

A regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County, Virginia, was held on March 10, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in Room 241, Second Floor, Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia, 22902.

PRESENT: Mr. Jim H. Andrews, Mr. Ned Gallaway, Ms. Beatrice (Bea) J.S. LaPisto-Kirtley, Ms. Ann H. Mallek, Ms. Diantha H. McKeel (left at 5:37 p.m.), and Mr. Mike O. D. Pruitt.

ABSENT: none.

OFFICERS PRESENT: County Executive, Jeffrey B. Richardson; Deputy County Executive, Trevor Henry; Deputy County Executive, Ann Walli; Chief Operating Officer, Kristy Shifflett; Chief Financial Officer, Jacob Sumner; Assistant Chief Financial Officer, Andy Bowman; County Attorney, Andy Herrick; Chief of Fire/Rescue, Dan Eggleston; Chief of Police, Sean Reeves; Clerk, Claudette K. Borgersen; and Senior Deputy Clerk, Travis O. Morris.

Agenda Item No. 1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m., by the Chair, Mr. Jim Andrews.

Mr. Andrews introduced the Albemarle County Police Department Officers present to provide their services at the meeting, Cadene Painter and Tyler Walls.

Agenda Item No. 2. **Work Session:** FY 2026 Operating and Capital Budget.

Mr. Andy Bowman, Assistant Chief Financial Officer, said that this was the first work session for the Fiscal Year 26 budget process. He said that he liked to start every work session by outlining the path ahead for where they were today. He would now introduce the Board of Supervisors to the adoption and appropriation of the budget in May. Over the next couple of weeks, there would be many meetings, and the list would start to get ticked off quickly.

Mr. Bowman said that today's work session would focus mainly on General Fund revenues, the non-departmental chapter, and public safety. He clarified that no action would be requested from the Board of Supervisors today, as this was an informational work session. He said that this would also be true on March 12 and March 17, which were work sessions just for information and no action.

Mr. Bowman said that on March 19, the Board would be asked to take action to propose a budget and set a maximum rate for advertisement. He explained that this meant the Board would advertise a tax rate, which they could adopt as advertised or reduce, but could not increase past that advertised rate, for both real property, personal property, and any other rates they chose. He said that this was the main goal for the next few work sessions, allowing staff to support the Board in making a comfortable decision on March 18, which was not a final decision but an important milestone in the budget process.

Mr. Bowman said that to facilitate the process, staff would present information in small chunks, more detailed than the County Executive's presentation, but less detailed than the 300-page document. They would allow as much time as possible for the Board to have discussions, with a brief presentation, time for the Board to go through their order, ask questions, and provide comments. He said that they would take notes on everything, and if there was not a question they could respond to on the spot, the answer would be posted on the website for transparency.

Mr. Bowman said that staff were also listening for any potential adjustments the Board may desire to the County Executive's recommendation. When discussing these items, their approach in the past had been to bring them up as a package and evaluate options as a whole, rather than addressing each item individually. He said that this approach had worked well for the Board in the past.

Mr. Bowman said that they would take notes on both the package and individual items, ensuring clarity at the beginning and end of each work session, particularly on potential adjustment items. He said that today's agenda would start with the total budget and then proceed to General Fund revenues. He said that then, they review the non-departmental chapter, which outlined transfers to public schools and capital.

Mr. Bowman said that this chapter served as the basis for those transfers, and they would discuss them in more detail next week. He suggested a break at that time, allowing them to focus on public safety for the remainder of the work session. He said that he aimed to allocate approximately 90 minutes to this topic, as it was a significant driver of the budget.

Mr. Bowman said that he would also allow sufficient time for the Chiefs to share their stories and for the Board to engage with what the majority of the recommended tax increase was supporting. To begin, he would like to step back and review at a high level the strategic plan adopted in October 2022. This plan served as the roadmap and basis for their budget, guiding their expenditures and changes.

Mr. Bowman said that as they aligned their spending with this plan, they must consider how each item would drive forward their strategic objectives. Not all items required the same level of funding, and this budget reflected this. He said that the first three boxes on the left, safety and well-being, workforce and customer service, and education and learning, drove the majority of the budget's dollars.

Mr. Bowman said that he also appreciated the visual representation of workforce and customer service at the center, as it aligned with their past experiences. When they had been successful in this area, with strong recruitment, retention, and training of their staff, it had a positive impact on achieving their other goals. In addition to the strategic plan, he would like to provide a few more refresher slides for the Board and the public who may be new to this topic.

Mr. Bowman said that obligations had been a significant component of their budget for the past few years. This was a summary of the Board's obligations over the last three budgets, including Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants, implementing other programs, modernizing their core systems, and constructing new capital facilities. He said that these obligations had contributed to their current Fiscal Year 26 budget.

Mr. Bowman said that while the County Executive's presentation would highlight new obligations, the ones in Fiscal Year 26 were particularly notable compared to other budgets in recent history. He said that as staff prepared the recommended budget, they were considering the strategic plan, obligations, adopted financial policies, economic outlook, and other factors to create a comprehensive total budget. He said that he would now move on to the first part of the budget, which was the total budget on pages 50 and 51.

Mr. Bowman said that the total budget represented every dollar that passed through the County each year, encompassing the County's operating budget, debt service, capital budget, and grant funds for both the County and the school division. He said that however, the total budget was not a reliable indicator of year-to-year changes, as it was heavily influenced by the capital budget. He said that this year, a recommended tax increase was implemented, which was reflected in the actual change of less than one-tenth of one percent, amounting to \$190,000.

Mr. Bowman said that he could explain why this was the case, as the County's local revenues, including taxes and other local sources, had increased by approximately \$46 million. He said that the total budget was not a suitable tracker of year-to-year changes due to the significant impact of the capital budget. He said that, for example, last year the Southern Feeder pattern Elementary School was allocated for construction, and those funds did not get reallocated again.

Mr. Bowman said that instead, they rolled forward year to year. He said that this was why the County was relatively flat in terms of revenue. He said that the total budget was often a headline, but it was not the focus of their discussion due to the year-to-year fluctuations in the capital budget.

Mr. Bowman said that they instead focused on the General Fund. He said that he would like to take a moment to address any questions or concerns the Board may have regarding the process or total budget before he began. He said that he would be presenting this information in a series of short segments, including a discussion of the County's tax revenues, which would be followed by a break, and then a presentation on State, federal, and other funding sources.

Mr. Bowman said that he had attempted to address as many of the Board's questions from the County Executive's presentation as possible through this material. He said that the General Fund was their primary focus for three reasons: it was where all property tax revenue was received, it was where the Board of Supervisors had the maximum amount of discretionary authority, and it was the primary funding source for the public schools and capital programs. He said that specifically, they were balancing on the rates of personal property, which had returned to the pre-pandemic rate of \$4.28/\$100.00, and real property, which had seen a \$0.04 increase.

Mr. Bowman said that food and beverage taxes remain unchanged, and they were not at the maximum for transit occupancy. He said that he would provide further information on this topic in a few slides. The overall General Fund revenue breakdown was represented by the provided donut chart, which showed the various sources of revenue.

Mr. Bowman said that notably, general property taxes accounted for approximately two-thirds of the revenues. State revenue was represented in the light blue section at 6% of the budget, while federal revenue was shown in the yellow section at 2%. These two portions were often misunderstood by community members, who expected them to be larger, but in the General Fund, they were relatively small.

Mr. Bowman said that moving on to real estate tax revenue, this was assessed by the County Assessor and his team. Peter Lynch had presented to the Board in January, providing a detailed explanation of their assessment process, measures of success, and other relevant information. He said that he would not be repeating that presentation today. He noted that by code, Mr. Lynch was required to assess property at 100% of fair market value.

Mr. Bowman said that before diving into numbers, he would like to briefly mention the Real Estate Tax Relief for Elderly and Disabled. If anyone was eligible or knew someone who may be eligible, he would recommend this program, which could provide relief for applicants who were 65 years or older, may be mentally disabled, or not using their property as a business and met other criteria. He said that if anyone knew anyone who may be eligible or would like to pursue this further, please contact the Department of Finance and Budget, and they would assist them in the process.

Mr. Bowman said that in actual numbers, the real estate tax revenue for next year was projected

to increase by \$29 million, or 12%. He said that the primary reasons for this increase were the recommended tax rate, which was \$12.4 million, and a 5.1% increase in overall reassessments from Calendar Year 24 to Calendar Year 25. He said that Mr. Lynch had explained these details in January.

Mr. Bowman said that they had an annual impact from new construction, land divisions, where property values were increasing due to changes to those properties, not market fluctuations. He said that the recommended tax rate was \$0.894 per \$100 assessed value, and this increase would be part of the Board's budget add for the next term. He said that this tax rate meant that if the Board were to set a tax rate solely to offset the increase in reassessments, that rate would be \$0.813 per \$100 of value.

Mr. Bowman said that this rate would not include any changes due to new construction, land divisions, or other factors. He said that as part of the publication and advertisement process, they were legally required to include this information. He said that the next slide explained the value of a penny on the tax rate.

Mr. Bowman said that currently, all available revenues were allocated for expenditures in the budget, but if the Board were to consider scenarios, adjusting the real estate tax rate would generate \$3.1 million for every full penny. He said that if allocated according to their current split with schools, County government, and the capital program, those amounts were shown on the slide. He said that if the Board were to consider alternative non-dedicated splits, approximately \$300,000 per tenth of a penny could be allocated.

Mr. Bowman said that this could be examined in future work sessions, depending on the Board's desires. He said that moving on to personal property, he would delve into more detail as this category encompassed many small categories. He said that personal property was assessed using the clean trade-in value based on the January issue of the JD Power Official Used Car Guide.

Mr. Bowman said that the State of Virginia allowed them to use a few different methods, and this was the one the County had adopted and used for some time. He said that other personal property not included in the car guide would be subject to the percentage of cost basis or similar, depending on the State Code.

Mr. Bowman said that personal property tax relief was provided by the State, and they received approximately \$15 million annually, which was applied towards individuals' vehicle tax bills. He said that the tax relief structure worked as follows: if the assessed value of a vehicle was \$1,000 or less, no tax bill was issued; the State tax relief covered that amount.

Mr. Bowman said that for vehicles with an assessed value between \$1,000 and \$20,000, they received 42% tax relief. He said that any amount above \$20,000 was taxed at the full rate. He said that this was a unique structure for personal property, and it differed from other taxes in terms of its progressive nature.

Mr. Bowman said that historically, the 42% tax relief rate had decreased over time as the population grew, businesses opened, and more vehicles were added. He clarified that this did not apply to businesses. He said that the personal property increased over time, and the state revenue could not keep pace with the total population of 118,000 people in the County. He said that personal vehicles accounted for the majority of personal property revenue, with almost 88% coming from this category.

Mr. Bowman said that they were taxed based on the assessment method, and the tax relief was applied to this amount. He said that there were smaller categories, including business tangible personal property, which made up 11% of personal property. He said that this was assessed the same as personal property but did not receive state tax relief.

Mr. Bowman said that the state had a limit that the business property rate must be the same as personal property. He said that a smaller group, comprising a lengthy section of code with various categories of boats, airplanes, manufactured homes, and others, accounted for less than 2% of personal property tax revenue. He said that each category had a distinct assessment prescribed by the State Code.

Mr. Bowman said that this was another instance where the rate could not exceed the personal property or machinery and tools tax rate. He said that he would discuss machinery and tools separately. He said that currently, if the Board were to set a rate for any of these categories, it would be different, and it would need to be in a downward direction, or the overall personal property tax would need to increase further.

Mr. Bowman said that moving to machinery and tools, which had historically had the same rate as the County, the State Code limited this rate to the personal property rate. He said that the Board could adopt a lower amount, but the County's practice was to maintain the same rate for all these revenues.

Mr. Bowman said that this primarily concerned equipment used in the manufacturing process, which was the most common type of business. He said that it totaled approximately \$700,000 and affected only 30 taxpayers, making it a relatively small group in their overall tax base. He said that for personal property, machinery, and tools, the math on the split was similar to their real estate split, with the value of a penny being just under \$100,000. He said that this was demonstrated on the slide using the allocation of 54% to Schools, 36% to County Government, and 10% to Capital and Debt.

Mr. Bowman said that next, he would like to discuss the history of the tax rate and where they had been. He said that this showed that since the 1990s, the County had a personal property tax rate of \$4.28. He said that many on this Board or those listening in may recall that in 2022, there was a significant change in the value of used vehicles, which was unprecedented. He said that as a result, the Board dropped the rate by \$0.86 or 20% to \$3.42 to offset this unusual increase. This rate remained the same through calendar year 2023 before increasing back to the previous rate of \$4.28 over the last two years.

Mr. Bowman said that there was a history, but he had asked their revenue team to analyze the tax implications of the most popular vehicles in Albemarle County. Specifically, he had asked them to examine the tax bill for five of the most popular vehicles, including two higher-end models, over a five-year period.

Mr. Bowman said that it was essential to note that individual experiences may vary, but among these seven vehicles, only two had seen an increase in their tax rate over the prior year, the Ford F-150 and the Toyota RAV4. This data helped to normalize the fluctuations in tax values over time. He said that he would like to thank their Revenue Administration team for compiling this data.

Mr. Bowman said that moving forward, he would like to discuss other local taxes. One factor they considered in their economic projections was a report by Dr. Sheryl Bailey, who provided her insights to the Board in the fall. They remained engaged with her throughout the year and had been in touch with her recently.

Mr. Bowman said that her advice in the fall was prudent, suggesting that they should expect a slowdown in the economy. He said that his conclusion based on her report was to expect both sunny and cloudy signals in the economy. He said that they needed to continue to monitor their key indicators and remain vigilant in their assessment of the economic outlook.

Mr. Bowman said that to illustrate this, they would consider the example of their other local taxes, which accounted for more than 90% of the taxes they collected. He said that their consumer taxes, primarily sales, food and beverage, and transit occupancy, were projected to grow at a slower rate in the current budget. He said that as they emerged from the pandemic, these growth rates were at historic highs, and they knew it would not last forever.

Mr. Bowman said that they had since adjusted their projections downward. He said that so far this year, they were running very close to budget, and things were unfolding as expected. He said that they were forecasting continued growth, but not at the same rate as during the pandemic.

Mr. Bowman said that the next category was other business-driven taxes, primarily consisting of business licenses and bank franchise tax. He said that this revenue stream was expected to perform well, based on the data they had collected so far. He said that it was a backwards-looking revenue, based on prior year gross receipts, and they had not received significant new data to make a meaningful change.

Mr. Bowman said that the revenue they collected last year was largely based on the economic activity they saw in Fiscal Year 24 and other available data. He said that he would like to highlight this slide from the budget on revenue diversification, which showed the County's revenues over the past few years. He said that the top blue line indicated a decrease in reliance on property taxes over time.

Mr. Bowman said that this shift was largely due to two changes: the decline in State and Federal funding, from 18% to 8%, and the decrease in other local taxes, such as sales, food and beverage, transit occupancy, and business licenses, from 23% to just under 18%. He said that a question that may be on the Board's and public's minds was what they could do to address the orange line, which represented the remaining revenue sources. He said that the Board had taken advantage of diversifying revenues with the Transit Occupancy Tax (TOT) and meals tax in recent years.

Mr. Bowman said that however, when looking at what the Board could do from here on, unfortunately, the answer was not very much. He said that this was due to the Dillon Rule, which this Board was well aware of. He explained that the Dillon Rule restricted their governing body to only those things expressly given to them by the State.

Mr. Bowman said provided was a chart of all the other taxes that fell under the local tax category. He said that the chart showed the recommended amount, rate, and maximum allowed by the State for Fiscal Year 26. He said that he would share this information and as they could see, they were at the maximum rate for most of these categories, with a few exceptions.

Mr. Bowman said that for business licenses, they were at the maximum rate for all existing categories. This meant that there was a very low likelihood that they were missing any opportunities for increased revenue, as the rates they could increase were only applicable to businesses that were not currently operating in their community.

Mr. Bowman said that consumer utility was the fifth item on the list, and they were currently under review. He said that the total budget for this was approximately \$4.6 million, with an impact of around \$46,000 per \$0.01 of tax. He said that this was paid on utility bills based on a complex calculation, and they were examining it to see if there may be a small opportunity for improvement. He said that for perspective, a few percents for this would be less impactful than even a tenth of a percent of the real estate rate.

Mr. Bowman said that staff were reviewing this to ensure they considered all opportunities. He said that the Transit Occupancy Tax was another area worth noting, which came into the General Fund at \$5.4 million, representing 6% of the 9% rate. He said that the remaining 3% went to a different fund. He said that every percent equivalent to around \$900,000.

Mr. Bowman said that the Board may wonder what would happen if they were to increase this rate. He said that for the Board's perspective, County staff had conducted a comparison of rates with other localities. He said that this did not include northern Virginia or Virginia Beach, as travelers from these areas may have different circumstances.

Mr. Bowman said that, however, they could provide rates for other areas of the state if needed. He said that they compared rates with Montgomery County, where Virginia Tech was located, and grouped together mid-sized cities and surrounding counties. He said that two observations were that other localities tended to maintain similar rates, and that Albemarle and Charlottesville were currently at 9%, which was not included in the City Manager's recommended budget.

Mr. Bowman said that this rate would be worth considering. He said that their tourism experts had noted that individuals rarely chose a destination based on tax rates, but businesses and professional organizations may consider it when deciding where to hold an event. He said that before moving on to state revenues, they would like to address any questions or comments the Board may have regarding property taxes or other local taxes.

Mr. Pruitt said that the in-depth analysis Mr. Bowman provided of their taxation tools had sparked his curiosity, which he had expressed in the past about the machinery and tools. He said that it seemed that any desire he had to explore this further was quickly dismissed due to their limitations in keeping costs below vehicular personal property. He said that his goal was to determine whether increasing taxes on transient occupancy would be more politically feasible than increasing personal property taxes.

Mr. Pruitt said that Mr. Bowman had effectively addressed that question. He said that he appreciated the additional context he had provided by placing the transient occupancy tax within a regional context. He said that as Albemarle was a destination and tourist attraction, he believed they shared commonalities with other localities, such as Virginia Beach.

Mr. Pruitt said that he did not have an appetite for acting on TOT unless they could do so in tandem with Charlottesville, given their surplus. He said that he appreciated the comprehensive list of taxation tools, which allowed them to quickly assess their limitations and, particularly, identify areas where they could not utilize them.

Mr. Pruitt said that this Board had likely been briefed on the topic before, and he may have received information on it as well. He said that he would like to draw attention to slide 17, the Personal Property Tax breakdown, as it helped them understand how the baked-in relief operated for individual users. He asked if Mr. Bowman could remind them of their current cent rate for personal property.

Mr. Bowman said that they were currently at \$3.96, and it was recommended that they increase this tax to \$4.28.

Mr. Pruitt said that, as he recalled, every \$0.10 was approximately \$1 million.

Mr. Bowman confirmed that was correct.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she appreciated the detailed information that had been provided. She said that she had a couple of questions regarding slide 18. She said that they had listed boats, airplanes, manufactured homes, and other items. She asked if recreational vehicles (RVs) were included in this category.

Mr. Ryan Davidson, Deputy Chief of Budget, said that they were accounted for in the vehicle personal property numbers, as they classified RVs (Recreational Vehicles) as vehicles that received a vehicle license, which were then included in their personal vehicles or business vehicles.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that her other question was about transit occupancy tax, but she believed it had been answered, because if Charlottesville was not considering it, then she did not think it was a good idea for them. She said that on slide 24, she would like to know if the orange line, other local taxes, was declining due to declining commercial or light industrial.

Mr. Bowman said that he believed that part of the issue was that the Board was unable to increase those taxes, with very limited exceptions, such as the food and beverage tax. He said that over the past 23 years, the Board had made decisions regarding real estate and personal property, with real estate being the primary option for increasing revenues. He said that since the Board had not been able to change the other local taxes, the blue line for property taxes had been the only tool available to the Board of Supervisors when there had been desires to change it.

Ms. McKeel thanked Mr. Bowman for his presentation. She said that she appreciated the concise and clear information he provided. She said that she did have two comments or questions, if he would permit. She said that on slide 8, regarding financial policies, she still received questions from some other boards' members about the significance of their Triple Triple A bond rating. She said that they were

concerned that their policies, which were designed to protect those who held Triple Triple A bonds, were unimportant.

Mr. Bowman said that the key points were two-fold. Firstly, the Triple Triple A rating allowed the Board to secure the best possible interest rate when issuing bonds, which they had paid back over 20 years. He said that it provided the County with significant financial flexibility in its operating budget. He said that think of the County's debt service as its mortgage payment or rent. He said that the less of that burden over time, the more flexibility the Board had to allocate funds to other priorities in the budget. He said that this increased financial flexibility, combined with the increased affordability of the Triple Triple A rating, was a significant advantage.

Ms. McKeel said that she had another request for information to share with the public. She said that on slide 24, the State and Federal revenues had changed, so she would appreciate if staff could explain how those changes affected the amount of money they had available. She said that she believed this was a crucial piece of information that the public should be aware of.

Mr. Bowman said that the state provided a significant amount of assistance to their public safety departments, Department of Social Services, constitutional officers, and other general support services. He said that however, the amount of assistance provided by the State had not kept pace with the needs of these services. He said that during the Great Recession, there was a notable reduction in State funding, which had resulted in a shift of responsibility from the State to the Board of Supervisors and real property taxes to fund the difference.

Ms. McKeel said that they reduced the percentage from 17.6% in 2003 to 8% in this year's recommended budget. She said that it had been reduced by more than half over that time.

Mr. Bowman confirmed that was correct. He said that this funding did not include any support from one-time allocations such as American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) or Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding related to the pandemic. He said that those funds were accounted for separately. He said that this funding was primarily for the day-to-day services they provided at the County, which were ongoing expenses.

Ms. McKeel said that as State and Federal monies decreased, they must find local solutions.

Mr. Jeff Richardson, County Executive, said that he would like to interject one point. He said that on the gray line she was focusing on, regarding State and Federal funding, he would like to remind the Board, drawing from their recent discussions with schools, this was not related to State funding for schools, but rather General Fund allocations for local government.

Mr. Richardson said that last year when they reset the local composite index, which examined a formula County by County to determine State funding for schools, Albemarle County lost \$10 million. He said that this only occurred every two years, and as a result, the schools were now looking ahead to the 2027 budget, considering the impact of this decline on a yearly basis.

Mr. Richardson said that they were concerned about the potential effects of this decline, which was based on per capita income on a County basis, and the \$10 million loss was a significant factor last year. He said that the schools' collaboration with them and their ability to meet their needs were greatly facilitated by this funding. He said that this was separate from the decline in State and Federal funding that was being seen in the General Fund.

Ms. McKeel said that many people referred to the Local Capital Improvement (LCI) fund as the ability to pay, so the lower LCI meant that the State viewed them as having a better ability to pay for their own schools. She said that as a result, they received less funding from the State.

Mr. Richardson said that was exactly right. He said that the state had a limited amount of money, and multiple school systems and counties were competing for it. He said that the County with the most ability to pay would likely be paired with the expectation that they would contribute the most local funding.

Mr. Richardson said that the County with the lowest per capita would be suggested as needing the most state assistance. He said that Albemarle County's per capita income was higher, so they had an enhanced ability to pay for their own schools. He said that the school system then turned to local government, stating that they had a gap and needed assistance, which was not reflected in the State's allocation. He said that this situation was similar to what she had discussed with Mr. Bowman.

Ms. McKeel said that to add to her previous comments, Albemarle County Public Schools and Albemarle County had attempted to influence the formula over the years, but to no avail. She said that the General Assembly had shown no interest in revising the formula. She said that she was simply stating that they had tried to adjust the formula and were unsuccessful.

Mr. Gallaway said that the way their revenue share was allocated for school funding was at issue. He said that the \$20 million they sent to the City was not considered part of their Local Capital Improvement (LCI) fund for school funding purposes. He said that the State treated it as if it were in their coffers, which could be beneficial in some years but detrimental in others.

Mr. Gallaway said that the State was not interested in simply changing this allocation to take the \$20 million and treat it as not being in their coffers. He said that it could have had a significant impact, as

evidenced by their disagreement in 2012, 2013, and 2014. He said that the potential loss could have been substantial, potentially in the range of a million to a million and a half dollars. He said that at \$20 million, that number could only have been higher.

Mr. Gallaway said that next, he was wondering if the County had a significant number of registered aircraft. He said that he was assuming that airplanes were registered in a similar manner to automobiles. He said that he was in agreement with the airport's approach. He said that he was simply curious about this aspect of the registration process

Mr. Gallaway said that given the significant amount of airplane traffic they hear and the various factors at play, he was curious to know if all the airplanes parked in their County were actually registered there or in another state with lower taxes.

Mr. Bowman said that he could follow up with an answer to that question.

Mr. Gallaway said that he would also like to note that some individuals with multiple properties may register their vehicles in the other property for tax benefits.

Mr. Gallaway said that the economic forecast had been partly sunny, partly cloudy since October, when Dr. Bailey visited. He said that the stock market was experiencing a downturn, and the President had expressed concerns that they may not avoid a recession. He said that he recently criticized the CHIPS Act (Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors for America Act), which was a separate issue. He said that this was a significant development that had been added to the impact.

Mr. Gallaway said that given the current situation, he questioned whether they should still rely on their current economic forecast of partly sunny, partly cloudy as their outlook. He said that considering the recent data, he believed they should be prepared for a recession, as it was a word that was often avoided in conversation. He said that nevertheless, they were acknowledging that they may not be able to avoid it at the Federal level.

Mr. Jacob Sumner, Chief Financial Officer, said that one of the aspects of a partly sunny, partly cloudy outlook was uncertainty, and he believed that was what they were experiencing right now, particularly with the conversations at the Federal level. He said that this uncertainty created a sense of unpredictability.

Mr. Sumner said that as part of their contingency planning and efforts to navigate this uncertainty, they were actively exploring potential scenarios and developing contingency plans for various economic and funding scenarios. He said that for example, they were considering how they would handle a shift in the economy or changes in Federal funding.

Mr. Sumner said that as Mr. Bowman had mentioned earlier, Dr. Bailey was in regular contact with them regarding the economy and their forecasts. He said that this situation served as a reminder that partly sunny, partly cloudy was indeed a reflection of their current uncertainty. He said that while they were seeing some positive economic signs, there were also other indicators that suggested otherwise.

Mr. Gallaway asked what the positive aspects were.

Mr. Sumner said that locally, they had a strong housing market, which was a positive sign for their economy. He said that job growth had been solid, resulting in a low unemployment rate. He said that although it had increased slightly in the last release, he considered it to be an overall positive trend, especially when compared to the high unemployment rates they had experienced during the pandemic.

Mr. Gallaway said that the housing market, particularly here, had been hit with a double blow of tariffs and labor shortages resulting from immigration. He said that this could potentially put a significant dent in their housing market, so he was unsure if it would fare well. He asked if the Cigarette Tax Board reported a decline in sales for next year and if this was the reason they observed a decrease in that area.

Mr. Bowman confirmed that was correct.

Mr. Gallaway said that this year's numbers were slightly lower than last year's, so it was possible that they were projecting similar trends.

Mr. Bowman said that he would also like to thank their revenue analyst, Robert Wilson. He said that in the last calendar year, they had 58 aircraft registered in the County, and they were primarily kept there. He said that if they were kept in hangars locally, they would be taxed locally.

Ms. Mallek said that they were stating that the tax decisions made in May will impact the June bill that goes back to January. She said that she would like to know if there are any impacts from these decisions that will affect the base of the schools moving forward into 2026, or if those effects are already accounted for.

Mr. Bowman said that there would indeed be a fiscal year impact for 2025, which would be reflected in the calendar year rate impact. He said that this was a one-time expense for a one-time use, and he would discuss this further in this work session.

Ms. Mallek said that it is worth noting that the increase in their receipts will occur before the new

fiscal year begins. She said that this was a positive development. She said that on slide 17, the State reimbursement was at \$15 million. She clarified that this amount was not a guarantee of full reimbursement to the County, but rather a portion of the total amount they would provide, which was then divided among the number of vehicles they had, rather than the amount they initially promised.

Mr. Bowman said that was correct; the \$15 million had been the same annual amount the County had received since approximately 2007 or 2008.

Ms. Mallek said that she would like to clarify some information regarding manufactured homes. She said that last week, they had discussed prices ranging from \$70,000 to \$90,000. She said that according to the tax calculation, the total tax would be \$4.28 times \$90,000. She said that she wanted to ensure that she understood the situation accurately, as it seemed significantly higher than the comparable value of a house at \$83,000.

Mr. Davidson said that it was a different assessment.

Ms. Jennifer Matheny, Chief of Revenue Administration, said that manufactured homes were taxed at the real estate rate. She said that they were classified as personal property, but they were not taxed at the personal property rate.

Ms. Mallek said that the machinery and tools tax had been a topic of discussion for several years regarding how they would obtain the revenue promised by the solar projects. She said that she knew that one solar project had a siting agreement in place, but the earlier ones did not. She said that at some point in the future, she would like to have them all learn about the impact this had on the solar sector.

Mr. Andrews said that regarding slide 24, since it was a percentage, they were seeing a notable increase, and this growth was substantial in real dollars. He said that if other categories remained stable at the same level, they would actually decrease. He said that he was aware that this was the smallest category, but he was intrigued by the significant jump in local revenue and transfers, which rose from FY23 to FY24 and then held steady. He said that he would like to know what was driving this increase and what was included in this category.

Mr. Bowman said that there were a few examples to illustrate this point, as it was a small category. He said that one notable example was the County's implementation of the EMS (Emergency Medical Services) cost recovery program over the past 20 years. He said that as the program was created and ambulances were added throughout the County, a revenue stream of over \$3 million was generated that did not exist previously.

Mr. Bowman said that the Department of Community Development had also conducted fee studies, which had been updated, and water resources revenues had been updated related to permits and fees. He said that these were just a couple of examples, but staff could provide a more detailed breakdown if needed. He said that he thought it was one of those areas where they were being mindful of changes when they occurred.

Mr. Bowman said that another notable category was their interest earnings and revenues. He said that they had restructured their Finance and Budget Department to focus on maximizing returns, and as a result, they were seeing a better return on investment in more recent years than in the past.

Mr. Andrews said it was helpful to know that. He said that, for example, on the blue line, the property tax line, there was a dip in Fiscal Year 24. Although it was small, he believed it was likely due to the other group. He said that since these were percentages, that was how it affected the number, even though the real property tax was increased. Tax was still collected. He appreciated that clarification. He said that he had a follow-up question regarding verification of residency. He said that he wondered if this process was solely handled by the state or were there local mechanisms in place to verify that individuals truly resided at the addresses they claimed, and to ensure that other aspects of their reported information were accurate.

Mr. Bowman said that they had a process in place. He said that they had had instances in the past where vehicles had been added to their fleet as part of quality control measures.

Ms. Matheny said that she utilized several different resources to verify garaging jurisdiction. She said that the primary source was the Department of Motor Vehicles from the State, which determined where a vehicle's jurisdiction lay. She said that this served as a verification method. She said that in addition, they had access to other tools to address any discrepancies that may arise. She said that she also used CARFAX reports, which provided detailed information on a vehicle's registration history, including any previous locations.

Ms. Matheny said that they had a process in place for individuals to report tax-related items, and they were part of the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN), which allowed them to access and research out-of-state plates. She said that this enabled them to send notices and verify the location of vehicles based on citizen observations.

Mr. Richardson said that before they moved on, he was not sure they would be able to revisit slide number 24 as they continued through this discussion due to time constraints. He said that between Fiscal Year 18 and Fiscal Year 23, this Board, which was different from the current Board, first identified the need for revenue diversification.

Mr. Richardson said that specifically, they noted that property taxes increased from 64.7% to 66%, and he emphasized the need to relieve the stress and burden on real estate property tax owners. He said that over time, they explored options such as cigarette tax, plastic bag tax, and increasing their share of TOT and prepared food and meal taxes under state law. He said that they had made efforts to address this issue, but despite their efforts, the trend line continued to show growth, primarily due to unusually high reassessments on the residential side.

Mr. Richardson said that unless he heard otherwise, they would continue to work on developing a revenue diversification strategy. He said that he had previously mentioned, and would continue to emphasize, that a \$0.01 sales tax, which the General Assembly had considered and would continue to consider, could provide a \$25 million annual dedicated tax for local school infrastructure. He said that this would be a game-changer, given their efforts to explore alternative revenue streams. He said that as Mr. Bowman demonstrated with the list of tax options, their choices were currently limited. He said that he apologized if his comments seemed repetitive but slide 24 highlighted the importance of this issue.

Ms. McKeel said that she believed it was also important to consider who bore the cost of the sales tax.

Mr. Richardson said that this was a shared obligation among residents, who lived, worked, and shopped here, but it also affected people who visited and paid property taxes elsewhere. He said that when the daytime population grew, it was essential to have a tax structure that captured taxes and helped with infrastructure. He said that as the population increased, the infrastructure became strained due to more cars on the road, more people, and increased service demand. He said that to reverse this trend, he remained interested in exploring this concept, aiming to turn the trend line down. He said that it would require a concerted effort.

Mr. Andrews said that it would be beneficial for them to understand the blue line in terms of the burden on residential real estate versus commercial and industrial real estate.

Mr. Richardson said that when they broke it down, of 68.4%, 72% were residential, while the commercial industry accounted for only 11.3%. He said that this was a decline from the past, and it raised a question for this Board and staff: what steps could they take to better position themselves for private investment across the County?

Mr. Richardson said that a great example was Tom Thorpe, Afton Scientific, who had invested \$200 million in his company last fall, creating 200 new jobs. He said that this investment was concentrated in Albemarle County, and it highlighted the importance of attracting private investment. He said that as they considered the cost-of-service delivery, it was worth noting that commercial and industrial areas tended to be less expensive to serve than residential areas.

Mr. Gallaway said that he would like to share a follow-up on that topic. He said that he believed that the commercial decline was a combination of both lost value and lost businesses. He said that he was assuming it was a combination of both factors, but he was unsure if they had a clear understanding of the specific situation.

Mr. Gallaway said that, for example, Fashion Square Mall was an example of lost value, but if a company left, it was a loss of businesses. He said that he was trying to understand which challenge they faced more: losing the companies that occupied the properties or losing the value of the properties themselves.

Mr. Sumner said that he believed it was a combination of factors. He said that they were indeed seeing a decline in certain areas, as he had mentioned, Fashion Square Mall was an area that had experienced decline. He said that while some businesses came and went as they were successful, others were not. He said that there was strong growth on the residential side, which significantly outweighed the commercial side. He said that this was because of the sheer volume of residential development. He said that despite this, the commercial base remained present, particularly in the context of redevelopment efforts and commercial activity.

Mr. Gallaway said that it was challenging to bring that topic together. He said that he believed it would be a valuable topic when the timing was right to understand further. He said that their Chamber would be interested, and likely should be, as well as their local counties and the City.

Ms. Mallek said that she needed to revisit the COCS (Cost of Community Services) report, as the influx of new residents brought new services required for various age groups, including school-aged children, emergency services, and others. She said that this created a significant gap that businesses, as well as others, were not yet addressing.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she would like to inquire about the split with the schools. She said that this arrangement was as she had heard, and whether it was set in stone, or could it be altered by the Board if needed.

Mr. Bowman said that he planned to address that topic later in the work session. He said that the next few slides would be on revenues. He said that this represented the portion of State revenues currently included in their General Fund. He said that as they knew, state revenues accounted for approximately 6% of their General Fund revenues, which were actually slightly lower than last year. He

said that one thing they always kept an eye on was the state budget. He said that it was not uncommon for the State to not have a final budget at this time.

Mr. Bowman said that they would continue to monitor the situation and see how it unfolded. He said that they had experienced both pleasant and unpleasant surprises when the state finalized its numbers, so they would remain vigilant. To provide more insight into the \$30 million, he would like to break it down. He said that half of that revenue came from the personal property tax relief they had been discussing. He said that this amount had been stable for approximately 20 years. He said that the other significant category they examined was the reimbursement from Department of Social Services programs.

Mr. Bowman said that this included both the funding received by the County and pass-throughs to individuals, as well as reimbursement for staff working in Social Services. He said that they had noticed a decline in reimbursement rates based on trends, resulting in a decrease in revenues for this reason. He said that they also had support for public safety departments, which tended to be more stable, as well as telecommunications taxes.

Mr. Bowman said that these were collected by the state and remitted to localities. He said that they also had support for the Compensation Board and other sources, primarily the vehicle rental tax, which was related to the tourism industry. He said that as of now, they did not have a strong indication that any of these may change, but they would continue to monitor the situation closely and gather any available insights from the State level.

Mr. Bowman said that moving on to Federal revenues, this was another area they were watching very closely. He said that at this time, they did not have any certain information to report, so this slide served to share the current Federal revenue breakdown across all funds and identify potential risk areas. He said that in the General Fund, the total was approximately \$9 million, which was relatively flat compared to last year.

Mr. Bowman said that almost all of that revenue went to the Department of Social Services. He said that the revenue came from three sources. He said that one was reimbursement for the Medicaid unit, which also covered other staff in the Department of Social Services, such as State revenue, and direct assistance payments that flowed to individuals.

Mr. Bowman said that they did not anticipate any changes, but they would continue to monitor it closely. He said that outside of the General Fund, there were significant buckets of federal funding. He said that in the County, special revenue funds were typically used to account for funding that was subject to specific requirements.

Mr. Bowman said that they had the Federal Housing Assistance Fund, which included over \$5 million in housing vouchers provided to the community, 90% of which was allocated in special revenue funds. He said that if anything were to happen to this funding, which they had no indication of, it would have a significant impact not only on the County government's bottom line but also on the community.

Mr. Bowman said that the schools would be present on March 17 to discuss the next two items. He said that they had approximately \$400,000 in their school fund budget related to Medicaid and \$11.5 million primarily through programs for free or reduced lunch, special education, and Title I reading and math support. He said that they did not have any information on where this funding was coming from, but they would continue to monitor it. He said that beyond the funding in the next budget, they were closely tracking their grants, which totaled around \$17 million in Federal dollars that they were currently managing. He said that they had no indication that any of this funding was in jeopardy, but they were maintaining close contact with their grantors through their team and the Office of Grants and Agreements.

Mr. Bowman said that the final revenue they wanted to discuss was fund balance. He said that this was a bit different, as they were not predicting the future, but rather looking at their past financial experience and how it influenced their use of this fund. He said that in December, the Board received the County's audit, which showed that their General Fund balance totaled just under \$98 million at the end of Fiscal Year 24. He said that in general, most of that money was already committed or allocated for various reasons, and the Board's financial management policies maintained a reserve of 10% for unassigned fund balance. He said that this reserve was intended to maintain cash flow and avoid emergency borrowing in the event of a catastrophe.

Mr. Bowman said that they also had a budget stabilization reserve of over \$10 million, which would be used to address more acute shocks. He said that they also had a school fund balance reserve and over \$20 million obligated in the current budget, whether adopted in the current budget or appropriated from a prior year. He said that this left \$11.7 million of one-time money available for one-time uses.

Mr. Bowman said that County staff had identified two other one-time sources that could add to this amount to support the budget process. He said that the anticipated local funding for MicroCAT operations last year had been reduced, with \$1.3 million no longer required, and this amount could be reprogrammed. He said that interest rates last year had not fallen as quickly as forecast, resulting in an additional \$1 million of interest money that could be considered one-time revenue. He said that when combined with the initial \$11.7 million, this brought the total one-time funding to \$13.7 million. He said that the uses for this funding were primarily in years 2025 and 2026. He said that on the coming Wednesday he would highlight the County's Health Fund and why a one-time transfer was needed into that fund.

Mr. Bowman said that a significant portion of this funding would go towards the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which was common for the Board to allocate a couple of million dollars or more to support equity and cash equity into projects. He said that the Children Services Act fund for a mandated program in the Department of Social Services would also receive support. He said that the septic to sewer program had received funding from the American Rescue Plan Act.

Mr. Bowman said that in September, the Board had previously approved repurposing the program but had requested that it be reinstated in the budget. He said that this funding was one-time and would be discussed further on Wednesday. He said that the reserve for contingencies was also one-time funding, intended to support the Board in the event of unexpected events or adjustments throughout the year as part of finalizing the adopted budget. He said that he would elaborate on the full reserve in the next section. He said that for now, he turned it over to the Chair for any additional questions.

Mr. Pruitt asked if the \$11.7 million figure was inclusive of or exclusive of the two separate savings.

Mr. Bowman said that it did not include one-time funding, so the total amount of one-time funding would be \$14 million.

Mr. Pruitt asked if it was the same \$14 million pot that was being drawn down in the subsequent slide under the recommended budget for 2026.

Mr. Bowman said that these were all the one-time uses for funding that were above the County's financial policies. He said that this was fully programmed on the slide.

Mr. Pruitt said approximately \$7 million remained unprogrammed from that fund.

Mr. Bowman said that it was the total funding for Fiscal Year 25 and Fiscal Year 26.

Mr. Pruitt said he would like to reiterate that the role of government was not to be a bank, nor was it to prepare for tomorrow. He said that its purpose was to address the needs of citizens today. He said that he had always been hesitant about reserve funds of this size, wondering if they could be leaner. He said that he was aware of how his peers viewed this issue, so he would refrain from pressing the matter further.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that to reiterate, the \$14 million funding, which was being proposed for FY 26 and FY 27 would cover one-time expenses.

Mr. Bowman said that these one-time expenditures would not create an obligation to the Fiscal Year 2027 in the budget.

Ms. McKeel said that although she did not have any questions at this time, she would like to make a comment. She said that as an organization with a long history, they had experienced their fair share of challenges, including having to make difficult payments to the General Assembly and establishing a rainy-day reserve and fund balance to mitigate potential issues.

Mr. Gallaway said that for the septic to sewer program, he agreed that it should be included. He said that as they had experienced the previous year, where the County had reached a point where they knew the funds would not be used, they had redirected the dollars to another program. He said that this likely occurred with other programs as well and asked if it rolled over to the next year, it was something that came to the Board for consideration at that time, allowing them to repurpose the funds for a different use.

Mr. Bowman said that he believed two notable examples of large items were on the previous slide. He said that if they did nothing else with MicroCAT, they would not be spending \$1.3 million this year. He said that in the context of the overall budget process, they could consider how they could utilize that now to support the overall budget picture. He said that they could consider how to effectively use the interest earnings, which was a smaller component. He said that part of this was routine quarterly management, and if there was anything significant, he recommended bringing it to the Board's attention promptly, rather than waiting six to 12 months for a conversation.

Mr. Gallaway asked how much was in the reserve contingencies at this time.

Mr. Bowman said that there was approximately \$700,000 total, with about \$300,000 ongoing and \$400,000 one-time. He said that he would have this information on the slide in a few minutes; they had not yet reached that point in the discussion.

Ms. Mallek said that she was wondering if there was a percentage of the Department of Social Services budget that was not covered by State and Federal reimbursement.

Mr. Bowman said that the majority of the funding came from state and federal sources, but there were some programs that were paid mostly by the locality.

Ms. Mallek said that during the recent mobility summit, she had expressed concern about the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant and was reminded by a staff member from another County that their contracts included a clause stating that if the funding

supporting this project did not materialize, everything would come to a halt.

Ms. Mallek said that while this news was disappointing, it also brought a sense of relief, as losing the Federal grant would have left them without the necessary funds to continue the project. She said that this was just another factor in the current chaos. For now, that was all she had to share. She also said that she believed the County should have a bank. She wanted to make that clear.

Mr. Andrews said that the reserve was actually quite small in light of their year's budget; it was only a month or so. He said that on slide 28, he would like to make a quick comment. He said that he believed that this issue would be relevant to the schools as well. He said that during his conversation with the schools, he asked about the free and reduced lunch program, which was administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but the other two programs were managed by the Department of Education. He said that this distinction may become significant.

Mr. Bowman would now move to the non-departmental chapters, transitioning from revenues to expenditures. Some of this chapter would be covered on Wednesday regarding how it ties into Goal 6. However, he would like to focus on big transfers. When discussing the approximately \$42 million revenue growth, the majority of that, he should note, is \$20 million going to the schools, and an additional \$2 million to the capital and the revenue sharing agreement.

Mr. Bowman said that this visualization of the General Fund, using a donut chart, showed that the left side of the chart represents a significant portion of the General Fund. He said that to better understand the composition of the General Fund, he had a slide that illustrates the General Fund on the left, non-departmental on blue, and other functional areas in gray.

Mr. Bowman said that on the right, it can be seen that non-departmental primarily consists of transfers to the schools, transfers to capital, and other uses of funds in the revenue sharing agreement that he will walk through. To begin, the revenue sharing agreement will exceed \$20.2 million in Fiscal Year 26, with an increase of \$2.4 million, or 14%. He said that this was a multi-part formula, detailed in the budget document he will not cover today.

Mr. Bowman said that the primary factor driving this increase was the growth in the 2023 tax base, not only the County's, but also the growth relative to the City. He explained that it was not just the percentage change; it was the dollar change. He said that the County's larger size means the City must grow faster to offset the dollar growth and make up for the deficit. Historical comparisons show that this is the largest increase the County has seen.

Mr. Bowman said that annual reassessments have resulted in a total of \$4.5 million over the last two years, and this trend was changing. From the previous slide, it could be seen that over the last 10 years, the County has experienced fluctuations. The financial environment had become significantly different in Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026.

Mr. Bowman said that moving forward, he would like to address the allocation of shared revenue, which was discussed by Supervisor LaPisto-Kirtley. Due to the complexity of the slides, he would provide a conceptual overview of the Board's Financial Policy. He said that this guideline was essential for staff, including both County government and public school staff, as they develop the budget.

Mr. Bowman said that the guideline works by taking their shared revenues, which included all local tax revenues and any state revenue not designated for specific purposes. He said that for example, funding for public safety was not shared with schools, and vice versa. He said that for certain revenues not designated for specific purposes, they were developed in step one of the calculation.

Mr. Bowman said that step two involved making deductions from those revenues, many of which were directly related to tax revenue or the ability to leverage tax revenue for other services, such as revenue sharing, the tax relief program, and tax-related performance agreements. He said that while those agreements were in effect, the revenue was not split. Once the agreement expired, it was split, and a designated transfer to the water resources fund was made.

Mr. Bowman said that the key part of this guideline was that it may be reviewed annually with the Board of Supervisors. He said that he had received a question regarding why the increased real estate taxes were not changing in the split. He said that to answer this, he would like to provide some historical perspective.

Mr. Bowman said that according to the County Executive's presentation, \$0.04 of real property were allocated as follows: \$0.032 to public safety, \$0.004 to schools, and \$0.004 to affordable housing. He said that these \$0.04 were the remaining amount, and the 54%-36%-10% split applied to all other revenues. He said that the increase in personal property taxes and assessments were also factored into this calculation.

Mr. Bowman said that over the last five times the real estate tax rate had been changed, the Board had made different decisions each time. He said that however, it was notable that in all of those rate changes since Fiscal Year 20, when the Board raised the rate by \$0.015 and dedicated it to public schools, operations, and capital, this was the first rate change since then. He said that the situation was different every year, but in all five of those changes, going back to Fiscal Year 14, there had been a dedication in one form or another.

Mr. Bowman said that even in Fiscal Year 15, when the rate increased by \$0.017, the additional allocation was driven by the funding formula but still had separate breakouts for public schools and operations. He said that he was sharing this not to delve into the history of every budget, but rather to take a step back and look at the bigger picture. He said that when the real estate tax rate changed, it was not uncommon for the usual split to not occur, as the Board considered the unique circumstances driving the change in this particular year.

Mr. Bowman said that moving on to the transfers, public schools will receive an increase of \$14.3 million, or 7.3% increase for the recommended ongoing transfer, which includes a \$0.004 dedication to supplement the normal four-way allocation. He said that the School Board will be discussing their funding request on Thursday, and they were still working to close a \$5 million gap.

Mr. Bowman said that the County was also recommending a one-time transfer of \$6.2 million from the fund balance to fund the school share of a health fund transfer. They will discuss this further on Wednesday. Additionally, the transfer to capital and debt service will increase by \$2.4 million, and they will hear more about the following Monday.

Mr. Bowman said that in response to Supervisor Mallek's question about Fiscal Year 25 when the rate changes, because the Board adopted tax rates on a calendar year basis, there would be an impact on Fiscal Year 25 and Fiscal Year 26. He said that when the Board adopted a rate in May, the tax bills collected in June would be affected by that rate.

Mr. Bowman said that considering the increase in personal property taxes, the impact on real estate, and the stronger-than-anticipated reassessment, this would generate \$11.1 million of one-time money in Fiscal Year 25. He said that staff recommended allocating this one-time money as part of the budget process. Specifically, staff proposes using \$6 million for public school operations, utilizing the traditional 54-36-10 split.

Mr. Bowman said that this would provide \$6 million to public school operations. Because it would not be available until June, staff recommended allocating that as one-time investment in the CIP. Additionally, staff recommended allocating \$3 million to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund and \$1 million to the Economic Development Fund, as part of the County Executive budget. He said that 10% capital, or \$1.1 million, was recommended to support the CIP as well.

Mr. Bowman said that on Wednesday, they would discuss the history of these funds, their available balances, and how they had been used. He said that this information would be available for the Board to consider when adopting the budget. He said that if the Board considers different tax rates, this could impact these items in Fiscal Year 25 as well.

Mr. Bowman said that he would next discuss other uses of funds for tax relief. He said that the Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled would grow 11% annually. He said that the reserve contingency would provide \$736,000, with \$322,000 allocated for ongoing expenses and \$413,000 for one-time expenses. He said that this reserve could be used as a funding source if the Board desired amendments to the budget.

Mr. Bowman said that other uses of funds included several categories that he would discuss on Wednesday as part of their overall workforce and customer service discussions. He said that these categories included reengineering savings, changes in positions, salary and benefits reserve, and the health fund. With that, he would turn it over to the Chair for any questions.

Mr. Pruitt said that when discussing the historical real estate tax changes, he had been paying attention to the County government's actions, particularly their recent tax increases. He said that the 54-36 split had become a widely recognized phrase, and he was wondering if that figure was accurate, whether it was based on before or after these funding streams. He said that if these funding streams were dedicated, then they should remain dedicated.

Mr. Bowman said that to clarify, the rate changes were essentially adjusting the base amount, and then the subsequent years continued to grow according to the 54-36-10 pattern, with the exception of the Water Resources Fund, which was established in Fiscal Year 17 and retained the \$0.007, regardless of any changes to the penny's value. He said that the second exception was the affordable housing fund, which would recommend retaining the \$0.004, rather than splitting it in the future.

Mr. Pruitt said that he believed he understood now. He said that the simpler interpretation of this was the one that made the most sense. He said that it could have been interpreted in two ways, but the easier interpretation was the one that was explained. He said that he appreciated the clarification. He said that that was the only question he had on this. He said that he also appreciated the explanation of how this would be incorporated into the specials.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she also had a question regarding slide 37. She said that if she understood it correctly, they were asking to raise the property tax by \$0.04, with \$0.032 allocated for public safety, but that amount was not part of the split. She said that the additional funds would go towards supporting the schools without being split.

Mr. Bowman confirmed that was correct; it was fully dedicated to them.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that the \$0.004 for affordable housing was not being split. She said that

she was unclear as to why this was the case. She asked if the funds were being allocated to affordable housing or another category, it would be a different decision.

Mr. Richardson said that he recommended that the \$0.004, four-tenths of a penny, allocated to affordable housing not be split because they sought to make a significant impact. He said that with four-tenths of a penny, they would have \$1.2 million in ongoing funding for affordable housing, in addition to the one-time \$3 million funding, which would be available by July 1. He said that this amount, he believed, was the most they could reasonably afford while balancing their other obligations. He said that he felt that \$1.2 million was a substantial enough contribution to warrant discussion in the context of the community's requests.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that the \$0.032 allocated for public safety was ongoing, and it was not part of the split that the \$0.004 went to schools, she asked if the \$0.004 allocated for affordable housing was ongoing meant that it was not part of the split.

Mr. Richardson said that was correct.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if it was dedicated to something else, it would be split.

Mr. Richardson explained that the dedicated tax rate increase was designed with public safety obligations, particularly in light of the FEMA SAFER grant funding expiring. He said that as a result, \$0.032 of the \$0.04 was allocated 100% to local government, avoiding the split with federal funding. He said that this amounts to approximately \$10 million. He said that with the remaining \$0.008 cents, they were able to allocate half of that to schools, which ultimately brought the total increase to 7.3%.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she was trying to understand the reasoning behind the split. She said that she understood that the schools and public safety were ongoing funding. She said that if they were to replace it with something else, the fact that it was ongoing meant that it would not be part of the split. She said that she was attempting to grasp the logic behind this distinction.

Mr. Bowman said that the Board had full flexibility to decide whether to dedicate funds to specific goals or not. He said this was one of the considerations when evaluating the six strategic goals and how they moved forward on them. He said that the County Executive felt that making an investment in housing, which had not previously received ongoing funding, required a different approach that could not be accommodated within the current revenue growth, given the other budgetary constraints.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley clarified that the split was something the Board decided.

Mr. Bowman confirmed that was correct. He said that if those four pennies had been allocated differently, it would have had a significant impact on the budget, requiring them to examine various levers that could affect the outcome.

Ms. McKeel said that she wanted to add a comment. She said that she greatly appreciated the general principle of the split, as it had been effective in addressing their needs and had provided stability in their funding. She said that the flexibility in this arrangement had been excellent, and it had significantly reduced the inconsistency in their budget.

Ms. McKeel said that prior to this agreement, their community would often see heated debates about school funding, which would pit them against each other. She said that this split had been a game-changer for their community, allowing them to work together more effectively and avoid annual conflicts over funding allocations. She said that she found this chart to be extremely helpful, and she appreciated its clarity.

Ms. McKeel said that it was essential for everyone to understand that the Board of Supervisors ultimately made the decision on how funds were allocated, and that decision could change over time. Nevertheless, she firmly believed that the idea of a formula-based approach had been incredibly beneficial to their community over the past 20 years.

Mr. Gallaway said that he had a comment and then a question regarding their use of funds, as noted on pages 235 and 236. He said that he had not realized in past years that the lapse factor was actually located within the department budgets rather than being a single item. He said that this was an important aspect of how they would be able to manage and analyze this as an organization. He said that they had not previously explained this concept in detail. He said that he seemed to have forgotten whether this was a School Board or Board memory, but he believed the 1.75 was used to calculate the lapse costs. He asked that they please remind him how this figure was arrived at, and what the underlying calculation was.

Mr. Bowman said that they analyzed their experience and aimed to target about two-thirds of that budget to avoid a lapse that would require holding positions to make ends meet. He said that their experience was not uniform, particularly in off-call situations where the work environment was normal, as opposed to the pandemic, which was a unique experience. He said that nevertheless, two-thirds of their experience was where the 1.75 figure originated from.

Mr. Gallaway said that he understood that adjusting it either added or reduced credit. He asked if the 1.75 was based on the pre-pandemic experience.

Mr. Bowman said that he believed that they had a relatively comfortable risk tolerance because there was a risk involved in going either higher or lower, and they managed that risk effectively.

Ms. Mallek said that she would like to pose a question regarding the revenue-sharing formula. She said that she was having difficulty understanding the information and felt like she was getting stuck in a loop. She said that the lower City assessment ratio appeared to be significantly lower than the standard range of 95 to 100 to 105, with the current ratio at 89. She said that she would like to know if this discrepancy affects the value of the property in the city, which was a crucial component of the sharing formula.

Ms. Mallek said that she would like to know if the County needed to improve their assessment ratios or if adjustments were necessary. She said that she noted that she would prefer not to have this discussion at this time, as it may be a complex issue that they had not prepared for. She said that she would like to add this to their list of follow-up questions.

Mr. Bowman said that would be a follow-up.

Ms. Mallek said that what would also be very instructive is what a penny was worth. She said that in 2014, a penny was worth \$1.5 million, and the value of dollars had changed significantly since then. She said that what they could buy with a penny, as well as the amount, was not just a small fraction, but rather two million dollars or ten million.

Mr. Andrews said that the fine print on page 40 indicated that Fiscal Year 25, but when they had previously discussed the Fiscal Year 26 budget, they had allocated four-tenths of a penny as a dedicated stream for affordable housing, as well as an additional \$3 million.

Mr. Bowman said that this was the source of the \$3 million.

Mr. Andrews said that for the upcoming Fiscal Year 25, as well as the Economic Development Fund, these funds were being allocated from that Fiscal Year 25. He said that he just wanted to confirm that he had a clear understanding of this.

Mr. Bowman said that to reiterate for his own development purposes, this was a construct. He said that staff had followed the split in this case. He said that the Board had the full freedom to shift among these categories. However, this decision would affect other parts of the budget that it funded, including both capital and operating expenses.

Mr. Andrews said that he understood. He said that his struggle was that the allocation of \$6 million to public schools did not account for other contributions to that amount, making it unclear what the actual figure was.

Ms. Mallek said that she wanted to add one more point. She said that every time there was an addition to the ongoing transfer to school, that became automatically part of the base. She said that she had been emphasizing the base because it had grown significantly over the few years she had been on Board.

Mr. Bowman said that was the staff's recommended course of action for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Pruitt said that he wanted to clarify one additional point. He said that in their ongoing conversation about what was and was not ongoing, he had been wondering how ongoing dedicated differed from just dedicated. He said that based on his understanding, the \$0.032 for public safety was dedicated for this calendar year, and moving forward, it would not be an ongoing dedicated element. He said that in contrast, the housing element was ongoing as dedicated, which meant that the remaining \$0.036 would be split in the future.

Mr. Bowman said that of those \$0.04, assuming the Board adopted this recommendation next year, the value of the \$0.036 was anticipated to change, and staff recommended considering the 54-36-10 split as a point for the Board's consideration. He said that staff would recommend not splitting the \$0.036, in the same manner as the water resources budget was currently managed.

Mr. Pruitt said that was consistent with what he understood. He said that perhaps he had not articulated it clearly. He said that he would like to draw attention to a specific point and ensure he was understanding it correctly. He said that if they levied the additional tax rate this year, as a percentage, a smaller portion of that would be going towards public safety next year. He said that he would trust that all ongoing funding needs, including salaries. He said that specifically, the \$0.032 dedicated to public safety was a dedicated expense. He asked if they anticipated a lesser percentage going towards public savings next year, and if there was there an assumption based on projected revenue, such as increased assessments or another shortfall next year.

Mr. Bowman said that in his opinion, when staff had this level of control, it could come at the cost of simplicity and effective communication with financial planning. He said that the schools appreciated the streamlined formula that they had in place, which was simplified to a seven-step calculation from its previous version. He said that although this change may have had an impact, it was just one factor among many that they considered in the budget.

Mr. Bowman said that, for example, next year's VRS rate was expected to change at the State level. He said that if County government were to change and the schools were not, this potential allocation could be even more impactful. He said that the Board would always have the right to adjust this at the end of the year as they saw fit.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that if next year they were implementing the \$0.04, and the Board decided to reduce the tax rate, it would likely impact this. She asked if, for example, would the school funding would remain at \$0.04, affordable housing at \$0.04, but the allocation for public safety would be unknown.

Mr. Bowman said that from a year from now, that Board would have the full flexibility to apply that in whatever way they felt was appropriate. He said that if it would be helpful, they could prepare a math exercise to demonstrate how this would work across Fiscal Years 26 and 27.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she thought that public safety, schools, and affordable housing would be ongoing funding with that \$0.04.

Mr. Andrews said that once it was incorporated into the base, then, as other tax revenues came in, they would be split according to the formula.

Mr. Bowman said that to clarify, he may not have mentioned this earlier, as it relates to the allocation of shared revenue. He said that the key issue was the increase or decrease in shared revenues, rather than the full amount that would be split. He said that it was the smaller differential that would occur year to year, rather than the entire budget being redistributed.

Mr. Bowman said that each year, it was not taking the entire budget and reconfiguring it, but rather a fractional difference. He said that this could help address the Board's questions, and it also allowed them to design a budget that prioritized public safety and education, if that was the Board's desire.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that if she understood it correctly, the \$0.032 would be allocated to public safety, and then, because it was part of the base, that amount would be part of the split. She asked if the remaining funds for schools and affordable housing would be treated the same way.

Mr. Bowman said that that would be the same scenario. He said that to illustrate his point, to consider public safety, assuming a budget of \$10 million, if 4% was allocated next year, that would amount to \$400,000. He said that instead of dedicating this \$400,000 to public safety, it would be split 54-36-10, similar to how the school's allocation would be divided. He said that the housing portion would remain unchanged, as it was currently designed in the budget, following the recommended allocation.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that there would just be that amount twice for dedicated housing.

Mr. Bowman confirmed that was correct.

Mr. Andrews said that they currently had an amount allocated to the Water Resource Fund in the same manner. He said that it was something that the Board could decide to change in the future.

Recess. The Board recessed its meeting at 4:41 p.m. and reconvened at 4:50 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 2. **Work Session:** FY 2026 Operating and Capital Budget, *continued*.

Mr. Bowman said that they would now resume their review of the functional area chapters in the budget document. He said that public safety was the largest County-governed functional area, accounting for approximately 16% of the General Fund. He said that it was primarily comprised of the Fire Rescue and Police Departments.

Mr. Bowman said that their community agencies, such as the Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail, Emergency Communications Center, Juvenile Detention Center, and Charlottesville Albemarle Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), played a crucial role in their obligations and increases. He said that Chief Eggleston and Chief Reeves would provide further insight into this area. He said that first, Kristy Shifflett, their Chief Operating Officer, would provide an introduction.

Ms. Kristy Shifflett, Chief Operating Officer, said that she would like to touch on a topic that the Board had already discussed in a previous session, which is the public safety staffing study. She said that as a follow-up, she would like to spend a moment explaining the purpose of this study. She said that both Chief Eggleston and Chief Reeves had been requesting this, and they had decided to merge their requests into one contract.

Ms. Shifflett said that they valued taking a moment to bring in outside expertise to review best practices, calls for service, and how they scheduled and supported their community. She said that this study would review the department's current and potential staffing levels, examining industry standards and best practices, as well as evaluating the current conditions, including staffing levels, scheduling, operational and administrative staffing, and response delivery capacity. She said that it would also consider future service demand forecasts.

Ms. Shifflett said that this study was not only about the current state of their department but also about where they were headed and how they needed to continue to focus and serve their community. She said that the study was currently underway, with the experts on site, meeting with staff from both departments, and was expected to be completed by the fall of this year.

Mr. Sean Reeves, Chief of Police, said that he would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Richardson and the County Executive's Office for allowing them to be before them today to discuss the Police Department's request for six additional law enforcement officers. He said that to begin, he would like to provide an overview of their current staffing levels and how they were deploying their existing officers. He said that currently, they had 165 sworn positions, with 158 of those filled.

Mr. Reeves said that the five vacancies, including the Deputy Chief of Police position, were already accounted for. He said that they had two HART (Human Services Alternative Response Team) positions currently advertised internally and externally, and one each in patrol and CID (Criminal Investigation Department). He said that they had several certified officers in the background check process, and several slated to attend the July Academy.

Mr. Reeves said that when considering the current number of 158, it was essential to note that 15 of those positions were either in field training or the academy, with four on light duty. He said that this was significant because it typically took about a year for a new officer to complete the pre-academy, training academy, and field training phases before being released on their own. He said that they were fortunate to have a talented training and recruitment unit within the police department, which helped maintain their staffing levels.

Mr. Reeves said that along with their 663 sworn positions, they had 28 professional staff, including support staff, analysts, and victim witness staff, with one vacancy in that position. He said that in terms of patrol operations, 60% of their sworn staffing was dedicated to this area, and the breakdown provided illustrated how they allocated their 163 sworn positions, including himself and command staff. He said that he would like to provide a timeline for the Board.

Mr. Reeves said that they were grateful for the resources they had received over the past several years. He said that in 2022, they received five sworn officers, with the majority assigned to patrol duties and one to the training officer position. He said that the problem-oriented policing officer, a grant-funded position, was taken up by the County at no additional cost.

Mr. Reeves said that over the following years, they had seen an increase in police officers, including last year when they had three sworn full-time employees, with two dedicated to the HART team and one to the TDO (Temporary Detention Order) transport team. He said that the Albemarle County Police Department operated under a geographic policing model, dividing into two districts: the Jefferson District, marked in orange, and the Blue Ridge District, marked in blue. He said that their officers worked 10-hour shifts.

Mr. Reeves said that they were divided into two districts, comprising eight sectors and 21 beats, which were not visible within these sectors. He said that this was how they deployed their resources. Under daylight, evening, and midnight shifts, the number of officers allocated and dedicated to each shift could be seen.

Mr. Reeves said that he wanted to draw attention to their minimum staffing numbers, which was the minimum number of officers required to effectively perform their duties. He said that currently, they were at their minimum staffing levels due to their rotating schedules and resource deployment. He said that, as discussed by Ms. Shifflett regarding the study, they were considering how they deployed their resources and whether they were utilizing them in the most effective manner.

Mr. Reeves said that he wanted to discuss their workload and performance measures. He said that they tracked their performance using calls for service, which was a straightforward benchmark. Calls for service were categorized into two main types: public-generated calls, which included emergency or assistance calls made to 911, and proactive or officer-initiated calls, such as warrant services, traffic stops, and administrative services.

Mr. Reeves said that in addition to the proactive service activities they wanted their officers to engage in, they wanted them to be actively involved with the community, building relationships and conducting proactive patrols within their geographic districts. He said that they also wanted them to be visible in both urban and rural communities, and to be able to identify and address hot spots in their community through proactive policing. He said that an ideal metric for their police officers would be to spend 60% of their available time on reactive calls for service, with the remaining 40% dedicated to proactive service activities, such as training, report writing, and court appearances.

Mr. Reeves said that in 2023, their internal review of officers' workload analysis revealed that only 10% of their time was spent on these proactive activities, leaving 90% of their time focused on purely reactive calls. He said that this strain on their officers was evident, and it was clear that they needed to reassess their approach.

Mr. Reeves said that one thing that had come to mind was that they were not entirely sure how their Police Department determined the number of officers needed to perform their duties. For example, he was often asked how many officers they needed to do their job. Historically, Police Departments had

used a population-based metric, such as 1.4 officers per 1,000, which had been the formula used for over two decades.

Mr. Reeves said that however, there were new service models being explored by law enforcement agencies, which may require a different approach to resource deployment. He said that the community's expectations of their Police Department and how they wanted to deploy their resources were crucial. To put this into perspective, they would compare their department to the Albemarle County Police Department and their neighboring City of Charlottesville.

Mr. Reeves said that they both had different population sizes and geographic areas, including urban and rural sections. He said that their officer population ratio was 1.4 officers per thousand, which was considered a great number 20 years ago. In today's market, the FBI and Bureau of Justice Statistics reported an average of 2.4 officers per thousand.

Mr. Reeves said that this raised the question of how they could meet that number. He said that if they were to reach 2.4 officers per thousand, they would need approximately 115 officers. However, this number was not what he was seeking from this Board or the County Executive.

Mr. Reeves said that he was asking for a reevaluation of how they deployed their resources, not just focusing on population numbers. Their staff's ability to provide the service their community expected was the true factor. He would like to draw attention to this number, as it was often asked about the 1.4 officer-to-citizen ratio. Next, he would like to review their current situation. As of last year, their officers responded to over 75,403 calls for service in 2024. Comparing this to 2021, they saw a 17% increase.

Mr. Reeves said that over a three-year average from 2021 to 2023, their calls for service increased by approximately 2.2%. He would like to focus on their Priority 1 calls for service, which were dispatched through their ECC system and alert tone. They may have heard the buzzing noise in the background, which was the Priority 1 alert tone.

Mr. Reeves said that those were the most serious calls for service their officers could respond to, involving a threat of bodily harm. He said that these were in-progress calls, such as breaking and entering, motor vehicle entrapment, or injuries where they assisted the Fire Department. He said that typically, these calls required two or more officers, depending on the circumstance.

Mr. Reeves said that when they saw an increase in Priority 1 calls, such as the 88% increase from 2021, it indicated singular events. He said that over the past several years, especially in their urban areas, they had seen a significant increase in Priority 1 calls for service. He said that compared to the three-year average, there was a 34% increase in urban areas, with 50% and 17% increases in rural areas.

Mr. Reeves said that their calls were becoming increasingly complicated and risky, posing a real-world risk to their officers when they ran lights and sirens to a call. This put both their officers and the community at risk. He said that training was essential, but this indicator suggested that all officers were at risk due to the nature of their calls because they urged everyone to use the 911 system.

Mr. Reeves said that the final area he would like to draw their attention to was the geographic distribution of their calls. He said that six police beats in the red areas were responsible for over 50% of all calls for service. He said that adding two additional burnt orange areas, including the Crozet area and the area around 5th Street and the urban ring, brought the total to eight sectors that comprised 72% of all calls for service in that geographic region. This highlighted the need to focus on workload balance and response times.

Mr. Reeves said that when someone called 911 in either the urban or rural sector, and it was a Priority 1 call for service, it was essential to know how quickly their officers could respond to the scene. He said that in 2024, they had met this goal in the urban areas. He said that in the urban areas of the County, they had a sub-five-minute response time. This meant that if someone called 911, at least one police officer would be on the scene in under five minutes, 85% to 100% of the time. This was their goal. He said that in the rural areas, the response time was 10 minutes due to geography and the structure of their roads. He said that they wanted their officers to drive safely with lights and sirens on the back roads, achieving an 85% to 100% response time.

Mr. Reeves said that as shown in the 2024 response times, they had only met this metric in the urban areas 73% of the time, and in the rural areas, they still had not broken the 50% threshold. He said that this was why emergency calls for service, Priority 1, with running lights and sirens, remained problematic, as most of their time and resources were spent in the urban areas, resulting in extended response times. He said that the addition of six officers was intended to address this issue.

Mr. Reeves said that these officers would be dedicated to patrol duties, not specialty divisions, special operations, investigations, or other functions. He said that they would be placed in the sectors where their officers were spending the majority of their time, based on call needs and service needs, as indicated by the black dots. He said that the green dots showed their intent to place these officers in the west side and south side to provide additional services, backup, and coverage in the more rural parts of the County. He said that given that they were a 24/7 service with three shifts, this was why they required six officers.

Mr. Bowman said that Mr. Reeves had provided a detailed presentation on staffing, performance,

and data tracking. He said that he would also like to acknowledge the notable operational increases in the budget, including vehicle replacement and equipment costs. He said that they had tracked and scheduled these expenses, and they had a substantial volume that would be recommended for next year's budget.

Mr. Bowman said that Mr. Reeves discussed the ongoing education and training, as well as the extensive training required for new staff members to perform in the field. He said that the physical and mental health services provided by the Police Department would have a similar component to those provided by Fire and Rescue, and these increases in costs were factored into the budget contractually.

Mr. Pruitt said that he appreciated the presentation; he had asked for a bit more data to support this decision. He said that in the past, he had seen similar requests from other departments get cut from the budget. He said that this presentation, however, presented a compelling case based on data he had not seen before. He said that he had a few questions to ensure he fully understood the context.

Mr. Pruitt said that he would like to clarify the daily minimum shift staffing figure he had mentioned earlier, which was slide 47. He said that he wondered if this was an internally generated figure, or if it was driven by specific, measurable circumstances that required a certain level of staffing.

Mr. Reeves said that if he referred to the map, he would see that their sectors were set up from one through eight. He said that the minimum officer numbers were designed to ensure that there was at least one officer in every sector, with an additional officer available to serve as a backup.

Mr. Pruitt said that that was the exact answer he was looking for. He said that he reflected on his role in this position, he saw himself as the person who attempted to bridge the gap between technical policy and creating a narrative that was accessible to the public. He said that while communications teams provided individual pieces of information, they were responsible for crafting a coherent narrative that explained the impact of policy on their community and society as a whole.

Mr. Pruitt said that they also needed to understand how policy translated into the needs and concerns of their community. He said that a narrative that had resonated with him was that the world, even if it was not becoming more violent, was becoming more attuned to violence. He said that consequently, he would assume that they saw an increase in calls for service, even if their crime rates were not shifting dramatically.

Mr. Reeves said that he understood that perspective, and while it was true that they lived in a relatively safe community, especially when compared to other comparable jurisdictions, it was also essential to acknowledge that they were not immune to crime. He said that they did experience motor vehicle crashes and homicides, albeit at relatively low rates. He said that as he had pointed out, crimes were becoming more complex, and technology was playing a larger role in these crimes.

Mr. Reeves said that they were leveraging their relationships with the City, university, state, and federal partners to enhance their efforts and utilize technology as a force multiplier, including speed cameras and drones. He said that, however, at the end of the day, human officers were still necessary to perform this job. He said that providing timely responses to Priority 1 calls for service was crucial. He said that this meant having one officer on the scene within sub-five minutes and sub-ten minutes, acknowledging that their backup might be further away. He said that by deploying resources more effectively, they could ensure that their officers could do their job safely and efficiently.

Mr. Pruitt said that on a similar line of thought, they were fact-checking the kind of political narratives they crafted against the actual experience of what it was like to staff this department. He said that a talking point he had used before had been met with polite pushback, with people expressing uncertainty about its accuracy.

Mr. Pruitt said that specifically, it was suggested that expanded authority for rural speed cameras could potentially reduce staffing demands in the patrol sector, either by reducing the need for staff or by reducing the growth of staffing demands. He said that however, this might not be the case if they were primarily driven by calls for service. He said that therefore, he would like to ask: When they discussed automated speed enforcement technologies, did Mr. Reeves see this as having a tangible impact on his staffing needs, either in the immediate sense or in the long term.

Mr. Reeves said that it should be a follow-up conversation because it was a complex issue. He said that currently, there was no law that allowed them to implement speed cameras, and their primary function was to catch speeders. He said that this did not address the overall calls for service. He said that while speed cameras might help reduce speeding-related fatalities or issues in certain areas, humans would eventually become accustomed to their presence, and they would simply find ways to circumvent the technology. He said that ultimately, it was the behaviors they were trying to change that were the real challenge.

Mr. Pruitt said that he was not even going to ask that today, but their previous statement brought to mind a question he had been wanting to ask. He said that when the Board voted to add an additional HART team last year, there was also an additional sworn officer added, which he believed was separate from the HART team. However, according to this timeline, two HART officers were added in 2025, and he was concerned that the timeline may be incorrectly stating three FTE positions. He said that he wanted to ensure he was not misunderstanding the situation.

Mr. Reeves said that transparency was a key aspect of this slide. He said that it demonstrated to

the Board how they utilized the one TDO award, considering that typically two officers were required for such a task. He said that he made the decision to take on that officer position, which was a conscientious choice, as it remained a sworn position and was allocated to HART to help meet the demand for mental health services.

Mr. Pruitt said that he appreciated the answer.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she was wondering if they could provide information on the number of two-person cars available, or if it varied depending on the shift, such as morning, afternoon, evening, or midnight shifts.

Mr. Reeves said that they currently had zero two-person cars. He said that in situations where two-person cars were typically seen, it was usually a trainee paired with their field training officer. He said that at present, they had a number of those two-person call units operating, but the role of the field trainer was to step back, evaluate, grade, watch, coach, and mentor the young officer, rather than necessarily interfere unless absolutely necessary. He said that the only exception to this was on inclement weather days, such as during a blizzard, when they paired them up for safety reasons, ensuring that officers could respond to priority calls safely and effectively.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if they had identified areas of the County where a two-person vehicle was required, such as during the midnight or evening shifts.

Mr. Reeves said that while there may be benefits to this approach, he believed it was not a viable short-term strategy due to the County's large size. He said that tying up resources in this way would be a long-term commitment, rather than a solution that addressed the immediate needs. He said that by dedicating two resources, when one would suffice, they were essentially doubling the investment, which may not be the most efficient use of their resources.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she was wondering about the amount of overtime that they typically spent.

Mr. Reeves said that he would need to follow up with that information. He said that they submitted a balanced budget for overtime every quarter, so they operated within the authorized budget. He said that they were conscientious about staying within their budget, ensuring that their overtime expenses were balanced and within the approved limits.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she was wondering if they had an increased workload as a result of not having sufficient officers to handle the work.

Mr. Reeves said that with that taken into account, their request for callbacks, holdovers, and special circumstances was factored into their budget. He said that as a result, they were currently fortunate that they were not exceeding their budget. He said that, as Mr. Sumner and he had previously discussed, a single or two critical incidents, or even longer incidents, could significantly impact their overtime budget. He said that for instance, last year they spent over \$20,000 supporting a local jurisdiction during a two-to-three-day operation.

Ms. LaPisto Kirtley asked if all six officers would be patrol officers.

Mr. Reeves confirmed that they would be dedicated for patrol.

Mr. Bowman said that Mr. Davidson could share the overtime numbers for the Police Department.

Mr. Davidson reported that the FY25 revised budget and the proposals they were making for FY26 had a total of approximately \$1.6 million, which was a slight increase from the prior year, primarily due to four increases in salaries and benefits as they moved forward.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that since the officers worked 10-hour shifts, overtime would mean they worked for 12 to 14 hours.

Mr. Reeves said that was their discretion regarding overtime. He said that he had a philosophy that, for various reasons, he believed officers should avoid 12-hour shifts. He said that when factoring in commute time, rest time, court time, and training time, it was easy to see how quickly it could add up, and they did not want staff working 18- or 19-hour days and then having to make critical decisions the next day while fatigued.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that at Albemarle High School, a significant number of tickets had been issued within the school zone. She said that according to her understanding, if drivers contested the tickets and proceeded to court, the officer involved must also attend court.

Mr. Reeves confirmed that was correct; a member of their traffic unit reviewed the violation, and the company also reviewed it. He said that the violation was then sent to the Police Department for a second review. He said that if it proceeded to court, an officer would testify on behalf of the department, adding to the overall time required for the process.

Ms. McKeel asked if a significant number of people were taking them to court over the traffic camera tickets.

Mr. Reeves said that he did not have the specific numbers, but it was not a large amount.

Ms. McKeel said that was good, because time was of the essence. She said that to facilitate a better understanding, she would like to ask a couple of simple things. She said that they had a problem-oriented police (POP) officer listed here, and it would be beneficial for the public to be aware of what a POP officer was.

Mr. Reeves said that he wholeheartedly agreed. He said that they were familiar with Officer Joe George and Officer Steve McCollum. He said that he was referring to problem-oriented policing. He said that as a problem-oriented police officer, their specialty officers were trained to handle community events, but they also worked closely with patrol units, particularly in cases such as a series of automobile thefts. He said that they were versatile officers who could adapt to various situations.

Ms. McKeel said that one of the questions she received frequently from the public, particularly because of the area she represented, was whether the officers directing traffic at Albemarle High School or other private schools were volunteers or not. She said that when people saw officers in uniform, they may not be sure what the uniform represented.

Mr. Reeves said that those were contractual overtime assignments funded through schools, so it was not uncommon to see someone from the Sheriff's Department or Police Department directing traffic at these events. He said that this was contracted through the school that wanted an officer to direct traffic. He said that this was distinct from a daily officer on the street, who was not typically pulled in to do this type of work.

Ms. McKeel said that the private schools that were utilizing these officers were paying for their time. She said that she was particularly pleased that they were conducting this study and that they were doing it collaboratively, even though they would receive separate recommendations. She said that she found that using the formula per population was straightforward for the community to grasp. She said that she was not suggesting it was the correct approach, and she was more than happy to consider alternative methods. She said that however, she was trying to think about how to effectively communicate this to the community, and it made it so much easier.

Mr. Reeves said that he understood; unfortunately, law enforcement did not have a one-size-fits-all approach due to the unique needs of each jurisdiction.

Ms. McKeel said that upon receiving the study's recommendations, they would be able to see the reasoning behind them. She said that her only other question was regarding the quality of life issues, particularly in high-density neighborhoods, apartment complexes, and neighborhoods in general.

Ms. McKeel said that she had received numerous calls from residents regarding these issues. She said that for instance, she had had people inquiring about the presence of a school bus in a neighborhood, or the parking of construction trucks in residential areas, or abandoned cars on trailers, or other quality of life issues.

Ms. McKeel said that she was trying to understand why these issues were becoming more prevalent. She said that she had been informed by two previous Police Chiefs that as the County urbanized, there would be a growing need for the Police to address these types of calls. She said that while rural areas may also experience some of these issues, she believed the majority were concentrated in development areas. She said that she was seeking help in better understanding this issue.

Mr. Reeves said that under their current deployment strategies, they prioritized their calls for service because there were limited resources available, and he wanted to emphasize that this was not a dismissal of the importance of addressing these issues in those communities. He said that their officers often did not have the time to respond to lower-tier parking violations. He said that he was bringing this to the attention of the County Executive's Office, as it was a long-term strategy that could involve utilizing the traffic unit's function to support a traffic program that enforced parking violations and other related issues.

Mr. Reeves said that they were not yet in the concept phase, but it was currently being discussed. Internally, they weighed all their priorities and considered the broader context, and they were currently prioritizing quality of life issues. He said that in the short term, they addressed these concerns, although it may not be immediate. He said that if the public had concerns, they planned to utilize a problem-oriented policing officer in their traffic unit to take enforcement actions and draw attention to these issues.

Ms. McKeel said that she understood the necessity of this approach, but as they looked to the future, she wondered if the quality-of-life issues that arose from this were being considered in the study. She said that it would be interesting to know what the future held for these types of facilities.

Mr. Reeves said that as part of the study, they had asked for it to evaluate not only the quality of life but also the overall functions of the Police Department and assess their capacity to provide these services. He said that if they did not have the necessary resources, they needed to determine what it would take to provide those services.

Ms. McKeel said that she believed he may not be aware of the current trend, but it was only going to continue to grow. She said that as the County urbanized and build out, there would inevitably be a

need for this type of facility. She said that it was essential to prioritize, and she understood it. She said that she was simply bringing it to the table, and she was glad that perhaps the study might address this issue in some way.

Ms. Shifflett said that the consultants received data from both departments regarding their calls for service, and she said that they were examining the types of calls they had been receiving.

Mr. Gallaway said that in the context of future planning and strategic planning, he would like to use the schools as a reference point. He said that as the student population grew, so did the need for more teachers. If they were operating at a 1.4 per thousand ratio, according to the AC44 population expectation, which was approximately 31,000 by 21, that would translate to an additional 40 to 45 officers over the next 15 years to maintain a staffing level that they believed was insufficient. The study would help them understand that.

Mr. Gallaway said that Mr. Reeves mentioned they were not here to ask for 115 more officers, but if there were 115 more officers, he thought about the potential impact on the Rio District, where they received approximately 16,000 calls for service per year. Given that 90% of their calls were in a reactive mode, whereas it was supposed to be 60-40, and they were currently at 90-10, he was concerned about the strain it put on operations and the work that was not being done in a timely manner.

Mr. Gallaway said that to move forward, he would like to know their expected population growth rate each year, which would be a percentage, such as 2%. This would help them determine if they were meeting the 1.4 per thousand ratio, similar to how they allocated teachers based on population growth. Then they would be back here, with them receiving one or two positions every fourth or fifth year, and potentially five or six in a long-term planning context.

Mr. Gallaway said that however, from a planning standpoint, this approach was not new or ideal. He did not think this was a good planning approach, and he believed a study could help inform his question. He had written down how they could determine what they would need to keep pace with growth and then commit to that. This would be a Board discussion. He said that by putting six current positions into traffic, but only receiving a total of six new positions, it raised questions about the need for additional staff next year. He said that earlier, they had discussed that these positions were not dedicated.

Mr. Gallaway said that if they were dedicated to public safety, particularly to the Police Department, it would be necessary to determine whether six more traffic officers would be required next year, or whether it would be the Criminal Investigation Department or Special Operations. He asked what the needs in a five-year plan were, or if it was too early to ask that because they did not have the necessary information or had not conducted a study.

Mr. Reeves said that to clarify, the six officers he was requesting today were for patrol duties. He said that they would be assigned to patrol staff and would handle traffic-related work, as well as respond to emergency calls such as domestic incidents and break-ins. He said that this was what he was asking for today. He said that for future years, they planned to review the study once it was completed this fall, which would help them assess their resource deployment and future resource needs.

Mr. Reeves said that they would then have internal discussions to determine a long-term strategy to meet those goals and identify the necessary resources, including support from IT and human resources. He said that acknowledging the domino effect, as they grew their police department, they would need internal support staff, including Information Technology and Human Resources support, to support their public safety officials. He said that this was not just about adding police officers, but also about ensuring they had the necessary internal support staff to meet their goals over the next five years.

Mr. Gallaway said that, despite their success in five-year planning in many areas, they did struggle with staffing for initiatives like this, particularly when it came to population-based needs. He said that to get ahead of year-over-year growth, they needed to invest in staffing that could provide adequate coverage.

Mr. Gallaway said that the math may have been informed by the study, but speeding was a good representation of the issue in a citizen's eyes, as it was a common complaint. He said that he had noticed that speeding was often not addressed effectively, as it was not a priority for law enforcement. He said that as a large County, they faced challenges in allocating resources due to the sheer volume of calls for service.

Mr. Gallaway said that he believed this was an opportunity to educate the public about the issue and help them understand the need for increased enforcement. He said that he imagined that other departments may also face similar challenges due to population growth, requiring additional staffing to maintain adequate coverage.

Ms. Shifflett said that she would like to respond to this. She said that one of the things the consultants were examining was the scheduling models and the way the sectors had been built out. She said that they would assess whether there were any efficiencies to be found in their current operations and how the special units were being utilized. She said that they would evaluate how they were working today and also consider future planning for the workload needs that they anticipated. She said that as a result, they would present them with options to help them address this challenge.

Mr. Gallaway asked if adding the six new patrol officers changed the ration of 1:4 to 1:5 or 1:6.

Mr. Reeves said that it would depend on populating growth. He said 1:4 had been maintained since 2021.

Mr. Gallaway said that 10 years ago it was even lower.

Ms. Mallek said that she hoped the department would take their consultants on a drive-along to the mountains and areas where his staff frequently traveled, as it was essential for them to experience the challenges firsthand. She said that she would like to revisit a point from their past discussions. In 2008, 2009, and 2010, the Chief at the time had requested four additional positions each time, but unfortunately, none were approved, resulting in a total of 12 unfilled positions.

Ms. Mallek said that she was grateful to eventually secure a second position to help build this team. She agreed that it was impossible to meet the citizens' demands for immediate response times, especially when drivers were passed at high speeds on rural roads. However, she was excited about the study. She had taken notes during his discussion of Page 47 and had a question at the time: Were the beat intervals close enough to allow for backup, even in situations where the officer was far from the nearest station? For example, she recalled a young officer who ventured out to Afton alone at midnight, which was unsettling. However, she understood that the proposed solution at 53 was a significant improvement.

Ms. Mallek said that she was curious to know how this solution would work for the three shifts, particularly in areas with long distances between stations, where backup might be possible. She wanted to express her appreciation for the opportunity to see the officers' cars parked in their yards, as this was a great deterrent. She hoped that they could continue to have them living in their neighborhoods.

Ms. Mallek said that she was surprised by the proposal, even with a 10-minute response time in rural areas, which seemed unrealistic given that 25 minutes was the best she had ever had. It appeared that time had changed, and she wished him the best of luck in pursuing this goal. She said that he mentioned the training academy, and she recalled that they were working to establish more training locally. She asked if this effort was still ongoing, or if it was still primarily focused on the facility in the valley.

Mr. Reeves said that currently, the academy was the sole location where officers received certification at this time; however, pre-academy and post-academy training, including training and drills, occurred within the Police Department.

Ms. Mallek said that she was supportive of the other questions that had already been raised. She said that separately, she would like to bring up a personal incident that occurred on Earlysville Road, near the church. She said that a person in a funeral procession suddenly stepped out in front of her, causing her to slam on the brakes. She said that the situation was chaotic, with people trying to navigate the road in both directions. She said that she was wondering if there was a specific rule or protocol in place regarding this type of situation, so that she could better understand what to expect in the future and respond accordingly.

Mr. Reeves said that that would be the preferred approach, having someone in uniform present. He said that some funeral homes did reach out or would reach out for officer support, and occasionally, an officer on a shift was available to provide assistance. He said that while they were not supposed to be doing that, there was some flexibility if they were doing it safely and effectively.

Mr. Andrews said that he looked forward to the study. He said that he believed there was a lot of strong justification presented here. He said that he found the information to be interesting. He said that he would like to learn more in the future about the role of urban planning.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked how many motorcycle officers they had.

Mr. Reeves said that currently, they had approximately four to six motorcycle officers, who were specialized from the traffic unit.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that the traffic units were the primary concern, as that was the main complaint she consistently heard. She said that it was mainly related to traffic and speeders.

Mr. Dan Eggleston, Chief of Fire and Rescue, said that he would like to extend his gratitude to the County Executive's Office and the members of the Finance and Budget team for their early involvement in this process. He said that this was a challenging budget, and he appreciated the collaborative effort that had gone into addressing it. He said that he also wanted to thank Mr. Reeves for his presentation, as his insights had highlighted important parallels between the Police Department and Fire Rescue, particularly in terms of the challenges they faced.

Mr. Eggleston said that he would now provide an overview of their demands and trends, as well as discuss their FEMA grants and the requirements necessary to maintain them. If they proceeded to the next slide, he would briefly summarize their system, which consisted of 14 fire rescue stations, strategically located throughout the County. He said that six of these stations were fully staffed with career personnel, while six were a mix of career and volunteer staff, and two were staffed solely by volunteers.

Mr. Eggleston said that they divided the County into 11 planning districts, which they monitored for performance, but ultimately, the overall performance of the County was influenced by the performance of these districts. He said that as a networked system, they often required multiple units from different stations to respond to large-scale events, such as motor vehicle accidents with entrapment. He said that maintaining strong networks, both within districts and across the County, was crucial.

Mr. Eggleston said that as a combination system, career and volunteer members worked together to provide service, and they relied heavily on unpaid professionals to deliver a vital service. He said that when volunteer service declined, they must invest in career staff to maintain a sufficient level of service.

Mr. Eggleston said that one of their central planning documents, an industry standard and best practice, was their Standards of Cover, which had been approved by the Board in 2019. He said that this document was centrally focused on the risk assessment of their community, designed with input from a group, and based on the risk in their community. He said that it was approximately six years old and was currently being updated. He said that the document examined their fixed and mobile resources, recommended response time objectives, and outlined a process for continuously evaluating performance against those objectives.

Mr. Eggleston said that currently their response time objectives were eight minutes 90% of the time in development areas, and 21 minutes 90% of the time in rural areas. He said that he was not pleased with the 21-minute response time, as it was a long time, but the vast area in rural areas made it difficult to cover everything. He said that he would like to briefly review this.

Mr. Eggleston said that they would discuss performance at the end of the presentation relative to these response time standards. He said that the next section was about their service demand trends. He said that they constantly evaluated their performance and, like the police, had seen a dramatic increase in calls for service, 21% since 2019.

Mr. Eggleston said that they believed this was related to urbanization driving growth, particularly in development areas. What was unusual was the increase in call types, including fires, which was not desirable. Some communities were seeing a decline in fires, but they were experiencing an increase across the Board. He said that he had nodded in agreement with Mr. Reeves' comments, and he would like to note that they too were experiencing complexity in the types of calls they received, including technical rescue situations, people getting injured in their parks and on their rivers, and major motor vehicle crashes on the interstate, which were complex situations to mitigate.

Mr. Eggleston said that he would like to add that, as a department, they were often the first to experience social shifts and issues. When there were problems related to overdoses, domestic violence, or other social concerns, they were frequently the ones who saw and responded to them. As a firefighter with extensive experience, he had never seen them so involved in so many of these issues. He said that he believed this service was crucial, but he wanted to highlight that it was different from what they were used to.

Mr. Eggleston said that additionally, he would like to bring up two other concerns. He said they were seeing an increase in calls related to weather events, which was unprecedented. For example, last year's wildfires and this past winter's snowstorms were just a few examples of the extreme weather they had been experiencing. He said that he believed this was a direct result of climate change, and he had had the opportunity to testify before Congress on this matter.

Mr. Eggleston said that furthermore, they were trying to address the root causes of these issues by providing preventative services, such as mobile integrated healthcare visits for high utilizers. However, these efforts were often limited by their discretionary time, which was a significant constraint. He said that he believed that investing in prevention was essential to solving these problems.

Mr. Eggleston said that some of their service demands could be visualized through a heat map, which may be familiar to them. He said that this was relative to their specific situation, as they did have calls in the White Hall area, although they may not always be reflected in the data. He said that he was sure that this was not a surprise to anyone, as they were seeing most of the calls concentrated in the development area. He said that there were several hot spots along 29 North, particularly in the Rio District, which was home to a large population of elderly care facilities. He said that this generated a significant number of calls, similar to Pantops.

Mr. Eggleston said that Pantops was an area with the highest concentration of people over the age of 65, who were more likely to experience injuries and illnesses, with a two-and-a-half times higher risk of injury. He said that it was crucial that they examine this data to better understand the situation. He said that even a glance at the roadways revealed that motor vehicle crashes were a significant part of their activity, especially along the interstate.

Mr. Eggleston said that he was amazed by the high speeds at which drivers traveled on this interstate, often approaching racing speeds. He said that while this was not unusual, it was a result of the clustered population and traffic in these areas, providing valuable insight into what to expect and how to respond. He said that as they looked at this data, it was essential that they consider the things happening around them and take steps to reduce the risk of accidents in these areas.

Mr. Eggleston said that he would like to take a moment to provide some historical context regarding their volunteer staffing request. He said that it dated back to 1997, when Earlsville, Stony

Point, and Seminole Trail all requested daytime assistance from the County due to a strain on their services. He said that the County had responded prior to when he joined the County in 2002.

Mr. Eggleston said that between 2000 and 2018, they only received two requests, an 18-year period. He said that however, they were building County stations during this time, so it was essential to note that there was still activity. He said that between 2000 and 2018, former Scottsville Rescue had requested daytime personnel, as had East Rivanna.

Mr. Eggleston said that although it was a lengthy period, the data showed a significant increase in 2018. At that time, both Crozet and North Garden had requested daytime assistance. He said that now, they were seeing a trend towards 24-hour staffing, with Scottsville Rescue, North Garden and Crozet volunteer fire departments requesting it. Although he was unsure if this trend would continue, he believed it highlighted the stress on their volunteer system and the need for investment to maintain service levels as volunteers aged out or were unable to meet community demands.

Mr. Eggleston said that moving forward, he would like to review some of their strategic investments to provide context. He said that the ones highlighted in green were funded through a federal SAFER grant and were crucial to their budget. He said that in 2022, they added staff to North Garden. He said that in 2022, they were facing the issue of shutting down rural stations due to staffing shortages. Thankfully, the federal government allowed them to secure a grant, which enabled them to prevent this process.

Mr. Eggleston said that they were fortunate to have the opportunity to invest in emergency management, adding positions to support this effort. He said that in 2023, they added emergency management positions. He said that the Monticello ladder truck and Scottsville fire engine, housed at the former Scottsville rescue station, were funded in 2024 and would be operational this July.

Mr. Eggleston said that it was just around the corner, but he wanted to give them advance notice because it took approximately 18 months to hire and train new personnel, resulting in a lag. He said that he would also like to acknowledge the approval of the match for the North Garden FEMA grant last year, as well as the significant impact of the Berkmar ambulance, which responded to approximately 3,400 calls annually. He said that this service was crucial, yet it was becoming increasingly challenging due to its high call volume, affecting other areas in the County.

Mr. Eggleston said that he believed they were all aware of this and had contributed to funding this essential service. He said that the Berkmar ambulance was expected to be operational next July, following the completion of the recruit school, which was currently underway. However, the process of recruiting and training paramedics took time.

Mr. Eggleston said that 97 new positions had been added since 2021, with 40 funded through General Fund revenue and 57 through SAFER grants. Notably, the SAFER grants had been instrumental in providing training and deployment opportunities for these personnel, with \$12.7 million in federal funds allocated to support this effort. Nevertheless, the grants were aging out, and they must assume the costs, which was a significant driver of their budget.

Mr. Eggleston said that he believed it was essential to frame this context, and the next slide provided a historical overview, and a breakdown of the dollar figure required to cover these positions in the budget. He said that there were 57 positions, and it was clear that this had been a long-term investment. He said that they still believed that this was essential for providing adequate services to their community.

Mr. Eggleston said that although they did not have a lot of funding, they had made significant investments. He said that although they were not required to continue these services beyond the grant periods, they had four of these agreements in place, and he could not imagine what their County would look like if they had not pursued this initiative. He said that he believed this was a vital part of their service. He said that next, he would discuss the return on strategic investments. He said that there was positive news in this regard. He said that they had seen a 2.6% reduction in response times for their ambulance performance.

Mr. Eggleston said that when they acquired the Berkmar ambulance, he expected this reduction to increase even further. Additionally, their partnership with Western Albemarle Fire Rescue and County staff would guarantee a paramedic on every critical call, which was crucial for life-saving situations. Next, they had seen even better performance on their first two fire engines, with a 5.6% reduction in response times. He said that what was also important was that they had been able to decrease response times for the second and third arriving apparatus, which was vital in structure fires where timely arrival was essential for suppression, search and rescue, and victim removal.

Mr. Eggleston said that he was particularly proud of their ability to transition from a former contract with the City, which they were paying \$1 million a year, to a mutual aid agreement at no cost. He said that this allowed them to use their resources more effectively and provide the same services to the City, which was working out better than they initially anticipated. He said that it was a great benefit. He said that their Emergency Management Department had made significant progress in recent years, focusing on County needs while also being regionally connected.

Mr. Eggleston said that today, they were more connected with the university and the City in terms of priorities and communications. He said that they had made great strides in developing policies and

procedures, as well as responding to large-scale emergencies. He said that in fact, they had made great strides in developing policies and procedures, as well as responding to large-scale emergencies. He said that they had worked closely with the University and the City year-round, including collaborating with Ms. Shifflett and her group to develop a continuity plan that ensured continuity of government in the event of a catastrophe.

Mr. Bowman said that he wanted to acknowledge the cost of medical and public safety supplies that they were including in their budget, as they continued to operate additional ambulances. He said that they were also responding to the change in regulations for the Fire Rescue pharmacy located at the Public Safety Operations Center to ensure compliance with the new requirements. He said that they were continuing to support the volunteer fire rescue stations as part of their operating requests, with funding included in the budget.

Mr. Bowman said that their regional public safety agencies included some partner agencies, and he wanted to highlight the regional jail, which was currently experiencing an increase in debt service due to its age and lack of major renovations. He said that the new contract with the Charlottesville Albemarle SPCA did include an increase based on Board approval. He said that the other partner entities were regional entities that were funded solely based on the County's and their shares of the costs.

Mr. Pruitt said that his understanding was that there were no new non-obligate costs from the Fire and Rescue department in this budget.

Mr. Eggleston confirmed that was correct; they were requesting that they plan for picking up the funding for these FEMA grants.

Mr. Pruitt said that he believed they had touched on this topic the previous year, but the main story in Fire Rescue was the data-driven approach shared by the North Garden department. He said that in essence, they had warned that a significant issue was looming, even if they were technically in good standing. He said that he was curious, and perhaps this was a long-term projection, but he found that being able to plan and forecast their resources in the future had been beneficial. He said that he wondered if there were other potential issues that they foresaw falling into place as they forecasted out the years to come.

Mr. Eggleston said that they had received a letter from the Crozet Volunteer Fire Department this year expressing the same concern. He said that the challenge they faced was that it took them a long time to hire. He said that he had found that when volunteer departments finally raised their hand and said they needed help, they needed it immediately. He said that they were challenged to react quickly to such requests without taking people away from other areas of the County, which was their main flaw.

Mr. Pruitt said that Mr. Eggleston had touched on this in his presentation: their declining volunteerism. He said that in addition to globally declining volunteerism, the changing age and demographic composition of their community affects individuals' work-life balance across various sectors. He said that there were limited levers they could pull to address this issue. He said that from a policy perspective, something they could control was to make changes to create a more favorable environment for volunteering.

Mr. Pruitt said that, for instance, improving the amenities at volunteer fire stations could lead to higher rates of volunteerism. He said this could be a capital priority. He said that he was curious about how they could address the volunteer fire departments, which were not incorporated into their organization, and still leverage their volunteer base.

Mr. Eggleston said that he agreed with that. He said that having a good station was an essential part of this. He said that he believed they had utilized a model that had been successful for a couple of years, as seen in North Garden. He said that when they asked for assistance with their building renovation and construction, Mr. Sumner and he worked together to create a great framework, mostly in Mr. Sumner's shop. He said that although they did not own the building, they were able to achieve a successful outcome through a combination of a grant and a loan, with some oversight. He said that he thought North Garden would attest that it was a success, as they now had a beautiful station. He said that he believed this model could be applied to other stations that were willing to participate in the process.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that a key aspect of maintaining the volunteer stations was the importance of having a good volunteer chief. She said that the example from Stony Point, where the volunteer fire department had undergone significant changes, was a great illustration of the impact a strong leader can have.

Mr. Eggleston said that he also wanted to point out that there were some stations that were doing an excellent job. He said that he did not want to assume that everyone was struggling. He said that they had some very strong stations that were performing exceptionally well. He said that Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley was correct that the leadership, particularly at Stony Point, was doing very well compared to what they had seen in the past.

Mr. Gallaway said that he wanted to make a couple of comments and then pose a question to tie this into the study, as it appeared the study would address this issue. He said that he assumed both of them had comments on this matter. He said that he believed the capacity of their team was often reached more frequently than they were willing to admit.

Mr. Gallaway said that he recalled an incident near Belvedere involving a homeless individual, which was resolved just in time, but then another incident occurred when a call came in about a bogus bomb threat at Planet Fitness. He said that the fact that there was movement at the scene suggested that something was happening elsewhere, and the fact that the initial incident had not been fully resolved added to the complexity. Considering this, he wondered what would have happened if the situation had escalated further.

Mr. Gallaway said that in the last month alone, they had seen three or four tractor-trailer accidents on the interstate, which required a significant number of personnel to attend to. Additionally, they had experienced a plane crash, a shooting, and other incidents that required an even larger response. He said he believed it was essential to recognize that these types of incidents were not the only ones that could stress the system.

Mr. Gallaway said he was concerned that they often focused on major events and overlooked the cumulative effect of smaller incidents, which could also impact the capacity of their team and the community's volunteerism. As a Board member, he was starting to wonder whether they could sustainably manage the system without putting undue pressure on their teams and community members. He said that he was not satisfied with a system that was maxed out three or five days per month.

Mr. Gallaway said he hoped the study would help them understand the maximum capacity and how often they were reaching it, so they could have the truth in front of them. However, he was starting to consider looking to the Finance team and asking what if some of the \$0.032 capacity was dedicated moving forward, and how that would impact their system.

Mr. Gallaway said he believed it was essential to have dedicated, ongoing funding for affordable housing, and this was similarly crucial for addressing population growth and the challenges it posed. They could not afford to allow for two events to stress their system. He said that they needed to get ahead of this issue, and funding would be a key factor. He said that he was not sure how the Finance team would react to this, and he had not considered it before today. He said that he was not sure they needed the entire \$0.032 or half of it, but he believed there should be some discussion about that.

Mr. Bowman said that he had a follow-up to ensure clarity on their approach, particularly for the public, the Board, their partners, and the schools, which would be impacted by how they approached this. He said that they had a couple of ideas and would look to develop a clear design that addressed this. He said that one of the most important things he had heard today was the need for direction from the Board on how this process worked, which would be crucial not only for this budget but also for setting expectations moving forward.

Mr. Gallaway said that he was interested in having that discussion and exercise to explore how to carry the public safety dedication forward into the future. He said that they were fortunate to have individuals in those positions.

Mr. Eggleston said that he appreciated the question. He said that it reminded him of their previous discussion in December last year, when they were speculating about what five years would look like. He said that at the time, the numbers seemed daunting, but he believed they were on the right track. He said that he would greatly appreciate it if someone could review and validate their work to ensure that their long-term goals were accurate. He said that he wondered if they were heading in the right direction and if there were any adjustments that needed to be made. He said that he thought a reasonable approach was needed. He said that he thought this was excellent work, and he appreciated the recognition of it.

Mr. Reeves agreed. He said that what they were seeing was the resilience of their public safety departments, both Police and Fire Rescue, in adapting to a wide range of situations. He said that they could seamlessly transition from responding to a violent crime, a catastrophic event, or a routine call, such as helping someone cross the street, to engaging with the community. He said that that level of flexibility and adaptability was truly impressive. He said that he appreciated their efforts.

Ms. Mallek said that she was glad that Mr. Eggleston was taking steps to implement the standards of cover, as that was a significant challenge for them during the initial review. She said that she hoped that they would be able to apply those standards more effectively in the future. She said that the eight-minute response time in the development area was concerning, as it often drew in backup from a rural station. She said that she was aware that there had been comments about the allocation of funds to rural stations.

Ms. Mallek said that given the 30-minute travel time from Station 4 to Greenwood, she believed it was essential to provide some level of service to those areas, even if it was just a basic level of response. She said that the interconnectedness of their emergency services was crucial, and she thought it was vital for the Board and staff to consider raising their standards for zoning decisions to ensure public safety. She said that the recent major flood rescues in Greenwood, which required extensive fire, police, and water rescue efforts, highlighted the importance of adequate emergency services.

Ms. Mallek proposed that they consider raising their standards for zoning decisions to mitigate such risks. She said that it was correct that their system was currently backed up, with the worst being handling over 2,000 calls in 2024, primarily in Crozet. However, the backup was also affecting other areas, such as Rio, and even Station 8 in recent weeks. She said that she had a mental block, because for some reason, she thought they had already acquired the second ambulance for Station 8.

Mr. Eggleston said that it was currently undergoing training. They started their classes in January.

Ms. Mallek said that she was glad to see that the ambulance was on its way. She said that the map on slide 60 was particularly helpful in visualizing the locations of 11, 12, and 15 in relation to the gap. She said that she appreciated the effort he had put into persuading those who were skeptical about the importance of this, and she was glad they had been able to reach a consensus.

Ms. Mallek said that she wanted to discuss ALS further on every call, as she believed it was an important topic. She said that she sometimes found it challenging to address due to its complexity. She said that she was aware of the dedication her grandson was putting into becoming a medic, but she did not think ALS was something that could be easily prescribed for someone who simply needed assistance with mobility.

Mr. Eggleston said that they triaged them now in a system where if it was a lower-priority call, they did not send people there.

Ms. Mallek said that priority one was the accidents. She said that she was glad that he had that covered. She said that she appreciated that. She said that nationally, volunteerism had been declining, but she hoped that they could all acknowledge and celebrate the stations they had, as Mr. Eggleston had mentioned, who were doing well.

Ms. Mallek said that one common thread among stations 4, 5, and 8 was their outreach to young people, including university students who were drawn to these stations and often returned to continue their work even after completing their studies. She said that for example, they loved it so much that they came back to Virginia Beach or medical school in Baltimore to continue running their programs.

Ms. Mallek said that what was also important was the investment the County had made in station 8's Seminole Trail facility, which included study carrels and a veterans' area to support 120 student volunteers. She said that similarly, the WARS (Western Albemarle Rescue Squad) organization was raising funds for its new station in the center of Crozet, also with a focus on supporting student volunteers.

Mr. Andrews said that he found the presentation to be excellent. He said that he was optimistic that they could start making progress this year as they began to address these issues. He said that slide 63, which he had been initially concerned about, was actually a positive step forward.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she would like to clarify, if the \$0.032 as dedicated, it would not be part of the split.

Mr. Richardson said that was correct; they would work through some financial scenarios and return to the Board, potentially presenting the information to them to gain a clear understanding of that.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she believed this was important because, moving forward, with the numbers they had, she thought it was essential to start allocating a dedicated source for this in the next year's budget and future budgets, gradually increasing it until it reached its maximum capacity, which would require significant investment.

Agenda Item No. 3. From the County Executive: Report on Matters Not Listed on the Agenda.

There was no report.

Agenda Item No. 4. From the Board: Committee Reports and Matters Not Listed on the Agenda.

There were no additional comments from Supervisors.

Agenda Item No. 5. Adjourn.

At 6:13 p.m., the Board adjourned its meeting to March 12, 2025, 3:00 p.m. in Room 241, Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA, 22902. Mr. Andrews said information on how to participate in the meeting would be posted on the Albemarle County website Board of Supervisors home page and on the Albemarle County calendar.

Approved by Board
Date: 10/15/2025
Initials: CKB

Chair