-range and it's very sensitive so little changes are really are really driving that um and again that's difficult to control but relative to the others you know aside from those bonus points we mentioned which you know if your

[00:39:20] tax base continues to grow perhaps you can get there i think within a few years um otherwise again you know it's hard to control the income and percent of your population with a bachelor's degree or

higher these are the things that are driving their their their model thank you for that the chair mentioned um you know looking at having a you know more in-depth conversation surrounding our surplus uh you mentioned a lot of the factors that we cannot control aside from increasing our reserves and, you know, talking more about surplus, what other factors can we control? You know, I go back to this list. I think this was clear. Guidance, these are specific quotes

[00:39:59] from the most recent reports about, you know, what could pressure the rating, and so fund balance, again, with Moody's and S&P, they've continued to note stable, which is good. You know, you're AAA, you're stable. There's no room for that to decline. There is room for that to improve relative to the peers and relative to the national meetings so that i think is one place you can control and then i think the debt levels i think if the debt you know we have a period that we're showing and that's projected to increase i think if your debt grows faster than your revenue i i think we are going to see some negative pressure where you know we talked about we have some challenges

[00:40:38] they're monitoring and so i think that's the other direct place i think the reserves and then the debt levels are the two areas you can most directly impact. Okay thank you for that. Now the \$365 million for schools is that on top of the 57.23% revenue share agreement? I'm sorry. You mentioned \$365 million for the school division for their for their projects. My question is is that on top of the 57.23% that we give the school division? This is yes this is the debt issuance

[00:41:15] that would be paid for the county on top of the revenue shared okay thank you dave do you have more just as a point of clarification the the 57.23 percent of general revenue that the county transfers to the schools by current policy of that 57.23 percent the schools pay their share of their debt service from that 57.23 percent okay thank you and then the final question that i have for now is um assuming because our job is to plan right for the worst um hoping that that

[00:41:53] that doesn't happen but if if it does if a downgrade to the double a category uh were to occur resulting in the estimated 18.3 million referenced in the presentation in additional debt service have we discussed any county services that would likely be impacted or diversion of funds? We have not. We have not. Do we plan on doing that? As part of this process, certainly the staff is always available to talk about cuts to services, cuts to our sort of some

[00:42:29] of the programs, but we generally know we have not scenarioed what services would be cut if we were in a position where we were double-A county versus a triple-A county. Thank you for that. Certainly, it's not our intention or our intent to make any cuts, but I do think that the more we prepare, the better off we will be in case this does happen, and I think that it would be in the best interest of you, Mr. County Executive, and the team to prepare for the worst in case it does happen.

[00:42:58] Not saying that it will, but we have to be prepared. All right, moving on to the next speaker, Supervisor Bode. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the presentation. When it comes to economic concentration, I know you've talked a little bit about it, and i appreciate that the conversation around it um so for clarity that's economic activity being generated within the locality right like those are jobs people that are generating wealth there and i get why and could you go back to that slide for a second i get why we are sort of where we are but it's also surprising that other localities like a stafford or fuck here which i would imagine

[00:43:36] have even less economic like it seemed like a weird comparison that they're somehow being rated higher on those things when we have more jobs and we as uh uh sures of vegas said earlier we had a

lot of good information that was given to us even just earlier today that we are actually outpacing a lot of our peer jurisdictions in generating new jobs and things like that but then here it seems like it's the opposite where other localities actually probably have less self-generating jobs are somehow being rated higher than us do you had was there any comparative analysis that was done if those registrations are somehow scoring higher on that economic concentration specifically?

[00:44:13] Yeah, and we do have that detail. I think what's a little odd about this, again, it's a complicated calculation, but it's about diversification. So you may have more income, but they're looking at how concentrated it is by those sectors.

[00:44:30] So, again, you have more income in the education and government sector than the national, and you have less in professional services. So, like, another community may have less overall, but if it's equally distributed among the different categories, then they may score better.

[00:44:49] Okay. I appreciate that. And my last one is, can you go to slide eight for a second, please? So, to me, this bears further conversation. One of the things you mentioned before is us taking considerations of how we balance our debt and the schools and what have you.

[00:45:07] And I think, Supervisor Vega, you started a good beat on that conversation where, you know, we give the school division the money. We don't control when they take on CIP projects, when they decide to pay down that, what have you. We have a conversation about it. But to me, this shows that overall, generally speaking, until the next couple of fiscal years, it's largely the school systems driving the debt and the issuance of this and not the county.

[00:45:31] And so I don't want to take a shot at the schools at the same time. If we have needs but we're constrained because we're basically in the same sandwich stack, there needs to be a conversation there because I get it. They still have needs. They need to do renovations, what have you. But we're in a place where, frankly, they're canceling new schools.

[00:45:49] But then we're not able to fulfill our need and create new facilities, public facilities, public safety, other recreational facilities, things that we will be talking about. To me, there's a real conversation there. Because if we're not the ones that are the main drivers of the debt, we're not in control of our own destiny around that.

[00:46:04] So we really need to have a bigger discussion with the schools about that. Thank you. Wasn't really a question, but I just want to do this. You're nodding, which means that where I'm saying jives with what you're seeing. Yes. Well, the schools will be here, and you can ask all the questions in the world.

[00:46:21] Supervisor Stewart. So just echoing with Supervisor Bodhi just mentioned, number one, but the other thing where it comes to school and government overweighting, because I'm looking at Arlington and Fairfax, which are right there.

[00:46:46] I mean, it would seem that they would be way more overweight in government jobs just due to their geographic location than Prince William. Is it that or is there an underweight that this formulation has changed to discount diversification and that maybe they overstepped that?

[00:47:15] Like, they went too far mathematically with diversification versus overweighting of – That's a good question. I think you guys are picking up on all the nuances here within the score. So, again, it's a 10-point scale.

[00:47:33] I mentioned the one point where, you know, if your tax base grows, I think you could get that bonus point. Fairfax and Arlington also get a second bonus point by having the highest contribution to the regional GDP. And they'll only give that to two jurisdictions in any MSA.

[00:47:52] So here, that's how they assign it. That's their methodology. So they get two bonus points on a, you know, a 10-point scale. So good for them. That's how their score is a lot higher. The economic concentration is only 9% of the weight, but again, if we were to play around and toggle that and bring that up to strong, you would look a lot higher up on this next graph compared to the others.

[00:48:22] Right, because that seems particularly arbitrary. I mean, we just got a report earlier today about our GDP and what we contribute to this, and they only printed out two certificates to give out.

[00:48:39] That's, you know, because math is just what it is, right? And I'm just going to say it out loud.

[00:48:54] Their point system is it doesn't work. It doesn't work. And I see it as a threat to the county and our credit rating. And I think it's something that they need to look at because these are people's lives that we're dealing with.

[00:49:14] And their approach doesn't need to be this arbitrary. And that's all I got to say about that. All right. Thank you so very much. Supervisor Bailey. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. If I go, I want to go back to page 19.

[00:49:34] That seems to be the popular slide for tonight. But the thing, when I look at it, it says the county's FY 2024 Finch score, right? So then I go back to page 17, and I'm looking at the Finch ratings.

[00:49:52] Yeah, that one. So could possibly, potentially, the reason why we're lower on the spectrum here has to do with the fact, because it says here the presence of Quantico and FBI could be good, but yet it could be bad and more volatile because of changes in federal defense spending and that kind of thing.

[00:50:12] Could that have an impact also on our scoring? yeah and timing you know one of the things that you know again you know we we got these ratings in the fall because you were going to market to sell bonds and so that's when we needed to get the ratings updated you know one of the factors that plays into the score is the unemployment rate which we've seen vary throughout the year and the timing so yes i mean these these you know if you look here they're all rated at different times so yes it could i mean this is what's you know

[00:50:44] it's a big change for Fitch to move to a model driven score again limited room aside from these bonus points which have specific criteria there's very limited room for for analytical judgment so these are the rules we're playing with and yes it does it it is subject to change and that's why we're noting for you 10.16 is above the triple a but it's something we need to be very careful about yeah I just you know just as a comment I would say that that would definitely have an impact on what we're seeing here based upon the rules that they're governing themselves by.

[00:51:19] And I also wanted to ask, as we go forward with this and really grasping this and understanding this, are there policy choices that we need to start making now or looking at now as it relates to really protecting our AAA bond rating?

[00:51:42] What type of policy changes or choices do we really need to hone in on? I think if the goal is to maintain the current credit ratings, we could come back and consider tightening up those debt policies. I said a few times that you could get up to the max and not maintain the current AAA.

[00:52:01] I don't think that those max limits were necessarily set with these rules in mind. I think if you're looking to tighten it up, that's a place. I think we talked about managing it. I think if you're, again, managing the growth, making sure it's not outpacing each other, to me that's the critical near-term, you know, given the dynamic and projections over the next few years, I think that's an extremely critical matter to manage. And then the reserve levels, as we talked about, are the two kind of concrete policy-driven steps that you could take that

[00:52:36] impact the credit ratings. And also, the term diversification has been mentioned over and over again in the conversations that we've been having here during the budget season. I think we're at that point now where we really need to focus on that in terms of our growth and our revenues, wouldn't you say? Yes, and again, that's been a strong point for the county over the past few years, the growth and diversification of your revenue source, the growth in the commercial base within the county those have been strong points and that again will help

[00:53:13] maintain the credit ratings perhaps you know that takes a little bit more time a little less directly than these like kind of immediate financial controls that you have but certainly that also helps with the credit ratings so the last question i have how much control do we have over being competitive with the Fairfax-Arlington thing with the two-certificate thing that we don't really like?

[00:53:43] I mean, is there a way that we could be looked upon or just as competitive as they are as we grow, as we improve? You know, again, that rating and the Fitch score, I think, subject to change and we're monitoring that closely I mean ultimately you do have a choice in who you pay to rate the county I think if you go back that's why I mentioned there is a fourth rating agency we have not recommended that you use them yet last year for the first time a few

[00:54:21] localities in Virginia did secure a fit our KBRA rating one of those localities did not have the higher ratings from the others so you know you do have choices in that but again these are used to go sell your bonds and so we're looking how do investors do that what's the right strategy that we're communicating the strength of the county and keeping your borrowing costs as low as possible so you know if you know we talked about the Fitch methodology and some some challenges with it some things that are difficult for the county in particular do you have a choice in that

[00:54:59] ultimately yes um but at this point again i think you know importantly across all three of them across all three agencies they all have things they're looking for you to do with respect to reserve yeah the debt levels yeah yeah understanding we got to do the work yeah yeah okay thank you madam chair supervisor vega just wanted to thank supervisor bode for expanding on the point that i was uh going to further make but i'm not going to um talk much more about it just to highlight that And on slide 22, PFM does recommend careful balancing between county and school needs.

[00:55:35] And so I look forward to having that conversation with the school division while calling on my board mates to look at this topic holistically and the needs that we actually have on our side and what we can control. Not a question, just a comment. Thank you. All right. Thank you so very much.

[00:55:54] I don't see any further questions. Madam Chair, I wonder if I could just, Sarah, have you talk a bit about the principles of sound financial management. Ultimately, those principles define what our reserve funds will look like, and I wonder if you could talk about the importance of the principles.

[00:56:13] Yeah, the principles of sound financial management, I mean, they've been around, as you know, for a long time. They're really, in my view, a bedrock of the county's credit strength. When we look across all three rating agencies, Your adherence to those over the long term, your culture of adherence to the policies and the financial planning is one of the greatest credit strengths, and in my opinion, even among the AAAs, that you really excel in that.

[00:56:39] For all the policies that you adopt, it is absolutely critical with the rating agencies that you adhere to those. You know, it's worse to have a policy you don't adopt, you don't adhere to. But, you know, having those policies, and so, again, those policies you have cover a variety of topics, including the reserves and the debt metrics that we talked about.

[00:57:06] All right. Thank you very much. Sarah, thank you so much for the presentation, really, and for your service. You said it at the beginning of the presentation, 24 years with the county, so thank you for your support. Thank you. Madam Chair, members of the board, we'll next here with item 6B from Leslie Weldon, our Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer, our general revenue estimate.

[00:57:37] Good afternoon, Chair Jefferson and members of the board. I want to start off, first of all, by thanking Sarah and the PFM team for their continued partnership and for presenting today.

[00:58:01] I am here to do a follow-up to the February 20th proposed budget presentation. We shared quite a bit of the proposed revenue during that meeting, so today's information, the majority of it will be a refresher and then give you an update on what to expect as we come up on recap.

[00:58:21] All right, so to start off with this first slide, our proposed revenue is approximately \$1.9 billion. Approximately 58% of this is comprised of real estate and nearly 28% is personal property tax.

[00:58:37] When you add in our next three highest revenue sources of sales tax, BPOLE, and food and beverage, that accounts for approximately 95% of our proposed revenue. You've also seen this slide before, which breaks down the proposed revenue at a flat tax rate of 90.6 cent and projects out the next four years using conservative estimates that approximate about 4% growth.

[00:59:06] In the bottom section of the table, you'll see the proposed revenue share for schools at the 57.23 percent with the county having the remaining 42.77 percent. For fiscal 27 this would yield approximately 1.12 billion for schools and about 836 million for the county. Okay here on slide four we have a high level breakdown of proposed real estate by major category. Residential revenue makes up 64 percent followed by data centers at 24 and commercial and industrial at

[00:59:44] 10% and public service companies at 2%. I will note while this slide was in the proposed budget when it was presented, the percentages have not changed, but the dollar amount for residential has been corrected. When we originally put that slide together, we had public service included with residential, and when we broke it out into its own pie slice, the amount did not get pulled out of that as well so here to the right side we have the residential real estate drivers

[01:00:19] these are what we are working on updating in preparation for recap we do have the the assessments are done for the real estate side and assessments will be mailed out tomorrow and go on the website at that point so we will have those updates and the impact it has to revenue soon. We're expecting that next week. All right, for slide five, we have a similar layout for property taxes. Business tangible revenue makes up 58 percent in this category, with the majority

[01:00:56] of that coming from data centers, with vehicles making up the remaining 42 percent. Computer equipment and peripheral continue to be the dominant drivers, whereas furnitures and fixtures and the heavy equipment and machinery show more moderate growth.

[01:01:15] Like real estate, we are working on the analysis to update the drivers for this as we come up on recap. Slide six was not in the proposed budget presentation.

[01:01:32] The purpose of this slide is to show that this is the first year that Business Tangible exceeds vehicles for revenue and showing that that projection continues, is expected to continue in the outer years. All right. The items that we are watching, as I mentioned, we are in the process of finalizing the updated revenue for a recap. Real estate assessments are ready to be released this week.

[01:02:01] That process begins tomorrow. In addition, we are updating our estimates for tax relief and other possible reductions based on the applications received to date. For personal property, business tangible filings are due April 1st with extensions allowed through September. So we'll continue to monitor that. And then we have received the updated values, the vehicle values from J.D. Power, and that is under analysis now. For food and beverage, we are monitoring our collections to better estimate the impact of the 1 percent, the reduction by 1 percent that took

[01:02:39] effect January 1st. I will note that December, we had record receipts, and we received that in February, we had \$10 million for the month of December, and we are expecting January receipts next week, so we will have a better feel for the impact of that 1% next week when we get the January numbers. Finally, for sales and use tax, we are awaiting the March 26 results from the

[01:03:10] Virginia Department of Taxation. Okay, so now I'll summarize what to expect at recap. As noted, Appreciation and growth are expected in real estate. We expect that this will be partially offset by an additional increase in tax relief.

[01:03:30] For personal property, we expect to update the vehicle units and the values based on the latest data from J.D. Power. However, at this time, I don't have enough information to give you a direction as to which way that's going to go. We are also evaluating all other sources of revenue for potential changes.

[01:03:51] All right. As discussed on the prior slide, tax relief continues to grow, and we are expecting revised estimates for the FY27 budget. For tax year 25, it was equivalent to a little more than five cents on the tax rate. The tax counts for FY25 are as of July 25. So what will happen here is this goes in the annual report, and when we go to put in tax year 26, we will true up the tax year, 25 numbers. So you may look at that and see it looks like the counts are down, but really

[01:04:28] we are seeing higher counts looking at the applications so far for this year. And then on the last slide, we have a jurisdictional comparison of FY27 average real estate tax bills. This includes levies where applicable. On the right side, you see the jurisdictions in order from highest to lowest for the average tax bill, with Fairfax being the highest and Prince William being the lowest. In the box in the top left, you'll see the change in the average tax

[01:05:08] bill compared to prior year, with Arlington having the highest change and Loudon having the lowest increase. And now open it for questions. All right, does anyone have any questions?

[01:05:29] All right, I'm going to move fast. All right, thank you so very much for this. Where are your questions? I will let you go unscathed for now. All right, I'm going. All right, thank you very much, Leslie,

for the presentation, Madam Chair, members of the board.

[01:05:52] We're going to, this is with item 6C, we've talked a few times, both at board meetings and at committee meeting, finance and budget committee meeting, about the bond referendum process. This is really an opportunity for us to present just that, the process.

[01:06:11] We did not intend today to come with a presentation on the projects that would be included in a potential referendum. And so with that, Madam Chair, members of the board, I'm going to turn it over to Tim LeClaire to walk us through this presentation. Tim? I have one clarification.

[01:06:29] I'm told I said the wrong word. The highest month for December, that was sales and use tax, not food and beverage. Okay. Thank you. Sales and use is smoking hot. It's really good, despite what you heard this morning. So good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of the board. I'm Tim LeClaire from the Finance Department.

[01:06:48] Today, finance is responding to Directive 2534 regarding a possible bond referendum process and timeline. Our goal is to provide a draft outline based on the 2019 referendum process for the board to consider for a potential 2026 ballot initiative.

[01:07:05] Today's agenda consists of four concise slides. First, we'll restate the directive. Second, we'll briefly look at the timeline that was followed during the 2019 referendum. Third, we'll propose a draft timeline with critical dates for the possible referendum on Election Day, using the 2019 experience as a benchmark.

[01:07:27] And finally, we'll explore next steps followed by board discussion, questions, and direction. Directive 2534 specifically tasks staff with creating a timeline to follow if the board chooses to hold a bond referendum for parks open space and libraries a key distinction this time around is the possible inclusion of an indoor sports complex which was specifically excluded in 2019 in favor of working with the private sector in a public private partnership which to date has not materialized so I assume that's why we're going to consider it this time

[01:08:01] around if it pleases the board the new project selection process presented by OMB to the finance and budget committee on December 2nd can be leveraged to identify the next tranche of projects that didn't make it into the proposed fiscal year 27 to 32 CIP we can use that as a starting point for finance budget committee or board discussion during one or more work sessions depending on what what the board decides the 2019 referendum was a long and methodical process beginning in

[01:08:36] January with a directive assigned to finance. Then OMB in February 2019 kicked off the process with the proposed CIP presentation and an update or a memo from the CXO at the time, I believe it was Chris Martino, looking at the universe of possible projects that didn't make it into the CIP for possible inclusion in the referendum. OMB then worked with agency directors and executive leadership over the next several months to review projects for board consideration.

[01:09:05] In early May, finance delivered a debt capacity and referendum timeline presentation to the board. At the same meeting, agency directors presented mobility and parks improvements projects during a work session, again for board consideration. Later that month, an evening town hall meeting was organized and presented by agency directors, executive leadership, and communications to obtain community input on the prospective referendum projects.

[01:09:30] After hearing from the community, draft resolutions were prepared by agency directors and reviewed by the county attorney's office and bond council. On June 18th, during supervisor's time, the board discussed the bond referendum and reviewed the draft resolutions with the proposed questions.

[01:09:46] They did some straw poll votes and things like that during that process. It was a couple hours long. Then on June 25th, the board approved two of the ballot question resolutions. After a fairly lengthy several hours discussion and directed the county attorney to prepare a request and petition the circuit court for an order to conduct a special election, including the referendum questions for voter consideration.

[01:10:12] The takeaway here is the final outcome was the board approved ballot questions for roads and outdoor park improvements. The indoor park improvements were not approved at that time. There were three questions that they voted on in the third one. Mr. Anger, I'm sure, remembers since he's the sole remaining board member that was there present during that discussion.

[01:10:32] There was a lot of conversation by Chair Stewart, too, about rookies, right? As we look toward 2026, we're specifically revisiting an indoor sports complex along with parks, open space, and library bonds.

[01:10:49] The 2026 referendum timeline began in October 2025 with this directive. It continued at the December 2nd Finance and Budget Committee with the new project selection process that the team has put together.

[01:11:07] We're currently in the late winter-spring phase. On February 10th, OMB presented the fiscal year 27-32 Capital Improvement Program. Earlier today, a few minutes ago, PFM, the county's financial advisor, continued the timeline with a debt capacity presentation, and this presentation proposes the timeline and process.

[01:11:28] On this slide, the most critical date is June 23, 2026. It's the most important date on the slide. This is the last scheduled board meeting where board action can be taken to place a question or questions on the ballot. If we miss this date, we likely miss the 2026 general election.

[01:11:48] Following board approval, the legal process moves quickly. How about that? A petition is filed by the county attorney. Target date is July 1st. The circuit court must order the election by mid-August, and public notice must be out by late October.

[01:12:04] It all culminates on Election Day, November 3rd, 2026. The 2026 next steps for the referendum include agency directors collaborating with OMB and executive management to propose a list of specific projects for consideration.

[01:12:24] Upon board direction, one or more work sessions can be scheduled for project discussion in the very near future, possibly right after adoption of the fiscal year 27 budget. Also given board direction, communications can coordinate public meetings for board members, agency directors, and executive leadership to obtain community feedback.

[01:12:43] There's no real mandatory process that needs to be followed, but I just laid this out the way the 2019 was laid out. The communication strategy is strictly governed by law. All outreach must be plain English and neutral. Agency directors cannot campaign for the bond. They can only explain it.

[01:13:02] Some combination of videos, brochures, and the Speak Up Prince William platform could ensure voters have the facts they need before they see the sample ballot. In conclusion, we are moving from the investigative phase into the project selection phase. Our eyes are fixed on that June 23rd deadline to ensure the board has the opportunity to present these options to the voters in November.

[01:13:25] And that's really all I have. All right, Supervisor Vega. So for clarity, Mr. Shorter, what is being asked of the board today in regards to this? So this is coming to you really after a directive was issued. So there's nothing that we need in terms of additional direction from the board.

[01:13:51] Unless the board would like to move in this direction, then there is a process that we would need to follow consistent with what Tim just presented. But we are just following, really coming back to the board based on the request. I do have some questions, but I will go ahead and wait for others who have been kind of pushing this to take a stab at this first.

[01:14:15] Supervisor Boating. Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the presentation, Mr. Laqueur. a question for the county exec um you sent us a memo back in october in response to chair jefferson's directive about master planning for community recreation centers and in near the end of that and i know these are all very rough timelines but near the end of it you did mention that some of the work that's already been done with the recreation master plan may help inform i know we're not talking about projects today but may inform that could you give us an update vis-a-vis that, knowing that that might be part of the larger conversation?

[01:14:53] Sure. So Seth actually walked in. So we have initiated, as you articulated, a county-wide master planning process for recreation centers. I believe that third party has been, we're close.

[01:15:12] So we've put the solicitation out, but we have not selected a firm yet to start that master planning process. I imagine given the timeline that's been presented today, we will be able to use some information from that process to inform our recommendation to the board. Seth would do the heaviest of lifting him and his team in terms of recommendations that will be put forward to the board. Appreciate that. And again, not going into specific projects, but I wanted to make sure that folks know that, you know, there's been a lot of talk about some of the specific projects that may beyond the bond and folks feel like hey we want to make sure there's there's um geographic diversity

[01:15:49] and the things that are considered so i think that was should be part of the conversation that said and the my last question um you know in terms of bond referendums just because a bond referendum passes doesn't mean that the board is obligated to actually issue those bonds or the county has to issue those bonds can you talk about that a little bit that's absolutely correct one of the sticking points in 2019 over the weekend as I was watching the the videos it seemed like a lot of the board members were surprised that the chair was driving forward with this referendum and a lot of the defensive comments were well we don't want to obligate the next board because four of those

[01:16:27] members were already planning not to be part of the new board but it was explained very clearly that a referendum is the will of the voters that's what they're telling you it does not obligate the next board um if you look at the 2019 um referendum 355 million dollars of mobility projects were authorized we've sold zero bonds in support of those so far so that's 355 million that could have been in there and we may be in worse shape from our rating perspective um if we had sold

[01:17:01] those bonds um we were lucky enough um and the transportation department did a great job of getting revenues elsewhere, using other people's money instead of the citizens' money to pay debt service. And I appreciate that, Tim, because that was going to be my last question, because even though we didn't issue those bonds, to me, especially Rick Ennisol, like you said, was able to expertly use that to show there was the will of the citizens to get those projects done, so he was able to get NVT A money for that other sources. So could you talk a little bit about that piece as well about rick's yeah like you just mentioned so the ability to have the bond

[01:17:39] if they're approved by the voters we don't issue them necessarily but they are sort of a proof of concept to lending folks to regional bodies to show that there's support behind the project that we're asking for grants and other things for yes we've they've done a terrific job seeking out federal dollars and state dollars and grant dollars i mean it's um although i will say there was one the biggest item that was on that referendum was route 28 and so without route 28 which would have been a huge huge bogey I want to say it was

[01:18:12] 200 million dollars of the 355 and it was for route 28 widening and that hasn't taken place at this point that's been pulled off and so that's a great example of one board going for something and then another a future board saying no i don't think we want to go down that path that doesn't make any sense last clarification question if i could manager i have 40 seconds left what's the um do you have the event horizon on how long after a bond referendum is passed for the county or the board to obligate those bonds

[01:18:48] so we you have eight years to sell the bonds and then you get an extension of two years so we're coming up on our 2019 deadline here in the not too distant future we can extend it two years by working with the circuit court and the county attorney's office and by the way the um the park bonds there were 41 million authorized in park bonds in 2019 to date we have only sold 11.84 million we do have one additional issue um in fiscal year 26 um or we've got another one this

[01:19:25] year that's planned that's in the cip but we've still got a little space there so and madam chair if I can. I just want to make sure that, Supervisor Brody, your question is answered. It seemed like you were asking if having projects listed as part of the bond referendum and voted on, if that benefits us in applying for federal and state grants. I think it does. I think it does.

[01:19:51] Because what it shows is that the community has actually supported and the elected body has actually gone out to the community to get support for the project so we could certainly expand on that if you wanted to supervisor bailey thank you madam chair tim let me just say thank you for bringing back a refresher and reminding us of what this process looked like in 2019 and so that says that we've got some best practices that we can pull from as well in that will the criteria if

[01:20:29] If we decide to go in this route with the criteria in selecting projects, how will that be handled? In a similar way or differently because we're in a different financial climate? It's actually, that's at the will of the board, however you would like to approach this.

[01:20:46] The chair, the last two boards ago, Chair Stewart, was a driving force in trying to get a referendum out there in his last year or so that he was on the board. And so he kept pushing and pushing this.

[01:21:03] There was a lot of conversations during supervisor's time. But basically, we presented a list of projects that we had put together that did not make it into the CIP. And we can do that same thing this time

around. And the board can ask questions, add projects, take projects away.

[01:21:24] I will say they did it the last minute in 2019. It was like June 18th they were doing it, and the 25th was the last date that they could vote on something. And so a lot of the projects that were tossed out on the 18th were, well, no one has even estimated this yet.

[01:21:40] So we don't even have to order a magnitude. It's hard to put in a referendum if you don't at least have a lowest price and highest price somewhere in their range. So the other thing, thank you for that. The other thing, too, is community engagement. That was kind of a, that was not a smooth process as well.

[01:22:02] That will definitely be a part of this, as you've mentioned in your slides. What does that look like? Because it's important that the community does get involved before the June 23rd date, if that's what we're going to do. So I don't have a plan, a communication plan.

[01:22:18] I was going to work with Nikki. But it comes from communications. and try and come up with a professional communication plan for this process. That does not mean that supervisors shouldn't be out talking to their constituents and finding what the constituents want. Because when we did have our presentation during the 2019, the agency directors got up and talked about it, and some of the projects totally switched because of the feedback that they got from constituents.

[01:22:44] And then with that process from communication, That will just help our citizens to understand the cost and the value of what they're investing in from a tax. Absolutely. All right. Thank you. Great presentation. If I can add, and this may be a repeat, Tim, of what you've said already, we would actually be working with your individual offices to work with and make sure that the community is informed.

[01:23:09] Yes, the communications team would make some recommendations on how we could put it on county government platform, But we would be really relying on the board to, in your offices, to define how you would want to engage within your magisterial districts, if you're interested in moving forward, how you would want to engage with the community.

[01:23:31] Supervisor Angry. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks for taking me back down memory lane, because this definitely was memory lane. And a lot of things have been said here, but I think, like, I'm going to speak to the board, and thanks for the presentation. We did this in 2019.

[01:23:48] It was the citizens that pointed out an indoor sports complex, and it was the citizens that pointed out indoor pools because they wanted a hydraulic track on the indoor sports. Those things came from the session we had at Hilton Performing Arts Center, and then we rolled it all together.

[01:24:04] Now, I will say it just derailed when we got into the chamber here, and, of course, then everything came off. And I think I was the last one standing with a park and a spooey, which, thanks to Rick Canizales and his team, because I was ready to jump on that bond for the school week, but he found other means of not having to use it.

[01:24:23] I think we're going to use it for the park, though. Are we using any? Well, anyway, I don't know if we're doing that or not. We are. Okay, so, because one of the things is we put all this that the citizens want, but we never acted on any of it. And I know it's the board's prerogative to do so, but you've got to understand, in 2019, that's what the people wanted.

[01:24:40] And we're still sitting here in 2025, and the people still want these things. So I think at some point, if we're going to invest in this, we need to be looking at what it is we're investing in. I can tell you the

roadways are always important. Very happy we were able to pull off this Parkway-Mineville piece that's not going to use the bomb.

[01:25:00] But it did, to your point, Supervisor Bode, triggered really a lot of that development to start. And then Rick was able to just find other means because they're good at that, to find other means. My question for you now, just one, are there any more projects that we – I forget how big that list was that we had in 2019, but it dwindled down to a small list.

[01:25:21] It was \$2 billion worth of projects. Okay. It's the front and back side of a piece of paper. Most of them were mobility projects. Okay. And even because you say we still have two years left on this current, I think you say we got two years left.

[01:25:37] We have roughly a year left, and we can get a two-year extension. And what is on that list still left? Through the circuit court. We have to do that. We would have to petition. Which we probably wouldn't do any of that. Exactly, but we just need lead time to be able to do. Yeah, I doubt we do any of that, to tell you the truth.

[01:25:53] I'm just curious what's left on the list right now, knowing that we still have a year to look at any of these projects. Well, you actually have, from your project selection process, you have these scored projects.

[01:26:10] This was Finance and Budget Committee, December 2nd, when it was presented. I'm going to take a look at that. Thanks. All right, before I go to the second round, I just wanted to say a couple things. So I spoke to the county supervisor and did the directive. Based on what we were hearing from the public, a number of people were looking for additional money for trails.

[01:26:28] Now, talking about the indoor sports complex, we are discussing that as part of the landing, which I know the economic development is still working on getting out, working on putting together materials, but the indoor sports complex is part of that discussion.

[01:26:44] I am fine with moving forward with the referendum, but I have two caveats. One of them is we have to be mindful of the debt we already have and adding more. So I think we need to really, again, go through the budget process, see how much money we have, what we can accommodate, and have a realistic picture of where we are financially.

[01:27:04] And taking into account the other things that we've heard concerning our debt and concerning building our reserves. If the people really truly want something, then they're going to also have to understand, that's part of the communications piece that Supervisor Bailey was mentioning, how much more this is going to cost them.

[01:27:20] Because we have a lot of wants, we have a lot of needs, but really what are wants versus needs? And that's going to be an important discussion. We have to have this budget season. So it's more of a comment to everyone. I am fine depending on what comes out of this budget season with moving forward with a referendum.

[01:27:40] but again we have to be very crystal clear we're not going to get everything we want on a wish list we're not going to necessarily be able to offer tax relief or do things maybe perhaps to make the county more affordable we are going to have to strongly prioritize what we as a board want and what is the board that we need what are we hearing from our constituents i think that keeping our debt low is particularly

important to me and if there are things that we can meet during the budget process or if we already have other ways of getting to those needs like the indoor sports complex. I definitely want to have those discussions. But if we're going to talk about taking on more debt, we're really going to be mindful about the conversation that we had

[01:28:19] earlier. With that, Supervisor Vega. Thank you, Madam Chair. And that's really going to come down to how we convey this information neutrally to the voters of this county so that they can understand exactly what it is that they're voting. I'm still very much interested in continuing to have dialogue before a final decision is made on this, um, in regards to a private part, uh, partnership. Um, I know that this is something that we had, um, discussed so that it wouldn't be an additional burden on the taxpayers of this County, but I, um, understand that, um, it seems like the majority is going in the direction of doing this referendum. And so my

[01:28:56] question to the County Executive is again, for clarity, you stated that, um, pretty much this presentation here today is informational, but that if the board chooses to go in the referendum direction, then we have to obviously do certain things. My concern in regards to that is that we're up against the clock. There is a clock that is ticking. There is a timeline. And in reality, we don't have that much time. We don't even have a list of projects yet to even consider.

[01:29:24] And so if the majority on this board is leaning towards this referendum, I think that that needs to be indicated sooner rather than later if we are to meet these deadlines if we are to convey this information to the public in a neutral manner and so I'm not sure madam chair how you want to handle this or if the county executive has a recommendation but certainly the timing of this process is concerning to me and to supervisor angry's point because we talk we talk we keep talking about the history it's my understanding that in 2019 during that referendum process the board approved questions for roads and outdoor parks but specifically

[01:30:00] specifically rejected the question for the indoor park improvements and here we are specifically focusing on an indoor track and indoor park whichever way you want to call it so are we going to have the same issues again that we did in 2019 I don't know but that is something that we have to consider the new directive that was issued talks about parks open space and libraries so now We're throwing in a different element that wasn't included in the 2019 referendum process.

[01:30:30] And so I say all of this to say that we have to make a decision and we have to make it fast because our backs are up against the wall and the clock is ticking. So I'll defer to you, Madam Chair, in regards to how you want to handle that or if we have some recommendations in regards to a timeline.

[01:30:46] So I just want to answer that briefly. I don't necessarily feel our back is up at the wall. We're getting close. It is March, but we have until June 23rd. and i don't want to rush into anything this is an informational discussion i think it would be great to take the temperature and to look at specific projects when i issued it i was more focused on trails and i think um indoor spaces i know i believe supervisor angry might have also added in libraries i believe he did for certain add on the indoor sports complex i still think that there are more discussions that need to be had because again we need to come back to where where's the progress on the landing that was discussed as a potential site where we could house

[01:31:24] a an indoor sports facility and it was also talked about making that site a public private partnership a true public partner private partnership not that we build it and someone else run it because that's not a public private partnership in my mind i would like to give them get the pulse and we can

continue to have discussions i don't think we are ready to make a final decision right now i'm sorry more pressure on staff i apologize greatly all But we've got to let budget season play out.

[01:31:50] We've got to see how much money we have. We've got to see what we're able to take care of during the budget season. Or we also have to figure out what it is we're going to prioritize and let go. There are some things that we may not be able to get around to that people can wait another year or two.

[01:32:07] But we've got to complete budget season, in my humble opinion. Madam Chair, I don't disagree with you. I agree with everything that you've stated. But again, we have to the deadline to approve the ballot questions is June 23rd. Yes, Madam Chair, members of the board. I was just going to say we're going to need some lead time prior to that June 23rd board meeting.

[01:32:26] We're going to need to know what the projects are. We need time to coordinate with bond council to get the questions in a legally verifiable form and then prepare the agenda item, which would be dispatched 10 days beforehand. So we're going to need lead time before June 23rd.

[01:32:46] will be when the board will vote up or down whether to direct me to file a petition in the circuit court. Thank you, Michelle. But again, with lead time, I'm just getting asked, are you talking about would we be able to finish the budget season? Can we do that in April? Or is that not enough time? If you're going to finish the budget season in third week of April, if you're going to be then choosing your projects in May, end of May. Well, even if we do, I mean, I guess we can simultaneously do these things.

[01:33:19] I'm worried about wasting staff time. That's why I wanted to wait until budget season. Perhaps we can do things concurrently, and I apologize. You know, that's not something, because I know we have a lot, everyone has a lot of work on their plate. I do want people to think about this as I go back down the line and call on folks, you know, where are you guys at?

[01:33:39] Yes, you already spoke. I just wanted to quickly get, where are you on this? I'm fine letting voters decide so long as the questions clearly state what they're voting for and the cost, because there is a cost associated to it. So I support letting the voters decide.

[01:33:54] All right. And everyone else, when you speak for your second time, please let me know where you're at. And people who are not in queue for that second time, I will ask you. Supervisor Bode. Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. And Supervisor Vega, I agree 100% with what you just said. And I appreciate, Tim, you actually have that up there and that I know, at least by law, the questions have to be neutral.

[01:34:15] They can't be supportive. They can't be nuanced in favor or against. So I agree with that 100%. And I also agree with letting the voters decide, especially as long as they're made clear on the cost and we communicate effectively, like, hey, one, this doesn't obligate the county to do it. But two, if it does, there may be a cost associated with it. So I agree with that. Two, I like the idea of having a conversation about what those subsequent conversations look like, because I think we should move forward in having those subsequent discussions to get between here and that drop-dead date.

[01:34:42] But as in the previous slide, You said there was at least one work session that the board had on that. I think we should have at least one, if not a couple more. My 1-8 or 1-7 right now, pending what happens tonight, is that we should probably have a work session on it and maybe also a Finance and Budget Committee discussion as well.

[01:35:01] So we could have a couple discussions between now and then to talk through that. In terms of earlier questions around how things are sort of what projects are decided, I know that you asked about that list. To me, another great way is to ask staff, hey, can you guys set up a criteria similar to how you came up with the CIP projects with more information such as the recreation master plan?

[01:35:24] And also, I'm not going to speak too much for Madam Chair, but I know that, Madam Chair, part of your impetus here was that we have that long list of trails and parks projects that we can't get to right now. There's hundreds of millions of dollars of park projects that people want to see that the board approved as part of the master plan all the way back in 2020.

[01:35:40] But it's a long list and that we don't have a lot of mechanisms to fund those. So I think having some kind of criteria that we work with in collaboration with staff, I think would be a great way to start to take some of the politicization out of it, frankly. But again, that's just my thought.

[01:35:57] And the last thing I'll say is, as Suarez or Vega said, I'm all for letting the voters decide. That's one of the reasons why I've been supportive of this process, because it's one thing for us to decide just us to always, hey, this is CIP. These are the projects, what have you. it's another much different thing for us to go to the voters hey here are projects we may have our own personal uh opinions and how we want certain projects to go whether they're indoor sports complexes trails rec facilities libraries mobility projects but until we hear from the voters we don't really know where the pulse of the of the greater population is and to me and i'll just end with this is we know just sort of macro speaking that we will likely have record turnout in november

[01:36:35] of this year? What's the best way to have a widest as possible survey of where our constituents are than making sure we're having a bond referendum in a midterm year like this, where we're going to have a large swath of folks participating in the franchise. And that's my two cents. Thank you, Madam Chair. Supervisor Bailey. Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree with what my colleagues have said.

[01:37:00] I think we should leave it to the voters. And one thing that I just want to remind us of as we're going through this process of making this decision is, number one, what Supervisor Vega said about the timeline, that's critical in us making distinct decisions and making sure that we're supporting our county attorney as to what her process is and what she has to do.

[01:37:23] But the other thing that we need to be mindful of is the fact that federal funding is not as lucrative as it was when we did this in 2019. And so that will have an impact as well. And to that was with Senator King yesterday, he and Congressman Vindman, and they were talking about the fact that their portals are open now for that federal funding application process.

[01:37:47] So I know, Seth, that was something in us that we went through when we were doing this before. So just want to put that out there in terms of using other folks' money. So that's good. And then the other thing I agree with Supervisor Bodie when you said in terms of giving us more time and making a good decision, the Finance and Budget Committee meeting, I think we need that time as well as a work session because we don't want to do it in a vacuum and we want to make sure that we are collaborating ideas before we make a final decision.

[01:38:25] And we're not doing it hurriedly, but we're doing it so that we have good discussions like we always do. So just wanted to say that. All right. Quickly, just wanted to get your polls, yay or nay, Supervisor

Stewart. I do want to let the voters decide, but just doing a little bit of back of the napkin math, it might be irresponsible for us to even ask, considering where we are fiscally right now.

[01:38:57] But I'm still going to need some more data to come up with a final point. But we're sitting on a fiscal precipice right now, and it's up to us to keep us from going over that cliff. Is that a yay or a nay?

[01:39:14] Or is that an abstain? That's an abstain. All right. Angry. There's no better time than the present. I remember COVID. I remember all these things. And I say we take it to the people. I say we have another Hilton Performing Arts.

[01:39:30] Bring the people out. Put something on a sheet that they want to see without coercion. And I say we let the people decide what they want to invest in. All right. And then I will work with the county executive about when to discuss this further.

[01:39:47] We'll have those conversations. So thank you so very much. More work for all of us to do. Mostly you guys. Thank you. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, members of the board. With item 6D, we're going to talk development service fees. We talked about this as part of the proposed budget. The board requested that we do a deeper dive. And this is a presentation that really gives a good deal about the history of our development services fees. I want to turn it over to our Deputy County Executive, Wade Hugh, to walk us through the slides. Thank you. Madam Chair, members of the

[01:40:27] board, Wade Hugh, Deputy County Executive for Mobility, Economic Growth, and Resiliency. And as the County Executive said, I'm pleased to be able to provide you a presentation on the framework for our development fee schedules. Before I get started, I would like to just take a second to recognize and appreciate the development agency directors who had just entered the room. As we go through the presentation, if you have questions, if there's ones that I can't answer, they will certainly help me out. So to start the discussion, what I'd like to do is take a look back in time. I've been with the county almost 30 years and predating me when I came to the county. The board's direction at that time was development

[01:41:05] pays for itself. So essentially, development fees that we charge need to cover the programs that we offer, which is plan review, permits, inspections, code enforcement, bond administration, all those different components. Now, even back then, 30 plus years ago, there were two areas that the board did provide general fund to help subsidize or offset some of the cost. One was in the entitlement process. And again, think about where the county was 30 plus years ago.

[01:41:33] We were really trying to grow. We were really trying to attract businesses here. We certainly had location. We had, you know, cost of land was relatively small compared to our neighboring jurisdictions to the north, but having an entitlement process that was also less costly made it more attractive. The other area the board provided general fund was zoning permits. So your permits for your decks, your sheds, your fences, looking at setbacks. We wanted to set the cost low enough to encourage folks to come in and get their zoning approvals. So those were the two areas back then over time as the county developed and the board added new programs new initiatives

[01:42:11] many of those programs were funded through general fund and I'll give you some four examples so the targeted industry program very successful as Christina and her staff are more successful in drawing more businesses to the county part of being targeted industry is that we provide expedited plan review so the more projects she brings in faster we got to turn those plans more workload so if we need

more staff resources the board had said that would be covered through general fund we also project management wise for targeted industry we really roll out the red

[01:42:45] carpet we do a lot of step-by-step hand-holding if you will for businesses to get them through the process code enforcement so unfortunately folks do not get their permits for whether they finish their basement or an office expand space without permits and we have to go through the code enforcement process, the board had made the decision to fund that through the general fund.

[01:43:08] So we're not essentially spreading those costs out to folks that are following the process the way they should. Small business project management program, something the board started pre-COVID, wonderful program. Again, it assigns a project manager to a small business owner who is going through a development application, whether it's just expanding their business, a new location they're going into. Again, programs funded through the general fund. And finally, as the board just adopted the affordable dwelling unit ordinance, a position was provided to development services to help guide those projects and applications through the process. Again, general fund. So if

[01:43:46] you look to the table on the right that says current, so if you add up all that general fund as a percent of expenditures, today's expenditures, you can see it's still a relatively small amount of a program budget. Building development, for example, of all their expenses, 9% is offset by general fund. Site development, which is land development, it's also planning entitlement process, 12%, and fire marshal's office, 15%. If we look to our neighboring jurisdictions, Loudoun, Fairfax, Stafford, Arlington, what's very interesting, as I mentioned,

[01:44:21] we've been in the fee game for 30 plus years. Our neighboring jurisdictions are now starting to get into the fee game. Many of them coming from the general fund. And if you look very recent, Loudoun County 2023 moved to 100% fee. Fairfax actually is in their final stages in 2026, 100% fee. And Loudoun and Arlington, or I'm sorry, Stafford and Arlington just moved in 2025.

[01:44:46] What I will tell you, and having spoken personally to some of their development agency directors is, as they've moved to fees, they're having some pretty substantial fee increases. When they're in the general fund, you may not have the pressure to ratchet the fees as quickly because you're getting the general fund support.

[01:45:02] As soon as you jump into the fee game, you're operating like a business. And when I say substantial, 25%, 30%, 40% increases, which the development community is pushing back in many cases. Now, we're often asked about benchmarking our fees, and I'll just say there's some real challenges when you try to benchmark.

[01:45:22] One, the complexity of the fee schedules. Our fee schedule in land development, for example, is probably 20-plus pages. If you submit a site plan, it's not as simple as there's a single line item that says site plan costs X. There's a lot of add-ons when you submit the site plan. How many acres are you disturbing?

[01:45:38] How many units are being built? What's the square footage of the building? Bond, administration costs, things like that. And that's universal across all Northern Virginia. We're not unique in that regard. The point is, if you try to have staff look at another jurisdiction's fee schedule and say, well, try to figure out how close our fees are, I'll just tell you I would never want to put something in writing on a number because you can miss a fee, and it could be a substantial fee. And it's a challenge for consultants,

too, because unless that jurisdiction is willing to really walk you through their fee schedule, you're somewhat taking a little bit of a guess

[01:46:13] when you look at those figures. Secondly, as you look to benchmark, is really understanding that jurisdiction's philosophy on fee collection. I'll give you a four example. We pay indirect cost in the county for services from the general fund. So for example, our development agencies, if they use the county attorney's office, human resources for recruitment, payroll, procurement, when we get consultants, fleet management, when we're ordering vehicles, essentially what is happening is the development agencies are paying back for those services from the general fund. So

[01:46:47] you truly are a fee supported program. But you may talk to another jurisdiction and they say, yeah, we're 100% fee supported, and then you ask, but do you pay indirect costs? No, we don't. The general fund just absorbs that. Well, then you're not really 100% fee supported. You really need to understand those nuances. What I will say on the right-hand side of the slide here, and a tip of the cap to Mandy and Ricky, because they were able to work with our neighboring jurisdictions and do what I think is one of the best fee studies that you can do. So in 2019, They did a land development fee study, 2021, a building fee study.

[01:47:26] And what they did is they coordinated with the other jurisdictions. They identified plan types. So say, for example, on site development, you may take a small residential project, 10 houses or less. That's very small. Medium, 50 projects or 50 units, and large, let's say 100 units.

[01:47:46] And so the jurisdictions went and found those types of projects, made copies of the plans, circulated the plans. So every jurisdiction had the same set, and in each jurisdiction priced those plans. They provided that information in a spreadsheet. All the agency directors in the jurisdiction signed off that those fees were accurate.

[01:48:05] And so to me, that is the best way to do a study. I mean, you're getting high-level data, but you know it's accurate, and you're all looking apples to apples. You have priced the same plans. So that was phenomenal work. Here I'm showing, now we're drilling back, and we're just looking at Prince William County.

[01:48:21] And you can look at our three main fee schedule areas, land development, building, and the fire marshal. You can see, and the board has been very supportive, even if I go back to 2008, annually, incrementally increasing our fees. And so what we did here is we just took an 11-year picture from 2016 to 2027, and you can kind of see each year how much these are across-the-board increases.

[01:48:45] There were some incremental new fees added. But if you look at this, you see we're running across the board about a 3%. So roughly, you figure inflation 3% a year. Not sure during those exact years if that was inflation, but that's really what it averages out to be.

[01:49:00] And it's going to vary a little by each year. There may be a year, if you notice land development 2017, we didn't raise the fees at all. That particular year, we probably weren't doing any program expansions. There may not have been any significant changes legislatively to environmental regulations that required more review.

[01:49:17] But then in other years, you're maybe playing a little catch-up in the fees. I will tell you, industry appreciates, they don't appreciate paying increased fees, I won't say that, but they appreciate the predictability. They know in the county it's going to be about an inflationary increase versus, as I

mentioned before, some other jurisdictions that don't raise fees for five or six years and then come back with a 30% increase.

[01:49:40] I will note, down at the bottom, footnoted there, the planning fees. As I mentioned, 30 years ago, heavily subsidized by the general fund. As we've grown, as we're at the point where we are now with workload coming in, with the type of projects that we're getting, we're trying now to ratchet those fees to be more cover our cost.

[01:50:00] And so you can see there's been some pretty big bumps, 25%, 26%, 15% across the board in 27%. Hopefully, because we just met with industry today and had a great discussion, is you're not hearing any negative talk about a 15% increase on entitlement fees.

[01:50:16] And I would argue if you're not, the reason you're not is time is money. And with the workload that we have and the great work that the planning office is doing trying to push this stuff through, time is money. A month or two can be \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 in carrying costs.

[01:50:32] So to pay a 15% fee to get these things moving forward, they'll gladly pay that. And what I'd like to kind of end with is when we talk about partnering with industry, three key things. One, we meet with industry every year, and industry being your NVBAs, your NAOPs, County Commercial Development Committee, and we talk to them about the fee increases.

[01:50:56] Here's why we're increasing, here's what we're seeing, here's the program, if there's expansion, staffing needs. So they have, I'll say, a comfort, if you will, in why these fees are going up. The other thing, and I would like to argue that the county does the best job in the region, is we work so closely with industry on process improvements.

[01:51:15] we're constantly working in different areas. We have different teams set up. Industry is great. They work with us, whether it's how can we expedite a certain type of inspection? How can we streamline the permitting process, plan review, whatever it is? And I see our directors are in the trenches in many of those meetings. You don't find that in a lot of other jurisdictions.

[01:51:34] So I think industry looks also and says, yeah, we're going to pay a little more in fees in terms of these annual increases, but we're getting something out of it. We're going to see faster turnaround times better customer service and as i mentioned before the the third block there um industry does appreciate the predictability and not being all over with our fees that we're annually ratcheting these fees each year so greatly appreciate the board support over the years for that um and with that i'd be happy to answer any questions all right i'm looking

[01:52:11] around all right got a couple takers um bailey and vega okay okay wait thank you i've not been at the podium in a long time it's good to see you there thank you i want i want to ask a question based upon what you were just talking about industry so if industry says um its values consistently and it values consistency and predictability and i like what you said that because that builds relationships and it builds um it also builds value for the county the

[01:52:47] predictability, having those conversations, how are we making sure that these annual adjustments remain disciplined, transparent, and tied to the process improvement rather than simply becoming routine increases? Because I think that's important. No, and I appreciate that question. So I'll give you actually a great example that's occurring right now. Again, we just had a meeting with industry

this morning is we're seeing a tremendous amount of workload coming through the entitlement process, all-time highs in terms of numbers. But when we look at the site plan side, we're seeing

[01:53:21] a drop-off in terms of plans coming in for review, significant drop-off, which isn't adding up. We know there's, in terms of housing, we know we have shortage. We need to get more units on the market. Why is there that gap? And so to just jump to your answer your question, we'll sit on positions. We'll oftentimes not fill a position. You may see when you look at the vacancy reports, which I know you all get copies and look at, you may see in development areas a position that's been vacant for 200 days, 300 days.

[01:53:52] I always say that's a good thing because that's showing we're managing like you would a business. If the workload's not there and we have a vacant, let's sit on it. Wait till the workload. Don't just fill to fill and spend money. So we're very careful on how we fill positions, how we spend the money.

[01:54:08] And the industry will tell us real quick how we're doing, back to your question on efficiency. Are we turning things quick enough? If they're not, they usually will let the board know. So I think we just have that great working relationship and have for years. So hopefully that answers your question.

[01:54:24] It does answer my question. And, you know, as we have historical industry makers, both with NVBIA, as an example, and NAOP as well, what about the new industries that's coming into the community and the new players that's coming into the community?

[01:54:42] How do you bring them into the fold, help them understand that Prince William County is a place to do business, and here's how we do it? Well, as much outreach as we can do, we have a newsletter that goes out to, I know it's well over 10,000 customers that have signed up.

[01:55:00] As we meet with even, I'll use the County Commercial Development Committee as an example, is it is a set number of individuals that have, quote, positions, if you will, on the committee. But we've always said, we want to open that committee up. We'd love to see 50, 60 industry members really participating in those meetings.

[01:55:18] So as new people are coming in, we're trying to get the word out, whether it's through the chamber, through all these different organizations, to get the word out. And we do see new folks. As a matter of fact, a new gentleman I met this morning at one of the industry meetings had attended this meeting. And so you really just try to encourage those folks to continue participating.

[01:55:37] So my last question is, how are we balancing the goal of full cost recovery with the need to keep Prince William County competitive? That's important as well. We heard that this morning. And not create unnecessary barriers for responsible development.

[01:55:53] Well, I think that's really through when we do the benchmarking. Because as we're looking at fees, if staff were to run numbers and come back and say, I'll use just a for example, we're going to need to increase fees 10%, for example. And we look very quickly and say, well, that's going to put us out of sync in terms of benchmark.

[01:56:11] What is driving that? Are we not being as efficient in our plan reviews? And if we start drilling down, looking at numbers and seeing it's taking us more reviews to approve a plan than maybe we see in our neighboring jurisdictions, then that would be a flag for us to say, okay, wait a minute, we need to drill down a little deeper.

[01:56:28] We can't go and sell a fee that's higher if the service isn't there. So by having those conversations, and the team works exceptionally well together. So I'm blessed to have a team that, you know, it doesn't matter whose area it's in. Let's roll up our sleeves. Let's see what's taking place. And we do that on a regular basis.

[01:56:44] Thank you, Wade. Thank you, Madam Chair. Supervisor Vega. Hi, Wade. You mentioned that we looked at other jurisdictions and their fee schedule. Can you tell me what things were taken into consideration? And I'm just curious. I'll name you a few.

[01:57:00] Did we compare service levels, review timelines, and staffing levels at all? What did we look at to compare those fees? It was really just, like I said, we distributed the plans and we just took a set of plans and said, if this plan came to your jurisdiction, what would you charge the customer for that particular site plan?

[01:57:17] And so each jurisdiction did that. So we're really just looking at costs. Now, in some cases, we had to look somewhat at service levels because some jurisdictions will say, when you pay for a site plan review, that covers a cost of two reviews. If you get bumped to a third review, then here's the additional cost.

[01:57:33] So as a group in the jurisdictions, we had to agree and say, let's make the assumption, this plan that we're all pricing, let's assume it took three reviews to approval so that we're all pricing the same thing. On our end, there isn't an additional cost per review.

[01:57:49] So that helps us to kind of benchmark even. The presentation also mentions annual fee adjustments moving forward. Will those proposals to increase said fees come back to the board? It's part of the budget, yep. So every time it's going to keep coming to us for us to make that decision.

[01:58:06] And you all advertise that as part of your overall advertisement of with the tax rate and all the fees. Thank you for the reassurance. And then the last question that I have, the proposed 15% increase for the planning fees for FY27 is significantly higher than the 7% and the 10% increase for the two-year priors.

[01:58:23] My question is, can you tell me what specific new services or infrastructure demands justify the increase? Well, it's kind of twofold. So some of it is, as I mentioned, going back again 30-plus years ago, there was so much subsidy on the fees. If you looked at your neighboring jurisdictions, our fees were so low because they were heavily subsidized by the general fund.

[01:58:43] So now we're trying to get those fees ratcheted up to where they're more comparable. But just with the workload coming in, additional staffing, I know the staffing that we're adding right now is still coming a lot from the general fund, and that's largely because we're still playing catch-up on the fees. We still haven't gotten the fees high enough yet to balance that.

[01:59:01] So you're saying the accelerated hike is due to us basically playing catch-up? Mm-hmm. Okay. That's all I have. Thank you, Wade. All right. Is there anyone else? Going once, going twice. Thank you so very much. Thank you. For such an informative presentation.

[01:59:20] All right. We are going to move into agenda item number seven. That's supervisor's time before we go around to each individual. We are going to start with 7A, and I'd like to get a motion to move that forward. So moved.

[01:59:37] Second. It's been moved and seconded. Any discussion? Let's take a vote.

[01:59:54] Unanimous. All right. Thank you so very much. Supervisor Vega, you are up first. Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a work session, so I'm not going to drag this out.

[02:00:12] But I just wanted to close the loop, if you will, on the discussion around the bond referendum. I just wanted to directly ask the county executive if he has or if he's prepared to make any recommendations in regards to that timeline before we adjourn today.

[02:00:29] Sure. I'm happy to work with the chair, obviously, in the clerk's office. As you all were talking, I certainly was looking at the calendar. We have a finance and budget committee on April 7th. We could come back on April 7th, and I obviously haven't talked to Chair Bodie about this.

[02:00:48] We could come back on April 7th with a communications and engagement plan, meaning dates that we would recommend for the board so that the committee could at least discuss. We could also have agencies come back with the criteria for how they will make recommendations on projects at that April 7th committee meeting.

[02:01:09] I believe on April 14th, we have budget markup. We could come back with actual recommendations at that time. In the recommendation that we have for communications and engagement, we will lay out recommendations on when potentially we would be able to have community meetings, that when we would potentially be able to have a budget meeting, in my mind, given the discussion you all just had, we would need to be in a position by the end of April to have the end of April, early May, to have an actual set of recommendations.

[02:01:48] So that is what I would want to work towards. First, the April 7th committee meeting that gives the staff time to work on some recommendations, present it at that time, And then that following week during maybe budget markup, having the board react more formally to either projects themselves or at least a discussion.

[02:02:16] Thank you for that. I'm not opposed to that. Madam Chair, your thoughts on him bringing recommendations to our Finance and Budget Committee meeting on April 7th? I certainly do not have any objections. I would need to speak to Supervisor Vot. He's giving me a thumbs up, so I do not have any objections. Okay. The last question that I have in regards to the topic is, I'm not sure that time will allow for it, but if it does, maybe you can try to make your rounds to our corresponding offices to talk about what that list is going to look like, because if I understood you correctly, it would be a list that is put together by staff.

[02:02:49] We would first put together a criteria. So really how each agency will evaluate the projects that they have on their sort of list. And then those would be, those criteria would be used to determine the projects. We absolutely can come around. Not each agency, unless you all want to have each agency. I don't think that's necessary. I'm going to be doing a round with each of your offices prior to budget recap we could certainly add this to the discussion i just don't know if we'll be prepared because those meetings actually start next week so so i don't know that i'll be prepared

[02:03:27] to unless you all are to actually talk specifics about projects just because this is so fresh yeah well i guess april 7th it is and once we meet with you in regards to the budget and the conversation begins in regards to the referendum i'm sure we'll have thoughts

[02:03:44] Very good. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. All right. Supervisor Bailey. Hello. That was quick, Madam Chair. Thank you so much. Good evening or good afternoon, everyone. On the 4th of March,

I had the wonderful opportunity of hosting the chair of VPRA and the CEO of VPRA on a tour at Potomac Shores and the new CEO, Ms. Katie Cho, at VRE with the developer to talk about the wonderful things that are happening at Potomac Shores and how do we move forward to get the trains

[02:04:22] on the track. So I was very excited about that. And then on the 5th, I joined my colleagues at the Human Trafficking Symposium that was put on by our own community safety department. It was very enlightening as well as very pointed and necessary. So I thank law enforcement, our social services and our advocacy organizations that helped to put that on to bring this most important item to fruition.

[02:04:52] And then also on the 5th, I had the pleasure of joining Vice Chair Anger in his district for a groundbreaking ceremony for the Woodbridge Navigation Center on the east. It was a it was to see a project come to come forward from 2020 is really, really important to know that we have something coming from on the West is equally important.

[02:05:15] So congratulations to you, Vice Chair Angering. On the 6th, I attended the Dominion Energy Tour at the Bramilton Station in Aldi, Virginia. I was in Loughton and didn't even know I was in Loughton, but it was it was also informative and enlightening. And then on the 6th, that evening, on a Friday evening at 6 p.m., 40 citizens joined me to talk about green policy and environmental stewardship in a town hall.

[02:05:42] And I want to thank Dale Medeiros from the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and our own David McGinnigan from Prince William County to talk to us and enlighten the citizens about that. I also want to apologize to the citizens that participated. We had an unusual happening on that night.

[02:06:00] Someone got in the system and presented porn during that, and so I was very embarrassed. But yet our citizens, as they always are, they came through, stayed online, and learned about green policy and environmental stewardship. So I want to thank you and say I'm sorry at the same time.

[02:06:17] On the 7th, I joined Pi Lambda Lambda of Omega Psi Phi for their 22nd Talent Hunt program when they ushered in 12 of our youth that were talented, creative, and showed their talents to get scholarships to go forward in their futures.

[02:06:37] And then that evening, I attended the NASA Symphony Orchestra, where my husband and I had an opportunity to partner with the Hilton Performing Arts Center and look at local arts in our community. And then on the 8th, I was the keynote speaker at Little Union Baptist Church for their annual Women Who Have Shaped the World, Past, Present, and Future.

[02:06:58] And boy, did we have a good time. On the 9th, I was able to host Senators Kane and Congressman Vindman to have them look at what they have supported here in our community at our Crisis Receiving Center. And then this morning, joining Madam Chair, we also had an opportunity to go to the VRE station in Woodbridge to collect and embrace and bring home a million-dollar check from Congressman Vindman, as well as he supported the Quantico Creek Flood Mitigation Project and \$1.2 million in Quantico.

[02:07:34] On the 11th, I will be attending the Women's Empowerment Conference. The 12th, First Care Ribbon Cutting, I'll be attending there. And then on the 14th, St. Patrick's Day. But lastly, I just want to offer my deepest saddened condolences to the passing of our own Karen Smith, a long-time executive director and Potomac District appointee for the Disabilities Board.

[02:08:00] And so we will miss her. Her pioneering leadership expanded to opportunities and championing inclusion of people with developmental disabilities across our community for years. Her passion, advocacy, and commitment to dignity and equity will leave a lasting legacy and will be cherished by all of us and the work that she did in this community.

[02:08:22] rest well my friend karen smith all right supervisor angry thank you madam chair pull this up right quick all right so first of all i want to thank uh the county i believe the county put this on our human trafficking uh symposium that was really good um we were all in attendance many of us for that and um i just got to say the information presented there uh the current information of things that we do not know was uh so critical so i want to thank uh you again for putting that on i do want to just pause for a second because i think what happened to supervisor

[02:09:01] bailey is um interesting and i don't know if you're using like is that county zoom or or teams but i i hear that's been happening more frequently than any so do we have security measures to kind of lock down i don't know if someone was telling me you could actually do that there's some technology they can lock people out from actually being able to jump in and do that kind of what happened to her and if we aren't there i think we should look at that because i'm hearing more

[02:09:30] and more stories about that happening yeah i'm not sure what platform so so the platform itself has has measures to not allow for sharing unless you give the privilege right um yeah what what i will do is work with uh do it to uh first allow pd to investigate then we will after that

[02:10:09] investigation, investigate ourselves from a technology perspective, if there's any additional support we can provide to your office. And I only say that because I was at a NACO kind of conference piece, and they were talking about this happening. But they were saying they had some type of system. Somebody was doing something behind the scene to make sure whoever was in the room was only allowed to be in the room, and no one else would come in and kind of hack the way in, if you will. I don't understand that technology. I just know it seems like that's happening a lot, and I would sure hate to be on a call and have something like that happen. That would just be crazy.

[02:10:41] Okay, just want to put that out there. Okay. So also I want to thank all that came out to the groundbreaking for the Homeless Navigation Center. Great addition to the county, I'll say. So thank you all that were there. Looking forward to that building. Want to say congratulations to Boxes of Basics. They had their second annual Dueling Keys for a Cause. The event was a great success, so really happy um uh that i was finally able to attend one of those so we we did that uh upcoming so we still have our neopsco i said neopsco neopsco residence fy 27 budget feedback survey so if you haven't

[02:11:19] taken that please take it it's on the website it's out there please email me call me text me whatever we'll get you the link and let you take that okay um and then um we're going to be having our next Courts District and Spooie community update. So I want to remind everybody of that.

[02:11:36] This is a community meeting. It's going to give the residents the latest and greatest of what's going on, and things are moving fast if you, again, look in that corridor. So now there's going to be some big changes happening with the Spooie, the Single Point Urban Interchange, which is the road construction. So we're going to be talking a lot about that. That's going to be Saturday, March 21st at 11 o'clock from about 11 to 1, and that's over at Fire Station 13, which is the central hall that's on the corner of del boulevard and um hillendale road um and just lastly i just i you know i can't stress this enough but you know we had another horrific um accident on cardinal

[02:12:15] drive that i just can't stress enough of and so we have two fatalities there uh someone driving up the wrong side of the road um at 6 45 in the evening the sun's still up i i still don't know I'm still waiting to hear kind of the finals of that.

[02:12:30] But all I can say, folks, is we have to pay close attention to how we're driving. Vehicles are worse than guns, if you ask me. The fact that you can be driving, I don't know where this family was going, but you don't even get to come back home is just heartbreaking for that family and the family of the other car as well and the fact that this is still happening.

[02:12:53] So I would just ask that we pay attention. If this is not focusing on the road because you're on your phone or whatever, just pay attention because it takes a split second in a car and you can be gone. So my heart goes out to all those families involved in all that, and we'll press this and figure out what happened, if there's anything different we can do or whatever we can do.

[02:13:17] We'll continue looking into this. But, again, just really all the condolences go out to all the families involved in this horrible accident. Thank you, Madam Chair. All right, Supervisor Stewart and Bodie. Thank you, Madam Chair. I also attended the Human Trafficking Symposium.

[02:13:37] And, you know, one of the things that I really discovered, I mean, I always kind of knew this, but maybe not as deep to this extent, is that our children are really in trouble online. Yeah, you know, I have a four-year-old, and she's not going to be allowed to be on the Internet until she's a grandmother.

[02:13:56] So I also got to work with the – or listen in on the Human Trafficking Task Force, and we have a lot of work to do there as well. I will say if you're a parent and you can hear the sound of my voice, do check in on your kids at a 45-degree angle.

[02:14:17] They're not going to like it, but it's what's necessary to keep them safe. i didn't like it when my parents were doing it but they they did you know in hindsight being 2020 they did the right thing i want to also congratulate um uh 2014 base battle 2014 battlefield high school graduate nick wells so this guy's a left-handed pitcher who's played with the blue jays the mariners and the washington nationals uh so let's go ahead and wish him success as he prepares to play for the for great britain in the 2026 world baseball classics uh congratulations

[02:14:52] to Matthew Arndt, hopefully I pronounced your last name right, also at Battlefield High School, for winning the 2026 Virginia High School League Class 6 Virginia State Championship in wrestling. And congratulations and best of luck to Haymarket resident Sarah Everhart, who's going to compete with the United States team in the ISU Figure Skating World Championships, which are scheduled to run in Prague from March 24th to the 29th. So tune in to watch our very own Prince William resident compete in that.

[02:15:28] And I'm also wishing the best of luck to two-time Regional Spelling Bee champion, Saya Sampath. She's a seventh grader from Ronald Reagan Middle School. She's going to be competing tonight at Garfield High School at 7 p.m. against 52 other spellers in the 48th annual Prince William Regional Spelling Bee.

[02:15:48] So, Samantha, or Sia, hopefully this is going to be a three-peat, and we're rooting for you. With that, thank you very much, Madam Chair. Pass. That was for you.

[02:16:09] That was for you. Everybody knew it was time. Pass one down. Oh, wait. Okay. Woo! All righty now. I had a little temporary heart attack, but first I'd like to start with the notice of intent, and that's to

appoint Joseph Lehigh to the Virginia Other Post-Employment Benefits Master Trust.

[02:16:32] I also like to note that I have a virtual budget town hall coming up on Monday, March 16th. Please check my website or Facebook page to sign up. And the other thing that, this will take up some time, I suspect, but I did a directive last week regarding collective bargaining.

[02:16:47] I have spoken to a number of people and I would like to go ahead with initiating public hearings. So I'm going to make a motion to suspend the rules so that we can go ahead. Hold on. I want to make sure I read everything correctly, I guess.

[02:17:04] Madam Chair. Yes. Would you like for me to make the motion? I would love for you to make the motion. Okay. I'd like to make a motion to waive the rules of procedure this afternoon to initiate this public hearing for collective bargaining. I was going to read the whole title, but okay, go on.

[02:17:22] Second. So it's been properly moved and seconded. I'd love to entertain discussion around this. Supervisor Stewart? Madam Chair, members of the board, is the waiving the rules combined into this or is it going to be two separate votes? Yes. Okay.

[02:17:37] Then the resolution will have to be changed. You have to read the -- I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It actually might -- so to Michelle's point, it might be easier to waive rules as one action and then to move forward with the authorization as a separate action.

[02:17:53] Okay. All right. So then let's go ahead with that motion again. Thank you very much, Madam Caller. Want me to read this? You're going to waive the rule. I guess we've already had a motion to waive the rules. And should we make a new motion or just say that the motion is to vote on the motion?

[02:18:09] Yeah, yeah. Don't confuse me, Madam Chair. Motion passes 5 to 1. Supervisor Vega voting nay. All right, then I'd like to get a motion.

[02:18:27] Or I'm going to move this. I move to authorize public hearing to consider amendments to Prince William County Code Chapter 2, Article, what is that, 6, Collective Bargaining Prince William County Code Section 2-217B3, Certification and De-Certification of Exclusive Bargaining Representative Countywide.

[02:18:49] Second. It's been moved and seconded. Discussion? Angry than Vega? All right. Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have just one question on this. So the key here is to collect signatures for our general employees.

[02:19:06] the question i have is the expiration date of the signature so and an example if an employee is in the county and signs this nothing no action is done they for whatever reason leave the county what gets their name off the list assigned or if they decide they don't want to be on it anymore can they come off this list so i'm just curious i don't i don't see where a language like that kind that makes an exit clause, if you will.

[02:19:38] Madam Chair, members of the board, when the board passed the collective bargaining ordinance, that was one of the issues. Maybe the employee changes their mind, the employee leaves, the employee moves, et cetera. So a time period of when those signatures would be valid was instituted, and the motion is now to take that away.

[02:19:56] So now if an employee signs their card that's there forever, And what will happen is the labor relations contractor will have to go through and now look at every single signature to see if they're still

here, not sure what will happen if the employee says, well, I've changed my mind, et cetera.

[02:20:16] So now there will be no expiration date on the signatures. Okay, so with no expiration date, can there still be language in here that says that's happening? I mean, at that point, if we're not validating or we're taking, I hear you saying that we're going to either take the word of validation or...

[02:20:37] No, this says right now that the signature of an employee of their intent to be in the bargaining unit is there. You have to have 30% to be able to go forward with an election to have the exclusive bargaining representative.

[02:20:53] Right now, your ordinance says after a year, they have to get another signature. So you have to have 30% of that bargaining unit within a year. This resolution or this intended amendment removes that.

[02:21:12] There's no proposal for a different time frame to be in place. It'll just go away, period. And so, okay, got that part. Just asking, can language be added then, though, that says, you know. You would need to make a substitute motion to change this resolution.

[02:21:28] And I don't know what language that is because, I mean, my point is, if this is an expiration, okay, I'll pull out. I'll back out. I just want to get some clarification, but okay. Supervisor Vega. You're spot on, Supervisor Angry.

[02:21:44] You are quite literally hitting the nail on the head and then some. But before I get to the point that you're trying to make, I want to understand the chair's reasoning. Last week, you issued the directive. And I specifically stated that I wouldn't object to your directive pending the county executive and the team coming back to this board with questions that I wanted answered.

[02:22:06] You sent this via email closer to 7 p.m. last night. I have dinner with my family. I didn't get to it this morning. So when we look at how this even started, it shows the lack of proper planning. And I want to understand, Madam Chair, why, one, we're not allowing for the directive to come back to this board, and two, why the rush?

[02:22:33] I would go with Supervisor Bailey, and then when everyone's spoken, I'll go ahead and make my comments. Supervisor Bailey. But I'm not done, Madam Chair. Oh, I'm sorry. that's kind of how we do it well i want those questions answered so that i can move down the the rest of the questions go ahead and move down the list and i'll answer everything at once because you're still you have about four minutes madam chair you're doing things out of order i don't understand what the issue is with answering my questions right now so that i can move on to the other ones in the order fashion that i have them presented here i am going to wait until you have gone through everything and i'll address everything at once okay that's fine so those are

[02:23:09] the two questions that I have. Supervisor Angry, to your point, they are removing the 12-month period. And that's alarming and concerning to me because it puts this county, in my opinion, a legal bind. A legal bind, an opinion that we haven't gotten from the attorney. We haven't gotten those questions answered. But here's the reason why they're asking for this change to be made. It is said that you need 30% signatures in order to move forward. There has been a consensus from the general workforce who is not interested in being a part of the union they can't even get

[02:23:46] to 30 percent which is why they're asking for this 12 month month clause to be removed they can't get to 12 they can't get to 30 percent so what they're trying to do is get signatures that they will hold

on forever employee priorities change okay employees may have a special interest today in salary and benefits but i would i would argue that in 12 months those priorities will change But what this group wants to do is that they want to hijack those signatures indefinitely, regardless of what the workforce priorities are, if they are a part of this union, and hold on to those signatures.

[02:24:23] And so, again, my question is, Madam Chair, why the rush? Why not allow for the directive that you issued last week to the one that I did not oppose to to come back to this board so that we can make an educated decision on what's happening here? And why are we rushing this?

[02:24:39] So I don't see this as a rush, quite frankly. And you know what? I was mistaking in making a directive because of the time frame for them to do the activity so they can have a chance to participate in the 2027 budget, which starts immediately pretty much after we pass this budget.

[02:25:00] Now, talking about hijacking signatures, I don't think that's a fair characterization. They have a number of people they're going to every year and asking them to sign. It's a small group of people who are really doing a lot of work outside of county hours, outside of their general work time.

[02:25:15] This is not the same as with police or fire. They don't have necessarily the same access. Now, from what I understand, they're pretty close. And perhaps this isn't needed, but I'd like to go ahead and go through and have the public hearings.

[02:25:32] There's going to be additional time for us to talk about this and discuss this. And I know that this is a strong philosophical difference between us. I do support collective bargaining. I do think that, in general, unions have been very good for our county and our nation. They're why we have a 40-hour work week, why we have weekends off.

[02:25:50] And I think in a county such as ours, we are behind other similar peer jurisdictions in doing collective bargaining. Listen, I want to make sure that our county employees have a voice. I want to make sure that they have a seat at the table. I don't necessarily think that this is a rush or that this is a bad thing.

[02:26:07] Again, that's a philosophical difference. Madam Chair. Hold on, Supervisor Vega, I'm going to ask you very politely, because I still have time on the clock, and I apologize. It's my time. My name is up there. Your time has run out.

[02:26:24] I have, and that's one of the reasons. I want you to have your time. That's why I wanted you to continue to go through your sheet, because I didn't want to interrupt your time. This is now my time. I have just over three minutes, and I can sit here if I want for those three minutes.

[02:26:42] What I am going to say is we can continue to debate this point. point. I know this is a key philosophical difference. But it's not, and I don't want you to put words in my mouth. Supervisor Vega? It's a fiscal concern of mine. That's where it comes from. I have asked you not to interrupt me. I'm just making sure that you don't put words in my mouth. Recess for five minutes. You can recess all you want. I'm still going to say what I need to say. All right, we are back, and I would like to remind people that when someone is speaking, we are not going to be interrupting. I know that emotions are running high. I know that we have

[02:27:20] an election next year but i would ask that over the past few years we have developed a very good rapport and that i would like to remind people when someone's speaking we shall not interrupt so

with that i did still have time on the clock however i had i'm frozen i believe i had supervisor angry in queue yeah listen um again my my just my one point was the expiration

[02:27:50] date. We can go back. Is there a problem? So, we are not rolling. Would you like me to hold a

[02:28:13] little longer? All right. Thank you. I apologize, Supervisor. I agree. Did we break something?

[02:30:59] Do you need additional time? Should I extend the recess, or can we proceed? No. My mind is down. I refreshed already. Let's see if it does it again. Okay. Looks like I have, I can see one person.

[02:31:27] I don't know. Can someone else try to do requests to speak to see if I can see you? All right. I'm sorry. All right. So if you want to speak, speak. If you're just doing the task, you may take yourself out. But I had supervisor. Are you ready, Supervisor Angry? You're in.

[02:31:42] Yes. So you may go ahead. Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. And look, again, I made the motion for us to get down this collective bargaining road in the first place. We took care of police. We took care of fire. I asked the general employees to get in. It's been a while since they got in, so I don't understand this holdup.

[02:32:01] But what I just don't like is the fact that there is no way out of signatures. So that concerns me, especially when I haven't gotten a brief from anybody, not even our employees, to say, like, what this really is. So I just want to make sure this is done the right way.

[02:32:17] And I believe, and I've talked to staff about this a bit, that there's got to be some kind of tracking measure more than if someone's got to track to see who's still active in this organization. There's got to be a measure for that.

[02:32:33] And that's what the whole 12-year expiration was. So if it's not going to be that, what is it going to be? Because if someone has to count these folks, I need to see some assurance inside of this resolution that says I'm counting active people who are actually employees of Prince William County.

[02:32:49] That's just my position. And so then let me pose this to the county attorney. Even under, or maybe Mr. Schur, but even under the current system, When people get to that threshold, aren't we looking over and verifying and checking the signatures, correct?

[02:33:07] Yes, we are verifying the signatures. I think what I'm hearing from Supervisor Angry or Vice Chair Angry is that what we are striking is, yes, we will continue to verify, but there would be no expiration.

[02:33:29] But wait, I don't want to understand. So if people leave, what you're asking, if I am a county employee, I signed it, but then I moved to New Jersey the next month, When they go through and verify my signatures, they will catch that, correct, Mr.? Yes, if they are no longer an employee, we should be able to catch that.

[02:33:47] Secondly, how about if they say, hey, you know what, I really don't want to be a part of this. How are you exited out of that? That is currently not addressed in the language. All right. Did we have anyone else who wanted to speak?

[02:34:03] Supervisor Vega. Yeah, maybe I missed it, Madam Chair, but I guess want to hear why not wait for the directive to come back to the board so that we can get all of this clarified and maybe I don't even

have an objection to it. I didn't have an objection to the directive. I just want my questions answered and to ensure that the team, along with Kelly and company, have time to properly vet this and inform us.

[02:34:26] I'm not sure, Mr. Shorter, if there's a timeline on that directive, if it's something that can be expedited. I just want to have my questions answered. So I'm not sure if it can come back to us, Madam Chair, if you would be agreeing to wait for it to come back again I don't I don't know why not wait for the directive to come back I the reason why as I had mentioned earlier it's considerations with timelines and to be quite frank with you I had discussions you know I spoke with Mr's um you know Mr. Shorter I spoke with

[02:35:01] others there's concern about the time frame and really being able to get everything in process for the next budget cycle. And so I just wanted to be mindful of that. If the county, if they are able to provide additional information before we have public hearings, that's great.

[02:35:22] I think that there is time for us to have still robust discussions and to get some of the information that I seek. So for me, the reason why I would like to do this now is so that the people who want to organize have time to continue to do so and do so in an organized fashion before next budget cycle.

[02:35:42] So I would like to move forward with this. If this is something that you're uncomfortable with, I respect that, and I would respect the no vote. Yeah, I'm uncomfortable with the process. But just to make sure, you also said that, as it stands right now, they can't partake in the county budget process.

[02:35:58] Is this accurate? So right now, for this budget cycle, I think that it's pretty much impossible. I'm talking about for fiscal, for the next fiscal year, Because it's going to take time for them to organize, to have their elections, and to do the entire process to get to that point.

[02:36:15] So we're looking at giving them time to do so for the next fiscal year. Madam Chair, I think that I've laid out clearly why this is not a good idea. I understand that I'm going to be in the minority and that I don't have the votes, but it reeks of bad government.

[02:36:32] In my opinion, it lacks true leadership because one would think that we would want county staff to be adequately prepared to advise this board before making such a drastic policy change in regards to this ordinance. But go ahead and call for the vote. Before I say that, I don't know if anyone else wanted to speak.

[02:36:50] I know other people were in the queue. I don't know if this is a drastic policy change because it actually puts us in line with neighboring jurisdictions. And I feel that I was not here for collective bargaining and for working on that ordinance. But this has long been a sticking point. And again, this puts us in line with other jurisdictions.

[02:37:08] Personally, I don't characterize this as drastic. I think that staff knew that this was coming and this has been a long ongoing discussion. Supervisor Bailey, I welcome to hear from you because you were on the board. I know this is something that you support. - Yeah, the majority of us were on the board when this took place, so it's not a surprise.

[02:37:27] And this, as I said last week, this is consistent with the other collective bargaining ordinances that we have put together that we use as a template as we were putting ours together. So there have been extensive discussions about it.

[02:37:43] This is not out of the ordinary. It does not legally put us in jeopardy. If an employee is no longer here, then the signature is just gone because they're no longer here. It doesn't put us in any legal jeopardation.

[02:38:01] It's us making sure in the discussions that I personally have had with the unions and understanding our ordinance, this doesn't put us in any legal jeopardy.

[02:38:16] And if it does, I'd like for the county attorney to say that to us if it does. But it is consistent with what has happened in Fairfax County and in Loudoun County. And so to put our minds and hearts at ease, and I know Megan is not here to come and give us that but you know we're but um county attorney what does it put us in illegal jeopardy as we move forward with this madam chair members of the board what will happen is if a bargaining

[02:38:49] unit states that they have 30 signatures they will come forward to the labor relations administrator we'll have to go through and double check them um if that employee is no longer employed here that signature will no longer count a question will be what happens if the employee signed it two years ago and changed their mind I don't know the answer to that but no this will if the labor relations administrator who is a neutral person that's um discussed in the ordinance goes through

[02:39:23] and certifies that there's 30 percent then the election will go forward thank you thank you so much I'm sorry a supervisor angry and then I'm going to call for the vote I just got I just got one more first of all police and fire did the same thing so why is it there's different than this 12 months if that's the case like madam chair members of the board police and fire were able to gain 30 percent of the votes within 12 months this might okay so so nothing's changed in the language they just were able to do theirs in the time frame they were able to do theirs

[02:39:59] with showing a 30 percent interest within 12 months my second question if if we approve excuse Excuse me, if we approve this today, can we cancel this later? If we make a resolution, I got it.

[02:40:15] If we find out this is a bad idea, can we say we don't like this resolution? Well, this is for a public hearing. I just want to be honest with you. This is just to initiate the public hearing. We're not taking a vote today. This is just to initiate the public hearing. That's right, you did say public hearing. That's right, okay. I had lost that point already. Okay, all right, thank you.

[02:40:31] All right, I'd like to go ahead and call for the vote. Motion passes five to one.

[02:40:48] Supervisor Vega, voting nay. All right, thank you very much. And we are at the end. Agenda item number nine, can I get a motion to adjourn? - Move to adjourn.

[02:41:04] - Second. - All right, so we're probably moved and second it. Let's go ahead and vote. My screen is down, hold on. I'm a yay, my screen is down. Oh, here we go, I got it, I'm a yay.

[02:41:19] - Sorry, I got it. Vote unanimous. - All right, thank you everyone. And our next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 17th, and that will be a regular session. Thank you so very much.



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