

An adjourned meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County, Virginia was held on March 13, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. in Room 241, Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA 22902.

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

ABSENT: None.

OFFICERS PRESENT: County Executive, Jeffrey B. Richardson; County Attorney, Steve Rosenberg; Clerk, Claudette Borgersen; and Senior Deputy Clerk, Travis 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 said two Albemarle County Police staff, Lieutenant Angela Jamerson and Master Police Officer Dana Reeves, were present at the meeting to provide their services.

Agenda Item No. 2. **Work Session:** FY 2025 Operating and Capital Budget.

- Sheriff's Office (*pgs. 112 – 113*)
- Non-Departmental (*pgs. 225 – 236*)
- Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled (*pgs. 235*)
- Fire Rescue System (*pgs. 123 – 126*)
- Capital Improvement Program (*pgs. 261 – 294*)
- Debt Service (*pgs. 295 – 304*)

Mr. Andy Bowman, Assistant Chief Financial Officer, said that they were in budget work session number three on the County Executive's recommended FY25 budget. He said that they would continue today with some items in the General Fund and then start the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) and vet chapters. He said that any items they could not finish today would be carried over to Monday, March 25. He said that the work session on March 27 was when the Board would be asked to take action to propose a budget and tax rates for advertisement.

Mr. Bowman said that regarding the agenda, the Board of Supervisors had requested additional time to discuss the Sheriff's Office request. He said they would follow that up to complete the non-departmental chapters they were not able to address on Monday, including an in-depth discussion around tax relief for the elderly and disabled programs. He said this discussion had begun on December 13 and would continue today, leading to eventual Board action and a public hearing on this item.

Mr. Bowman said they would then move to a discussion on the Fire Rescue system. He said that Deputy Chief David Puckett was there. He said that they would review some data, and the maps were related to that item. He said that following this, they would recap the General Fund. He said that if the Board desired, they could schedule a break at that time before delving into the CIP. He noted that the timing of the break may be adjusted depending on how the session progressed.

Mr. Bowman said that he would proceed to provide more details on the Sheriff's Office item. He said Sheriff Bryant was present that day and would deliver the majority of this presentation. He said that he would provide a brief recap for the Board. He said that there were two unfunded requests excluded from the County Executive's recommended budget. He said that the first request concerned the court's complex security, initially submitted by the Sheriff. He clarified that this recap did not address the request's merit; it only focused on its timing.

Mr. Bowman said that due to a sequence of events anticipated as the courthouse opens, they expected these positions would be necessary but not required in FY25. He said that consequently, they would likely reappear at a later time. He said that the second request involved funding for 4.5 FTEs (full-time equivalents) for temporary detention orders (TDO). He said that these amounts were not included in the FY25 recommended budget. He said that there was a portion of one-time for the vehicles and the outfitting of officers, and then the ongoing portion we can see during FY25 and FY26. He yielded the floor to Sheriff Bryant for her presentation.

Chan Bryant, Sheriff of Albemarle County, thanked the Board members for allowing her to present their request for positions at TDO and answer any questions they may have. She began by directing their attention to the Code of Virginia.

Sheriff Bryant said that the transport of TDO patients relied on the primary law enforcement agency, which was the County PD (Police Department). She explained that they had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County PD, stating that they would provide transport forms so their police officers could remain in the County to answer calls for service. She said that this applied to both juveniles and adults.

Sheriff Bryant stated that for the past three years, she had collected data from their actual transports that they performed over the previous three years. She said that due to COVID-19, the 2019 and 2020 numbers were not realistic because everyone shut down and stayed home. She said that the data gathered included the issue time of the TDO, the response time, return time, starting location, ending

location at the hospital, mileage cost, and deputy cost. She said that each transport required two deputies to respond to take a mental patient from the hospital to the receiving facility.

Sheriff Bryant presented the data collected over the past three years, which showed the breakdown of TDOs that occurred during the different days of the week. She said that the majority of TDOs happened during weekdays, during their operation time on Monday through Friday. She said that Tuesdays had the highest call volume for TDOs to be transported, followed by Fridays, while Saturdays and Sundays had the lowest numbers.

Sheriff Bryant said that the majority of the transports' actual start and end times occurred during their operation hours from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. She said that out of the total number of TDOs, 88% affected her operation staff, either during the 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. hours or before that at 2 a.m. or 3 a.m. in the morning and continued throughout their operational day. She said that this resulted in staff members being unable to perform their regular duties due to TDO transports.

Sheriff Bryant said that provided on the current slide was their transport data, displaying the time taken and distance traveled to deliver patients to facilities. She pointed out that most transports had taken between four to eight hours to reach the facility destination. She said that the majority of the 0-2 hour trips were heading to Western State. She said that the 8 to 12-hour transports were those farthest out and closest to Virginia's state lines. She said that their frequency map showed that Western State was their primary destination, and the County PD had been assisting them in transporting patients there over the previous year and a half.

Sheriff Bryant said that the next slide displayed the total mileage covered per month for TDOs, with data from 2022 in blue, 2023 in orange, and the first half of 2024 in yellow. She said that their vehicles had accumulated a significant number of miles just doing mental health patient transports.

Sheriff Bryant said that for context, she highlighted Russell County's location on the heat map, along with other areas where they frequently performed transports. She noted that the bright white regions represented the majority of their transport activity. She said that it was alarming how far away people were transported away from Albemarle County in order to receive treatment.

Sheriff Bryant stated that the cost per deputy for handling these transports ranged from \$3,000 to \$6,000 per month. She said that despite the implementation of the HART (Human Services Alternative Response Team) program, there had been little change in the Sheriff's TDO transports. She explained that the HART program was effective but still not enough to replace traditional hospital transport needs.

Sheriff Bryant said that the Department of Health had entered into a pilot program with Allied Universal, which began last Monday and covered five CSBs (Community Service Boards) in Region One. She said that Allied Universal's alternative transportation program initially started in Southwest Virginia in 2015 and 2016, aiming to replace law enforcement in transport duties. She said that however, the program ran out of funding in 2019 and had not been restored. She said that the current pilot program involved three two-person teams and three vehicles serving 24 cities and counties across the region.

Sheriff Bryant said that she joined the Sheriff's Office in 1995, and the Sheriff's Office and the Albemarle County Police Department (ACPD) had been doing TDOs since before then. She said that the three vehicles for this program were based out of Front Royal, so when a call was received, they responded from Front Royal and came to Albemarle County to transport patients. She said that she would review some of what that program had accomplished. She said that provided were two different references that talk about alternative transports.

Sheriff Bryant said that so far that month, they had conducted five TDOs, and four of them came after March 4, when alternative transportation had been established. She said that the first one was on March 8 to Virginia Beach, the second was on March 10 to Western State, the third was on March 12 to Williamsburg, and one that morning was to transport a patient to Bristol. She said that deputies were called at 3 a.m. for that patient, and that alternative transportation was not available for any of these transports. She said that as a result, she had to send those deputies home early because they were unable to work effectively for their scheduled shifts at a time when the Sheriff's Office was involved in a jury trial for a murder case.

Sheriff Bryant said that she requested additional resources to manage these transports effectively and maintain their commitment to upholding the Code of Virginia. She noted that they had added four positions since 2005, two of which were part-time positions working full-time and upgraded due to working full-time hours while receiving only part-time benefits. She showed a slide that compared their agency to others on the public safety pay scale, including the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, which had received 10 additional positions. She said that they did not ask for much but when they did, it was because they needed it. She said that they had been asking and had not been receiving. She said that she would be happy to answer any questions from the Board.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she found it interesting to see the wide range of facilities and where they were across the Commonwealth. She asked whether they had knowledge of any additional treatment centers being constructed or if UVA was contemplating such a facility. She asked if anyone was considering a similar facility.

Sheriff Bryant said that after Senator Deeds' experience, the state compiled a list of accepting hospitals. She said that as a result, Region Ten must contact each hospital in the state to determine their

willingness to accept patients based on their presented condition.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if anyone closer to their area was contacted.

Sheriff Bryant said that they must use the list they had; they cannot randomly call people.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if Sheriff Bryant had that list.

Sheriff Bryant said that she did not. She said that Region Ten must contact the hospitals to determine if they could accept the patient.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that it sounded like they needed additional facilities that were closer, and they did have hospitals in the area.

Sheriff Bryant said that there were only a limited number of beds available on 5 East for individuals transferring from the UVA ER to 5 East, and there just were not enough beds.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that to clarify, the renovations to the regional jail's second floor for mental health patients was only for those who had been incarcerated and had nothing to do with this issue. She asked if the ACPD assisted in these transports.

Sheriff Bryant said that they had transported numerous people to Western State for them.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if the only place they went was Western State.

Sheriff Bryant said that was correct.

Ms. McKeel said that she had relatives in Russell County, which was why she was knew where it was located. She said that was a hike. She asked when the HART program began.

Ms. Kaki Dimock, Chief Human Services Officer, said that it began on July 1, 2023.

Ms. McKeel said that she noticed that the high usage for the TDOs coincided with the hours when the HART team on Monday through Friday. She said that she was trying to give some perspective to the situation.

Ms. Dimock said that there has been a 23% increase in behavioral health calls in the last year over year. She said that it was not surprising that the number of TDOs would also see a similar increase. She said that despite this rise, the percentage of behavioral health calls within the total call volume is actually decreasing. She noted that although this did not directly affect the Sheriff's Office operations, it suggested that HART team may have some impact. She said that it was premature to assume that HART would significantly affect the number of TDOs.

Ms. McKeel said that if Ms. Dimock believed that it felt early, this was due to the relatively short existence of the HART team. She asked, considering Ms. Dimock's experience and educated opinion, how long did she estimate it would take for the HART team to be able to figure out what the kick-in time really might be.

Ms. Dimock said that she believed that the first full year of operations would provide them with some insight, and then perhaps after year two, which was why they designated the initial period of the pilot as approximately 18 to 24 months. She said that this would allow them to examine data and assess its impact. She said that they had already observed a significant effect on community well-being. She said that the systemic impacts had not yet fully materialized. She said that despite the 23% increase in calls for behavioral health services, the relatively stable number of TDOs might indicate that they were having some influence.

Ms. Dimock said that several factors, such as the expansion of Region Ten's CTAC (Community Treatment and Care) program and the establishment of a 988 call center, may contribute to the changes in numbers within the community's behavioral health context. She said that these initiatives provide alternative options for individuals who might benefit from additional evaluation or intervention before resorting to a TDO. She said that the alternative transport program had not had a lot of time for them to measure that impact. She said that UVA was developing a mobile crisis unit that would cater to students, faculty, and staff. She said that this development may have some indirect impact on their operations.

Ms. McKeel asked if Ms. Dimock could repeat the last part of her answer.

Ms. Dimock said that she was unsure about the name, but it was known at this time as the UVA mobile crisis unit. She said that the unit would respond similarly to how HART does to individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis, regardless of their location. She noted that this service was available to students, faculty, and staff members. She said that she was not certain about how they would perform a geographic overlay for that purpose.

Ms. McKeel said it was wonderful to hear that.

Ms. Dimock said that partly, the ECC was considering the possibility of integrating a clinician within the ECC center. She said each one of these things layered together had the potential to

substantially affect the number of individuals attending the emergency room or experiencing a behavioral health crisis. She said that recent national data, specifically addressing this layered strategy, revealed that 87% of calls could be diverted.

Ms. Dimock said that the national data indicated that when screening and diverting were conducted, only 3% of the time a mobile crisis unit was dispatched; even with a mobile crisis unit, which included various types of responder units, only 9% of those resulted in a TDO. She said that these approaches were currently under development and expected to have significant impacts within the next 12 months to 24 months, potentially improving both well-being and system impacts.

Ms. Dimock noted that a challenge they faced was that, when a TDO was necessary, available beds were often located far away. She said that this issue was prevalent across the state, as they prioritized placing individuals in the first available bed regardless of location, resulting in their ranking 47th nationally for this criterion.

Ms. McKeel said that she was a bit confused. She said that she would like to better understand the pilot program, the alternative transit.

Sheriff Bryant said that the Department of Health had contracted with Allied Universal to provide alternate transportation for mental health patients across Region One of these five CSBs.

Ms. McKeel asked if Albemarle was in Region Ten.

Sheriff Bryant said that they were part of Region One in the state. She said that Region One consists of nine CSBs, and they were doing this pilot program in five of them.

Ms. McKeel asked if Albemarle was included in that pilot.

Sheriff Bryant said yes. She said that the graph on the slide listed all the cities and counties involved in the pilot program. She noted that the pilot program was set to end in September, so they were seeking additional funding to continue with this pilot program beyond September. She said that during a meeting on February 29 with the state and Region Ten, they learned that this alternative transportation company was taking over.

Ms. McKeel asked if the next slide detailed what that team consisted of.

Sheriff Bryant said yes, it discussed the services offered by the company to the five CSBs and what was guaranteed. She said that they provide three vehicles, with two individuals per vehicle, to address TDO situations. She said that these TDOs have been issued by the magistrate to all the counties involved. She said that there were three vehicles available 24/7 for all the cities and counties on that list.

Mr. Gallaway asked if the Sheriff was operating outside of the 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. timeframe.

Sheriff Bryant said that they operated from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for court, but the TDO work was 24/7.

Mr. Gallaway asked if the point of the Sheriff's request was due to the fact that a TDO may require transportation at 3 a.m., and after an eight hour drive, the deputies could not be assigned to court duty for the rest of their shift.

Sheriff Bryant said that they may leave their home at 3 a.m. and get back at 1:30 p.m. She said that they had been awake since 3 a.m. driving to and from Bristol. She said that they were too tired and could not be utilized for court.

Mr. Gallaway asked how they staffed these hours. He asked if they rotated staff between court and TDO assignments or if people were specifically assigned.

Sheriff Bryant said that for after-hours situations, there is a TDO call out. She said that individuals arrive at work daily at 8:00 a.m. She said that in the event that a TDO arises between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., it was necessary to identify those available and assign someone from civil process to handle the transport, as other staff members were occupied in court. She noted that this may involve pulling two people from their tasks, such as serving papers, to accompany the TDO. She said that if the situation occurred after 4 p.m., the on-call deputy for TDOs would respond to address it. She said that during regular operations, someone from civil process must be replaced to ensure continued duties if they were required in court.

Mr. Gallaway asked if the ahead of time staffing was the on-call person for after 4 p.m., and the rest was being managed with who was available.

Sheriff Bryant said that they had designated staff for the general district court, with each court having its own staffing. She said that civil process was permanently assigned to various areas throughout the County to serve legal documents. She said that this week, they pulled staff from civil process to assist in a murder trial. She said that they were currently in the middle of that trial and there have been intense debates between the victim's and the suspect's families. She said that they had allocated additional personnel to the court to manage that issue.

Mr. Gallaway asked if Sheriff Bryant was saying that eventually, the HART team, due to the service they provide when responding to calls, offers a more effective solution that prevents a call for a

TDO.

Ms. Dimock said that during appropriate situations, this alternative allowed responders to connect individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis to their current caregiver instead of rapidly progressing towards the more severe outcomes as previously observed. She said that in communities with co-responder teams, there was a decrease in the number of TDOs, fewer transports to emergency rooms, and reduced transports to jails.

Ms. Dimock said that this was a predicted outcome of the approach, which aimed to improve community well-being. She said that the layering approach mentioned could potentially divert a significant number of calls away from deep end emergency services towards more compassionate, upstream solutions.

Mr. Gallaway asked if the service provided an alternative to being sent to where a bed was available.

Ms. Dimock said that it was the right thing at the right time as opposed to the only thing available down there.

Mr. Gallaway said that the reality was very different at the moment and they would have to wait and see what happened.

Ms. Mallek asked when they hired, what the lag time was between getting a position authorized to the point of advertising and hiring, training, and how soon they could be ready.

Sheriff Bryant said that it depends. She said that in the past, they used to have a high number of applicants, but with their last job posting they had four. She said that if an applicant was not certified, they must attend the academy. She noted that all their deputies were fully certified law enforcement officers, except for one; the previous sheriff had allowed this exception. She said that upon obtaining law enforcement certification, they then needed to go through courtroom security and civil process certification. She said that the hiring process duration and their certifications determined that length, plus a 14-week Field Training Officer (FTO) program.

Ms. Mallek asked if it would take six months to one year.

Sheriff Bryant said yes.

Ms. Mallek said that regarding the crisis beds at Region Ten, there were 16 and they were typically full. She asked if they were specifically designed for and had clinicians available to assist the types of individuals being transported. She asked if a person in crisis who they were planning to transport could be taken to Region Ten if a bed was available there.

Sheriff Bryant said that they were taken to Region Ten to be evaluated. She said that this was done with the case they had today. She said that they left court with HART, went to CTAC, and then were transported to UVA hospital for additional care. She said that they were waiting to see if they needed a TDO. She asked if this answered Ms. Mallek's question.

Ms. Mallek said that she believed so. She asked if the 16 beds were typically for less crisis-oriented cases.

Sheriff Bryant said that was correct. She said that those people who required TDOs and were being transported to a mental health facility needed the care of a mental health facility.

Mr. Pruitt said that he would like to start by pointing out that this was a discussion that almost every jurisdiction in the state was currently having. He said that just two days ago, during the work session for the Town of Scottsville, it was the main topic they were discussing. He noted that this issue had directly contributed to their decision to hire one new deputy.

Mr. Pruitt said that it also related to what Ms. Mallek mentioned and questioned because Scottsville could not advertise competitive pay rates. He said that as a result, they were inevitably looking at a year lag time to recruit officers. He acknowledged the ubiquity of this problem. He asked the Sheriff whether she could provide insight into whether there had been any disruption in court operations or schedules that might have contributed to this situation.

Sheriff Bryant said that they frequently had to pull people and work under stress to compensate for the lack of personnel on their TDO. She said that initially, they had 60 volunteers; however, as everyone from public safety in the County knew, they now only had 18. She said that consequently, even their remaining volunteers were unable to contribute as much as the previous 60 members did. She said that in the past week, during the murder trial, staffing had to be adjusted due to circumstances encountered in court. She said that as a result, supervisors were taken from their supervisory duties and assigned to the court.

Mr. Pruitt said that the underlying issue could be fairly characterized as the state had not sufficiently invested in community-based services, resulting in increased reliance on state hospitals. He said that this overburdening of state hospitals had led to more travel. He said that he had several questions regarding the progress made on their community-based services as well as the challenges

faced at the state level. He said that the state had previously contracted with private hospitals and service providers to alleviate bed shortages, and asked if there were any third-party agreements in the pipeline that could affect this.

Ms. Dimock said that she was uncertain, but she did not think so.

Mr. Pruitt said that he understood that the statewide CTAC expansion was a new initiative, but he was unsure about how long their own CTAC had been online or if further funding and additional space would be available in the future. He asked for an overview of the timeline for their CTAC expansion at Region Ten.

Ms. Dimock said that CTAC started off slow, primarily as a result of a partnership with ACPD. She said that thus far, only Albemarle County residents could go to Region Ten, and that in the process of expanding to the entire Region Ten District, had recently received with the partnership with Albemarle County, funding from the Opioid Abatement Authority to execute an expansion of the receiving center. She said that this would enable the facility to operate more along the lines with what they hope would increase staff capacity, making it possible to provide round-the-clock availability for a more responsive service.

Mr. Pruitt asked if the implementation would assist in accommodating a higher number of short-term emergency TDO patients.

Ms. Dimock said that it was a second step. She said that if they responded to the community with someone who was despondent and having trouble regulating, they may spend a couple of hours with them, and they may improve. She said that however, they might also connect them to a service and not be entirely ready to leave the scene. She said that in such cases, they would like them to voluntarily accompany them to the crisis intervention center for a more comprehensive evaluation.

Ms. Dimock said that Sheriff Bryant described what happened that morning, and that was a situation in which Region Ten required them to go to UVA. She said that often, also it could be that they had 23 hours available that an individual could stay in a bed with some de-escalation, crisis intervention, and clinical support. She said that if additional assistance was needed, one might come to Region Ten's wellness center for an extended stay or return home with the natural supports already in place. She said that the approach aimed to create nuanced steps rather than a single response to crisis calls.

Mr. Pruitt said that regarding the one response to crisis calls, he was aware of an initiative from at least a year ago to address crisis calls involving forensic TDOs related to substance abuse to provide officers with more flexibility in handling such cases without requiring bed control. He said that he was unsure of the current status of this effort. He mentioned that a possible alternative is offering a cool-down option for individuals with mental health issues and addiction who need time to stabilize, which did not have to be at Western State.

Mr. Pruitt said that although mobile crisis centers have been discussed as a potential solution, he knew that their implementation had been slow. He asked if they were actually being served by one of the state-funded mobile crisis centers. He said that he knew that StepVA also promised full implementation by the end of this year, which seemed unlikely. He asked whether there was anything coming to the County.

Ms. Dimock said that she believed the definition of full implementation should be addressed. She said that having one team available for everyone was not functional coverage. She said that the Marcus Alert would eventually apply all of them; however, the implementation regarding requirements had been slow. She said that it was not until 2026 that they were obligated to commence creating a local mobile health program for Region Ten. She noted that UVA seemed to be in the process of developing such a program, but she presumed there were no results available as of yet.

Mr. Andrews said that although he was still processing the information, he found it alarming. He said that the pilot program was expiring but could be renewed if they secured funding. He said that it seemed that it had not really helped.

Ms. Dimock said that the individuals she had conversed with expressed confidence in obtaining funding; however, its effects had not yet permeated their community. She said that it had not proven to be an adequate response in the areas where it had been implemented previously. She noted that, in conjunction with other initiatives, it might lead to a more substantial impact. She said that however, they could not definitively assert this outcome.

Mr. Andrews said that he did not see them gaining control over the issue if they considered the slide displaying the number of calls each month for two years; it had remained constant instead of decreasing. He said that this had been a persistent problem for some time now, and he was unsure when it was initially identified. It appeared to be an ongoing concern indefinitely.

Mr. Andrews said that this was part of the MOU with the ACPD, which he assumed was open-ended with respect to TDOs, providing whatever was necessary. He said that the request featured both ongoing and one-time funding, and the one-time funding, he presumed, covered vehicles associated with four-and-a-half positions. He asked if this would equate to four vehicles.

Sheriff Bryant said that was correct.

Mr. Andrews asked if there was any knowledge of any pending or proposed state legislation that could potentially impact this matter because it certainly seemed like a state problem.

Ms. Dimock said that she was not aware of any. She said there was always suggested legislation regarding increasing the number of treatment beds and making it mandatory to receive mental health treatment within a certain radius of one's community, as it is considered a best practice. She said that she did not recall hearing about any successful implementation of these measures. She said that staff would go back and verify this information.

Mr. Andrews said that perhaps the County could consider it as a legislative priority for their representatives, as they were very in tune with this issue.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that Mr. Andrews discussed the possibility of receiving additional funding for Allied. She asked if the funding would be expanded, meaning would it remain at the same amount or potentially increase.

Ms. Dimock said that she did not know.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that regarding the HART program, it appeared that it had successfully prevented the number of TDOs from rising.

Ms. Dimock said that it was too early to make that claim, but it was reasonable to surmise that at this point.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she understood that they had several matters in the process of moving forward. She said that she agreed with Mr. Andrews that this issue should be one of their legislative priorities for next year. She said that she was uncertain whether the legislature was aware of it.

Ms. Dimock said that the legislature was very aware of it.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that to clarify, she believed that their level of awareness may not lead to action and asked whether there was any legislation currently.

Sheriff Bryant said that she was aware of only one pending legislation, which was House Bill 832. She said that it addressed the duration it takes to provide alternative transportation for individuals to reach the hospital. She said that she believed this bill was being considered in the House. She said that she was uncertain about the status of the bill's final outcome.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that to expedite transporting someone to a facility sooner, additional funding and assistance were necessary.

Mr. Pruitt said that state intervention was more about the budget than legislation.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that it would be beneficial if they increased the budget. She said that to clarify, the HART program transports individuals to various facilities, not specifically the TDO for transporting people to mental hospitals. She said that instead, the HART program allows them to go home, visit a hospital, attend Region Ten, or other destinations. She asked if this was accurate.

Ms. Dimock said they may still end up with a TDO.

Ms. McKeel said that she would like to mention that the state is well-known for requesting JLARC (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission) studies and subsequently disregarding the JLARC study report. She said that last year, a JLARC study focused on CSBs was conducted, and she believed they should include its findings in their legislative packet this year. She said that the primary takeaways from the study highlighted that CSBs faced inadequate funding, insufficient compensation, and inadequate training. She said that she proposed discussing this matter with their legislators as part of their legislative packet. She said that she genuinely appreciated the report and request, and she understood the challenges they faced. She said that they should definitely consider that the JLARC study was available and had great recommendations for the state.

Mr. Gallaway said that he believed he misheard something when Mr. Andrews had asked a question. He said that included in the budget were an increase in operations for vehicle replacement fees, vehicle equipment, and fuel. He asked if the four and a half FTEs for TDOs were filled, would they need new vehicles to accommodate or if that was already part of the fleet.

Sheriff Bryant said that they had requested four vehicles for four and a half positions. She said that it would be a one-time cost for those vehicles.

Mr. Gallaway said that if that was included in there, he did not see any indication that it was not funded or if it was part of the unfunded list. He said that he had not searched for it specifically. He asked if staff could provide an approximate budget estimate for a vehicle, possibly similar to the one requested by the Police Department, so \$120,000.

Mr. Bowman said that on Page 113, the third-to-last bullet, the white not filled in, for \$918,000, which represented the cost for the four and a half FTEs. He said that this total amount covered both the

vehicles and the FTEs. He said that the reference to any increase in other costs would be for the existing operations and existing fleet.

Ms. McKeel said that throughout the budget discussions, various concerns were set aside in a designated "parking lot" for later consideration. She said that the parking lot had not been mentioned yet during their discussions. She said that she would be interested in discussing it further.

Mr. Andrews said that the Board understood the concerns of the Sheriff and appreciated her being at this meeting to present this information.

Mr. Bowman said that later today, they would revisit some of the other parking lot items with staff, but for now they would move forward in the presentation. He said that they would proceed to the final functional area within the General Fund that had not been addressed thus far, which was non-departmental. He said that they would discuss this topic briefly as it predominantly encompassed the transfer to Public Schools, which they had discussed on Monday.

Mr. Bowman said that this included transfers to capital and debt according to their formula, as well as revenue sharing payments to Charlottesville City. He said that although there were additional items in this category, he intended to devote most of their time in this chapter to continue the discussion on tax relief for the elderly and disabled. He said that he would briefly pause to accommodate any inquiries concerning other aspects of the non-departmental chapter apart from tax relief for the elderly and disabled.

Mr. Andrews said that there appeared to be no further questions from the Board, so Mr. Bowman could continue with his presentation.

Mr. Bowman said that the topic aimed to continue a conversation that the Board had held on December 13. He said that over the last two years and continuing into this third consecutive year, the Board was considering refinement of criteria and expansion of relief for this program. He said that on December 13, the Board had achieved consensus on four main points: income criteria, net financial worth criteria, potential program-wide funding cap, and property-specific caps.

Mr. Bowman said that the current income criteria were benchmarked at 80% of the area median income for a family of four, which had been endorsed for continuation. He said that the net financial worth criteria had increased from \$200,000 two years ago to the current proposed amount of \$305,000, adjusted for inflation since 2007. He said that the reason 2007 was referenced was because that was the last time the state had that gap and removed it. He said that the Board had decided not to pursue program-wide funding caps but was interested in property-specific caps.

Mr. Bowman said that the Board was not asked to take any action at this time but rather to provide direction on a preferred option. He said that this would allow staff to bring this back to the Board on a consent agenda at a work session on March 25, and to advertise a public hearing scheduled for April 17. He emphasized that this timing was important in order to factor in current program participants and others before tax bills were sent out in May and due in June.

Mr. Bowman said that to be eligible for the program, one must be 65 years old or totally and permanently disabled, hold the title of the property, and use it for residential purposes only. He said that the property could not be used as a business and must meet income and net financial worth criteria based on the Board's consensus from December 13. He said that a proration system was in place, offering 100% relief for those with an income of \$44,400 or less. He said that net worth was measured with exclusion of the subject residence and 10 acres of the property.

Mr. Bowman said that program data showed that when the Board expanded the criteria in 2023, there was an increase in the success rate of people applying. He said that it was 89% in 2022 and 94% in 2023. He said that it primarily benefited the most economically vulnerable people in the County, with 73% of qualifying individuals receiving 100% relief. He said that the average income of applicants was \$32,000, and the average net worth was \$48,000. He said that in the previous slide, he mentioned two categories: a net income of \$44,400 or less and a net worth of \$305,000; approximately 25% of individuals fell into the former category, while 5% belonged to the latter with an income ranging from \$66,000 to \$88,000.

Mr. Bowman said another way to analyze this graphically was to examine the relief provided to those in the program in 2023. He said that the majority of people in the program received 100% relief, and the provided chart represented those in the program for 2023, rounding off to the nearest \$1,000. He said that the most common relief ranges were between \$1,000 and \$3,000, resembling a mountain with a gradually descending left side and a steeper right side. He said that there was a tail that extended up to \$8,000.

Mr. Bowman said that the orange line on the chart represented the Countywide average tax bill for the recommended tax rate for CY2024. He said that this indicated that the financial situation of those receiving relief generally fell within the program's criteria, with most recipients receiving relief less than the average tax bill for 2024. He said that although the program could always be improved, it had provided a useful landscape of whom the program was serving.

Mr. Bowman continued that moving on to new information, staff had prepared three options for further Board discussion and direction. He said that the first was to continue the program without a cap as

it currently stood, incorporating the Board's December 13 direction, then the program would remain unchanged until the Board revised it.

Mr. Bowman said that the second option was to implement a property-specific cap but set it high enough so that no one currently in the program was affected. He said that he would walk through the implications of this option. He said that if the Board wished to establish a property-specific cap, they could set a basis for that, which would differ as it would impact existing recipients.

Mr. Bowman said that he understood the Board's desire from December was not to reduce relief. He said that the idea involved here was to increase some relief thresholds in order to redistribute the funding for relief. He said that in the next slides, he would present an analysis of how each criterion would expand relief, its understandability, its basis in the budget, and its impact on program recipients.

Mr. Bowman said that the first option is the most straightforward one, as it continues the status quo. He said that based on the Board's direction in December, this would expand relief by approximately \$120,000 in the upcoming budget. He said that the total increase for this program would be just under \$270,000, or 15%, which is a combination of the new relief amount of \$120,000 and the historical trend of growth, around 8%, seen in this program year over year. He said that this option is understandable because it involves no changes to the current program, can be funded in the FY25 recommended budget, and has no impact on current program participants as long as they remain eligible based on the criteria.

Mr. Bowman said that Option B introduces a property-specific cap, which represents a fundamental change in the program. He said that the Board still provides increased relief of \$120,000, but the important difference is the introduction of the cap. He said that if the cap is set at a level where it does not impact anyone, it would be relatively high. He said there will be no immediate impact on current participants; however, individuals needing to plan for potential changes in their financial situation and eligibility should be aware that relief would only be available up to the cap amount.

Mr. Bowman said that this option can also be funded in the recommended budget, with no impact on current recipients. He said that they would not be expanding relief in this case because the cap would be set so high that any additional applicants would require additional funding in the budget. He said that for perspective on what a maximum cap would look like in the budget, the highest amount of relief provided in CY23 was just over \$8,000, and from there it was a pretty steep drop-off to \$6,400. He said that referencing the slide, there was a small dot at \$8,000 and a slightly bigger tail end at \$6,000 as they went from right to left where more people were getting relief.

Mr. Bowman said that Option C involves instituting a cap with an objective basis, which would have an immediate impact on people currently in the program. He said that it provided \$120,000 in the expanded threshold, so the Board was continuing to do that. He said that the big difference that the Board must consider is that it would have immediate impact on those in the program currently. He said that there were some current recipients who would be put in a situation where, if the Board took action in April, people with limited financial means would have to figure out how to pay their bill before June. He said that the Board must consider the difference between the immediate versus the future impact of this option.

Mr. Bowman said that this option is also able to be funded in the budget. He said that to illustrate how a cap could work, staff used a cap based on the average tax bill in CY24. He said that this was objective, tied to a metric, and could be updated annually. He pointed out that the orange line they saw a few slides ago was important to understand the implications of the proposed changes.

Mr. Bowman said that if one was to the left of that orange line, they would still receive 100% relief, whereas if they were to the right of it, they would start to get a tax bill instead of having none before. He said that for example, if their tax bill was \$3,869 or less, they would continue to have no tax bill; however, if their tax bill was \$4,869 and they were used to having no tax bill, they would now get a tax bill of \$1,000.

Mr. Bowman explained that looking at the group of recipients in the program to the right, there would be 45 current recipients who would have their relief reduced in total by a combined \$35,000. He said that each individual's experience would be very different based on what that amount is; it was not really an average. He said there were 45 people in the program who would be impacted.

Mr. Bowman explained that staff had done further analysis to understand these 45 recipients better, and the Revenue Administration team found that their average income and average net worth was very close to the overall program averages. He noted that the \$26,000 average income of those 45 people was below the overall program's average income of \$32,000, and their average net worth of \$57,000 was slightly higher than the overall average net worth of \$48,000. He said that these figures were based on a group of 45 individuals with some variations among them but that they were representative of the typical recipient.

Mr. Bowman said that next, when considering the impact of a cap, the focus was not on reducing total relief but rather on modifying the program. He said that by reallocating \$35,000 due to increasing the net worth eligibility, at least nine people could be eligible for the full cap, with the possibility of more depending on specific circumstances. He noted that when evaluating how to modify criteria, staff suggested maintaining an 80% AMI (area median income) as a standard metric that should not be changed.

Mr. Bowman said that adjusting the net worth based on inflation-adjusted values from 2007 could

be considered. He said that if they were to increase the net worth, they would need to determine what that would look like for that \$35,000. He said that limited data makes it difficult since they only know the net worth of applicants. He said that they knew of three applicants that did not qualify in CY23, and they had a net worth of over \$500,000 at minimum. He said that they could not raise the net worth to \$500,000 or greater without additional revenue in the budget. He said that staff's analysis explored potentially increasing the number of recipients up to \$350,000, it could likely be accommodated in this budget or close enough that they could manage it as a budget issue.

Mr. Bowman said that in summary for Option C, they went from capping the relief to the average, and those 45 folks would begin to receive bills and come up with that money by June. He said that it allowed the Board to provide more relief. He said that it would be nine or more received with those applications and they could open the eligibility up to \$350,000 rather than \$305,000. He emphasized that this was a considerable amount of data; thus, it primarily depended on the Board's decision and the trade-offs concerning the best program design. He said that the focus should be on identifying who benefits from the thresholds under consideration.

Mr. Bowman said he would be glad to provide further details on these options, which staff has proposed for the Board's consideration. He said that as always, he was at their disposal to answer any questions that may arise. He said that if they received clear guidance, they could revisit this matter on March 25 and initiate the legal process for the Board to take action in April.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that regarding slide 35 and option A, she wanted to clarify that this expansion of the program did result in a total increase of up to \$268,000.

Mr. Bowman said that the total increase in the budget is \$268,000. He said that it was not related to the net worth or anything else.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that, considering the 45 people and nine people who would not be serviced with Option C, she would like to know how many people received 100% relief this past year.

Mr. Bowman said that he would ask the Revenue Administration if they had that answer available.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that her primary concern with selecting option C was the substantial amount of work it would entail and the subsequent issuance of tax bills to residents. She said that in both options B and C, individuals would receive more tax bills than they did previously. She said that her preference was for a more simplistic approach, so option A seemed to be a reasonable choice. She said that by choosing this option, they could monitor its effectiveness in serving the intended population while ensuring that qualifying individuals continue to be checked annually, despite receiving no tax bill for multiple years in a row.

Mr. Bowman said that there was a three-year process they went through. He asked if the Chief of Revenue Administration, Jennifer Matheny, could explain how that process worked.

Ms. Jennifer Matheny, Chief of Revenue Administration, greeted the Board. She said that in this three-year cycle, participants must complete a full application to qualify for the program. She said that for the subsequent two years, they undergo recertification to ensure no changes have occurred. She said that on the third year, they need to submit another full application. She said that the process repeats annually, with participants needing to prove their eligibility through a complete application during the third year. She said that while enrolled in the program, they followed this cycle.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley thanked Ms. Matheny for the explanation. She said that it was mentioned that if they decided to increase the budget from \$305,000 to \$350,000 for Option C, this amount could be accommodated within the budget.

Mr. Bowman said yes, that was correct. He said that it would be a combination of instituting a cap and increasing net worth. He said that the Board also had the option of just increasing the net worth criteria from \$305,000 upwards, but it would require other adjustments in the budget in order to fund that.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that referring back to Option A, which she preferred, she would like to clarify if \$268,000 was the total increase or the total they had.

Mr. Bowman said that the total program cost approximately \$2.1 million, representing a 15% increase from the previous year. He said that this increase of about \$120,000 stemmed from the Board's expanded criteria, which they agreed upon in December. He said that additionally, around \$140,000 was attributed to annual growth. He said that as more individuals became eligible and property values increased, and other people came into and out of the program, staff could anticipate an 8% change in overall figures.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that it appeared that the proposal in Option A increased the amount and allowed more people to be included. She said that this simplification ensured that individuals within the cycle would not receive the tax bill. She said that it could be confusing if they suddenly received one when they had not been, and she did not want penalties for those who might discard the bill due to confusion. She said that she was supportive of Option A.

Ms. McKeel said that she supported Option A. She said that maintaining the program's simplicity for participants was important, as complications may lead to a decline in participation during the

application process. She noted that coming out of the pandemic, they had experienced high inflation and challenges with budget issues. She said that although situations were improving, with inflation coming down, she suggested adopting Option A with the caveat that they reassess this decision next year. She said that by then, they would have more data available on the program's performance and its impact on participants. She said that without belaboring it, she would support Option A.

Mr. Gallaway said that Options B and C involved putting in limits on what this program costs the County.

Mr. Bowman said that was correct.

Mr. Gallaway said that therefore, Option A left it open-ended.

Mr. Bowman said yes.

Mr. Gallaway asked what Option A was raising the net worth to.

Mr. Bowman said that it was \$305,000 from the previous \$250,000.

Mr. Gallaway said that it had been mentioned that there was an option to raise it to \$350,000, but if they raised it to \$350,000 in Option A, it would take budget dollars.

Mr. Bowman said that was correct.

Mr. Gallaway said that what he recalled from the conversation in December was that the property caps were being brought up in order to restrict the tax relief in some capacity. He said that Option B was basically giving a tax bill to anyone who surpassed \$8,000. He said that Option C was grandfathering in those in the program.

Mr. Bowman said that was correct.

Ms. Mallek said that there was a question about if they went to \$350,000, how much more they would need to fund, and that someone may come up with that at some time. She said that she understood why some citizens had tried to figure out ways to cap individual benefit in order to exclude those who needed it the least and get some changes for people who needed it the most, and she believed they had done some significant improvements in the past couple of years.

Ms. Mallek said that she understood Option A was based on the \$305,000 and higher income. She said that Option B would keep the people in now, and future applicants at any level would be held to new monetary standards.

Mr. Bowman said that it would also impact the current recipients, but only if their value went over \$8,000. He said that if the relief value was \$1000, they would probably be okay for a long time with \$8,000. He said that not knowing everyone's financial circumstances or how they may change, they would not be locked in forever, but the cap would be high to reach. He said that it would also apply for anyone new in the program.

Ms. Mallek said that it was challenging to envision how both net worth and income levels were at their current stage, yet someone still faced a tax bill exceeding \$8,000. She asked if this might be an old family house where the elderly resided, which was large, leading to a significantly increased assessment. She asked if more context could be given to better understand the situation.

Mr. Bowman said that without knowing the exact circumstances, it must be something to do with a high assessment, financial net worth, and income, which formed the foundation of the tax bill. He said that he did not know the particular circumstances of anyone in the program.

Ms. Mallek said that it seemed counterintuitive until considering people living well into their 90s, as many of her constituents were, and living at the same place they were born. She said that she could understand that circumstance. She asked if there was a way to stagger the beginning, because she was horrified at the thought of giving an announcement in April that constituents may need to come up with \$1500 by June 5. She asked if there was any option the County had to manage that timeframe.

Mr. Bowman said that he would consider this in a couple of ways. He said that he did not believe the County had the authority to forgive or extend deadlines for any groups of people. He said that an approach the Board could take would be if they wanted to start the cap high, they could then revisit it in future years; however, it would require an analysis to understand the implications of that approach.

Ms. Mallek asked if they could not say that a part of the program would not take effect until the next fiscal year to give people more time to prepare.

Mr. Bowman said that they could take that as a follow up, and that he would direct that question to the County Attorney's Office. He said that he understood that they did have questions as to the certain date when legislation would take effect.

Ms. Mallek said that she appreciated the effort to keep increasing, although she was worried about losing the 2007 decrease because that was where they lost about 20 years' worth of participation

ability. She asked why that would go away.

Mr. Bowman said that to clarify, it was not going away. He said that last year, the Board discussed adjusting the \$200,000 for inflation. He said that \$250,000 was a two-year step-in for that. He said that because of the unknown financial impact, they did a partial step-in to \$250,000 and were now recommending to go to \$305,000. He said that the intent when considering future inflation changes was that the \$305,000 would be adjusted accordingly.

Ms. Mallek asked if that adjustment would continue under any of these options.

Mr. Bowman said yes.

Ms. Mallek said that she appreciated the clarification. She said that she had misunderstood that point earlier.

Ms. Mallek said that she would provide her inclination after her fellow Board members had all spoken.

Mr. Pruitt said that he was not the best at math, so he would like confirmation that an \$8,000 assessment would equate to a \$1 million estate.

Mr. Bowman said that doing math in his head was not his strong suit either.

Mr. Pruitt said that he understood it was the tail end and somewhat of an outlier, but his understanding was that it would be around \$1 million. He said that the smaller cluster they had at \$6,400 would be approximately \$800,000. He said that he could understand ways that that could happen. He said that he had recently taken his property and trusts class, and it seemed to him to be very realistic that if someone really wanted to, they could choose to retire here in a multi-million dollar estate, place their assets in a trust, disburse the trust annually, and never pay taxes.

Mr. Pruitt said that this was simply true because the trust was not an asset and he could easily disburse it to himself, therefore easily screwing the tax system if there was no property cap. He said that he would invite any lawyers present to correct him, but he believed this was appropriate. He said that if the trust was not classified as an asset, it would not be applicable to the caps on assets. He said that if there was no property cap, having a multi-million dollar estate would not disqualify him either.

Mr. Pruitt said that in that case, if he had no income other than the disbursements he was giving himself for paying his own property tax, it would mean that there was no income that would flag the income threshold, and it would only be \$10,000 to \$20,000 to pay those taxes. He said that it was not happening based on the data provided by staff, but the situation was possible, so he was uncomfortable with Option A. He said that a property cap was appropriate, and Option B seemed prudent in order to curb that type of future scenario.

Ms. McKeel asked if staff had an opinion on Mr. Pruitt's position.

Mr. Bowman said that to clarify, in terms of how the net worth was calculated, it was with fixed assets. He asked if Ms. Matheny had anything further to add in terms of the application review process.

Ms. Matheny said that applicants must provide supporting documentation, so that included tax returns and capital gains. She said that they could typically identify with the group that usually applies if there were situations like that. She said that it did depend on the type of trust, but they request trust documents and review those as well.

Mr. Pruitt asked if those were trusts of which they were beneficiaries or parts created as assets they have.

Ms. Matheny said yes. She said that they get all that documentation. She said that this statement did not cover everyone to the right, but there were situations where someone inherits a family property that they otherwise would not be able to afford themselves.

Mr. Pruitt said that when discussing the distinction between what is considered and what is not, he had observed various methods employed by different states to define income. He asked if they included the consideration of government benefits and annuities.

Ms. Matheny said yes, they took all that into consideration when determining what the income consisted of. She said that they also looked at bank statements, sometimes identifying what the source was, so there was a lot they could find through the bank statements as well.

Mr. Andrews said that to clarify, it was mentioned there was a three-year application and three-year recertification process. He asked whether the recertification for all individuals was completed simultaneously or if it was a rolling recertification.

Ms. Matheny said that it was rolling and based on when one entered into the program.

Mr. Andrews said that regarding slide 38, 45 current recipients would have relief reduced by a combined total of \$35,000. He said that he could determine the average, but he was more interested in

the median and where the amount of \$35,000 came from among the 45 individuals. He said that he suspected the distribution was not uniform.

Mr. Bowman said that generally, some individuals would be in the thousands and others would be less. He said that he could provide the follow-up information on what the median relief was. He said that he would ask Mr. Wilson, their revenue analyst, to calculate that.

Mr. Andrews said that he did not feel that they would lose people in the application process by doing Option C because they were already applying. He said that the question was when they applied that they would recognize at some point they did not necessarily qualify for 100% relief, meaning that they would receive a tax bill. He said that if they were to implement something as significant as the average tax bill, it would be a shock for a few people, although he did not know exactly how many people because he did not know how this distribution played out.

Mr. Andrews said that some of those 45 people may get a few dollars on their tax bill but others may get thousands of dollars. He said that there may be one or two who received the maximum \$8,000 bill. He said that part of his interest in reconsidering the cap stemmed from recognizing that it was still low for net worth. He said that some retirees prefer to receive their retirement funds as an investible portion they can own but live off only the investment for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Andrews said that raising the cap would cater to these individuals' needs, which was why he leaned towards Option C, which would create a cap higher than the average tax bill but still meeting the intent of the program. He said that the data presented was different than he expected, and he recognized it was highly impactful for some people, but he did not know how many. He said that some people had high tax bills due to the value of their property despite their very low income.

Ms. Mallek said that on slide 31, it said that applicant is the titleholder of the property. She asked if that did not mean a person. She said that it seemed like that would remove some of the consideration about trusts.

Mr. Andrews said that the trusts being referred to were asset trusts rather than property trusts.

Ms. Mallek said that still, it would be the person who received the benefit. She said that if they were not in this program, they could be an LLC.

Mr. Pruitt said that he was suggesting that it could be possible for a very clever and wealthy person to hide their assets in a way that it appeared they were nonexistent. He said that it seemed that they had a lot of good controls against that, but he never tried to underestimate the cleverness of those trying to save a buck.

Mr. Andrews said that in that case, they would not be hiding their home but would be hiding their assets, likely in an irrevocable trust in that case.

Ms. Mallek said that military pensions were all part of what was handed in, so a lot of people were ruled out even though they had the money. She said that she was still struggling and would love to hear from some other people about the real life circumstances as they related to these options.

Mr. Gallaway said they had mentioned in December that there may be some people attempting to game this system, but the process was such that they would have to be really committed due to the required steps in order to qualify for the program, which probably precluded people who needed the program, let alone someone trying to game it. He said that he was satisfied with the controls they had.

Mr. Gallaway said that Option A and Option B appeared very similar to him. He said that Option B was saying that in the future they may have a tax bill that goes up, but at this point, if they were going to revisit it next year, he would be fine staying with Option A. He said that it would increase the piece for the inflation and gave them another year of data to decide if a cap was necessary based on budgetary concerns or liability down the road. He stated that he was supportive of Option A for the next year.

Mr. Pruitt said that he believed that Option B was a necessity, but as a policy issue, he erred more towards Option C due to some of the reasons mentioned by Mr. Andrews. He said that it seemed that it allowed for a greater accommodation of the things people who were struggling actually needed to survive rather than at the cost of creating some tax liability on some of the most expensive estates. He said that it seemed to allow for more achievements in their goals for the program. He said that if he were to rank his choices, it would be Option C, then Option B, then Option A.

Ms. Mallek said that she would choose Option A and Option B as her first choices.

Mr. Andrews said there was Board consensus for Option A, with some interest in Option B that would be revisited next year.

Mr. Gallaway clarified that this was direction from the Board and not a final decision. He said that some of the information requested by Mr. Andrews would be beneficial for the Board to have when making their final decision.

Mr. Bowman said that staff could prepare a draft ordinance based on Option A. He said that they would provide the follow-up information at the March 25 meeting if that was the will of the Board. He said

that the Board could take action on Option A or Option B, but this had narrowed the possibilities of what could be considered. He said that regardless of what was approved, he had heard desire from the Board to revisit this with additional data as they had continued to do.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if, regarding Mr. Pruitt's comments, they had mechanisms in place so that someone with a \$20 million estate and an irrevocable trust could not take advantage of this program. She said that they would clearly be able to tell if someone was living in a \$10 million home, so she would like to know if there was a way for them to decide that those individuals did not qualify.

Mr. Andrews said that he believed that would be Option B. He said that they already knew the highest beneficiary had a \$1 million assessed property value, so if they were to do Option B, they would be preventing the possibility of the described situation. He said that at this point, however, it had not been an issue.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if this had ever been an issue or if they had a way of seeing if this was an issue.

Mr. Bowman said that they had the data for historical context, but he did not have it readily available. He said that he could confirm that the program had experienced steady growth at about 8% annually until the Board began expanding the relief efforts in the past two or three years. He said that this suggested that there was not someone who came in with tens of thousands of dollars in tax relief for their bill, because it would have been evident in the data. He said that this was his speculation and not based on data.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she was content with the current progress of the program and anticipated examining it next year for potential improvements. She said that they could reassess the situation as necessary to identify individuals who could benefit from their assistance.

Mr. Bowman said that to answer the first question from Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley, there were 45 individuals to the right of the orange line, while there were 550 people to the left of the same line who currently received assistance. He thanked Mr. Wilson for his prompt analysis on this matter. He said that staff had received adequate direction and would continue answering questions in their next discussion.

Mr. Jeff Richardson, County Executive, said that the Board had engaged in a meaningful discussion on this. He asked Ms. Matheny if she had anything further to add to the conversation.

Ms. Matheny said that they must make additional considerations for selecting Options B and C, as the income thresholds impact the percentage of relief individuals receive. She said that this was not only a discussion about caps but also about the percentage of relief people get initially. She noted that not everyone received 100% relief. She said that they needed time to think through the questions posed by the Board, as they modified the landscape and affected how they considered relief for those not receiving full coverage. She said that while they may think that everyone in the program received 100% relief, there were actually a lot of people in the 50% and 75% brackets that they must consider.

Mr. Bowman thanked Ms. Matheny for clarifying that. He said that in how they showed the data, because almost three quarters of the recipients were in the 100% bracket, it was the easiest to understand, but there were impacts for those in the 75% and 50% brackets.

Ms. Matheny said that when looking at the line, not everyone to the right was getting 100%. She said that many of those were only getting 50%.

Mr. Pruitt noted that the statistic of 45 residents, who collectively received a total relief amounting to \$35,000, suggested that most of them were receiving approximately 50% of this aid.

Ms. Matheny said that was correct. She said that they should not lose sight of that, and she wanted to emphasize that. She said that she appreciated the opportunity to think this through.

Mr. Andrews said that this meant that residents were in fact receiving a tax bill.

Mr. Bowman said that the next part of their discussion would focus on Fire Rescue.

Mr. David Puckett, Deputy Chief of Fire Rescue, said that he would begin by providing an overview of how Fire Rescue services were provided. He said that they would then review the two unfunded requests that the Board had asked for additional information on, followed by discussion with the Board.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that Fire Rescue divided the County into 11 districts based on their facility locations. He said that while they evaluated performance by district, he wanted to stress that all districts contributed to the overall success of the system. He said that no single station could address the needs of all emergencies within its district. He said that there were a total of 14 stations, with six represented on the map in blue having 24-hour career staffing, and the six in green being volunteer stations with career staffing from Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. He said that additionally, two stations in orange represented volunteer stations without any career staff.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that performance evaluation was based on a standards of cover. He said that this was one of the components required for accreditation and considered a best practice. He

said that a third-party consultant completed their standards of cover and provided recommendations in 2018, leading to the Board adopting response time objectives for the County. He said that the response time objectives were 8 minutes, 90% of the time in Development Areas, and 21 minutes, 90% of the time in Rural Areas.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that since 2018, they had continued to use the various metrics included in the standards of coverage to evaluate their performance and inform their five-year planning process. He said that the first request they would discuss was the addition of a second 24-hour ambulance in the Route 29 Rio area. He said that the area, shown in red, was known as the Seminole District and was served by the Seminole Trail Volunteer Fire Department and ACFR's (Albemarle County Fire Rescue's) Berkmar Station. He said that the area included Route 29 from Forest Lakes to the City, East and West Rio Roads, and some adjacent areas such as portions of Barracks and Earlysville Road.

Deputy Chief Puckett said there were over 28,000 residents within this 21 square miles, making it the most densely populated area they served with over 1,300 people per square mile. He said that this area included over 7,500 individuals aged 65 and above, along with a high concentration of nursing homes, meaning many senior citizens had complicated medical conditions and required more frequent care. He said that the area continued to grow due to large developments such as Stonefield and Brook Hill.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that on the left of the slide was a heat map illustrating all calls for service in the County. He said that heat maps were useful for demonstrating relative call density, with the busiest areas indicated in yellow. He said that for reference, the Seminole District was circled in white. He said that in 2023, this district had over 5,000 calls for service, accounting for 29% of the County's total call volume. He said that currently, one ALS (Advanced Life Support) ambulance was staffed in the area 24 hours a day. He said that the standards of cover recommended adding a second ambulance to the area in 2018.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that they would now examine the ambulance demand in this area more closely. He said that in 2023, there were over 4,500 requests for an ambulance, with the assigned ambulance running over 3,000 calls, almost 1,000 more than the next busiest ambulance. He said that the chart on the right showed the call volume of urban ring residents. He said that due to high demand, the Seminole ambulance was unavailable for 35% of their calls in their area.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that the Board may be questioning who responded to those additional 1,600 calls when the Seminole ambulance was not available. He said that ambulances from neighboring districts had to step in. He said that as seen in the chart, Hollymead and Ivy were the most impacted, with Ivy responding to almost as many calls within the Seminole District as they did in their own district. He said that Hollymead and Ivy were unavailable for 20% of the calls in their own district. He pointed out that ambulances outside the urban ring occasionally responded to the Seminole District, including Western Albemarle Rescue Squad and Scottsville. He explained that an area over capacity had a ripple effect across the rest of the system by pulling more and more resources into it.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that before he reviewed the information on this slide, he wanted to note that all multiyear charts he would present to the Board this afternoon used a 12-month rolling average. He said that this removed much of the volatility associated with monthly demand and provided a more accurate trend line for their consideration. He said that he wanted to briefly thank Brandon Ackart, their Fire Rescue analyst, for helping compile this information.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that the displayed chart represented the monthly call demand for ambulances in the Seminole District over the past four fiscal years. He said that it included all incidents within the district that required an ambulance, regardless of where it came from. He noted that there had been an increase of approximately 100 calls per month since 2019 or a 29% increase. He stated that the standards of cover recommended adding a second ambulance based on the call demand in 2019.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that when comparing response time performance to call demand, they observed that the response times, indicated by the blue line, had increased from 10 minutes to just over 11 minutes, correlating with the growing demand. He added that although it was challenging to predict future performance, it was reasonable to assume that demand in this district would continue to increase alongside population growth, resulting in a subsequent rise in response times. He said that he would also anticipate seeing response times increase in neighboring districts as those ambulances compensated for the escalating demand.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that predicting the exact impact of adding a resource to an area was challenging; however, they had analyzed the performance of the primary ambulance in that district. He noted that the next chart was nearly identical to the previous one but only included calls answered by the ambulance station on Berkmar Drive. He said that the unit had continued to absorb some of the growing demand but was beginning to level off, the standards of coverage suggest that 250 calls per month was approaching maximum capacity.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that it was projected that if they added a second ambulance to that district, they would split the 400 calls a month, each handling approximately 200 calls. He said that this would result in performance improvements in the Seminole district while increasing ambulance capacity in neighboring districts. He said that this request included nine FTEs (full-time equivalents), and based on their hiring timeline, would have a half-year impact in FY25. He said that they could utilize an existing ambulance to limit one-time costs, which included items such as turnout gear. He said that since these

positions were not specifically for fire suppression, they were ineligible for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Firefighters and Emergency Response) Grant funding.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that as they transitioned to North Garden, he would like to take a moment to recognize the North Garden Volunteer Fire Company and their unwavering commitment to the community. He said that the Board had heard from Chief Stevens the previous week, and he was present in the audience that night. He said that they had worked together for a number of years, and the Chief and his team were truly community-minded individuals.

Deputy Chief Puckett acknowledged the difficulty it posed for a volunteer fire department to serve their community for over 50 years and then request assistance. He said that the fact that their membership voted unanimously to request 24-hour staffing demonstrated their commitment to the community above all else. He said that their intentional planning efforts, supported by the Board in the past, had focused on meeting the needs of the community. He said that a few years ago, they had completed a building renovation and expansion process. He said that this foresight ensured that when the community needed 24-hour staffing, they would have the facilities to support it. He said that as a result, no additional capital funds were required for this request.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that the proposal to staff North Garden differed significantly from the Seminole ambulance situation, but he believed the Board would find it equally compelling. He said that the area encompassing North Garden District involved the communities of North Garden, Covesville, and Batesville, as well as 15 miles of Route 29 South. He said that this region spanned 111 square miles and housed approximately 4,800 residents.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that in 2022, the Board provided career staffing for North Garden from Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., utilizing FEMA SAFER Grants. He said that staff comprised of fire engine and ambulance staff during these hours. He said that volunteers were responsible for staffing nights and weekends but did not provide ambulance services staffing. He said that in 2023, there were 695 calls in the North Garden District, with an additional 200 calls responded to by units from North Garden Station in other districts to support the overall system.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that of these 695 calls, 364 occurred during nights and weekends. He said that the highest concentration of calls was in the Route 29 Plank Road area. He said that the region is somewhat isolated, with the next closest stations primarily originating from Ivy or Monticello. He presented a graph illustrating the call demand for North Garden District, with the orange line representing the total monthly call volume and broken down by applicable staffing periods below: the blue line denoted Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., while the brown line represented nights and weekends. He pointed out that there had been a modest increase in call volume, most of which took place during the Monday through Friday portion.

Deputy Chief Puckett stated that in July of 2023, North Garden submitted a formal request to expand their career staff into 24-hour coverage. He said that they emphasized the urgency of this request due to the two-year period required for hiring, training, and deploying firefighters; the decreasing membership; and the increasing age of existing members. He said that additionally, they expressed a desire to move the ambulance available to the community on nights and weekends.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that in 2021, as North Garden experienced a decrease in membership, they partnered with ACFR and CAPE (Community and Public Engagement) to conduct a targeted recruitment drive specifically targeting the North Garden area. He said that recruitment efforts encompassed increased advertising, yard signs, flyers, mailers; however, they observed limited success. He said that during the market research, it was discovered that there were only 1,500 individuals within the district aged between 20 and 49 years old, indicating a relatively small number of potential new members from this demographic.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that the next chart demonstrated North Garden's membership activity. He said that each operational member is listed along the bottom, with a bar illustrating the number of calls they responded to in 2023. He said that it was possible for multiple members to have answered the same call for service. He said that for instance, the bar on the far left represents member number one, who participated in 568 out of the 842 incidents North Garden was dispatched to handle.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that North Garden had a total of 21 operational members who participated in at least one call in 2023. He said that a small group of members accounted for an unusually high percentage of responses. He said that the top three members constituted 53% of the responses, while the top five accounted for 70% of all responses. He said that losing just one or two of these members could significantly impact the agency's capacity to address emergencies in their community.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that examining member responses by age, it was seen that the majority of responses originated from individuals aged between 70 and 79. He said that 63% of all responses were from members over 60 years old. He asked the Board to bear in mind that it takes approximately two years from the time the budget is approved to train and deploy firefighters.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that finally, he would like to present performance data for the North Garden District. He said that the chart displayed response times in minutes, with the blue line representing weekdays between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. and the brown line representing nights and weekends.

He said that he wanted to direct the Board's attention to the right side of the chart, specifically in October of 2022 when they added career staff. He said that there was a corresponding reduction in response times due to the addition of an ambulance in that area. He said that as they started to think about what impact this request would have on performance, it was easy to assume that they would see the same impact they saw when career staff was added, which had reduced response times by approximately three minutes. He said that that represented the best-case scenario with night and weekend performance remaining constant. He said that it was important to consider the potential performance decline as membership declined.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that examining historical data could provide insight into possible outcomes, but predicting how and when membership activity would diminish was challenging. He said that the increased response time had resulted from two of North Garden's most active members experiencing serious medical conditions simultaneously, leading to their inability to respond and causing response times to increase dramatically. He said that assuming that this situation represented the area's performance if North Garden's membership declined, funding this request could improve response times by up to eight minutes.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that the request included seven FTEs and would have a half-year impact on FY25. He said that these positions were eligible for FEMA SAFER Grant funding, but the potential offsets for FEMA funding were contingent upon receiving the grant. He said that the application window was currently open, and they typically received notification in September. He said that both of these requests aligned with goal one and six of the Board's Strategic Plan, and if funded in FY25, personnel would be deployed in spring of 2026.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that if the Board considered a fourth SAFER grant, they must prepare and submit the application within the next few weeks. He said that however, the Board's approval did not commit to the grant. He said that if successful, the Board would have the opportunity to accept or decline the grant at that time. He said that he had also included the combined budget impacts of these two requests with and without SAFER funding for reference.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that on slide 53, they were asking for nine FTEs for Seminole Trail.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that was correct.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if they were requesting an ambulance as well.

Deputy Chief Puckett said no. He said that they had enough ambulances to supply an ambulance.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if the nine FTEs were for one ambulance.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that was correct. He said that for 24-hour staffing, they were required to have a minimum of two on every shift, and they needed enough surplus to cover leave, sick leave, family leave, and other absences.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that it was mentioned that these positions were ineligible for the SAFER Grant.

Deputy Chief Puckett said yes. He said that the SAFER Grant was specifically for firefighters on suppression apparatus. He said that since this was targeting an ambulance, it would not be eligible for FEMA funds.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she knew that many of the firefighters were both EMTs and firefighters.

Deputy Chief Puckett said yes, they were all cross-trained. He said that as an example, when they added staffing in North Garden, that was FEMA eligible. He said that even though they crossed between ambulance and engine, those positions were at least 50% on a suppression piece. He said that since this request was for staff 100% dedicated to ambulance, it would not qualify, even though they were firefighters. He clarified that if they were not on fire suppression, they would not be eligible.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if they were eligible to be firefighters or ambulance, but not eligible for FEMA funds because on paper they were only seen as one.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that was correct.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that regarding North Garden, they were asking for seven FTEs. She asked if that was due to the volunteer situation.

Deputy Chief Puckett said yes. He said that it would expand their daylight coverage to 24/7 coverage.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if it was correct that these FTEs would reduce response times by three minutes in the area.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that it would have an immediate impact of three minutes, but if they

continued to see a decline in membership at North Garden, it could be more dramatic than three minutes.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if they had an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the City of Charlottesville.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that was correct.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if they utilized Charlottesville to respond to calls when Seminole was unavailable.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that the MOU with Charlottesville was limited to fire apparatus and did not include ambulances. He said that the ambulances were limited to mutual aid, so if they needed an ambulance, they would request one, and based on their census at the time, they may or may not provide an ambulance.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she understood that Charlottesville responded in her area.

Ms. McKeel said they faced a complex issue that they had anticipated for years, which was unfortunate. She said that Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley clarified the issue regarding Seminole not being eligible for FEMA grants, while North Garden was. She said that she would like to explore the possibility of obtaining FEMA grants at a relatively low cost until they were required to assume responsibility for them. She said this involved applying for FEMA grants with the understanding that they would eventually need to pick them up. She asked if they did that, how this would specifically affect Seminole. She said that given its domino effect, she required further clarity on the situation.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that they could feel some impact in the Seminole district in the sense that the Ivy ambulance was the primary ambulance along Route 29 south into North Garden. He said that consequently, if the North Garden ambulance handled those calls, there would be increased availability for the Ivy ambulance to respond to emergencies in the Seminole District. He said that likewise, adding an ambulance to the Seminole District allowed the Ivy ambulance to better serve North Garden. He said that these changes impacted them in both ways.

Ms. McKeel said that she was sure it was difficult to quantify that.

Deputy Chief Puckett said it was. He said that he did not think he could put a number to that.

Ms. McKeel asked if there would be some impact on Seminole due to the domino effect.

Deputy Chief Puckett said it would be relatively small, but yes.

Mr. Gallaway said that he would present some comparisons that may not be entirely fair; however, he needed to ask about the urgency of these items. He said that he understood the importance of both, but if they must prioritize one over the other, they may have to determine which is more critical. He said that his line of questioning aimed to explore this issue while acknowledging that these might not be fair ways to compare.

Mr. Gallaway said that when examining the two areas and their contingency plans, it seemed Seminole's contingency plan was triggered when they got called out, and then resources were allocated to other calls as they came in. He said that in contrast, North Garden's plan involved back filling when volunteers were unavailable. He said that given the staffing and equipment challenges currently faced by both areas, he asked which contingency plan caused greater concern for them.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that considering the staffing aspect, they had a consistent and stable career staff in place around the urban ring. He said that the issue there was whether they were outpacing demand. He said that the declining and aging membership from North Garden presented an uncertain future regarding sustainability. He said that this factor was more unpredictable. He said that as pointed out, the lower demand in that area complicated a direct comparison.

Mr. Gallaway said that he acknowledged the point regarding call times and the two volunteers with high numbers of responses. He said that in the urban ring, the target response goal within eight minutes had never been achieved. He said that even with adding in the ambulance and staff, response times were still between nine and nine and a half minutes, which was a minute and a half over the response time goal. He said that over the past few years, they managed to stay under the response time; however, it was essential to note that it only took a couple of volunteers exceeding their response times to push their overall average above the 21-minute mark.

Mr. Gallaway said that he believed it was unfair to make a comparison, but these response time goals were established for specific reasons. He said that if they failed to meet the benchmarks for Seminole, they were essentially accepting higher response times while assisting a location that currently met the response time goals. He said that he may have unfairly compared the two situations since one was an ambulance and one was fire. He asked if that difference should be taken into consideration.

Deputy Chief Puckett said no. He said that he would add that the North Garden nights and weekends currently possessed fire coverage, which included the volunteer staff, engines, and tankers. He said that however, they did not staff the ambulance. He said that incorporating career staff during nights and weekends would, by default, also provide an ambulance to the community during those times.

Mr. Gallaway asked if the current response times take that into account.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that on the graph, the blue line to the right of the hashed line demonstrated a reduced response time when both career staff and an ambulance were added at the station. He said that the presence of an ambulance significantly decreased the collective response time, as previously, it was dispatched from Ivy.

Mr. Gallaway said that it was delicate, but he believed that three minutes in rural areas had a more significant impact compared to one minute in urban rings. He said that the data provided should help them determine where their resources yielded the best results. He said that although he had not made a decision yet, he was still analyzing the situation and considering other factors, such as contingency plans. He said that the integration of Seminole's fire truck had aided calls throughout the urban ring; however, its impact may not have been as dramatic as anticipated.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that in those calls for service pertaining to ambulances, Seminole Trail did not offer transport services. He said that they provided first response medical care, often responding quickly and initiating care before the ambulance arrived and transferred the patient.

Mr. Gallaway said that he was really concerned about the increasing number of urban ring calls, especially when assistance is required from other locations. He said that his concern arose from the limited number of incidents that can be effectively responded to before reaching a critical point where no one responds. He asked if mutual aid resources step in to provide assistance in such dire situations.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that there could be several factors contributing to this situation. He said that it was indeed possible that multiple units within the urban ring were simultaneously occupied by calls. He said that if a spike in call volume occurred, battalion chiefs could relocate units closer to the urban ring. He said that they might consider moving a rural unit nearer. He said that as the available units were exhausted, they would then seek assistance from Charlottesville or expedite the release of units currently at the hospital to restore them to active service.

Mr. Gallaway asked how many times they had exhausted the units in that type of scenario during the past year.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that there have been very few instances where they requested an ambulance from Charlottesville. He said that the City may have requested the County more often than they had requested the City, but it was not infrequent for them to move units closer to the urban area. He said that occasionally, they took engine staffing from a station and reassigned them to a reserve ambulance at the same location, surging up an additional ambulance to meet specific demands. He said that they could experience high patient volumes that might require an hour-long response, followed by a return to normal levels. He said that they took action based on these fluctuations.

Ms. Mallek said that this was a painful thing that had been going on for the 16 years she had been here. She said that she met with Chief Richardson and President Lawson last night. She said that they had explained that many times the Station 4 ambulance or fire engine was coming into Seminole. She said that she agreed with everything said previously about the demand. She said that the raceway in North Garden was terrifying and created a high risk. She said that even though it was not as red on the map, there were still many deaths that occurred at that particular intersection, so she understood the need in that area. She said that it really was a domino effect in that if one station was not equipped or lost volunteers, it could significantly impact response times. She said that before Station 12 existed, Earlysville was running 800 calls per year by themselves.

Ms. Mallek said that sometime during the legislative process at the beginning of the year, there was a funding study, JLARC, performed that focused on the capacity for fire and rescue services across the Commonwealth. She asked if staff had heard anything about that. She said that she assumed that there would be resources that went along with that study, which would be great, but she did not know.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that he had heard of some bills early on, but he did not know if any of them had made it out of session. He said that he had not received any updates recently.

Ms. Mallek said that it was disappointing that SAFER grants did not apply to ambulances. She asked if the percentage of calls that were rescue were 70% or more.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that it depended on the area, but Countywide, 70% was a fair estimate.

Ms. Mallek said that this statistic was another reason to recognize the issue. She said that the interrelatedness of this was incredibly important, and it was wonderful that their different agencies continued to work better together each year. She said that the overall philosophy was keeping every element as strong as it could be. She said that while they were not discussing the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) right now, what they were discussing for operational personnel was the whole reason why she would discuss the \$800,000 County commitment to match the already-existing bank account that the volunteers had raised.

Ms. Mallek said that the funds would support two staff every night. She said that they could run an ambulance and an engine or a tanker and a brush truck simultaneously, given their current number of volunteers. She said that the station had been building momentum for years, with this being the third

cohort of strong and dedicated volunteers ready for placement. She said that her intention was to emphasize accelerating the addition for the company, with the County contributing for the first time.

Mr. Pruitt said that he knew that private ambulances existed, but he was unclear as to how they were integrated into the response configuration. He asked if there was a private alternative that could backfill when there were gaps.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that there were several private ambulance services that did not participate in the 911 service except during mass casualty incidents when emergency plans were activated. He said that these services had limited capacity, and nursing facilities sometimes struggled to secure them due to their scheduled-based operations. He said that they prioritized keeping their vehicles occupied to generate revenue; thus, they could not respond immediately when called. He said that instead, they scheduled appointments hours later. He said that the Chief of Police was working on integrating mobile integrated healthcare into the system in collaboration with nursing homes to alleviate the pressure on the 911 system over time.

Mr. Pruitt said that he appreciated bringing up the topic of mass casualty incidents, as it was his next question. He said that considering the training and preparation processes for such events, there were particular areas of interest that they focused on. He asked for more insight into these specific concerns, as it may assist their decision-making process regarding the geographical factors within the County when dealing with mass casualty incidents.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that to clarify, "mass casualty" referred to situations where the number of patients overloaded available resources. He said that this could involve as few as ten patients or hundreds of patients. He said that a mass casualty event may result from accidents with two minivans on Route 29. He said that such incidents could quickly overwhelm resources and demand a significant number of resources in one area. He said that in contrast, areas with denser populations may face more severe consequences if an event like an active threat or a large-scale accident occurred. He said that the impact would be greater, affecting more people and requiring even more resources to manage the situation.

Mr. Pruitt said that previously they discussed response times in comparison between various urban Fire Rescues and specifically the North Garden Fire Rescue. He said that he was curious if North Garden's remarkable performance with their current staffing levels was also seen in other rural Fire and Rescue and Rescue Squads. He asked if they were consistently meeting the 21-minute goal. He said that he was under the impression that the average in the Rural Area was exceeding the goal.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that in the Rural Area, response times typically aligned with the set response time goals. He said that however, when considering the entire County, meeting the Development Area response time goals proved challenging due to the demand and limited resources.

Mr. Andrews said that regarding slide 61, he wanted to address a key point regarding the differences between Seminole's and North Garden's ambulance service needs. He said that while Seminole had experienced a steady increase in its ambulance service requirements, North Garden's situation was more about recognizing the volunteer system as a significant potential flaw that required attention. He emphasized that it was essential to consider these distinctions when comparing the two, as they presented unique challenges.

Mr. Andrews said that both requests addressed important needs. He said that he wanted to ask about the SAFER Grant capabilities. He said that their previous experiences with SAFER had been successful, and they had been very effective in securing funding. He asked for insights into the strength of this application compared to past successful applications. He noted that criteria and applicant pools may change over time; however, he expressed curiosity about the current standing of their application.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that they believed the story was quite compelling, although predicting all criteria and meeting them precisely could be challenging. He mentioned that in previous years, they had combined various items to maximize points in multiple areas. He said that the justification for North Garden staffing from Monday through Friday during daylight hours was similar to that for nights and weekends. He said that additional information on membership availability and age could be included, which should further strengthen the proposal.

Mr. Andrews asked if there was room for that in the application.

Deputy Chief Puckett said yes, it would certainly be a part of their narrative.

Mr. Andrews said that he wanted to confirm his understanding about Charlottesville requesting more from County services than the County requested of them. He said that in this particular case, it was not an obvious call as to whether it was agreed to. He said that they had not discussed, and he would like to know if, they had used Nelson County resources in southern Albemarle.

Deputy Chief Puckett said not really. He said that Albemarle had better resources than most adjacent counties, so they received more mutual aid requests than they had sent out.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that the main unspoken issue was that the volunteer force was declining. She said that she did not know whether this trend would persist for five more years or 30 more years, but it was something that their current Board as well as future Boards must consider. She said that at some

point, this would become an all-career fire department. She said that hopefully, it would not be for a long time, and perhaps it never would, but she believed that the SAFER Grant would benefit from including the information about the aging volunteer base. She said that it was very compelling that they had so many volunteers aged between 70 and 80 years old, as well as some over 80 years old.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that he would like to make one brief remark regarding this slide as well. He said that in addition to its implications from a workforce perspective, he reiterated the dedication to the community. He said that there were several individuals aged 60 and above who remained highly active in community affairs and responding to emergencies. He said that he applauded those volunteers.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she had one other question regarding Seminole Trail. She asked if the nine FTEs would be for 24/7 ambulance service.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that was correct.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked when the predominant number of calls took place.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that in 2023, the Monday through Friday calls were 183 per month on average, and on nights and weekends it was 202.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if the heaviest calls would necessitate 4.5 FTEs.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that they could scale this into a Monday through Friday peak unit to relieve pressure during those periods, and while it would not necessarily help the nights and weekends, it would be a step in the right direction.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if they would allocate the staff for those peak hours.

Deputy Chief Puckett said yes.

Ms. McKeel clarified that the Board was not making a decision today. She said that this was another parking lot issue that they would need to come back to.

Mr. Richardson said that the topics discussed so far were significantly budget-impactful. He said that these included allocating 4.5 FTEs for TDO, exploring solutions for Seminole Trail, and addressing the North Garden station, which allowed staff to apply during the period ending on or before April 12. He said that they had been successful on three, but there were costs associated with pursuing the application, costs for FY25 and FY26. He said that these costs were significantly less than what they would incur without the SAFER grant.

Mr. Richardson said that their goal was to receive some indication from the Board regarding any topics discussed today that they would like staff to work on between now and the 25th, when they would return to set the tax rate ceiling on the 27th. He said that if the Board had an interest in exploring any of the budget-related items mentioned today, the list mentioned by Ms. McKeel would serve as a reference, and Mr. Bowman would maintain a record of the Board's interests. He said that if they provided initial guidance today on things they should examine, they would consider their input. He said that alternatively, if they required more time until the 25th, they understood and would accommodate that request.

Mr. Richardson said that as they progressed through the budget process, he reminded the Board that it was a constrained budget. He said that the Board was aware of the six pages of unfunded issues discussed earlier, which could not be incorporated into the budget. He said that therefore, having more time to work on scenarios over the 12 days available between now and the 25th would assist them in thoroughly considering these matters, even if it involved general direction and general interest. He said that he hoped that this clarification did not confuse their understanding of where they were and that it was helpful. He said that staff were open to answering any further questions or concerns.

Mr. Andrews said that it seemed that there was a shared interest in understanding the potential impact of addressing certain issues. He said that this could involve reallocating existing priorities or even necessitating changes to the tax rate itself.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that a step-up approach may be appropriate, as they had previously discussed.

Ms. McKeel said that she would like to know what exactly they needed to do. She said that they were all looking at the FEMA SAFER Grants, but that left a hole at Seminole. She asked what they would need to do in terms of cutting an item to cover these issues while also creating a new hole, or what it would look like if they were to raise taxes.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that they should also consider what items could potentially be deferred in the budget.

Ms. McKeel said that her concern was that there were six pages of items that they had already deferred.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she was looking for any and all options.

Ms. Mallek asked if it would be appropriate to direct staff to work on the SAFER Grant.

Mr. Andrews said that there was consensus of the Board to direct staff to apply for the SAFER Grant.

Mr. Bowman said that the direction provided had been helpful. He thanked the County Executive for setting up the discussion effectively. He said that their next slide was actually discussing this topic. He said that as they prepared for meetings on March 25 and 27, staff had some time before March 25 to plan various scenarios, and he did not expect the Board to share everything on their mind, but if there were alternative options available, for instance, if staff must create a scenario involving North Garden and the Sheriff, it would be beneficial to consider other options that they may also need to think through.

Mr. Bowman said that they had reviewed the General Fund, delving into several topics with substantial data. He noted that the Board had given valuable guidance throughout this process, engaging in Q&A sessions regarding the unfunded list. He said that this current stage represented a checkpoint either before taking a break or transitioning to capital discussions. He said that any additional directions provided at this point would aid staff in assisting the Board on March 25 and inform the subsequent action on the 27th. He said that to simplify matters, he asked if there were any other items in the parking lot, aside from the Sheriff and Fire Rescue, that could help staff better support the Board if identified.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she would like to see all available options for Fire Rescue. She said that this was the most important issue to her at this time.

Ms. McKeel said that based on the information shared within the past few hours, she was highly interested in exploring the FEMA SAFER Grant and its requirements. She asked if this application was something they could pursue given their current funding situation, or if they could get that money for the grant quickly, because it seemed like a great opportunity.

Mr. Bowman said the staff's direction would involve determining what was not covered by the grant and exploring potential approaches for Berkmar, whether it was a phased or full-in approach. He said that they would also consider other budgetary impacts. He said that as they assisted the Board, their goal was to provide options for addressing these concerns. He said that also, they could prepare scenarios for any other anticipated issues that may arise during the decision-making process.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she would like to contribute a related point concerning the question. She asked if the Board reaches consensus at this time regarding the SAFER Grant, could they provide it to staff to avoid them having to return on March 25 and ask again at that time. She said that if they feel strongly enough about it, they should decide as soon as possible because they only had until April 12.

Mr. Bowman said that he believed there were two actions to consider. He said that the first action was to listen to the Board's recommendation to proceed with the grant. He said that the second action was to amend the FY25 budget to ensure sufficient funding was available if they secured the grant. He said this would cover the approximately \$100,000 for one-time costs in the first year that were not covered by the grant.

Mr. Gallaway said that he would like for all of it to happen, but that he did not want to limit the options for Fire Rescue. He said that he understood the logic of applying for the SAFER Grant, but at some point it would cost them something. He said that if they kept going after the SAFER Grants without addressing the items that they could not use those grants for, in some ways it would be like using one-time funding for ongoing expenses. He said that they must take the operational hit at some point, so he was not ready to go there yet. He said that he would like to think on it a little bit after what they had discussed today, then start looking at numbers and how they could get creative with it.

Mr. Gallaway said that the SAFER Grant amount of \$100,000 did not get them very far with anything else, but if they were going to step up and increase the revenue somewhere, then there may be a way to get somewhere for both of them. He said that he did not know yet. He said that there were still things that he had not yet discussed from their six pages of unfunded items. He said that he did not need extra sessions on the fact that they were not adding a police position, and he was concerned about the DSS (Department of Social Services) not getting some of those positions. He said that in years past, it had been up to him to come in and say that they needed to do this and the \$100,000 had to come from somewhere.

Mr. Gallaway said that he did not need their help in preparing for that, but these decisions involved more than just \$100,000 or \$200,000 each. He said that at that level, he needed to review the Sheriff and Fire components. He said that to him, it was not moving money around. He said that if they had money to move around for \$1 million, they would have had that in there already. He said that the smaller items that were \$100,000 had flexibility and did not have huge consequences elsewhere, but they all needed to be at the table to look at the larger items. He asked if Mr. Bowman could refresh the Board on what a penny on the tax rate was equal to in revenue.

Mr. Bowman said that one penny on the real estate tax rate was equivalent to \$2.9 million in revenue. He said that the allocation included \$0.3 million towards capital and debt, \$1.6 million for Public School operations, and approximately \$1 million for County Government operations.

Mr. Gallaway said that the question had been asked, and he could not find the answer for, the property tax at \$3.42.

Mr. Bowman said that for each penny on the personal property tax, each penny was equivalent to approximately \$100,000. He said that the split would be about \$6,000, \$54,000, and \$36,000 respectively.

Mr. Gallaway said that his other revenue question earlier was about the business tax, the gross sales receipts.

Mr. Bowman said that he would have an answer to that question with their next follow-up.

Mr. Gallaway said that he would like to know the history of what that fee had been, and what kind of revenue that could bring in if it were raised.

Ms. Mallek said that she would like to further discuss the potential expansion of the HART team's operational hours. She said that if there was a way to understand how they balance operational investments and capital investments of the same amount, she would appreciate it.

Mr. Bowman said that in their scenarios to expand HART, there were questions from DSS, and they could put that in the parking lot as well as options.

Mr. Pruitt said that continuing with Mr. Gallaway's point, he wanted to discuss what a penny on the different tax rates would be. He said that focusing specifically on personal property taxes, it seemed necessary to work within a specific number, which was what the split was between the total revenue if they were to return to the pre-COVID amount. He said that it would be helpful to understand if they were to return to their personal property tax rate prior to COVID, what would be the full implication in the budget.

Mr. Bowman said that he would follow up on what the peak was a few years ago. He said that if the Board were to take a step back from where they were with the revenue from the adopted budget last year, it would be 13 cents to generate about \$1.2 million.

Ms. McKeel asked if that would be split.

Mr. Bowman said yes. He said that going back further, it would be greater than those 13 cents. He said that he could provide that specific information as a follow-up to the Board.

Ms. Mallek said that there might be information regarding the recovery of the used car market. She said that it had reportedly increased by 30%, although it had not fully rebounded at 100%.

Mr. Bowman said that he would provide the historical context for those values to the Board with their next follow-up.

Mr. Pruitt said that he had concerns from their unfunded list that he wanted to address, and believed they were significant for his community and the matters he was focusing on. He said that he wanted to ensure they were not overshadowed by the larger boulders being discussed. He said that in terms of budget scenario planning, he was curious about the trail technician and whether their role would meaningfully impact the opening of sections of Biscuit Run, as many people were eager for.

Mr. Pruitt said that he thought the emergency aid fund was highly impactful in terms of dollars spent, and the proposed increase, along with additional FTE to manage it, seemed a modest cost considering the value it provided. He said that he believed it had been a \$40,000 unfunded request for this initiative.

Mr. Pruitt said that regarding Southwood, there was a significant request for accelerated fund dispersal to keep them solvent while they continued the project. He said that this was something they needed to consider, as delays could lead to increased construction costs and sewage mitigation expenses. He said that although he believed this would come from the Housing Fund, it was unclear whether reprioritizing other commitments could cover Southwood's request fully.

Mr. Pruitt said that if additional funds were needed beyond the Housing Fund's allocation, he wanted that amount to be part of their conversation. He said that the issue was complex as it involved multiple aspects: timeline concerns, increased costs, and Southwood's deployment pace. He asked for the exact figure if there was an excess amount they could not cover through reprioritization or other commitments. He said that it was important to urgently address these financial concerns and their potential impact on construction timelines and costs.

Mr. Andrews said that it appeared that there was not consensus on all of these issues, so they would each need to think hard about their most important issues and what remained unfunded.

Ms. McKeel said that they may need to make time to address those six pages of issues.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she would like to clarify the information provided regarding tax rates, specifically for real property tax and personal property tax. She said that when presenting the tax amount, it was essential to also provide a breakdown or split of the allocation. She said that this information was important for understanding their share and utilization.

Mr. Bowman said that he would like to reiterate the three items mentioned by Mr. Pruitt so that he understood the direction. He said that mentioned were the trail technician position, the emergency aid fund, and Southwood support. He said that he wanted to ensure that he had not missed any other topics. He expressed gratitude for the Board's assistance. He added that there were no Board action requests today; however, this discussion was aiding staff in their preparations for the upcoming meeting on the 25th.

Mr. Andrews said that they had to all go back and look through those six pages of unfunded items to determine their priorities.

Recess. The Board recessed its meeting at 5:36 p.m. and reconvened at 5:44 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 2. **Work Session:** FY 2025 Operating and Capital Budget, *continued*.

Mr. Bowman said that they would begin discussing the CIP, acknowledging that there was much content to cover and understanding that the Board had to stop at 6 p.m. He said that he aimed to provide an overview, after which they could delve into Goal 5 of the Strategic Plan around Education. He expressed his gratitude to the School staff present at the meeting that day. He said that any topics not covered would be addressed on March 25 during the next work session. He said that the good news was that the Board members had previously seen most of this information during the joint work session with the School Board on December 6, which focused on the CIP.

Mr. Bowman said that at that joint meeting, staff had been directed to develop a recommended CIP using the balanced FY24 – 28 CIP as a starting point. He said that this approach was important because it allowed them to concentrate on later years for new projects instead of adding them in the first year. He added that staff would continue updating financial assumptions, taking into account the County's bond issuance in the fall. He said that the impact of this had been factored into their numbers. He said that at the joint meeting with the School Board on December 6, they had shared their long-range space planning committee's funding request.

Mr. Bowman said that they would consider revenue and have staff prepare a starting point for the Board's deliberation and use the Board's Strategic Plan for that milestone. He said that there were some revenue options available to the Board should they choose to amend the CIP. He said that some items had already been incorporated, and they were aware of the impact of the CY24 reassessments. He said that the School Board was recommending one-time funding to contribute as well.

Mr. Bowman said that he would like to take a moment to give an update from December. He said that the Board may be aware of legislation in the General Assembly that would allow enabling authority for localities to hold a referendum for sales tax of 1% if approved. He said that 1% sales tax in the County was in the range of \$24 to \$25 million dollars, which would be significant for school construction. He said that this was now awaiting the Governor's action. He said that they would see what happened and proceed accordingly.

Mr. Bowman said that, similar to their operating budget process, they considered their Strategic Plan, obligations, and financial policies, leading them to a total five-year CIP of \$336 million dollars, rounded up. He said that this represented the revenue side of the CIP. He said that the first year of the CIP was the capital budget that was appropriated and that was where the legal authority would be enabled. He said that years two through five the CIP were referred to as the out years. He said that these served as a basis for planning but were not legally authorized to be spent.

Mr. Bowman said that projects typically worked their way through the CIP. He said that for example, the southern elementary school construction had been in the CIP for some time and was now part of the FY25 budget recommended to the Board. He said that revenues for the five-year CIP primarily came from planned borrowed proceeds, which would be used for projects like the southern elementary school due to its expense, long life cycle and eligibility for borrowing funds to be paid back over 20 years. He said that the next category of funding was cash equity, which included General Fund transfers and one-time money coming into the CIP.

Mr. Bowman said that he would not discuss the smaller revenues in detail as they were assigned to specific projects like the Darden Towe athletic field rebuild, where the City contributed funding that could not be reprogrammed for another public safety project.

Mr. Bowman said that on the expenditure side, in summary, Public Schools made up 62% of the CIP over the upcoming five years. He said that the largest County Government portion was in Community Development, specifically the transportation leveraging program. He said that they would discuss this further on March 25.

Mr. Bowman said that he would now focus on Goal 5, which was Education. He said that the total School CIP was \$207 million, with significant funding for High School Center II and the southern feeder pattern elementary school in the first year. He said that the northern field pattern would be addressed in years three and four, with funding allocated for renovations, maintenance, and development investments throughout all years. He said that system-wide renovations totaled \$14 million, and the other schools were out there.

Mr. Bowman noted that the School Board provided a letter to the Board in February based on their upcoming deliberations, prioritizing increased costs for High School Center II and the southern elementary school. He said that these priorities were reflected in the recommendation acknowledged by the School Board chair on Monday. He said that while this did not fully fund the School's capital request, it reflected their priorities for how they would allocate funding as they progressed.

Mr. Bowman said that taking a higher-level view of these projects, he would briefly discuss them as the Board had seen these before. He said that the capacity of projects included the southern and northern feeder patterns, with slides reflecting the appropriation timing and when they would actually be open for operations. He said that the southern feeder would be first, followed by the northern feeder. He said that system-wide renovations involved work planned for Albemarle High School and Western Albemarle High School as part of the overall high school project with Center II and modernizing other facilities.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if the 1% sales tax referendum was passed, would it accelerate the process and allow them to move faster on the northern feeder elementary school opening. She said that considering a projected opening in 2029, it was a long wait.

Rosalyn Schmidt, Chief Operating Officer for Albemarle County Schools, said that she would primarily defer to the County Finance Department for more detailed modeling. She noted that assuming increased funding, projects may be accelerated, and that school had been deferred based on available funding. She said that she did not have as much knowledge about how the availability of cash would affect the timing.

Mr. Bowman said that first, they must determine if they could implement it, and he expected that the School staff would find a way, but he would ultimately defer to them on that point. He said that second, they must determine what the sequence of events would be after the bill was approved by the Governor.

Mr. Sumner said that considering the calendar and the bill's content, there were timing aspects that would determine when it would come into effect. He said that the earliest possible referendum election would be in November, assuming the Governor signed the bill. He said that numerous activities must be completed collectively to achieve this goal, and it largely depended on when the Governor signs it, as well as their early vote estimates and the required timeline. He said that ideally, they should appear before the Board of supervisors in May or, at the latest, June for this to happen. He said that they were closely monitoring activities in Richmond and had planning efforts underway with staff to ensure accurate timing.

Mr. Sumner said that assuming the Governor signed the bill, it passed through the referendum, and received approval from the Board of Supervisors, the earliest they would see tax dollars flowing and revenue starting would be June of 2025. He said that the state required approximately 120 days after the approval of the referendum and the approval of the ordinance by the Board to implement the additional sales tax for it to be collected by the state. He said that consequently, all these factors would influence when they would see revenue or have estimates on that revenue.

Ms. McKeel said that she would simply make the comment that she believed it was very important, if at all possible, to undertake this action during a presidential election cycle because that is when people typically vote, and they would have the best chance of achieving their goal. She said that it would be great if they could begin seeing revenue in June 2025. She said that she did not have any questions at present. She said that there were many uncertainties surrounding the Schools, and they must continue monitoring their progress as they go through the process.

Mr. Gallaway said that he understood that they increased some of the CIP funds based on the letter received from the School Board for southern elementary school. He said that at the time when he inquired about this, the School Board had already made decisions to adjust the costs involved. He said that these decisions were made prior to his question, according to staff.

Mr. Bowman said that it was due to both the rise in costs and alterations in the project's scope; however, he requested the School staff that were present to clarify.

Mr. Gallaway said that the specific scope of the question was whether it did not decrease the 500-seat capacity.

Ms. Schmidt said that the presentation to the School Board included the schematic design of the school, which featured a significant funding gap. She said that they proposed value engineering options to address this issue, but the gap still persisted. She said that consequently, the revised funding gap was presented to the Board of Supervisors and incorporated into their considerations.

Ms. Schmidt said that to reduce costs, they explored various value engineering options for items as playground services and window glazing. She said that they did not decrease the building's overall capacity. She said that they had three classrooms that were add-alternates to give them flexibility on their bid, but if they were able to afford those classrooms, the capacity would be 500. She said that they had to cut the size of some of the classrooms. She said that they had originally planned it as a kindergarten through 5th-grade school. She said that kindergarten and first grade classrooms were typically larger with bathrooms, and that the revised design now catered to 3rd through 5th-grade students, with smaller

classrooms due to the change in age groups. She said that the modification limited the facility's future adaptability. She said that this was likely the biggest concession, but the capacity of the school remained unchanged.

Mr. Gallaway asked if they made that decision because there was another elementary school nearby.

Ms. Schmidt said yes.

Mr. Gallaway said that it was important that they approve the CIPs based on student seats, and he was fine with that justification. He said that the numbers could not change without some alert to them, because he would not be supportive if they reduced seat capacity with either of those two projects.

Mr. Bowman said that Mr. Davidson would present the CIP and debt management on March 25 so that they would have adequate time to address it. He said that he would discuss the next steps on the agenda. He said that on March 25, they would continue the CIP discussion, consider various scenarios and parking lot options. The work session on March 27 would be dedicated to Board action regarding the chosen scenario for tax relief. He clarified that the town halls scheduled in April had been posted on the website for future reference, with April 10 being a placeholder, to be determined later based on necessity. He expressed appreciation for the Board's attentiveness and valuable input during this productive work session.

Mr. Andrews thanked staff for the excellent presentations and for being willing to address all the concerns raised by the Board. He said that he wanted to remind everyone about the town hall meeting, which provided an opportunity to gather feedback on the parking lot issues, and the priorities discussed.

Agenda Item No. 3. From the Board: Matters Not Listed on the Agenda.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that there would be a budget presentation tomorrow night at the Places 29 North CAC (Community Advisory Committee). She said that she would let them all know how it goes.

Ms. McKeel said that they had faced many challenges, and she had something more fun to propose. She said that tonight she was proposing the final step in the Sense of Place Transit Art Initiative. She said that she wanted to express her gratitude to Garland Williams, Director of CAT (Charlottesville Area Transportation), for joining them tonight, as he could address any questions people might have.

Ms. McKeel said that the Board had been receiving quarterly updates from Ms. Jessica Hersh-Ballering, Principal Planner, and Mr. Kevin McDermott, Deputy Director of Planning, as the work with VDOT, the City, CAT, and Albemarle County began prior to the pandemic. She said that bus stop artwork not only supported public transportation but also demonstrated their commitment to environmental sustainability by reducing traffic congestion. She said that it fostered a sense of community pride and highlighted the history of their region.

Ms. McKeel said that bus stop artwork was an excellent investment, as it enhanced the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. She said that the initiative came to them now because CAT has a bus shelter prototype and progress has been made for placement of bus shelters along VDOT roads. She said that CAT intended to order approximately 60 bus shelters over the next five years for designated CAT stops in Albemarle County and within the City. She said that as part of the Sense of Place Transit Art initiative, one piece of artwork would be installed on a bus shelter in the County and another in the City each year.

Ms. McKeel said that Ms. Hersh-Ballering had provided a list of 30 shelter locations to the group, and the most suitable ones for art would be determined. She said that all artistic work, art installations, and maintenance were under the direction of the Charlottesville Mural Project through an agreement with the City of Charlottesville and CAT. She said that Albemarle County was not an assignee of the agreement, which was currently with the City's legal department. She said that they were not an assignee on that agreement.

Ms. McKeel said that Albemarle County's commitment to the Sense of Place Bus Stop Art involved funding. She said that with bus stop installations of two per year at a cost of \$6,000 per bus stop, the total Art installation cost equaled \$12,000 annually. She said that this required a contribution of \$4,000 per bus stop by Albemarle County, \$4,000 from CAT, and \$4,000 from the City of Charlottesville. She requested consensus from the Board to allocate \$4,000 of ongoing funding in the Community Development Department (CDD) budget to support Art in Place.

Ms. McKeel said that CDD had a transit budget where this allocation can be located, and the first Sense of Place Art location had already been determined to be at Stonefield where a shelter had already been installed. She said that she understood there might be questions regarding this matter and mentioned that Ms. Mallek might be able to address some, and Mr. Williams was available to answer any questions as well. She said that Mr. Richardson could also speak to the project.

Mr. Andrews said there was consensus from the Board to allocate \$4,000 per year of ongoing funding from the CDD transportation transit budget to fund bus stop art.

There was a Board consensus in favor of the funding.

Mr. Richardson said that staff would be working until March 25 to generate options for the Board to consider if they wished to give direction on any of the items they had discussed so far. He said that the SAFER Grant specifically had obligations attached to it for FY25. He said that they would look at options within the budget to consider funding of the Berkmar Station ambulance.

Mr. Andrews said that the Board was definitely considering options, and those options had tax rate implications as well as potential reprioritizing of other items.

Mr. Richardson said that it was correct that there were tax rate implications to this work, and staff wished to respond to the Board regarding the real estate and personal property taxes. He said that if the Board requested staff to find funds within the budget, they would come back with recommendations for the Board to consider, and based on the six pages of unfunded items, those recommendations would be related to cutting services.

Mr. Andrews clarified that funding anything from their list of unfunded items would require not funding something already included in the budget.

Mr. Richardson said yes.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she was concerned about the SAFER Grant because of the imminent April 12 deadline. She said that they should give Fire Rescue enough time to apply for that, so if they did not have a decision until March 25, it was limiting their available time to apply.

Mr. Andrews confirmed that there was consensus from the Board to move forward with the SAFER Grant application.

Mr. Bowman said yes, staff would move forward with the application. He said that the \$100,000 deficit would not be the same type of disruptor as some of these other larger changes would be. He said that it would be a relatively easy issue to resolve. He said that they would proceed with that, but the rest of the items would be addressed again at the March 25 work session.

Agenda Item No. 4. From the County Executive: Report on Matters Not Listed on the Agenda.

Mr. Richardson said there was no report from the County Executive.

Agenda Item No. 5. Adjourn to March 20, 2024, 1:00 p.m. Lane Auditorium.

At 6:07 p.m., the Board adjourned its meeting to March 20, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Lane Auditorium, Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA 22902. Opportunities for the public to access and participate in this meeting are posted on the Albemarle County website on the Board of Supervisors home page and on the Albemarle County calendar. Participation will include the opportunity to comment on those matters for which comments from the public will be received.

Chair

Approved by Board
Date: 06/18/2025
Initials: CKB