

An adjourned meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County, Virginia, was held on March 18, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. This meeting was held by electronic communication means using Zoom and a telephonic connection, due to the COVID-19 state of emergency.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Ned Gallaway, Ms. Beatrice (Bea) J.S. LaPisto-Kirtley, Ms. Ann H. Mallek, Ms. Diantha H. McKeel, Ms. Liz Palmer, and Ms. Donna P. Price.

ABSENT: None.

OFFICERS PRESENT: County Executive, Jeffrey B. Richardson; County Attorney, Greg Kamptner; Clerk, Claudette K. Borgersen; and Senior Deputy Clerk, Travis O. Morris.

Agenda Item No. 1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by the Chair, Ms. Donna Price.

Ms. Price said the meeting was being held pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 20-A(16), "An Ordinance to Ensure the Continuity of Government During the COVID-19 Disaster." She said that the opportunities for the public to access and participate in the electronic meeting were posted on the Albemarle County website, on the Board of Supervisors' homepage, and on the Albemarle County calendar. She stated that participation included the opportunity to comment on those matters for which comments from the public would be received.

Ms. Price noted for the record and the public's information that Chair Gallaway will be attending and participating in the meeting, but due to some anticipated interruptions at his worksite, in order to minimize disruptions during the meeting, she would be running the meeting.

Agenda Item No. 2. **Work Session:** FY 2021-2022 Operating and Capital Budget.

- Fire Rescue Overview
- Complete Review of Board "List" Items

Mr. Jeff Richardson, County Executive, said a number of staff were present and would introduce themselves if they are an active part of the afternoon's presentation or to answer questions from the Board.

Mr. Richardson said Mr. Andy Bowman, Chief of Budget and part of the Finance and Budget team, would walk the Board through the framework of how they would be spending their time that afternoon.

Mr. Bowman said this was Work Session #3 for the FY 22 budget.

Ms. Palmer asked if when staff sends the Board the slides later, they could put it in a form where the Board could easily see the notes. She said she cannot see the notes in the PDFs they receive.

Mr. Bowman said earlier, he sent the Board a page to make it more digestible.

Mr. Bowman presented a slide showing the work session schedule. He said this was Work Session #3, and #4 would follow on Monday, March 22. He said on Monday, they will talk about an update to the cigarette tax, and about transit and the voter registration budget.

Mr. Bowman said there will be an update on March 29 that was previously an "as-needed" session. He said this is now planned to be an update and discussion on the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funding.

Mr. Bowman said if needed, there will be a work session on April 1. He said they will then have a public hearing on the Calendar Year 21 tax rate and the Board's proposed budget on April 28, with adoption on May 5.

Mr. Bowman said the agenda for the afternoon would include an overview of Fire Rescue, followed by a short break if desired by the Board. He said the Board would be taking two actions; the first being to finalize the advertised tax rate for public hearing and advertisement, and the second to approve a proposed budget for public hearing and advertisement. He said those items may be considered in either order, but staff has suggested for the Board's consideration putting the tax rate first. He said this can be discussed later in the meeting.

Mr. Bowman paused in case there were questions from the Board regarding the process over the coming weeks. There were no questions.

Mr. Bowman said he would begin by framing, at a high level, the total Fire Rescue System budget, which is discussed on page 85 of the recommended budget document. He said the total budget for the system's operations is \$19.5 million and is made up of the listed components, which he would talk through at a high level.

Mr. Bowman said the largest portion of the Fire Rescue System is the Fire Rescue Department, shown in the light grayish/blue-green color on the chart, which makes up the majority of the chart.

Mr. Bowman noted the Fire Rescue Department includes a substantial portion of volunteer support. He said for example, for volunteer stations that have requested supplemental staffing, those personnel are included in the Fire Rescue Department budget. He said in terms of the Training Division, which is a division of the Fire Rescue Department that supports both department personnel and volunteers in the system, all the Training Division expenses are included in the Fire Rescue Department.

Mr. Bowman said there are materials and supplies costs that are really system costs that are included in the Fire Rescue Department. He said there are other costs such as insurance for volunteer stations and insurance-related costs the Line of Duty Act (LODA) state program. He said all of the costs are included in the Fire Rescue Department, and they manage those costs on behalf of the entire system.

Mr. Bowman said the next part of the chart, shown in dark blue/turquoise, is "Volunteer Fire Rescue" and refers to the contributions of the nine stations in the community. He said it covers, pursuant to the Board's volunteer funding policy, items such as utility costs, building maintenance, fire and EMS supplies, meals for crews, uniforms, training, administrative costs, etc. He said this totals \$1.8 million.

Mr. Bowman said the next category is "Systemwide Fleet Management" and totals \$1.7 million. He said the apparatus are co-titled and includes fuel, repair and maintenance, and the insurance on those vehicles that go into maintaining the entire systemwide fleet.

Mr. Bowman said the final category and piece of the chart is "Other Fire Rescue" and totals about \$300,000. He said the majority of that is a contract with the City of Charlottesville, who provides fire service in the Development Area ring around the City. He said there are some areas where the City is closer to respond. He said this amount is set by a contract, and the funding is revised every year based on the number of net calls that go from the City into the County.

Mr. Bowman said Chief Dan Eggleston would talk through the majority of the content for Fire Rescue.

Chief Dan Eggleston, Chief of Fire Rescue, said he was joined by Deputy Chief Heather Childress and Deputy Chief David Puckett, who will be participating in the run-through of the Fire Rescue System at certain times. He said he would start by giving a quick overview of the Fire Rescue System, touching on significant milestones and investments that have been made in the past 20 years.

Chief Eggleston said the first major investment was made in 1998, when they first started putting career staff at volunteer stations upon request. He said Seminole Trail was the first department to do so, followed by Earlysville and Stony Point Volunteer Fire Departments.

Chief Eggleston said that in 2002, they built and staffed the Monticello station. He said this is one of five stations that were built over a 16-year period and was something identified years ago in the Comprehensive Plan to mainly support the land use plan by providing urban levels of services in the Development Area. He said this is a process they started in 2002 and ended with the Pantops station in 2018.

Chief Eggleston said also during this period, they started adding additional career staff to volunteer stations, listed on the slide. He said they also fortified some of the staffing at the urban stations to address service gaps they had been seeing over a number of years.

Chief Eggleston said that in 2005, they made a significant investment to what is probably one of the bigger processes, where the Board adopted a volunteer operational and capital program. He said before, they had been funding each volunteer department at the same equal amount, and so this was changed to base it upon the actual needs. He said at the same time, they established a fleet plan for the entire system, then established the replacement criteria to move all that apparatus into the capital budget. He said this is an initiative to free up the funding that the volunteers are doing to put towards their buildings and other methods to close those gaps. He said this was a significant move in 2005.

Chief Eggleston said that in 2008, they began the EMS Cost Recovery Program. He said this was a long process that began in 2010 and today, allows them to recover about \$2.7 million of EMS insurance-only billing. He said this is related to the transport of patients to the hospital and has been a very successful program. He said with the Board's support, they are charging insurance only so that the citizen does not bear any cost to this program.

Chief Eggleston said that in 2011, they established through an ordinance a coordinated Fire Rescue System, which clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the chiefs, volunteer stations, and volunteer members. He said it set forth an initiative to develop a more unified and coordinated system across the board.

Chief Eggleston said 2013 was a significant milestone as well, which is when they renegotiated the City contract which, at the time, was approaching \$1 million. He said this was negotiated down to something much lower, about \$150,000 at the time, and is now about \$200,000. He said they were able to take the savings and reinvest it back into the Fire Rescue System. He said in part, the Ivy station was helped with funding by the savings from that renegotiated contract.

Chief Eggleston said finally, in 2020, a significant investment was made of 22 additional personnel to further staff two ALS ambulances at Pantops and Ivy, to provide a daytime engine at Pantops, and to provide staffing for Crozet Volunteer Fire Department during the daytime. He said this was a significant investment in the system, and as they will address later with Chief Puckett, they are currently in the middle of the implementation of this program.

Chief Eggleston presented a slide that showed a quick snapshot of the station makeup. He said at the top, there were four stations that are all volunteer. He said there was an asterisk next to North Garden because in this FY 22 budget, there is an initiative to provide daytime staffing to North Garden.

Chief Eggleston said in the middle were the stations at which they provide supplemental daytime staffing. He said these are called "combination departments" because they help staff during the day, then the volunteers pick it up and staff on nights and weekends.

Chief Eggleston said at the bottom were mostly career staff, which are County-owned stations and staff that are mostly in the Development Area. He said while 24-7 Fire Rescue service is provided out of most stations, they still have an all-rescue station at Berkmar and one in Scottsville.

Chief Eggleston said naturally, with the recent request from North Garden, the Board probably wanted to know more about what is being done in terms of volunteer recruitment and retention. He said Deputy Chief Childress would cover these topics.

Deputy Chief Heather Childress introduced herself as the Deputy Chief of Member Services. She said the last several years has seen significant change across the Fire Rescue System. She said given this amount of change, they felt it was important to provide Board members with information about systemwide recruitment and retention efforts.

Deputy Chief Childress said that unfortunately, volunteer fire and EMS numbers across the nation are declining. She said this is a fact that every volunteer fire department and rescue squad are dealing with in the country. She said at the bottom of the slide, she included a link to a study published by the National Fire Protection Association that provides a quantitative analysis of fire department profiles nationwide. She said this report talks about declining numbers of both volunteer firefighters and volunteer departments across the nation.

Deputy Chief Childress said there are a number of reasons why volunteer numbers are declining. She said an important factor to consider is that Baby Boomers are retiring en masse, and there are not enough Millennials and Gen-Z'ers to take their place. She said the fire service has traditionally relied on multigenerational families passing down their tradition of joining the local fire department or rescue squad, but this is sadly becoming a thing of the past. She said the Millennial and Gen-Z generations are just not trending towards emergency service as much as previous generations have done. She said many people need two jobs to make ends meet or have other obligations that prevent volunteering as a firefighter or EMT.

Deputy Chief Childress said that in the Commonwealth, the time and effort required to obtain and maintain basic fire and EMS certifications has increased significantly over the years. She said these changes were made to increase member safety and provide the highest-quality patient care but, without argument, have had quite a negative impact on volunteers. She said an unintended consequence of the additional certification requirements for volunteers is the hardship that it creates for them to obtain that certification. She said this directly impacts any volunteer department's ability to draw in new members.

Deputy Chief Childress said that locally, the Fire Rescue System is not immune to this problem. She said they are experiencing some of the same issues seen across the nation in Albemarle County. She said last year, Crozet Fire Department requested career staff, and the Board would see a similar request from North Garden in this year's proposed budget.

Deputy Chief Childress said while not immune to it, they are somewhat insulated to this problem with the supply of UVA students who join Albemarle County departments and provide service during their time there.

Deputy Chief Childress said residents in the area also have hundreds of other opportunities to volunteer in the community. She said the vast majority of those opportunities do not require the significant and ongoing time commitment associated with membership in a Fire Rescue department.

Deputy Chief Childress said there are indicators of successful recruitment efforts across the Fire Rescue System. She said the first indicator is the number of volunteers that are recruited, onboarded, and trained every year in the system. She said a significant number of volunteers join each year.

Deputy Chief Childress said the second indicator is that the certification courses taught by the ACFR Training Division are consistently full, with rosters made up of new members from the Fire Rescue departments.

Deputy Chief Childress said in Calendar Years 2019 and 2020, approximately 180 new volunteers were onboarded across the Fire Rescue System. She said 95 new members were added in 2019, and 84 new members were added in 2020, despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic forced departments to halt onboarding for several months while they got their arms around what conducting business in the pandemic atmosphere was like. She said data on these new members are collected from the number of new members physicals that ACFR schedules and pays for, as well as the number of new users to the records management system.

Deputy Chief Childress said an important point that they do not have a firm grasp on is the number of volunteers who left the system during that same time period. She said the net gain or loss of members is not clear.

Deputy Chief Childress said the ACFR Training Division is responsible for providing basic certification courses year-round for the volunteer members. She said the Training Division provides all the courses required for any member to be released as a firefighter or EMS provider in the system. She said these classes are offered multiple times throughout the year and are held on nights and weekends to accommodate volunteer and student schedules.

Deputy Chief Childress said the Training Division also provides advanced classes to train beyond that basic certification level. She said additionally, they try to accommodate any requests submitted by the volunteer departments if there is something specific they would like to have.

Deputy Chief Childress presented a slide that provided data on the basic certification courses conducted in 2020. She asked the Board to keep in mind that the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Training Division to make multiple course adjustments and postponements, which also ultimately resulted in a few class cancellations throughout the year. She said the courses shown in the table on the slide represent the core set of certifications necessary for members to provide service. She said the table shows how often the courses are offered in a year, the minimum number of hours required per class, and the total number of students who were members of the volunteer Fire Rescue departments and participated during the year.

Deputy Chief Childress said based on the data from these rosters and the required hours per course, 156 volunteer members received 13,324 hours of instruction in 2020. She said the asterisk on the slide noted that several of the students took more than one class, and it was 156 students total.

Deputy Chief Childress said the next slide included data on the advanced training that was offered in 2020. She said this goes beyond the essentials, as the courses vary widely in subject matter and include some instructor/officer training, driver pump operator, technical rescue, and specialty classes that are not required to participate in the system, but many people enjoy taking them.

Deputy Chief Childress said several of these courses were cancelled in 2020, and one of the toughest cancellations was the Regional Fire School. She said this event is always well-attended and provides another 8-10 classes for members to participate in. She said for reference, in 2019, 38 volunteer Fire Rescue members received over 1,000 hours of instruction in the 2019 Regional School.

Deputy Chief Childress said the training in the table shown represents an additional 1,800 hours of instruction for 57 more students that happened in 2020. She noted that some of those students may have participated in more than one class.

Chief Eggleston said he would take a moment to talk about volunteer retention efforts. He said what the Board would not see in this budget recommendation is a funding request for the Length of Service Award. He said this is an issue that was identified some years ago as a high-priority item, and a survey had been conducted in 2019.

Chief Eggleston said the Volunteer Recruitment Committee and staff, working with the FEMS (Fire & Emergency Medical Services) Board, dug into this issue, the less they felt about the program's ability to retain volunteers, especially in comparison to the cost of the program, which is roughly about \$500,000 annually, with about 50% of the people participating. He said they also reached out to other departments that have used the Length of Service Award and received lukewarm reception from them as well.

Chief Eggleston said this was discussed during the January 2020 FEMS Board meeting, and the FEMS Board decided to pivot at that point and establish the Volunteer Incentive Program Committee,

which was focused on other ways they could perhaps incentivize volunteers. He said what they have seen in the past is that they have exhausted many other options to the point where they are considering direct compensation to volunteers. He said this has many implications in terms of tax and employee-employer relationships that they must navigate through, but they will certainly look at all of that. He said some of this had to be paused due to COVID, but they are reengaging and reestablishing that committee again this March.

Chief Eggleston said that at the same time, in their own backyard, they have the Center for Nonprofit Excellence (CNE), which is a great organization that helps nonprofits focus on leadership and governance support. He said staff is currently working with that group and with Procurement and Legal to perhaps even get a contract where other volunteer organizations can engage with CNE to provide that support. He said he understands that a couple of volunteer stations are already having conversations about updating bylaws and looking at some other governance and structure matters, and so this can perhaps help in terms of providing support at that level.

Chief Eggleston said Deputy Chief Puckett would be talking about the FY 21 budget and the use of dynamic staffing.

Deputy Chief David Puckett introduced himself as Deputy Chief of Operations with ACFR. He said before reviewing Fire Rescue's FY 22 budget information, he would take a few minutes to review and update the Board on their FY 21 initiatives, along with a few other concepts they introduced last year.

Deputy Chief Puckett said FY 21 included 22 FTEs to address several urgent service needs, including a daytime engine at Crozet and Pantops and expanded ALS ambulance coverage at Ivy and Pantops.

Deputy Chief Puckett said they also introduced the Board to two staffing concepts: cross-staffing and dynamic staffing. He said cross-staffing is a practice used in lower call volume areas where a three-person crew staffs a fire engine and an ambulance and responds in the unit that is most appropriate for that emergency. He said Earlysville has been utilizing cross-staffing for years, and ACFR proposed expanding the practice to Stony Point and East Rivanna as part of the FY 21 service changes.

Deputy Chief Puckett said dynamic staffing is the practice of reducing in-service units based on the number of available people. He said he would describe this concept in more detail later.

Deputy Chief Puckett presented a slide showing the proposed timeline for the FY 21 budget process. He said as the Board would recall, this was an aggressive plan, requiring a total of three Recruit Schools and a Paramedic School in less than 18 months. He said he was happy to report that they are on schedule. He said an ambulance was moved to Stony Point, and cross-staffing was implemented in July. He said career staff was assigned to the Crozet Volunteer Fire Department last September; a full year ahead of the originally proposed schedule.

Deputy Chief Puckett said the Paramedic School and final Recruit School is in progress. He said he was happy to report that earlier that week, they learned the Recruit School had a 100% success rate on their first attempt at the National Registry EMT Certification Exam.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that while this was all good news, he also felt obligated to point out that this is their most challenging period. He said as expected, staffing Crozet early and running a Recruit School and Paramedic School concurrently has resulted in a strain on the staffing model and an increased use of dynamic staffing.

Deputy Chief Puckett said as mentioned, dynamic staffing was a concept introduced to the Board last year, but all stations (career or volunteer) have used dynamic staffing informally for years. He said that while the same concept of staffing units based on available personnel could be used to staff extra units, the scenario that is more concerning for Fire Rescue, the Board, and residents is when they have to reduce the number of units staffed, as this may lead to increased response times as units respond from farther away.

Deputy Chief Puckett said currently, there is no systematic method to coordinate and document when dynamic staffing occurs across the system. He said he would take a moment, however, to describe how and why this occurs with ACFR career staff units.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that prior to dynamic staffing, ACFR used forced overtime, or holdovers, to ensure minimum staffing for all career units were met. He said "holdover" is a term used when a firefighter is required to work an additional 12 hours after finishing their regular 24-hour shift. He said a firefighter cannot decline this assignment, even when they have personal needs such as childcare to attend to. He said that after this 36-hour shift, they are typically scheduled to report back to work 12 hours later for another 24-hour shift. He said as one can imagine, this can have a dramatic impact on the employee's personal life and their overall health and wellness.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that leading up to 2018, they were experiencing an unsustainable number of mandatory holdovers. He said in some cases, firefighters were being held over twice in the same week. He said they began to see a dramatic decrease in morale, along with an increase in employee turnover.

Deputy Chief Puckett said ACFR decided they had no other choice but to implement dynamic staffing to address the growing problem. He stressed that this was not an easy decision. He said he never imagined when he became a firefighter that he would have to make a decision to reduce service to the community he served. He said in fact, this was one of the most difficult decisions he has been a part of as a chief officer; to choose between the service the community deserves and the health and wellness of the firefighters.

Deputy Chief Puckett said he would spend a few minutes describing how dynamic staffing works today and the plan to minimize its use in the future.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that while they never want to take a unit out of service, when they do, they have to carefully consider the impact of the County's overall Fire and EMS coverage, the number of residents impacted, and the individual person who is actually receiving 911 service during that period. He said there are no easy answers, but the decisions are guided by the Board's adopted Standards of Cover, historical call volume, and the potential impact on the ability and response.

Deputy Chief Puckett presented a slide representing the desired career staffing at rural stations. He said Earlysville and Stony Point are both staffed with a three-person crew and are cross-staffed a fire engine and an ambulance, taking the most appropriate unit based on the call. He said East Rivanna is also staffed with a three-person crew, and they are not scheduled to be cross-staffed with an ambulance until later that fall.

Deputy Chief Puckett said they always attempt to fill open positions with voluntary overtime before implementing dynamic staffing, but if they cannot fill all positions, they transfer one person from Earlysville, reducing into a two-person ambulance. He said if necessary, they then transfer one person from Stony Point, reducing them to a two-person ambulance. He said once Stony Point is reduced to two-person staffing, that triggers the East Rivanna engine to move to Pantops, where they are better positioned to provide coverage to Stony Point. He said finally, if the staffing shortage is severe enough, they transfer all personnel assigned to Earlysville and cover that from adjacent stations.

Deputy Chief Puckett said beginning in the fall, all three rural stations will have a three-person crew and cross-staff an engine and ambulance. He said the dynamic staffing strategy will then shift to utilize all three stations to compensate for staffing shortages. He said one firefighter will be transferred from each station as necessary but will maintain a minimum of a two-person ambulance at all of them.

Deputy Chief Puckett said the Board members may be asking themselves why they have staffing shortages in the first place. He said the Board has funded a number of FTEs for Fire Rescue in the past couple of years, but all of those have been dedicated to expansion service and do not address existing staffing shortages.

Deputy Chief Puckett said a standard method is used to determine how many FTEs are required. He said as an example, the FY 22 request for North Garden requires a total of five FTEs to ensure there are three firefighters on duty for five 12-hour shifts. He said the chart on the slide retrospectively applies that same methodology for all of the operational units put in service since 1998. He said as one could see along the bottom of the chart, it indicated they need 120 FTEs to ensure consistent coverage, but they only currently have 113 filled. He said functionally, they are operating on a shortage of FTEs.

Deputy Chief Puckett said historically, they have been successful at using voluntary overtime to address that shortage, but over the last several years, they have seen that trend change. He said their employees tend to place more emphasis on a healthy work-life balance, meaning they do not take as many overtime shifts and, in effect, their time off is more valuable than the additional compensation.

Deputy Chief Puckett said that as the department has grown and aged, they have also seen an increase in unscheduled leave, including sick leave, family medical leave, injury, and military leave. He said for perspective, they currently have seven people on long-term leave due to injury or illness, in addition to two vacancies. He said all of this places further strain on the already lean staffing model.

Deputy Chief Puckett said in addition to overtime, they have attempted a number of other strategies to address staffing shortages. He said hiring and training a firefighter is a long process, and vacancy can have a dramatic impact on the staffing model. He said the use of over hires minimizes the amount of time it takes to get someone back on the street following a vacancy. He said that by using historical trends, they try to anticipate the number of vacancies they will experience throughout a year and hire replacements for them, in some cases before they actually leave.

Deputy Chief Puckett said in FY 18, they requested and received three FTEs specifically to address the staffing shortage. He said that while those positions had some impact, this ultimately was not enough to meet the demands.

Deputy Chief Puckett said finally, as discussed early, dynamic staffing was implemented to address a significant increase in forced overtime, or holdovers. He said Mr. Bowman would share additional opportunities to reduce the use of dynamic staffing as part of the FY 22 budget information, but he felt it was important that the Board have this background prior to that.

Chief Eggleston said to summarize, they touched on the evolution of the Fire Rescue System and identified some major milestones in the development of the system. He said Deputy Chief Childress provided a good overview of onboarding and training successes, and Deputy Chief Puckett touched on the staffing challenges, and on what they do to compensate in terms of dynamic staffing and the process they go through.

Chief Eggleston said he would wrap up by talking about a long-term Fire Rescue staffing plan. He said they have made tremendous investments in the Fire Rescue System over a number of years, especially in the last two years. He said even with that, there are still significant needs in terms of demands for service and gaps in the current system. He said they will likely see additional staffing requests come forward.

Chief Eggleston said his intention is to work with the Finance and Budget Office and the County Executive's Office to put together a long-term Fire Rescue staffing plan that gives an idea of what investments may be needed in the future. He said he thinks it is a better way of planning the financial demand in the future, and he looks forward to bringing this forward, once vetted through the County Executive's Office, to the Board for further discussion.

Chief Eggleston said he has had some conversations with the Finance team, and even sat down with one of the volunteer chiefs recently to explain the concept. He said he thinks they have general support to move forward, but they want to do so in a smart, meaningful way so it can provide them with some predictability, moving forward.

Ms. Price said that before Mr. Bowman were to present further on the FY 22 budget, if he did not have anything further specifically around Fire Rescue, it could be a good time to let the Supervisors ask any questions of Chief Eggleston and Deputy Chiefs Childress and Puckett.

Mr. Bowman said he had three slides to wrap up Fire Rescue.

Ms. Price asked to move forward with those before going to the questions.

Mr. Bowman said this would be a good transition, as Chief Eggleston and his staff had been discussing the past and present Fire Rescue System. He said his comments would turn attention back to the FY 22 budget and potential options for the future.

Mr. Bowman presented a slide he had reviewed with the Board the prior week on the North Garden supplemental staffing request. He said he would not repeat himself beyond noting that the recommended budget includes \$435,000 in operating funding for the services described on the screen.

Mr. Bowman said that what he would instead speak to is an opportunity or option for the Board to consider in the near future. He said it does not impact the FY 22 budget today, but it potentially creates some flexibility to address the issues that Chief Eggleston and his staff reviewed that afternoon.

Mr. Bowman said one option that could be available is another FEMA SAFER grant. He said FEMA SAFER stands for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response. He said the Board may recall that the County is currently in the first year of a FEMA SAFER grant that will fund the salaries and benefits for 10 positions for three years for fire engines at the Crozet and Pantops stations. He said this proposal would be a second FEMA SAFER grant.

Mr. Bowman said the County has put in an application for a second grant. He clarified that this application does not bind the County to anything, should the Board desire not to pursue this. He said it is only an application and not an accepted award. He said if awarded, notifications would be expected sometimes between June and September. He said for perspective, they applied last year in May and received an award in September or so. He said the application for the grant had been due earlier in March.

Mr. Bowman said the application itself includes 10 positions, as were shown on the screen. He said this would provide five positions for supplemental staffing for North Garden, as requested by the station, as well as five additional staffing positions that would work in the field. He said the intent of those field positions is to reduce the need for dynamic staffing once all of those approved positions are trained and released to operate.

Mr. Bowman said the combination of these two issues into one application is done to make the most competitive application possible, and it would provide several benefits if it were awarded and accepted by the Board. He said the first benefit is for those five positions at North Garden, which is that it would provide the ability to staff this a little sooner than the current plan in the FY 22 budget. He said instead of having staff in the fall of 2022, there would be staff in the summer of 2022.

Mr. Bowman said the second benefit is that once everyone is trained and released to be in the field, it would reduce the use of dynamic staffing, as it enables there to be more minimum staffing positions in the field than there are currently available.

Mr. Bowman said the third benefit is more longer-range in the future and a "what-if" or hypothetical. He said it provides more depth into the organization to more quickly address systemwide future needs as they arise. He said it is a hypothetical future, as they do not know what the future holds, but if in the future a volunteer station requested supplemental staffing, this could create a situation where that need could be addressed sooner than the current timeline that exists for stations; between the timeline for the budget process, to hire and train, and to release people to be in the field.

Mr. Bowman said this would shorten that timeline. He noted that the timeline would need to be used at the same time as dynamic staffing and then, the future long-term staffing would be considered as part of the future budget process.

Mr. Bowman said there are many variables and hypotheticals, but the main takeaway from this is that in the future, this will put the County in a better position to adapt than there currently is now. He said currently, there is a situation where in the fall of 2020, North Garden requested supplemental staffing, and to go through the budget process and the process of hiring, training, and releasing, the current status in the FY 22 recommended budget would be getting those positions fully in service almost two years later.

Mr. Bowman said beyond the benefits of the grant, he would talk about the budget impact if the grant were awarded, and the Board wanted to move forward with this. He said this grant, like the first one that is currently underway, provides salaries and benefits for these positions for three years. He said the value of the federal funding across those three years would be approximately \$1.8 million. He said the County would be responsible for the related operating costs of those positions and anything above base compensation, such as overtime.

Mr. Bowman said if awarded and the Board accepts, the current budget in place for \$435,000 could provide the local match in FY 22 that would be needed for these 10 positions. He said this would just take care of FY 22, and they would certainly look at the long-range financial planning process in the fall, as the County would need to incorporate their increased local funding if the grant expires to the long-range financial plans. He said if awarded and accepted, they would have two FEMA grants running concurrently that would be picked up in FY 24, 25, and 26 as those grants expire. He said this would need to be part of the long-range financial planning process.

Mr. Bowman said his final slide on this content conveyed the schedule for this. He said Deputy Chief Puckett shared his schedule, which has been shared with the Board in the past. He said with these 10 positions, however, it would look a little different where if they were awarded in the summer, they would hire 10 employees in September, who would go through a Recruit School and be able to wrap up in the spring. He said they would then be able to be released at the North Garden Volunteer Fire Company in the summer. He said this is earlier than the proposal, where this happens in the fall.

Mr. Bowman said the other five FTEs would go through the system's Paramedic School in the first half of CY 22. He said as they go through that school and are released into the field, by January 2023, they would have more minimum staffing positions in the field that would put them in a position to reduce the current use of dynamic staffing.

Mr. Bowman offered to take comments and questions from the Board.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said she understood the SAFER grant and the 10 positions, and she fully supports this. She said there are five positions noted for Paramedic School, and she asked if this was coming out of the 10.

Chief Eggleston replied yes.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said going back to when Chief Eggleston talked about hiring seven additional firefighters, she wanted to know if the 10 SAFER grant positions would offset the seven he spoke of, or if he was talking about getting the 10 as well as an additional seven.

Chief Eggleston replied that the 10 positions would help to address two issues. He said it would first help to supplant the funding they have proposed in the FY 22 budget for North Garden, but the other five would help to reduce that seven that was identified in Deputy Chief Puckett's chart that puts a strain on the system and causes them to dynamically staff Earlysville, Stony Point, and East Rivanna. He said this would greatly reduce the dynamic staffing count from three to two at those stations.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if he would then ask the County for an additional two positions.

Chief Eggleston replied no. He said currently, they have approved overhires that can make up those other two, and they will continue to utilize overhires and overtime where necessary. He said he thinks the five will provide the much-needed relief, but they want to be very conservative on their number.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if the Board would then not be asked to fund the seven positions that Deputy Chief Puckett proposed because if they get the 10 positions through the SAFER grant, it covers it all.

Chief Eggleston said this was correct.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said it was an excellent presentation and that she hoped the Board could have the PowerPoint sent to them.

Ms. Palmer asked if Mr. Bowman said that 20 positions will come due in the budget for FY 24, 25, and 26.

Mr. Bowman said this was correct. He said he could follow up by providing a schedule of what that exact timing would look like. He said essentially, the first grant will end in midyear FY 24, and so half the impact of 10 occurs in one year in FY 25. He said the second grant would be split across FY 25 and 26.

Ms. Palmer said clearly, there is a lot of turnover, and over the next several years, they will have that normal turnover. She asked Chief Eggleston how hard it is to fill these positions.

Chief Eggleston replied that he did not think it would be difficult to fill the positions at all. He said this past year, there were a couple of different recruitment programs for career staff that fulfilled their needs to provide a greatly enhanced Recruit School. He said he did not think it would be a problem at all.

Ms. McKeel said as someone who has been in two professions, both nursing and teaching, and had to have additional hours of training and so many requirements, she was very impressed with the numbers she was seeing. She said this was extraordinary in terms of the requirements for people who obviously have families and other things going on in their lives. She added that she likes the idea of a long-term staffing plan.

Ms. McKeel said whenever there are these grant opportunities, which she thinks are often the right thing to do, at the end of the day, they have to absorb them because they are not going to end up firing those people and letting them go when the grants run out, as they need the positions. She asked what this would mean at the end of the three-year grant in terms of the monies. She said she understood this is what they would be doing in the long-term planning process, but she wondered what monies this would represent.

Mr. Bowman said he could pull those numbers. He said he hesitates to do a lot of math during the Board meetings.

Ms. McKeel said this was fine, but she was trying to think about this.

Mr. Bowman said the federal funding is about \$1.8 million over three years, so it would annually be about \$600,000 or so as those get picked up. He said those would be staggered somewhat over the years, and it would depend on the personnel cost of those positions in the future.

Ms. Mallek said she had a few questions along the way that may or may not have answers. She said if it was not appropriate that afternoon, answers could be sent out to everyone later. She said at the beginning, when talking about the training and the numbers of students in Firefighter 1 and Firefighter 2, she wondered if Firefighter 2 is required for a candidate to be released. She said she thought it was, and it sounded like many of the students were not going that far.

Chief Eggleston replied that Firefighter 1 is a minimum requirement for students, and if they choose to advance their training, they can take Firefighter 2.

Ms. Mallek said Firefighter 1 would, then, get them inside the burning building. She said she still hoped that sometime after budget, they could come back to the retention programs and dig in further on that with this new information. She said it has been a revolving door for 15 years, and they need to nail down what is going on and learn from what other places are doing.

Ms. Mallek asked how many staff are involved in training. She said she seemed to understand people saying the reason they could only field the 113 now is because some staff are having to stop to train other people. She said she thought there were different training officers than the people who are on the engines.

Chief Eggleston replied that there is a Training Division, and Deputy Chief Childress may need to help him with how many are assigned for ongoing training for both the volunteer and career academies. He said it is an entire division that provides volunteer academies, both Fire and EMS, as well as career recruit academies. He said they are also responsible for providing continuing education for career staff, which is intense.

Chief Eggleston said they support Earlysville and East Rivanna in terms of EMS, as they are on their EMS license. He said this same Training Division group helps to coordinate and provide continuing education for those two departments as well. He said it is a large endeavor, which is why there are significant numbers in terms of at least volunteers running through the program.

Ms. Mallek said she understood there are four training officers now, and somewhere in the recent materials, it said they were hiring four more firefighters and had to have one more training person. She said she assumed it was not a four-to-one ratio and that it is a far greater ratio of one training officer per number of candidates. She said this was not clear in the materials that came out.

Chief Eggleston said they made a significant investment last year of 22 people that were added to the system. He said this year, when they received the request from North Garden, they had to increase their training cadre up one position in order to maintain the baseline they provide today.

Ms. Mallek said she understood. She said moving into the dynamic staffing category, it talked about how there were no systematic records on how dynamic staffing is happening, and she cannot understand that. She said a couple of weeks ago, they all received charts from Mr. Doug Walker that had come from ACFR that told exactly how many days various stations had been staffed and open. She said she would like to have this available all the time so that the community can have better information about what is going on.

Chief Eggleston said he believed what Deputy Chief Puckett was referring to is that they have very good records on when the career staff are supposed to be assigned when they actually use dynamic staffing and reduce staffing in those stations.

Chief Eggleston said what they have been looking at systemwide, however, is that oftentimes, many of the volunteer companies are faced with the same challenge, and they may down staff or not staff their station at all. He said this is where they have holes in the data, as they do not know exactly when that happens, nor do they have good records of that. He said they just know that they are having staffing shortages, and some of them will actually not staff their stations when they have difficulties. He said this is where the difficulty lies, as it is uncertain of when this happens.

Ms. Mallek pointed out that they would mark up with the ECC that they are not there so that things can be sent to someone else right away.

Chief Eggleston said they do. He said they have one station that does a very good job of marking their units out of service, but they have some that do not, or they get paged and there is a delay.

Ms. Mallek asked Chief Eggleston could explain further on the note about how reductions are capped in dynamic staffing. She said what she learned from the graph that came out a couple of weeks ago was that the neighbors in Earlysville were not wrong. She said they had been calling her and saying there was no one at the station. She said it turned out from the chart that from January 6 until today, there has been staff there one day. She asked what the cap is that is put on for this station, as this is a lot of darkness.

Chief Eggleston said that as Deputy Chief Puckett explained, this particular time they are currently in is a very difficult one because they are trying to run a Recruit School and a Paramedic School at the same time. He said they explained this last year, during the budget work session, because while they are doing that, they also staffed Crozet early. He said they are in a very difficult time and often have to dynamic staff or reduce staffing at Earlysville.

Chief Eggleston said in the fall, when they graduate these students and begin to staff up units, he thinks what Deputy Chief Puckett was referring to is that they will never go below two at those stations. He said they will start with Earlysville, then go to Stony Point, then to East Rivanna. He said then, they will probably hire back people if they have to. He said the commitment is that they will never go below two.

Ms. Mallek asked Chief Eggleston if he was referring to fall of 2021.

Chief Eggleston replied yes.

Ms. Mallek said she had panicked in the presentation when he was talking about doing things in 2022, and they cannot go on this way for another 18 months. She said there was also talk about relying on the Standards of Cover and the call volumes to make decisions. She asked Chief Eggleston to be

aware of the fact that if they closed a station for nine weeks, of course it does not have call volume, so it is unfair to use that as a punishment when, since 1998, there has been a County obligation to staff that station during the day. She said they must be careful about how things are evaluated and be fair.

Ms. Mallek said going back to the dynamic staffing operation, when the Board discussed this plan last summer or fall, it was talked about as a shared obligation and shared deficit to be done. She said there was never a discussion about having all of the burden fall on one station. She said this is where her part of the County is getting underserved and very upset about the fact that the station is closed for weeks at a time. She said this puts everyone at risk, so there has to be a way to figure out how not to burden one station while leaving all the others completely staffed, or three instead of two.

Ms. Mallek said there are three paramedics who are about to graduate and be released at Earllysville Volunteer, and if there were one person from another station who could work with one volunteer, that would get the ambulance going during the day.

Ms. Mallek said she was asking Chief Eggleston that people work harder to find some bodies to go out there to keep that station going. She said one day a week is one thing, and this was how it was described when this was dropped on the station two years ago, not nine weeks of nothing. She said this is a real concern.

Ms. Mallek said she would also very much hope that there would be staff who are working at the 5th Street office building who could take their duty out at the station and telework from there. She said she thinks this is reasonable for people who have had long careers in the field.

Ms. Mallek said she did point out to Chief Eggleston for the future that when they are looking at page 86, the FEMA salary does not even show up in the numbers. She said it is already \$592,000 more in salary, and though they are not paying for all of it, she thinks it will be helpful for everyone to understand where they are, going forward, if they include those FEMA numbers on the same budget page rather than hidden away in other funds, which is where it finally showed up. She said she had never found that before, and she was grateful that she found it this time.

Ms. Mallek said she had asked all her questions, but for the citizens that she and Mr. Gallaway share who depend upon the station that has been there for 55 years, she would ask ACFR to dig deep and figure out a way to get some staff in that building before September of 2021.

Mr. Gallaway said his questions were some of the same as those Ms. Mallek asked.

Ms. Price said she did not have any questions, but she did have some comments. She thanked the ACFR staff for their presentations. She said as they go through this, she is reminded of the indebtedness, reliance, and dependence that those in the County have on their volunteers. She said what those volunteers do for the County is immeasurable.

Ms. Price said looking at what ACFR described, the forced holdovers, or what she would have called in the Navy "cross-decking" someone, as ACFR recognized and commented on, are simply unsustainable. She said the demands this places on an individual to have done a 24-hour shift, holdover 12 hours, and then 12 hours come back for a 24-hour shift is unsustainable, and she appreciates ACFR recognizing that and taking all the action they are in order to diminish and reduce that from happening.

Ms. Price said the only comment she had is that the \$1.8 million from the SAFER grants, or about \$600,000 as it was later described once those funds start to go away in FY 24, 25, and 26, there was also reference that in addition to the \$1.8 million from the SAFER grants, there are additional funds that the County has to pay. She said as those grants go away, it will be a little more than \$600,000 in today's figures, which means it will be even more than that a few years from now. She said she appreciates ACFR already working up what this will end up costing the County.

Ms. Price said population growth continues as the demands continue, and hopefully perhaps a little reduced from the pandemic state. She said with the training that is required and with the staffing, the County needs to be prepared that these additional expenses will have to be part of the budget as they go forward in future years. She said she appreciates what ACFR provided that day, including the explanation of how they have handled what they have had to face and the actions that are being taken to reduce those personnel burdens on the individuals while providing better staffing for the County.

Mr. Bowman said there was a scheduled break if the Board preferred to take one.

Ms. Mallek asked if she could ask a question before taking a break.

Ms. Price replied yes.

Ms. Mallek said there was a chart that showed the different budget payments and reductions to the volunteer companies. She said she forwarded this on to the three chiefs and heard back very quickly from Chief Kostas Alibertis at WARS (Western Albemarle Rescue Squad) because they were not told

what the reductions were for, and he wanted to clarify that there were errors in the reasoning that was given. She said they never had the opportunity to know and therefore had no corrections.

Ms. Mallek said she would report this quickly, and people could take it for guidance's sake that she thinks they need better communication with agencies when it comes to budgets, and there should be reasons provided and contact back in the same way that staff does with ABRT agencies. She said they do not just slam the door on those agencies but rather, they provide them with shortcomings or questions they did not have answered and give people a chance.

Ms. Mallek said there was a deduction for a gas pump that was needed, saying that it did not meet the qualifications of the process because they were supposedly buying an unapproved ambulance. She said this ambulance is purchased through the CIP and is part of the fleet plan, so it is approved. She said they have had gas vehicles for years there, and they have had to go to Crozet Fire to fill up. She said Crozet Fire has been very helpful, but this was the reasoning that this pump was included that was disallowed by whoever is evaluating these things.

Ms. Mallek said the cardiac monitors were not fully funded, even though they were completely at end of life. She said WARS got a grant on their own for more than \$100,000 and more than half the cost of these monitors.

Ms. Mallek said she thinks it is appropriate that as a way of showing some bona fide respect for the agencies, they communicate with them in the budget situation. She said she has very high expectations that they will hand in their audits and do their forms, but County staff also needs to work on their side to ensure they are making decisions based on the full information. She said she wanted to put the clarification out there so that people could figure out a way to do it differently next time.

Ms. Price asked Mr. Bowman and Mr. Richardson if they had any comment or response to that.

Mr. Bowman said staff can always look at how they can do things differently to better serve the community. He said he could follow up with the Chief and staff at WARS. He said when the budget is released, the Deputy County Executive sends it out, and they do communicate to all agencies, whether they be volunteers, ABRT, or other community partners so they are aware of the funding recommendation. He said they are provided the line-item detail at their request.

Mr. Bowman said before they get to that request, there is dialogue that goes through the budget between the Fire Rescue Department and Finance staff. He said he has not heard any questions yet from WARS, but they will follow up with them to make sure they understand what this is so that there is not a disconnect. He said he had personally not seen any questions, but if there are concerns, he certainly wants to follow up on those and understand them.

Ms. Mallek said there was a missing link somewhere because she contacted them earlier, when the book came out and she saw there was a \$20,000 cut to two of the stations. She said she asked them what this was for, and the stations had no idea. She said somewhere along the line, better clarity needs to be provided. She said the stations felt badly because they did not have her answers, and she was even more confused later than she was when she started.

Mr. Bowman encouraged that if there are questions in the future the Board receives, those can be directed to him, and he would be happy to follow up directly so they can connect them with any communication or whatever it may be to assist with that.

Ms. Price thanked Mr. Bowman, adding that recognition of improvement to the process is the major answer.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said she agrees with Ms. Mallek regarding communication and clarification, and the process needs to be improved. She said there was something she wanted to ask Chief Eggleston. She said it piqued her interest when he said that Earlysville would notify him when they are not able to respond. She said she noticed he did not mention the other volunteer stations. She asked if this means there is not a system whereby all of them respond when they do not have volunteers at the station so that ACFR can better address the safety of the community.

Chief Eggleston said this was correct. He said the way in which they notify ACFR is that there is a Computer Aided Dispatch system so that if they are unable to staff, they will go into that system and mark the unit out of service. He said this is very beneficial because ACFR can then modify the response and not delay sending the next closest unit. He said the challenge is that this is not consistently done across the system for those people who are having difficulty staffing stations.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said it seems to her that this is something that could be easily addressed and that each volunteer station should be doing that, as this provides more safety to the residents. She said this is a time factor and perhaps life or death.

Chief Eggleston said ACFR has encouraged all the stations to utilize the system they have invested in to do just that so that they can know at a moment's notice. He said the system receives the call, evaluates who is available, and dispatches the closest unit. He said in order for this to be most effective, it has to be accurate to reflect the amount of resources out there because otherwise, they are flying blindly. He said they have encouraged all departments to participate in that, and at this point, that is all he can do. He noted this is not across the board, and there are some stations that are very robust and do a wonderful job. He said some are struggling, and they have been encouraged to use that system to help to plan accordingly.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if they are struggling, they can find out why they are struggling and provide some kind of assistance.

Chief Eggleston said there is an IT person on staff that makes sure the systems at the stations are up and running and that the computers and apparatus are working so that the infrastructure is there. He said it is really just a matter of a couple of keystrokes to mark the units in and out of service.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked Chief Eggleston if he would be able to periodically give the Board a report (monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually) on how this is working. She said this concerns her. She offered praise to those doing it correctly, noting that for the others, they need to know about this.

Chief Eggleston replied that he could give the Board some information.

Ms. Price asked if there is not a simple system where much like there are badges that allow access through locked doors, each firefighter has a similar badge. She said when they are on duty, they are logged in somehow, and they would then know whether a station is properly and fully manned.

Chief Eggleston replied that they utilize the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system to determine if units are in service. He asked Ms. Price to keep in mind that some of the more rural stations have home response, so they may mark units in service although no one is at that station. He said they respond from home, but even in that case, sometimes people are just unavailable. He said it would be extremely helpful if they knew there were not enough people around to staff a unit, this unit is taken out of service. He said this is something they can utilize the existing CAD system for.

Ms. Price said it sounded like they need to work on that system to actually know who is available, rather than it being self-reported in all instances.

Ms. Mallek said this was a wild idea, and she did not know if it was possible to simply tone the station, and they push the button if they are there and respond back that way or if they are on a call, they would have done their dispatch response from ECC so one would know they are out with the engine. She said there must be a simple way to get this information.

Chief Eggleston reiterated that this is why they invested in the Computer Aided Dispatch system, as it does all of that. He said they need to make sure the unit statuses are updated, and it is a matter of a couple of keystrokes. He said it really does aid the dispatcher to determine what complement to send to the closest call.

Ms. Price said she appreciated this as well as Chief Eggleston's comment about home response.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked what the longest time and average time was for home response.

Chief Eggleston replied that he was not sure, and he would research and get back to Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that along with the audit from each volunteer station, she would think they would make sure that this response system is utilized.

Recess. The Board recessed its meeting at 4:12 p.m. and reconvened at 4:22 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 2. **Work Session:** FY 2021-2022 Operating and Capital Budget (continued).

- Finalize Tax Rate for Advertising

Mr. Bowman said two actions needed to be taken that day for the public hearing and legal advertisement requirements, the first of which was to finalize a tax rate for advertisement.

Mr. Bowman presented a slide that he had previously shared on March 10, when General Fund revenues were discussed. He reminded the Board that the recommended budget revenues are calculated at the current real property tax rate of 85.4 cents per \$100 of assessed value. He said this

generates the majority of General Fund revenues. He said each penny on the real estate tax rate equates to about \$2.1 million in collectible tax revenues.

Mr. Bowman said the “lowered,” or effective, tax rate of 84.2 cents per \$100 of assessed value refers to the rate at which they received the same amount of tax revenue in CY 21 as they did in CY 20. He said this is based on the reassessment change of 1.4% only, and it does not factor in changes to new construction, new parcel creation, changes in land use, etc.

Mr. Bowman said the County continues to have a Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled Program that is recommended to be \$1.3 million in FY 22.

Mr. Bowman noted that the tax rate the Board chooses to advertise is a cap on what can be adopted. He said for example, if the Board were to advertise a rate of 85.4, they could do that amount or lower when adopted, but they could not raise it higher at that point.

Mr. Bowman said if the Board desired to advertise the current rates, the motions to do so were shown on the screen. He turned it over to the Board for questions, discussions, and action.

Ms. Palmer said she was ready to support this tax rate.

Ms. McKeel said she noticed that people were able to take advantage of the relief for the elderly and disabled, which was a good thing. She asked if the state ever raises the cap on this.

Mr. Greg Kamptner, County Attorney, replied that he would get back to Ms. McKeel, adding that he knows this question comes up every year. He said he would pull out last year’s response.

Ms. McKeel said this was fine, but she assumed that as the state changes theirs, she is sure the County matches whatever the state does. She asked if this is not capped at the state level somehow.

Mr. Kamptner said he could see if he could quickly pull it up.

Ms. McKeel said she did not intend to derail the discussion, but she was just curious, adding that she should have asked at an earlier point.

Ms. Mallek said she did not have questions about this, but she wondered if they would be coming back to the Clerk’s Office afterwards, when they talk about the budget itself. She asked if this was when they would talk about those things.

Ms. Price said this was only about the publicized tax rate.

Ms. Mallek said she understood, but she wanted to be sure they were coming back to the other questions later.

Ms. Price said they would be coming back to the budget after this.

Ms. Mallek said she had no intention of wanting to increase the tax rate.

Ms. Price said she was also supportive of the tax rate.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley **moved** to advertise the following rates for public hearing for the 2021 year: \$0.854/\$100 of assessed value for real estate, public service property, and manufactured homes; \$4.28/\$100 of assessed value for tangible personal property; \$4.28/\$100 of assessed value for miscellaneous and incidental tangible personal property employed in a trade or business that is not otherwise classified as machinery and tools, merchants’ capital, or short-term rental property, and that has an original cost of less than \$500; and \$4.28/\$100 of assessed value for machinery and tools.

Ms. Mallek **seconded** the motion. Roll was called and the motion carried by the following recorded vote:

AYES: Mr. Gallaway, Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley, Ms. Mallek, Ms. McKeel, Ms. Palmer, and Ms. Price.
NAYS: None.

Mr. Kamptner said he could quickly answer Ms. McKeel’s question regarding the relief program. He said the cap on the Tax Relief for the Elderly was removed by the General Assembly in 2011, so the rate is set by the locality.

Ms. McKeel said this was very helpful. She apologized for derailing the discussion.

Mr. Kamptner said he knew that the cap had been lifted, which is why he paused to dig out when this had happened and what the result was that followed.

Ms. McKeel said it was worthy of some discussion or having some information on that at a later date.

Ms. Palmer said she would like some clarification because she did not realize they could have a discussion later, but when Mr. Kamptner said the cap was raised, she wanted explanation of what the cap was that was changed, as there are a couple of aspects to that.

Mr. Kamptner said the cap was removed in 2011. He said he would have to go back and see what it was at that time, before it was eliminated.

Ms. Price said currently, the locality sets what the cap may be.

Mr. Kamptner replied yes.

Ms. Mallek said to clarify, her understanding was that what the locality decided on was the net worth value. She said the County has a much larger net worth than the City does for their program, for example, which allows more people in between to qualify. She said she thinks it is a great thing to look at, even during the summer.

Ms. Mallek said she is always grateful that whatever the need is for this category, the local government finds the way to pay it, and they do not have people turned away because they budgeted wrong. She said she remembered previous County Executives always explaining that if they had a lot of people apply, they find the money somewhere to make sure they can cover that amount.

Ms. Mallek said she is very grateful it has gone up almost double in the 13 years she has been there because she thinks it means people are participating in something they should participate in. She said these are people who have worked their lives, and it is the County's turn to help them. She said she hopes more people will do that. She said April 1 is usually a time when applications and renewals are due, so this is a good thing to talk about.

Ms. Palmer asked if someone could send the Board a link to information on what that currently is. She said they did not need to discuss it at that time, but she was somewhat confused.

Ms. McKeel said she was not insinuating in any way that she wanted it to go away.

Ms. Price said the link could be found on the County's website, as she had looked at it herself recently and it was a very reasonable figure trying to protect those residents in need while also being good stewards of the County revenues.

Ms. Mallek said Ms. Birch had just put the link in the chat.

Mr. Kamptner said he just forwarded to the Board via email his explanation and summary of where Albemarle County stood among Virginia's counties that he had sent for the budget Q&A last year.

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- Approval of FY 22 Proposed Budget for Advertising

Mr. Bowman said the second action item was for a proposed budget for public hearing. He said he had some summary comments before turning it over to the Board.

Mr. Bowman presented a slide with the total budget of approximately \$466 million. He said this is the total budget that includes all funds. He said revenues were shown on the left, and expenditures on the right. He said this includes the General Fund, School Fund, Capital and Debt Funds, and any other funds.

Mr. Bowman said the next slide was a snapshot of the General Fund, which was reviewed during the first work session on March 10. He said this was a snapshot of revenues, the majority of which come from general property taxes.

Mr. Bowman said the next slide showed a snapshot of the major functional areas they have reviewed, the transfer to schools, and the transfer to capital and debt. He said this was also reviewed on Wednesday, March 10.

Mr. Bowman said that on Monday March 15, the Board heard from the School Board about their funding request for FY 22. He said they also discussed the Capital and Debt Service Budgets, as well as a snapshot of what the Capital Budget for FY 22 looks like, as shown on the slide.

Mr. Bowman said he would slow down for a moment to talk about potential adjustments to the recommended budget. He said the first item was that on Monday, March 15, Deputy County Executive

Doug Walker introduced, and the Board discussed, amending the County Executive's recommended budget to add a new Transportation Planner funded from the capital budget.

Mr. Bowman presented a slide showing what the revised recommended total budget looked like, which was still about \$466 million. He said the change was not shown in the charts but was reflected in the total at the top of the slide.

Mr. Bowman said at that point, this was the only change that the Board had discussed. He paused to hear any other recommended changes that the Board wished to discuss or take any other additional questions. He reminded the Board that there were no final decisions that day, and there will be opportunities to continue to revise the budget before May 5. He said if the Board wanted to approve the proposed budget with the County Executive's recommended amendment for the Transportation Planner, that motion would appear on the following slide.

Ms. Palmer asked if Mr. Bowman could repeat what he said in the last slide due to noise on her end.

Mr. Bowman said the recommended budget was introduced by the County Executive on February 24, and there is a recommended adjustment to that to include a Transportation Planner funded from the capital budget. He said he was pausing for any discussions, questions, or further changes the Board would desire. He said these are not final decisions, and the Board can still amend the budget through the public process before it is adopted on May 5. He said at this point, it was time for the Board to ask any questions on the proposed budget, and there was a motion if the Board was ready to move forward.

Ms. Palmer asked if the motion was just for the Transportation Planner.

Mr. Bowman replied that it would include the recommended budget, any staff adjustments, and any further clarification. He said if there were further adjustments, they could run through that and amend the motion as needed.

Ms. Price clarified that this was simply to approve advertising the budget to the public. She said there will actually be a later hearing where the budget will be approved.

Mr. Bowman said this was correct. He said Board members are holding their townhalls, and other public engagement can happen over the course of the process. He said the public hearing will be on April 28.

Ms. Price said there would still, then, be opportunities to submit proposed amendments or modifications to this proposed budget if approved today.

Mr. Bowman said this was correct.

Ms. Palmer said the Board just approved the tax rate and had that in place. She said they will have more discussion on March 29 about the federal money. She said there will be more discussions occurring going forward. She said she was not totally sure why they were approving the budget at that time.

Ms. Price said her understanding was that the Board was not necessarily approving the budget. She said they were approving advertising a proposed budget. She said the budget itself would be approved at a later date.

Mr. Bowman said this was correct.

Ms. Palmer apologized.

Ms. Mallek said her question was about the Clerk (of Courts) Office. She said when they were doing the original run-through of those, she asked the question of where the extra \$500,000 was coming from for their budget because they had lost the recordation taxes that the state took away. She said there was no answer that came forward that she saw and now, apparently, their request for supplements for their staff who was in the office the whole time during the pandemic has been denied. She said she would like to know what other options there are for this, or if other Board members had any opinion about this, or if it was something they should take up at an upcoming work session, perhaps on March 22. She said this was the second time she was asking.

Mr. Bowman said he did not respond to a follow-up on the question about the state recordation taxes. He said he thought it had been addressed before, and he apologized it was not.

Mr. Bowman said essentially, the Clerk of the Circuit Court is funded in the General Fund, and so all of the local tax revenues, state revenues, and any other designated revenues go into this one central pot, which funds all of the County services. He said the impact of the state's elimination of the state

recordation tax does not impact court operations, and it is just less revenue that comes from the General Fund. He said the recommended budget essentially says that they do not have that state revenue now, so they need to rely on other General Fund revenue to continue to fund the Clerk of Circuit Court's operation.

Mr. Bowman said he believed the FY 22 request for the Clerk of Circuit Court is recommended to be funded, and he would fact-check himself to make sure he did not misspeak. He confirmed this was correct. He said they have requested a total budget of \$930,453, which is the recommended amount on page 73 of the document. He said while there is revenue lost to their operation, it does impact the expenditures that are being provided to them. He said he would be happy to summarize this in an email as well.

Ms. Mallek said this was very clear and was not the answer the Board got before. She said she is very glad to know that it is actually the County Government that got cut by the state and not the Clerk of Circuit Court's operations. She said the concern now is the disallowance of any bonuses, as they did for Fire Rescue and other people who were working hard on the pandemic, and his employees are not included in that, even though they are part of the County pay plan. She said this is something people can investigate, and they can talk about at the next work session.

Ms. Palmer asked if the Sheriff's Office got the 2%.

Mr. Bowman replied yes.

Ms. Palmer asked if it was just the Clerk of Circuit Court's Office, then, that did not get the 2%.

Mr. Bowman replied that the Clerk of Circuit Court is included for a 2% salary increase in the FY 22 budget. He said he believed what Ms. Mallek was referring to would be an additional one-time bonus.

Ms. Price said she believed this was the issue. She asked Ms. Mallek if she was finished with her questions.

Ms. Mallek said she was finished and if the Board were interested, they could discuss it on Monday.

Ms. Price said she would add her voice to the question about the one-time payment to the employees of the Clerk of Circuit Court's Office for consideration. She said this was something the Board members all learned about just before the meeting. She said subject to that, understanding that further changes can be made to the budget, the question before the Board was whether they were ready to move to authorize staff to advertise for public hearing, the proposed budget, understanding that this budget can be amended prior to the final approval.

Ms. Mallek **moved** to authorize staff to advertise for public hearing the FY22 proposed budget, which is the same as the County Executive's Recommended Budget, including any staff recommended changes and any additional amendments made by the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. McKeel **seconded** the motion. Roll was called and the motion carried by the following recorded vote:

AYES: Mr. Gallaway, Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley, Ms. Mallek, Ms. McKeel, Ms. Palmer, and Ms. Price.

NAYS: None.

Mr. Bowman said they would be back on Monday, March 22 for a discussion on the cigarette tax update, transit, and discussion with Voter Registration and Elections. He said on March 29, they will discuss the federal American Rescue Plan funding. He said April 1 was an "as-needed" meeting at that time, and April 28 would be a public hearing on the tax rate, Board's proposed budget, with the adoption of the budget on May 5.

Mr. Bowman said they would continue to provide Q&A to the Board, and he asked them not to hesitate to reach out to him with questions.

Ms. Price said clearly, there were enough Supervisors who wanted the issue of one-time payment to employees of the Clerk of Circuit Court's Office to be addressed. She said she would defer to Mr. Bowman and County staff for the appropriate time to bring this up again.

Mr. Doug Walker, Deputy County Executive, clarified that this issue would be relevant to all three of the constitutional officers, as they are in a similar situation with respect to this issue.

Ms. Nelsie Birch, CFO, added that this was coming before the Board at their first meeting in April, April 7, which is when they will be appropriating the funds from fund balance to support this one-time payment they have been discussing for a few months. She said it is an FY 21 payment and is not

affecting the FY 22 budget. She said more information could be provided at the April 7 meeting to the Board in support of that decision of appropriation at that point in time.

Ms. Price asked Mr. Richardson if there was anything else to address at that time.

Mr. Richardson replied no and paused to see if there were any items from the County staff to address. Hearing none, he turned it back to Ms. Price.

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

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said on Proffit Road and Polo Grounds Road that weekend, Saturday and Sunday, there will be a big cleanup. She encouraged the community to join them.

Ms. Palmer said there would be a CAC townhall that evening with Ms. Price, and her townhall would be the following day with the Yancey Advisory Committee at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Mallek said the Rio District and White Hall District would have a combined townhall on Tuesday, March 23 at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Gallaway echoed Ms. Mallek's comment.

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

There was none.

Agenda Item No. 5. Adjourn to March 22, 2021, 3:00 p.m., electronic meeting pursuant to Ordinance No. 20-A(16).

At 4:48 p.m., the Board adjourned its meeting to March 22, 2021 at 3:00 p.m., which would be an electronic meeting held pursuant to Ordinance No. 20-A(16), "An Ordinance to Ensure the Continuity of Government During the COVID-19 Disaster." Information on how to participate in the meeting will be posted on the Albemarle County website Board of Supervisors homepage.

Chair

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| Approved by Board |
| Date 02/15/2023 |
| Initials CKB |