A special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County, Virginia, was held on Friday, December 6, 2024, at 1:34 p.m. in Room 241, Second Floor, Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia, 22902. This meeting was called by the Chair, Mr. Jim Andrews, to allow a quorum of Board members to convene an open meeting for the purpose of allowing a quorum of Board members to attend and participate in a Legislative Forum with State Legislators to discuss the County's legislative priorities and legislative positions and policy statements.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Jim H. Andrews, Mr. Ned Gallaway, Ms. Beatrice (Bea) J.S. LaPisto-Kirtley, Ms. Ann H. Mallek, Ms. Diantha H. McKeel, and Mr. Mike O. D. Pruitt.

BOARD MEMEBERS ABSENT: none.

COUNTY OFFICERS PRESENT: County Executive, Jeffrey B. Richardson; Interim County Attorney, Andy Herrick; Director of Economic Development, Emily Kilroy; Clerk, Claudette K. Borgersen; and Senior Deputy Clerk, Travis O. Morris.

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Delegate Katrina Callsen, Delegate Amy Laufer, and Senator Creigh Deeds.

Agenda Item No. 1. Call to Order. The special meeting was called to order at 1:34 p.m., by the Chair, Mr. Jim Andrews.

Agenda Item No. 2. Welcome and Introductions.

Mr. Andrews introduced the Albemarle County Police Department Officers present to provide their services art the meeting, Lieutenant Angela Jamerson and Officer Trent Cole.

Mr. Andrews welcomed Delegates Katrina Callsen and Amy Laufer, and Senator Creigh Deeds.

Agenda Item No. 3. Albemarle County 2025 Legislative Priorities and Legislative Positions and Policy Statements

Mr. Andy Herrick, Interim County Attorney, extended his gratitude to all of them for attending today's Legislative Forum for Albemarle County for the year 2025. He said that it was his pleasure to present the County's legislative program on behalf of the Board of Supervisors. He said that this was a team effort, and he would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of other County staff members who had assisted in preparing this presentation.

Mr. Herrick said that he would like to recognize Emily Kilroy, the newly appointed Director of Economic Development, as well as James Douglas from the County Attorney’s Office, and many others from County staff who were present today who had helped with the presentation. He said that he would also like to extend his appreciation to David Blount, the Legislative Liaison for the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC), for his outstanding work in representing the interests of central Virginia localities in the General Assembly. He said that he would like to thank them all again for their assistance in preparing this presentation and for taking the time to attend today.

Mr. Herrick said that this presentation was divided into three parts. He said that they would begin by discussing the County's legislative priorities, which were targeted asks that the County had of the General Assembly. He said that next, they would discuss legislative positions and policy statements, which covered a wider range of issues that were likely to come before the Assembly this year. He said that these positions and policy statements would assist County staff when questions arose about the County's positions on certain areas.

Mr. Andrews said that finally, they would discuss next steps. He said that this year's forum had been organized to be more interactive, allowing for more time for give and take. As a result, his presentation would be shorter than those of his predecessors, and he would focus on the high points. He said that following his presentation, the Board would proceed with its customary speaking order.

Mr. Andrews said that they would first go through for questions and then go back through.

Mr. Herrick said that there would be ample time for further discussion, so if his presentation seemed more abbreviated from what was presented in the past, that was the reason for it.

Mr. Herrick said that the priorities, which were the County's highest priorities, took precedence over legislative positions, which were the County's positions in response to initiatives from Richmond.

Mr. Herrick said that they would begin with the priorities, and he would outline the six targeted priorities. He said that the first priority was to expand the photo speed device authority. He said that currently, the County had used this authority with some success, but they were seeking expanded authority. He said that they also had a $1 cent sales tax option for Schools capital, an item familiar to the delegation, and a new initiative to expand offenses subject to property forfeiture to include community threats. He said that he would explain this in more detail. He said that they also had a couple of budget requests, which Ms. Kilroy would address regarding Rivanna Futures and the Biscuit Run Park project.

He said that another priority was to study tools to mitigate rent increases caused by multifamily residential development.

Mr. Herrick said that expanding the photo speed device authority was their first priority. He said that the Virginia Code currently limited localities' authority for photo speed enforcement under certain circumstances. He said that they were asking the Assembly to expand this authority to allow photo speed monitoring devices on designated segments of roads where speeding had been identified as a problem. He said that although legislation had been introduced last year, it may not have gone as far as the County would have liked, but this was a priority for the County, and they were seeking similar legislation this year in the General Assembly.

Mr. Herrick said that the next priority, which made it as far as the Governor’s desk in the previous year, was to amend the Code to designate Albemarle County, in addition to previously designated localities, or to allow general authority statewide for the $1 cent sales tax revenue for school capital projects. He said that as they were all aware, several localities in Virginia already possessed this authority. He said that Albemarle County would like to join them, either through a statewide blanket authority or by being specifically designated. He said that they acknowledged the potential obstacles that may arise in getting this legislation to the Governor's desk. He said that nonetheless, they would appreciate it if the Assembly would introduce and pass this legislation.

Mr. Creigh Deeds, Virginia State Senator for the 25th District, said that the issue was not about getting the bill to the Governor’s desk; it was that he did not sign it. He said that this problem would likely still exist. He said that what he would suggest was a better source this time. He said that they had $2.2 billion in the budget of surplus funds. He said that a portion of that money could be used for construction grants, including school construction grants, which he believed would be a more realistic source of funding for school construction this time around.

Ms. McKeel said that they should try this again at a later time.

Mr. Deeds said that he believed it would still move forward. He said that Jeremy Pike had introduced it in the Senate the last time, and someone else had introduced it previously in the House.

Ms. Katrina Callsen, Virginia State Delegate for the 54th District, said that she had introduced it, but several people did. She said that Sam Rasoul had carried it, and based on their conversation, she understood that he would be going to carry it again. She said that, however, things change, but he will try to do it again.

Ms. Amy Laufer, Virginia State Delegate for the 54th District, said that she had introduced the speed camera bill last session. She said that again, there were several delegates who had similar legislation, so they decided to roll all of those bills into one. She said that this year, Delegate Mike Jones from Richmond would be carrying the bill, and she said that they had worked extensively on this issue. She said that she did speak with Mr. Richardson about it, and they could discuss those concerns later. She said that she did not want to go into the details, but she did want to emphasize that their language regarding rural roads should be incorporated in Delegate Jones's bill.

Ms. Callsen said that she thought the school grant funding was an innovative approach, but she would say that with the current construction grant fund, which came from casinos, Albemarle County had not received any funding despite multiple applications. She said that Charlottesville, on the other hand, had been successful in securing some funding, but the formula used would likely need to be adjusted.

Mr. Deeds said that he understood that. He said that he was suggesting that they could potentially put more money in that fund.

Ms. Callsen said that more money would hopefully mean more distribution.

Mr. Deeds said that it would with more surplus. He said that they could do a lot of things with the surplus, but they had to be smart about it because it was not guaranteed every year; it was one-time money.

Mr. Herrick continued that there was a new proposal for which the main objective was to expand the list of offenses subject to property forfeiture to include community threats. He said that currently, the Virginia Code allowed for property to be forfeited if it had been used in terrorist hoaxes, bomb threats, or malicious activations of alarms, with a cap of $250 in cost recovery. He said that the proposed expansion by Albemarle would add false reports to police to the list of offenses eligible for civil forfeiture. He said that this slide provided further details on the proposed changes. He said that the rationale behind this expansion was that it would allow for the seizure of property beyond terrorism offenses, which would be significantly more than the $250 currently allowed by the statute.

Ms. Laufer asked how many offenses they were currently seeing.

Mr. Herrick said that he would defer to Amanda Farley, Senior Assistant County Attorney, to answer that question.

Ms. Amanda Farley, Senior Assistant County Attorney, said that she did not have a specific number to provide. She said that what was reported in their department was that they were not a common occurrence, and even less potentially prosecutable because some of the threats may originate outside the Commonwealth, if not outside of the country. She said that it was not a common occurrence, but one that does occur.

Ms. McKeel noted that the School Division sees these more than the County does.

Mr. Deeds said that with the School Division, when there were kids involved, it was not collectible. He said that the children involved were not capable of paying, and the amount of civil penalty imposed was not a collectible sum of money. He said that even if they were out of state, the amount was not collectible to a large extent. He said that it was academic.

Ms. Farley said that a potential benefit of the forfeiture was that it was an action against the property itself, not against an individual.

Ms. Laufer asked if the property would be the parents.

Mr. Deeds asked if a 16-year-old were to make a hoax call from a cell phone, what property would be subject to forfeiture?

Ms. Farley said that anything that had a connection to the criminal activity and could be substantiated to that extent would be subject to forfeiture. She said that it would be against the property, so the only claim could be an innocent owner. She said that in this case, if the parents owned the phone, they could potentially claim under forfeiture an innocent owner defense, which would result in a different disposal of the property. She said that unless the affirmative defense was acknowledged by the court, the property would be forfeited.

Mr. Herrick said that next, Ms. Kilroy would discuss the budget requests.

Ms. Emily Kilroy, Director of Economic Development, said that the primary focus and priority budget amendment from Albemarle County this year was the state budget support for the Rivanna Futures Phase 1 Site Readiness Plan. She said that they had brought this forward last year, at a larger scale, looking at the full development potential of the property. She said that based on the feedback from their delegation and other members of the General Assembly, they spent the past couple of months conducting conceptual engineering work to explore what a first step in developing the property would look like.

Ms. Kilroy said that what they had here was Phase 1, which included the first 50 acres of the property purchased by the County adjacent to Rivanna Station. She said that this plan would prepare the site for the first six development blocks. She said that they could see that it would extend the existing terminus of Boulders Road, which ended at the dotted line on the provided map, as well as extending the water and sewer lines and grading the site to make it pad-ready.

Ms. Kilroy said that they were concurrently pursuing state and federal grant funding to support this work as they refined their estimates; they substantiated more than $11 million worth of effort to bring this to the next level of site readiness. She said that the provided package was for the purposes of the General Assembly. She said that they appreciated the time they all had taken this summer to visit the property and receive a briefing from staff with more detail. She said that they continued to be excited about this project, and so did many others.

Ms. Kilroy said that they believed this was a great opportunity not just for the County, but for their region as a potential national security innovation hub with Commonwealth-wide significance. She said that the next slide was a video, so she would set it up before she clicked it, as she otherwise may encounter an IT issue. Earlier this week, on Tuesday, the Intelligence and National Security Alliance, a professional organization serving intelligence and national security professionals across the country's military branches and 18 intelligence agencies, focused a lot of their professional development, learning, and conference events in the National Capital Region in the greater D.C. area.

Ms. Kilroy said that they occasionally hosted events outside of this region, including in hubs for their partners and members, such as Huntsville, Alabama, and Boston, Massachusetts. She said that they were thrilled when they learned about the positive developments in Albemarle's community and decided to explore the possibility of hosting an event here. She said that the meeting took place at the Boar's Head on Tuesday. She said that they began working with them in earnest during the summer, and she had asked about their goals, specifically how many people they hoped to attend. She said that she was aware that taking on this event was a risk, and they replied that 200 would be a challenging goal.

Ms. Kilroy said that they were delighted to report that over 300 people attended the event on Tuesday evening, with a significant number from the D.C. area coming to learn more about the project and its opportunities. She said that a two-star general in the Army and local leaders from Rivanna Station participated, discussing the innovation opportunities and priorities for the intelligence community and how their community could contribute to these efforts. She said that although not all invited guests could attend, Senator Kaine and Senator Warner, who had shown great interest in the project, recorded video messages that played during the event, which they would like to share with the delegation.

Ms. Kilroy played a video of Senator Kaine speaking, in which he thanked those present for their contributions to the nation's security and those involved with forwarding the establishment of Rivanna Station. Mr. Kaine said that collaboration was essential to drive the innovation that supports the intelligence community.

Ms. Kilroy said that the second budget amendment request the County had put forward was what they hoped was the start of a conversation with the General Assembly moving forward. She said that they were likely familiar with Biscuit Run Park, but they may or may not be familiar with how the County came to be in possession of the lease of the park.

Ms. Kilroy said that Biscuit Run is composed of 1,200 acres on the edge of the County's Development Area and the Rural Area in the southern end of the County, with the future entrance roughly positioned at the intersection of Route 20 and Avon Street. She said that it was originally slated to be residential development; however, the Great Recession caused that plan to change, and the state purchased the property with the intent to establish it as a state park. She said that the state developed a master plan to program the park over the course of a few years, but funding did not materialize at the state level to bring that plan to fruition.

Ms. Kilroy said that the County suggested that if the state leased the land to the County, the County could take on the development of that park, which they had done. She said that they were excited to be celebrating the opening of the park next Saturday, December 14, 2024. She said that this park that they had talked about for many years would be coming online. She said that this was a project that was locally leased, but had regional significance due to its size and amenities, which likely would attract many visitors.

Ms. Kilroy said that the County had invested $14 million to date in developing the entrance and preliminary site work to make the property accessible to the public. She said that this was all part of Phase 1(A), so there was still much work required to bring the park to a reality. She said that the request was to the state to support the local development of the park; the park was currently not in the County's adopted CIP (Capital Improvement Plan). She said that however, it was a true amenity and had regional significance.

Ms. Kilroy said that the full buildout of the park featured a circulator trail that would encircle the perimeter. She said that this section of the trail would be ADA accessible and connect Biscuit Run Park to a new park scheduled to open within the next couple of years, as part of the Southwood Mobile Home Redevelopment Project, which was the Monacan Indian Nation Tribute Park. She said that the County believed this project was truly worthy of state consideration for partnership and support. She said that this was the second budget amendment request adopted by the County for this year.

Mr. Deeds said that the state had it for eight years, from 2000 to 2008. He said that in 2009, the property was acquired between the election and Tim Kaine leaving office, and that by 2017, nothing had happened. He said that the Scottsville District Supervisor at the time, Rick Randolph, had emailed him and asked if the County could lease the property. He then asked the Chair of the Senate Finance Committee what he thought of the proposal, and they were able to fulfill that request by January 2018. He said that at that time, they had a ceremony with Terry McAuliffe, who was leaving office.

Mr. Deeds said that he thought it was a great project; he would love to see a walking trail from Downtown Charlottesville through 5th Street Station, connecting out to Biscuit Run. He said that the original vision for this property was for it to serve as a regional park and to get more local governments involved. He said that local governments did not always work together, but he did not understand why. He said that he would like to see more investment from other local governments in this, because they would certainly benefit from it. It made perfect sense, and the $14 million investment was significant.

Ms. Laufer said that she had served on the Disability Commission two years ago, and she was aware that there was money in the state park budget to renovate parks. She said that she wondered if they could tap into the existing funds with the state parks; because it would be ADA-accessible, that may allow for specific funding.

Ms. Kilroy said that they would continue to look for opportunities. She said that the Parks Department and their Facilities and Environmental Services (FES) teams had been actively seeking state and federal funding to support various aspects of the project. She said that a recent stream restoration project had secured outside funding. She said that staff would continue to look for opportunities to draw down through formal grant programs. She said that they would definitely look into that specific funding.

Ms. Laufer said that regarding the first budget request, she recommended that the County consider the similarities between Wallops Island and the Rivanna Futures property.

Ms. Kilroy said that she appreciated the input.

Mr. Pruitt said that this was the first time he was hearing about the ADA funding mentioned by Ms. Laufer. He said that both of the parks operated by the Town of Scottsville were looking into improvements to ADA amenities, so he would appreciate it if Ms. Laufer's staff could connect him with more information about that.

Ms. Laufer said she certainly could.

Mr. Herrick said that in addition to the priorities they had already heard and the budget amendments they were seeking, the County had a final priority on its list: a study on tools to mitigate rent increases caused by multifamily residential development. He said that they were not necessarily seeking legislation at this point, but rather a study. He said that the reason for this was that multifamily residential development differed from traditional changes in ownership.

Mr. Herrick said that when a property underwent complete redevelopment, there was no baseline on which to establish rent stabilization. He said that a study would address this academic void of the current literature, and it could also explore effective means of protecting tenants after redevelopment while allowing landlords a reasonable opportunity to recoup project costs. He said that those six items constituted the County's priorities for the year. He said that next, they would move on to legislative positions and policy.

Mr. Deeds asked if they had talked to anyone about the study. He asked if the delegates were aware of the request. He emphasized that they had internal deadlines, so the deadline had already passed for them to introduce a resolution to request a study. He said that he wished they had been asked about this a month or so ago; they probably could have done something then. He said that they may not have that ability now.

Ms. McKeel said that was good to know.

Mr. Deeds said that he believed the deadline was last Tuesday or around then.

Ms. Callsen said that Jason might know more about it.

Mr. Pruitt said that he had talked with Jason on the phone, but not in a formal way.

Mr. Deeds said that if someone put in a request, they could submit it so it was drafted, but at this point there would probably not be much value in getting it drafted because he doubted too many people had the space to accommodate it.

Ms. Callsen said that she was double-checking with Jason to see. She said that regarding studies in general, they were waiting on word from their leadership regarding expectations around study bills. Last year, there were a lot of requests for studies, resulting in over 100 study bills and only two were put through. She said that people were seeking guidance this time so they were not just putting in bills that could not gain traction.

Mr. Deeds said that this was something that could be addressed by writing a letter to the Housing Commission and requesting their attention to the issue. He said that it would not require a formal resolution, but rather a simple request. He said that if they could not get it in, that was something they could do.

Ms. Kilroy said that Ms. Callsen’s staffer had also suggested contacting the Housing Office to conduct the study.

Mr. Deeds said that the Housing Commission and its staff operated full-time.

Ms. Callsen said that Jason has been working on this, and they had talked about doing the resolution; however, this year resolutions counted towards the bill amendments.

Mr. Deeds said that if they sent a letter to the Housing Commission to ask them to pick it up, he was sure they would. He said that however, he was unsure of their current priorities or workload.

Mr. Herrick said that in addition to the six legislative priorities they had outlined, the County had developed policy and position statements on 49 different issues that may come before the Assembly. He said that these statements would address the County's official position in response to any inquiries that may arise. He said that many of the position statements were similar to those from last year, but he wanted to highlight some new or revised items for the delegation's attention.

Mr. Herrick said that of the first seven of these new statements, five were primarily focused on seeking increased state funding or support for various items, including economic development and site readiness, community services boards, mental health services, affordable housing, and public schools funding. He said that the County was seeking increased state funding or support for these areas. He said that the remaining two items on the list concerned the local authority concerning land use matters, the County wished to avoid any incursion into local land use decisions, particularly with regards to regulations on facilities such as solar facilities and data centers. He said that they saw a lot of state-level attempts to preempt local land use authority.

Mr. Deeds said that one county in Virginia had said yes to data centers and no to industrial-scale solar. He said that they were significantly increasing their energy demand, but not generating the necessary wattage. He said that no one would come to the Board of Supervisors seeking permission to install a nuclear plant. He said that he wanted to keep localities involved in the process, particularly when it came to solar. He said that however, to meet their goals outlined in the Clean Economy Act, they must be cautious. He said that they aimed to remove carbon from energy production by 2050, and they must achieve this goal. He said that unfortunately, it was unlikely to be met without nuclear, solar, and wind power.

Mr. Herrick said that they also wanted to ensure localities were part of the process. He said that they had seen a trend of bills that aimed to cut out local authority.

Mr. Deeds agreed that they had been introduced somewhat. He said that he was right in the middle of that stuff, and he wanted to stay right in the middle of it.

Mr. Herrick said that they were seeking to preserve local land use authority. He continued that the Board continued to oppose skill games and refrain from repealing any ban on skill games.

Ms. Laufer said that she would like to address the solar aspect of their energy needs. She said that as she had been attending many conferences on this topic, two key points had become increasingly clear to her. She said that firstly, they were purchasing approximately 60% to 70% of their energy from out of state, as they were not yet generating enough locally to meet their current needs. She said that additionally, the data center issue was relevant, as they controlled around 70% of the world's internet traffic, which was specific to Virginia.

Ms. Laufer said that she believed it was essential to acknowledge that, even without considering the Clean Economy Act, they were not producing enough electricity to meet their demands in general. She said that this issue was closely tied to the fact that some farmers relied on the solar installations to maintain their property, which was a vital aspect of their family's livelihood. She said that given this, she thought it was crucial that they work together to achieve the goals of the Clean Economy Act, while also considering what they were doing now. She said that this was a concern for the future that she wanted to bring to their attention.

Mr. Herrick said that the next two slides presented new items on the County's legislative position statements from last year. He said that as noted in the handout, these items included updates to the digital equity section, where they aimed to support statewide efforts to advance digital equity. He said that in the environmental section, they were seeking to include support for sustainable materials management, which would encompass extended producer responsibility legislation.

Mr. Herrick said that they had several items related to affordable housing, which was a top priority for the Board. He said that they were looking to support state funding to increase the supply of affordable housing, not only in alignment with their local Housing Albemarle initiative but also generally. He said that they were seeking to grant localities the power to enforce the Landlord Tenant Act, as currently, only tenants could bring enforcement actions and localities had no enforcement powers. He said that they wished to expand localities' authority to act as third-party plaintiffs in landlord-tenant enforcement actions.

Mr. Deeds asked if someone had introduced a bill regarding that issue last year.

Mr. Pruitt said that Delegate Cia (Marcia) Price had carried one for the past two years.

Ms. Laufer said that she carried one last year and in 2023 as well.

Mr. Pruitt said that it was typically perceived as an anti-slumlord bill, which was certainly the messaging in the text.

Ms. McKeel said that that was one of the issues she heard about most often in her district.

Ms. Callsen said that there was a lot of work being done to address this issue. She said that also, efforts had been made to expand the protections available to tenants who may file claims. She said that currently, tenants were required to place funds in escrow. She said that if the situation became unlivable, they were still required to continue paying the rent and find alternative housing. She said that this created a significant barrier to taking meaningful action against their landlord. Delegate Cousins had a bill regarding that specific issue, but this was another approach to tackle the issue. She said that by giving localities more power the ability to intervene, they could provide tenants with a more effective means of seeking help.

Ms. Mallek said that one thing that is often missing from discussions about financial situations is the lack of protection, for example, her specific constituent, who is living in a place that is the only affordable option for her. She said that this property had been passed down through generations of owners and was in disrepair, with a significant hole in the roof. She said that the new young owner had made it clear that if she did not like it, she should leave.

Ms. Mallek said that this had left her constituent feeling terrified to speak out or complain, fearing that she would be retaliated against. She said that she was hopeful that if there was more authority granted to a local agency to become involved in such situations, it would provide more people with the opportunity to stand up for themselves without fear of losing their home.

Mr. Deeds said that he believed the prior legislation had never made it out of committee.

Mr. Pruitt said that he recalled that the legislation had made it to signature but was part of a group of legislation that the Governor vetoed, contingent on the completion of some kind of analysis on the effects. He said that it was identical language to what he had used for a wide variety of tenant protection legislation that attempted to drive a wedge between affordability and tenant protection.

Ms. McKeel emphasized that in addition to the landlords, the property management companies were a large part of the issue.

Mr. Andrews said that they were greatly appreciative of the delegates’ work last year to address similar issues.

Ms. McKeel said that she hoped they would keep at it.

Mr. Herrick said that rounding out the new additions to the County's legislative policies and position statements, two further related to affordable housing and housing availability. He said that the first was to support a locality's right of first refusal when affordable housing was sold or converted, allowing localities to step in. He said that the second was to support a state study on rent stabilization or rent gouging protections, as a way to inform their approach to addressing these issues.

Mr. Herrick said that the third item was to assign demerit points to truck drivers who violated through truck restrictions, including over-length or overweight trucks, in order to hold those drivers accountable for these infractions and potentially impact their driving privileges.

Mr. Deeds said that that was an interesting point, as commercial drivers had significant consequences with respect to every ticket they received, and the demerit points were not it. He said that many drivers did not have control over their loads, as they were working for someone else.

Ms. Mallek said that they could control their speed.

Mr. Deeds said that they could control their speed, but they were proposing overweight violations here.

Ms. McKeel said that one of their former police chiefs stated that in just sporadic stops, approximately 30% of the trucks they were stopping had critical violations. She said that then, they looked at the all the wrecks on their highways and byways, which often involved trucks.

Mr. Andrews said that at least some of the overweight or overlength were about the direction of the roads they had chosen to use, particularly the rural roads. He said that these rural roads had restrictions that the vehicles were not adhering to, which was a problem.

Mr. Deeds said that he understood. He said that the only issue he had was with the demerit points, as that was penalizing the driver for issues that were beyond their control. He said that the owner was responsible for creating the load and the dimensions of the truck.

Mr. Andrews said that the route taken was the responsibility of the driver.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that they were discussing the route taken by oversized trucks. She said that despite publicized restrictions stating that no truck over 65 feet was allowed, they continued to take them anyway, because they used their iPhones for navigation.

Mr. Deeds said that he had heard nightmare stories about truck drivers who failed to heed the warning signs that GPS navigation was not recommended. He said that they may take a mountainous route, only to get stuck and have to make a hasty turn around, because the truck could not get through a curve.

Ms. McKeel said that she did not mean to muddy the waters with this, because this was definitely a problem, but another problem was the critical violations that trucks were running around on their roads.

Mr. Herrick said that this concluded his presentation. He said that he would like to thank James Douglas in their office for preparing this legislative program bulletin, which they are now viewing. He said that he hoped that the summary in this format effectively summarized his previous points. He said that the next steps for their forum today would be to hear comments from both the Board and their delegation, followed by an open discussion that had already begun.

Agenda Item No. 4. Legislators' Priorities / Questions & Answers.

Mr. Deeds said that with respect to Rivanna Station, he believed that the requested amount was a lot more reasonable than $50 million. He said that a significant concern was that many people would view this as an attempt to put Albemarle County at the front of the line, as other localities already had site requests in and were eligible for funding. He said that there was a substantial pot of money available for site preparation. He said that despite this, they would still pursue the idea, as he found it appealing and was excited about its potential. He said that however, there was an argument against it.

Mr. Andrews said that they had already heard about the project's statewide significance, and David Blount was here and could attest that the TJPDC had also prioritized this as a multi-jurisdictional project.

Mr. Jeff Richardson, County Executive, said that he wanted to thank the delegation for taking the time to visit the site. He said that unfortunately, time constraints prevented them from sharing it, but they did have a video from Senator Mark Warner, who expressed strong support at the INSA (Intelligence and National Security Alliance) conference. He emphasized the regional and statewide significance of this project. He said that in the Department of Defense (DOD) world, this site was uniquely positioned for growth. He said that given the state's continued support for military and DOD work, they believed this property was well-positioned for significant growth over time. He said that its proximity to D.C. and separate electric grid, which enabled the continuation of Operation Redundancy, set it apart from other military-related projects in the state.

Mr. Richardson said that they appreciated the delegation's efforts in this endeavor and were encouraged by the good conversations they were having with the federal government. He said that while he had their attention, he would also like to mention that two weeks ago, the University of Virginia announced a $55 million, five-year grant for the creation of a national security institute tied to data science, aligned with the University of Virginia's mission. He said that they were able to participate in that. He said that they had established an amazing partnership with the academic community, and this partnership extended beyond the University of Virginia. He said that they believed that with their partnerships in academics, government, and private industry, this project had significant potential for growth over the next period of time.

Ms. Laufer said that her visit to Wallops Island, where she took a tour, revealed that the majority of the infrastructure, including the roads, bridges, and one of their fuel storage facilities, was supported by state funds. She said that Rivanna was a similar type of project. She said that most of the vendors currently operating in Wallops Island were commercial vendors. She said that therefore, she believed it presented a compelling argument.

Ms. McKeel said that if the delegation knew of something Albemarle could do to make the argument stronger, she would ask that they please let them know.

Ms. Laufer said that she had already been discussing it with staff. She said that MEI grants were one potential source of funding. She said that it was a compelling argument because it was a very similar type of project. She said that she would do whatever she could do support it.

Mr. Gallaway said that he would like to extend an invitation to the Regional Housing Partnerships (VHP) meeting on December 18th at 2:00 p.m., which will be a virtual meeting. He said that Isabel McLain, Director of Policy and Advocacy for the Virginia Housing Alliance, would be giving a presentation on their legislative priorities, and it may be of interest to the delegation. He said that he would be curious to know their thoughts on the state's role in addressing affordable housing issues, as these were not unique to any locality.

Mr. Gallaway said that every locality was grappling with affordable housing challenges, and it was a persistent problem. He said that their economic report from Virginia Tech highlighted a decrease in local poverty levels, but this did not necessarily translate to improved living standards. He said that it suggested that they may be pushing people out of the County rather than helping them climb out of poverty. He said that he was not looking to bring a specific bill forward, but rather to understand what the state could do to address this issue in a way that would be beneficial to their community. He said that he did not want to put them on the spot, but he would appreciate their thoughts on this matter.

Mr. Deeds said that when he first took office in the Senate, Charlottesville was the primary focus of discussions on housing. He said that now it seems that affordable housing is a concern that affects every corner of the state and the Commonwealth. He said that it is an issue that requires attention everywhere. He said that the largest portion of State funding for housing comes from the Behavioral Health Commission, which allocates approximately $85 million annually for long-term support of housing.

Mr. Deeds said that while it was more money every year, it was still insufficient. He said that they will continue to focus on this issue from the state's perspective, exploring what they can do. He said that in the past, they had established the housing trust fund to support the construction of affordable housing. He said that unfortunately, they had not always provided sufficient funding for this initiative. He said that in fact, the housing trust fund had typically received only $10 million in funding over the years, a paltry sum for the entire Commonwealth of Virginia.

Mr. Deeds said that it was a drop in the bucket. He said that they needed to explore alternative funding sources, such as the recording tax on land transactions. He said that he had suggested this idea in the past, but he had not received much support. He said that the challenge was that whenever they discussed raising money, there were few people willing to support them. He said that he believed that they would either have to divert funds from existing sources or increase fees, which was a difficult proposition. He said that this year, with all 100 seats in the House of Delegates up for election, it was even more challenging to gain support for this initiative.

Ms. McKeel said that in the past when they had discussed the land recording tax, the pushback they had heard locally was that it was not consistent and had variables.

Mr. Deeds said that the state's share remained consistent. The recording tax and grantor's tax had a predetermined percentage that went to the state and a predetermined percentage that went to the locality. This part of the equation was consistent. He said that while there were other factors to consider, they had the option to either increase this amount or attach a portion of the existing fund.

Mr. Pruitt asked if that funding would go to the general fund. He asked where it typically would go.

Mr. Deeds said that it was allocated to various purposes. He said that the local tax went to the locality, and the state share went to funds such as the Route 58 fund, which paid for the construction of Route 58. He said that there may be other specific allocations as well, but any remaining funds were directed to the general fund.

Mr. Pruitt said that the argument they sometimes heard was asking why they did not just use the recording tax, because that was how some housing trust funds were funded, but his reply was that they did use it to pay their Clerks' salaries locally. Therefore, he could not just move it without identifying alternative funds.

Ms. Callsen said that Governor Youngkin was quite harsh in his vetoes of housing legislation, with nearly all bills being rejected. She said that one bill she managed to pass was a measure requiring landlords to provide a copy of the lease. She said that despite this, she believed lawmakers were taking the veto statements into consideration and revising their legislation for the upcoming session. She said that regarding the question on what is to be done; money in the affordable housing trust fund and electing a different governor and then waiting to see which bills would actually pass, as few had made it through in the past.

Ms. Callsen said that for instance, she was working on an anti-rent collusion bill targeting large software companies that set rents for multi-family homes. She said that she was attempting to pass a bill for a taxing change that allowed publicly-owned affordable housing could get an income approach guarantee when they were getting their taxes. She said that they were all exploring novel approaches to address this issue, and she did not have the institutional knowledge. She said that she did not see many Republican proposals related to housing, but she was aware that this issue affected their districts.

Ms. Laufer said that she had the opportunity to speak with a lot of the Republicans and review specific bills, including one related to a broken refrigerator or HVAC system. She said that unfortunately, she did not recall the exact bill. She said that the concern was that the owner did not have enough funds to repair the property. She said that he suggested that they discuss ways to support these owners without infringing on the rights of tenants. She said that it was emphasized that some owners could not afford to maintain their properties, and it was essential to find a solution that helped them keep their tenants in safe and habitable conditions.

Ms. Laufer said that this led her to think about how they could enhance the Albemarle Housing Improvement Program (AHIP) to provide more assistance to renters and make it more accessible. She said that there was also a proposal she had previously supported and attempted to resurrect this year, which aimed to ensure that landlords renting low-income properties were able to pay taxes that reflected the property's actual rental amount, rather than the market rate. She said that it was met with opposition from many, but mainly from assessors. She said that she had a call in to resurrect that issue.

Ms. Laufer said that she had also been considering the potential for social bonds to raise funds for public housing repairs. She said that social bonds allowed private interests and private money to support public entities, which could be a valuable resource for addressing the maintenance needs of public housing units. She said that because it saved taxpayer money and improved public health, which in turn provided a return on investment, this was a valuable initiative. She said as someone who had attended this annual conference at UVA for several years, she was surprised that they had not expanded this program in Virginia.

Ms. McKeel asked if they did not have the ability to use that option.

Ms. Laufer said that they were not using it currently for that purpose; it was used in some instances with the Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP).

Ms. Callsen said that it was a peculiar world they were living in in terms of bipartisanship. She said that for instance, there was a bill proposed by Joe McNamara last year, which he pulled out before they could vote on it. Although she had not delved deeply into the details, the bill aimed to bifurcate how taxes are applied to land versus actual property. She said that the reasoning behind this was to target areas with underdeveloped prime property and real estate, with the goal of increasing affordable housing options.

Ms. Callsen said that a property with a $50,000 house could be valued at $5 million, but the tax would only be applied to the house, not the land. She said that a Republican representative was also supporting the bill, albeit for a different reason. She said that in rural areas, they wanted to help individuals with lower property values, such as those with $20,000 houses, by only taxing them on their house as property, rather than the land. She said that they had to find the middle ground, as it required balancing the need for affordable housing in the city with the needs of individuals in different settings.

Ms. McKeel said that it was interesting that Ms. Callsen brought up that scenario, because it was similar to the circumstances that led to the $1 cent tax for school construction. The proposal received widespread, bipartisan support all over the state.

Ms. Laufer said that it was certainly worth listening to the other side on many of these issues.

Mr. Gallaway said that he had two quick comments to make. He said that last night, Mr. Blount presented the legislative agenda for the TJPDC, and it was clear that all six localities were in support of using the surplus funds for one-time purposes. He said that the key was to recognize that once a project was funded, it was often a one-time expense, rather than a recurring one. He said that this approach could be more manageable than trying to secure funding for a project that may not be repeated.

Mr. Gallaway said that in the past, he had not had the time to advocate for various issues due to his work schedule. He said that he assumed that the delegation would discuss some of their own priorities they would be carrying this year. He said that usually, the locality brought forward their priorities for the delegation to advocate for, but he would be interested in hearing the other things not on Albemarle's list that the delegation would be carrying this year, so that they could advocate locally for those issues.

Ms. Mallek said that she was thinking about the previous year or the year before when the state invested a significant amount of money into a new state park in Culpeper. She said that upon hearing that news, she felt a sense of optimism, thinking that perhaps this could be a positive sign for their own state parks. She asked if there were any new developments regarding improvements to state parks that they should be aware of, so that if this opportunity arose, they could be prepared to potentially receive additional funding for Biscuit Run. She said that she was aware that Mr. Deeds had worked diligently on this issue 10 years ago, but unfortunately, it did not come to fruition.

Mr. Deeds said that the park system was quite interesting. He said that the key was identifying where to catch the energy. He said that the system had a $200 million backlog in maintenance reserves. He said that having a state park in the community was a mixed blessing, as it required significant work to develop the facilities. He said that they had a few parks in the process, and it often took years to develop the park once the land was acquired.

Mr. Deeds said that Biscuit Run was Albemarle County's shot, and at the time, Governor Kaine acquired the property and that was what it became. He said that Rick Randolph played a key role in moving the project forward. He said that he believed it made sense to raise awareness about Biscuit Run and pursue state funding for its development. He said that he was committed to working on this project.

Ms. Mallek said that it was something for them to remain aware of, so they could be prepared to respond effectively, as they needed all the guidance they could get to act in the best way possible and help people effectively. She said that having participated in the energy series with Dave Marsden this summer, she had gained a deeper understanding of the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) and the challenges they were currently facing. She said that unfortunately, they were experiencing backlash from localities because they were being perceived as obstructing the passage of this legislation, which had been passed with provisions that they were required to implement, as per California's requirements. She was surprised to learn about this inclusion, as she had no prior knowledge of it.

Mr. Deeds said that the specific issue was that they either had to do what the federal government was doing or the highest standard. No one knew what the federal government was going to do; therefore, the only highest standard that existed was California's.

Ms. Mallek said that this discussion centered around the requirement that all sales be electric vehicles by 2030, which she found to be unrealistic and ultimately unachievable for Virginia. She said that she was surprised to learn that this had been passed by the legislature, as she had missed it. She said that in her opinion, it seemed that everything, including small modular reactors and other innovative technologies, should be considered as options.

Mr. Deeds said that regarding the bill for the small nuclear reactor, he had voted against the previous year due to its limited success in a location out west, where it did not work. He said that the proposed legislation specified that the ratepayer would be responsible for the cost, which he believed was unfair. He said that in contrast, the agreement between Amazon and Dominion was a more reasonable approach.

Mr. Deeds said that Amazon would cover the development costs of the small nuclear reactor, estimated to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars. He said that as data centers became a part of their landscape, they needed to find a way to require them to generate their own power. He said that it did not seem fair that their ratepayers should bear the cost of their electric usage. He said that for example, these data centers consumed approximately 1 million gallons of water per day (MGD) to maintain a cool environment. He said that Dominion estimated that the demand would double within 15 years.

Ms. Laufer said that they should also explore alternative construction methods to minimize the amount of resources required. She said that in Europe, they often buried them when appropriate. She said that she believed they could be more innovative in how they were using them.

Ms. Mallek said that the standards that localities can impose, as seen in the five solar installation applications submitted to Albemarle, were approved with conditions to protect the community and allay the Board's and community's concerns. She said that she believed that was what counties generally wanted: the opportunity to establish conditions for a solar project to operate on a site. She said that this included requirements such as sufficient erosion control measures, among others. She said that the reason people rebelled and did so strongly last year was due to what happened with Sullivan from northern Virginia, who simply stated that the SCC (State Corporation Commission) would decide on these matters without any conditions.

Mr. Deeds said that it was his own bill. He said that Schuyler from Henrico County had a different bill. He said that his bill, along with Sullivan from Northern Virginia, had a bill that stated that if a locality rejected a proposal, while the locality had the first bite at the apple, the developer could then amend or appeal the decision to the SCC. He said that he had no problem with localities imposing conditions on the developments; however, the problem was that some localities in the state were permitting data centers while rejecting industrial-scale solar projects.

Mr. Deeds said that this was not the case in Albemarle County, but other localities were simply denying solar projects. He said that they had passed a constitutional amendment about 12 years ago that guaranteed personal property ownership as a fundamental right. He said that this meant that individuals had the right to decide how to use their property, subject to certain limitations. He said that however, when it came to land use, local governments were acting as arbiters on decisions about appropriate land use for private property, which raised questions about fairness, particularly when it came to decisions that affected the environment, such as nuclear power plants.

Mr. Deeds said that he grew up in Bath County, where a significant portion of the area was condemned, and Dominion Power built the world's largest hydroelectric power plant of its kind. He said that, however, the construction of four 150-foot-wide easements across Bath County had a profound impact on the viewscape, and the Board of Supervisors was not requested to approve this major change.

Ms. Callsen said that Schuyler's bill did not pass, and she did not think it would be revisited in its current form. She said that, however, she believed that there were other proposals being considered, such as establishing an appeals board or a regulatory body that could review permits independently of the Board of Supervisors. She said that she recalled that Ms. Mallek had visited her office, and she had attended the local County gathering that evening. She said that she was informed about the data regarding permit acceptance rates, which were remarkably high - approximately 95%.

Mr. Deeds said that he knew it was above 70%.

Ms. Callsen said that however, it was with the caveat that solar companies often conducted extensive research to determine the most likely locations for permitting and tended to avoid areas where they were unlikely to secure approval. She said that she believed that this cycle was hindering their ability to reach their clean economy and environmental goals. She said that she was trying to be responsive, and she was currently working on a bill to increase the cap on distributed solar from one megawatt to five megawatts. The goal was to increase the percentage of solar projects that required Dominion to install solar panels on already disturbed properties, such as landfills, rooftops, and parking lots.

Ms. Callsen said that she was trying to be responsive in that way, but it was frustrating to hear that some people were pushing back on these efforts. She said that for example, there was currently a requirement that 35% of these solar projects come from third-party providers, such as local, small solar companies. She said that someone tried to introduce a bill to make that the floor, so that they could go beyond 35%. She said that Dominion argued that this would introduce instability into the grid, but when they had made efforts to simplify the permitting process, they were met with resistance from the same parties. She said that it was a delicate balancing act, and she did not want to hold back progress. She said that she was working with County, City, and town officials to find a solution that prioritized increasing solar production, while also addressing the concerns of stakeholders.

Ms. Mallek said that they were in the special interest dilemma right now, just like the homebuilders in 2016, when they got rid of all the proffers and that the lack of housing was due to local governments' faults. She said that all the money they were having to pay took away a huge amount of money for all the services for sidewalks, bridges and other local amenities because of the impact of the new developments coming in. She said that this was the push and pull that always happened, and she appreciated the delegation's efforts, because she knew it was not always easy.

Mr. Pruitt said that he wanted to take some of their priorities they discussed at the beginning and put them into additional context in case it could be helpful in understanding how they came to the delegation and how they would socialize them to their peers. He said that there was one that was an odd duck, which he had introduced and would like to explain further. He said that this was the request regarding community threats.

Mr. Pruitt said that for context, earlier this year there was a terror threat to his gym in his own district, which he responded to in a public forum, resulting in County staff providing security for his personal safety. He said that another bomb threat was made to the same location, as well as additional bomb threats to Sentara Martha Jefferson. He said that there were multiple bomb threats in his district at places of learning.

Mr. Pruitt said that at one point, they had received a figure provided by County staff, and he believed it was between one and two dozen threats per year made against a variety of buildings in the County. He noted that this was a fairly low boil. He said that in Haywood County, North Carolina, where they were recovering from Hurricane Helene, there was misinformation promoted by a YouTube channel regarding a false claim that the County was obstructing FEMA relief services by not abolishing code provisions. He said that this was incorrect, but resulted in dozens of bomb threats to County services and buildings that effectively halted their ability to conduct business for a week during the relief and recovery efforts.

Mr. Pruitt said that he brought this up because, immediately after this incident, he spoke with the County Attorney and Commonwealth's Attorney, and they explored various options to address the issue. He said that unfortunately, he felt deeply powerless in their ability to respond to this situation. He said that he was concerned that the current environment made it difficult to take bold action, and he worried that their inability to effectively address these issues may be attributed to social media responses that they could not handle.

Mr. Pruitt said that they examined ways to extend liability and increase fees under the current statute, which was poorly drafted and challenging to use. He said that this solution, although not ideal, was the best they could come up with. He said that he wanted to provide some context for the unusual request for a bill, which he believed was an important issue that required attention from the General Assembly. He said that he still felt powerless in addressing these types of issues moving forward. He said that if the delegation had immediate thoughts on the address, he would appreciate it. He said that he had a few other points he would like to bring up as well.

Ms. Laufer said that she wanted to thank Mr. Pruitt for sharing that information, as it had helped her to better understand the context. She said that to be honest, she was initially unclear on the matter, but she was aware of the growing issue of misinformation and disinformation, which had led to a significant increase in its consequences. She said that she appreciated his willingness to share this, and she was particularly concerned about the potential risks associated with issues like the past "pizza-gate" and other similar topics. She said that she would take some time to carefully consider this further.

Ms. McKeel said that she also appreciated what Mr. Pruitt said, and she noted that it would likely only get worse considering the current landscape. She said that it was best that they be prepared.

Mr. Pruitt said that to provide some additional context on the Biscuit Run request, he would like to mention that this was his neighborhood. He said that an important aspect that should not be overlooked was that this project was not just about recreation, but also about fostering interconnectedness. He said that as they had discussed, the scale and utility hookups required for subdevelopments could create a siloizing effect, where communities around 5th and Avon became isolated from one another. He said that people lived just a stone's throw away from each other, yet it took 20 minutes to walk between them.

Mr. Pruitt said that he could throw his spoiled vegetables over the woods and literally hit a neighbor behind him, but to actually walk there took 20 minutes. He said that the Biscuit Run project, however, aimed to bridge the gap between the 5th and Avon and connect to the park from the Southwood community intersection. He said that as a result, people would be able to walk a much shorter distance, essentially eliminating the current three-mile walk and create a few hundred-foot walk instead. He said that this would bring these communities much closer together, allowing them to literally walk to each other, which was a significant improvement.

Mr. Deeds said that a broader vision involved the City of Charlottesville as well. They could connect the Downtown Mall to 5th Street Station to Biscuit Run, which could introduce a whole new segment of the population to Biscuit Run and to an outdoor experience.

Mr. Pruitt said that he was very excited about it.

Ms. Mallek said that it would connect the 400 or so people who currently had easy access to it as well.

Mr. Pruitt said that he would like to briefly mention the study on tools to mitigate rent increases during multifamily redevelopment. He said that this was something they discovered during a period of significant media attention regarding a redevelopment in his neighborhood, but it was actually a symptom of a broader issue. He said that in their community, a significant portion of their affordable units were built using federal dollars, such as the low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC), which typically came with a 30-year period of affordability. He said that many of these units were already nearing the end of their affordability period, and they would soon need to be redeveloped, but were no longer required to be affordable.

Mr. Pruitt said that most of their affordable units were built during the construction boom of the late 1980s and early 1990s. He said that as a result, they were approaching the end of their affordability period and would likely be redeveloped, potentially at a higher cost. He said that currently, they lacked a tool to address this issue. He said that one possible solution was to compete with the high bids of $60 million, but he was concerned that he could not compete with such a large bid.

Mr. Pruitt said that even more drastic measures, such as rent stabilization, may not have been effective because they did not typically attach to new construction until 10 to 15 years after the property had been on the market. He said that this meant that any rent stabilization measures they implemented would not be effective in addressing the affordability issue during the redevelopment process. He said that unfortunately, there was a lack of literature on restrictions on affordability during the redevelopment process; it was a complete blind spot, and he did not know how they would even go about addressing this.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she would like to highlight the importance of the photo speed cameras, especially in her area and others like Ms. Mallek's, but also anywhere with rural roads. These rural areas were experiencing a significant increase in accidents, deaths, and other issues because of this. She said that they had been working with VDOT to reduce speed limits, but unfortunately, those efforts often did not yield the desired results. She said that studies often concluded that everything was fine, despite the concerns of residents.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that in her area, residents had taken matters into their own hands by pooling their resources to hire off-duty officers to patrol Gordonsville Road and issue tickets. She said that this was a desperate measure, as evidenced by the fact that seven illegal oversized trucks were spotted in a half-hour period on those small two-lane roads such as Gordonsville Road. She said that this year, with Delegate Jones' information, she was hopeful they would find a solution.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that regarding the proposed $1 cent sales tax, they were all in favor of that. She said that Rivanna Futures was a major priority for them as well. She said that if the delegation could think of any other way for the state to give localities the permission to raise revenue, they would greatly appreciate that. She said that it could be via a referendum, where they asked the community members if they would like to raise revenues.

Ms. McKeel said that she would like to yield her time to Mr. Deeds so she could hear his thoughts before he had to leave.

Mr. Deeds said that it was going to be a tough session. He said that they had a budget surplus, but the governor would likely insist that a portion of it be allocated to a tax cut, and he may also seek an ongoing tax cut. He said that to be realistic, there were many people on both sides of the aisle who were looking for tax relief, particularly in light of the recent election. He said that in his view, a $200 check may not have a significant impact on most people's lives, but it could be beneficial to some. He said that they would be considering tax relief, but he also thought that investing in school construction was a good idea.

Mr. Deeds said that a JLARC report from two months ago had highlighted that at least two of their older institutions of higher education, Virginia State and Mary Washington, were struggling due to crumbling infrastructure. He said that using one-time funding for capital improvements seemed like a good way to address this issue.

Mr. Deeds said that other than that, his priorities would be similar to what he had in the past, including chairing the Commerce and Labor Committee and the Health and Human Resources Subcommittee of Senate Finance. He said that he would be working on commerce-related energy-producing legislation, as well as healthcare issues. He said that he wanted to warn them that the incoming administration had proposed cutting $2 trillion in spending, which could have significant implications. He said that this would require drastic measures, such as reducing Social Security, Medicaid, or Medicare.

Mr. Deeds said that in 2019, they had passed legislation to expand Medicaid in Virginia as part of the budget, but it had included a provision that it would be pulled it back if the federal government's share of costs fell below 90%. He said that there were six states with that provision as well. He said that a $1 trillion or $2 trillion cut would certainly impact that. Health coverage for hundreds of thousands of Virginians would be at risk.

Mr. Deeds said that they had a $632 million shortfall right now in Medicaid spending, and 70% of Medicaid funding in Virginia goes to 25% of the people who received it; they also received Medicare. As they all got older, they spent more on healthcare costs, and the state spends a chunk of that. He said that everything is at risk.

Mr. Deeds said that it was a short session, but they had a whole lot to deal with in a very short period of time. Their input was critical, so they should not wait to share information or ideas with the delegation. He said that his experience was that most people in the General Assembly, whether they agreed with them or not, genuinely wanted to do the right thing, and they all operated on the best information available. He emphasized that no one should assume they had the best information; if they knew something, they should share it.

Mr. Andrews thanked the delegates and senator for being there today. He said it was extremely important and their time was very valuable. He said that their work had been critical, and as Mr. Deeds mentioned, the federal government was very uncertain right now, but the state and local governments must be there.

Mr. Deeds said that he would ask that they consider that 1940 was not that long ago. He said that although no one in the room was alive then, it was a couple of generations ago. He said that the two largest counties, most populous counties in Virginia in 1940, were Pittsylvania and Wise. He said that their economy was different back then. He said that it was resource-based, manufacturing-based, and then something significant happened in 1941.

Mr. Deeds said that World War II occurred at that time, and following World War II, their economy has been shaped by the military-industrial complex, driven by defense spending and the growth in Northern Virginia, which now accounts for about a third of their economy. He said that they were heavily dependent on the feds.

Ms. Laufer said that she would share with the Board some of her priorities for the upcoming year. She said that last year, she had introduced a bill about leaving unattended firearms in view in vehicles, with a civil penalty. She said that she would be revisiting this bill. She said that a police officer talked with her at the Crozet Fair about how it would be a great bill. She said that she would appreciate if the Board members could provide her with testimony on the dangers of this issue. She said that as they may know, 52% of crimes are committed with stolen firearms. She said that this bill aims to penalize irresponsible gun ownership.

Ms. Laufer said that she also had a dam maintenance bill that addressed the issue of over 1,500 dams in the 55th District, many of which were privately owned, and some were municipality-owned. She said that this dam maintenance bill would allow municipalities and private citizens to access funds to mitigate issues or to research them.

Ms. Laufer said that she also planned to carry a bill related to public school procurement, aiming to do procurement with more entities to secure better prices. She said that she was also working on a solar bill focused on agrivoltaics as well as an address protection program for people in legal cases against their partners. She said that she had two recycling bills, one on waste tires, which aimed to create a pipeline for responsible waste management and recordation for waste tires, and one on mattress recycling, which would eliminate illegal dumping.

Ms. McKeel asked if Ms. Laufer could send a summary of these bills.

Ms. Laufer said yes. She said that they submitted all of those for drafts, and she would be submitting a bill today about maternal healthcare monitoring with telehealth. She said that she had a few budget amendments to carry as well, including Rivanna Futures and a telehealth expansion initiative from UVA Health.

Ms. Callsen said that she had put in a draft for Mr. Pruitt's study bill. She said that some of it was still in flux; they were past the drafting deadline, but she put in some extras so there would be some shuffling that would happen.

Ms. Callsen said that she had quite a few criminal justice bills because she was on three committees related to criminal court. She said that she would not delve into the details, but she did want to highlight some of the more significant pieces she was working on.

Ms. Callsen said that she was always open to meeting with any of the Board members to discuss these bills. The approach she took was based on how the average citizen perceived the criminal justice system, and anywhere the perception differed from the reality was her focus. For example, one area was access to counsel. She said that most people believed that defendants had easy access to their lawyers, but that was not the case. She said that she was working to address this issue.

Ms. Callsen said that another bill she was pushing was an education bill that aimed to improve tracking and ensure students were being pushed to excel. Specifically, it involved using fifth-grade and eighth-grade SOL scores to determine math placement, and she was working with UVA, the Equity Center, and local schools to implement an opt-out system to replace the opt-in system. She said that she was excited about this initiative, as it aligned with her personal interests.

Ms. Callsen said that she had also been working on bills related to peer recovery specialists and a firearm bill, which she had carried the previous year. Unfortunately, the Governor vetoed it, but they continued to respond to the veto and continued to advocate for its passage. She said that with the most recent bill, the governor had vetoed it. She said that for context, firearms were not allowed on UVA, but it was more of an administrative issue and they could not take much action beyond telling someone not to have it and directing them to a committee to discuss the issue. She said that guns should not fall into the same category as things such as hot pots, and so police chiefs, particularly those at UVA, had expressed support for the bill because it allowed them to take an appropriate remedy when someone was found to be carrying a firearm.

Ms. Callsen said that the governor vetoed the bill, stating that colleges were unique throughout their diverse state, and therefore, one-size-fits-all solutions did not work everywhere. She said that her bill aimed to address this by making it permissive, allowing the colleges to decide whether they wanted to opt in to having it be illegal. She said that they would see if the bill passed, but it was a response to the governor's concerns with his veto, so they would have to wait and see how it unfolded.

Ms. Callsen said that she had some energy-related bills, and she mentioned briefly that she was trying to work with distributed solar and expand its use.

Ms. Callsen said that she had a lot, and that she was committed to meeting with everyone this year. She said that her office was open, and she had one more office hour before the session started. She said that she was hosting a town hall meeting, which she would be happy for anyone to attend. She said that it was usually a round-table discussion, and she would be joined by other officials. She said that she would also be having cookies and conversation tomorrow at the library, and she encouraged anyone who wanted to attend to come. She said that if anyone wanted to discuss something with her, she was making herself as available as possible. She said that she would certainly share her list of initiatives with the Board members for future reference.

Ms. Laufer said that she would like to discuss the speed cameras briefly. She said that they had been actively meeting with Delegate Seibold, Delegate Jones, and herself regarding this matter. She said that there was a court case that centered on the speed cameras, where the statute required an officer to witness the violation in order to issue a citation. She said that this was an active litigation, although she was unsure of its current status. She said that it was likely to be a point of opposition to the speed camera bill. She said that the current statute required a witness to the violation. She said that she wanted to inform the Board that this would be a topic of discussion regarding the speed cameras.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she believed they had a right to go to court, at which point the officer would verify the protocol was followed for the process.

Ms. Laufer said that yes, that would be part of the conversation.

Ms. Mallek said that she thought that had been taken care of with the red-light camera bill, which had been a successful measure implemented ten years ago.

Ms. Callsen said that they had all done a good job by getting the ones in place that they already had the enabling legislation for, and that would help make the argument stronger this year.

Mr. Richardson said that Ms. Laufer mentioned earlier today that since the implementation of October 21, 2024, Trevor Henry had talked with the police department, and since that time, 2,411 citations had been issued.

Ms. McKeel said that as shocking as the number was, she saw during her recent drives down that road that there was a noticeable change in driver behavior, which was the desired outcome.

Ms. Mallek said that if there was data about the speeding happening between the morning and afternoon enforcement times, it may provide an argument for the enforcement to occur all day.

Ms. McKeel reiterated that the goal was to change behavior and not to make money off the citations.

Mr. Gallaway said that they could not make money; the General Assembly restricted their locality from implementing a full-on fine or giving demerit points on their licenses. He said that it was awful, and he would love to know the rationale of the General Assembly regarding that requirement. He said that speeding through a construction zone or school zone should result in points against the license, regardless of if the person was driving or not. If someone owned the car, they were responsible for it.

Ms. Mallek said that students crossed the road all day long at Albemarle High School.

Mr. Gallaway said that he loved receiving emails from people complaining about getting speeding tickets in the school zones.

Ms. Callsen asked what time the December 18 meeting was.

Mr. Gallaway said that the Regional Housing Partnership meeting was at 2:00 p.m. and would be a virtual meeting, so it would likely be recorded for access afterwards. He said that there would be multiple presentations and they did not need to stay for all the procedural presentations.

Ms. Mallek said that if future legislation did not stipulate that someone had to be killed first, which was part of the one last year, it would be beneficial. She did not understand why they had to wait for someone to die in order to enforce the speed limits.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if she should send the delegates some of the photos of oversized trucks.

Ms. Laufer said yes, that would be helpful.

Agenda Item No. 5. Adjournment.

At 3:08 p.m., the Board adjourned its meeting to December 11, 2024, 1:00 p.m. in Lane Auditorium, 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.

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Chair

Approved by Board
Date: 09/03/2025 Initials: CKB