

An adjourned meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County, Virginia, was held on March 22, 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 (joined at 3:19 p.m.), 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 3:00 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 work site, in order to minimize disruptions during the meeting, she would be running the meeting.

Mr. Andy Bowman, Chief of the Budget Division within the Department of Finance and Budget, said he would be walking the Board through Work Session #4. He said the Board would be back again on March 29 for Work Session #5, where they will review the Federal American Rescue Plan funding in more detail. He said there were no other topics scheduled at that time for work sessions, so the other meetings scheduled were the April 28 public hearing on the calendar year tax rate and the Board's proposed budget, then the adoption of the budget and tax rate on May 5.

Mr. Bowman said the agenda for the day would start with an update on the cigarette tax. He said they would then discuss the Department of Voter Registration and Elections budget in more detail than they had a week and a half ago. He said they would then have a break if the Board desired, then spend the bulk of their time discussing the County's transit agency contributions. He said he would provide a brief overview of this, and there would be time to hear from the Regional Transit Partnership, CAT, and JAUNT before wrapping up.

Mr. Bowman said if there were no questions on the process, he would turn it over to Ms. Lori Allshouse, Assistant CFO for Policy and Partnerships, to take the Board through the first item.

---

Agenda Item No. 2. Update on the Potential to Tax Upon the Sale or Use of Cigarettes.

Ms. Lori Allshouse, Assistant CFO for Policy and Partnerships in the Office of Finance and Budget, said she would give the Board an update on the cigarette tax option. She said several staff were available to answer questions during this part of the presentation, including Ms. Siri Russell, Director of the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI); Mr. Jason Inofuentes, Project and Policy Associate in OEI; Ms. Phyllis Savides, Director of the Department of Social Services; Ms. Jian Lin, Chief of Revenue Administration; and Mr. David Blount with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC).

Ms. Allshouse said she would start by providing background for the item. She said the 2020 General Assembly authorized the County to impose a cigarette tax of up to 40 cents per pack. She said up until this time, only Virginia cities and towns, Arlington, and Fairfax County were able to impose a cigarette tax.

Ms. Allshouse said on December 2, the Board and staff had a discussion about the potential for a cigarette tax and consideration of this tax levy through the equity lens. She said they also spoke about actively supporting the development of a regional board to administer the cigarette tax for this region of the state. She said the tax will be approved only after a public hearing and via an ordinance.

Ms. Allshouse said the revenues the County had built into the FY 2020 budget was set to begin mid-year, around January 2022. She said there are many steps they need to go to in order to get to that point and to begin collecting revenues.

Ms. Allshouse said the Board and staff talked about different options on the cigarette tax revenues. She said the County had been working for decades to obtain approval from the General Assembly to provide a more diversified taxing authority for counties, more like cities, to reduce the pressure on property taxes for residents. She said the cigarette tax was approved as a tax counties could do, and this is a General Fund revenue. She said unlike the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and even the plastic bag revenue the County is allowed to impose, this is not dedicated or partially dedicated to any one thing as it is just for the General Fund.

Ms. Allshouse said as they talk about equity, the Board would hear options for potentially using a portion of the revenue and based on the timing of getting this tax levy in place if approved by the Board via ordinance, the revenues would be a good time to discuss and put together the FY 23 budget. She said expenditure options can be many, and the Board may recall that on December 2, they spoke about various options to consider. She said they talked about potentially using the revenues for categories of youth program support, mitigation efforts to cigarette smoking, and other uses.

Ms. Allshouse said many options were asked to be brought back to the Board for consideration, and the Board would be hearing about one option staff is looking to bring to their attention based on some of the equity work that was done. She said there would be more time to talk about that, and staff believed it would be most appropriate for the FY 23 discussion.

Ms. Allshouse said she would start with the equity framework. She said the guiding framework staff used to look at this was the Equity Impact Assessment. She said this is an assessment tool that OEI has put together as part of a countywide effort to more intentionally incorporate equity and inclusion into the work of the organization. She said as part of that process, staff began its consideration of this proposed tax by first seeking to understand who could be most affected by this tax and how those impacts could be experienced and mitigated. She said what they learn will inform them of the potential negative, disparate impacts that might be mitigated or reduced for the community.

Ms. Allshouse said this cigarette tax policy proposal has been one of the first opportunities the County has had to implement the assessment framework. She said members of OEI were present, and they will provide a more thorough presentation on the development and implementation of this tool at an upcoming August work session for the Board, though the Board would see this tool played out that afternoon.

Ms. Allshouse said the Board would see that some of the populations believed to be affected by this particular tax will be retailers, primarily those with small convenience stores, as well as the smokers themselves.

Ms. Allshouse said one group that was discussed in December that staff believes could be more impacted than the larger retailers by this cigarette tax would be the small grocery and convenience stores. She said staff believes that when cigarette taxes are increased, the smaller grocery and convenience stores could possibly see sales decrease due to customers traveling to neighboring jurisdictions if those jurisdictions have potentially less expensive cigarettes.

Ms. Allshouse said that as part of staff's work, they actually surveyed seven Albemarle County convenience and small stores. She said there were more they wanted to talk to, but they were able to speak with seven. She said staff shared with these stores information about the potential cigarette levy, and the managers, assistant managers, and owners shared some information with staff. She said three shared they do believe that the cigarette sales actually impact their foot traffic, as staff had wondered if cigarette sales are one of the major reasons people are coming into the stores. She said the three stores told staff that cigarette sales affect their foot traffic by 40% or 50%.

Ms. Allshouse said that when staff asked the stores whether or not they thought the tax would have an impact on their sales, the answers were mixed. She said half the stores said they thought it would, and the other half said they did not think it would have any impact on the sale of cigarettes.

Ms. Allshouse said several of the stores noted to staff that in terms of mitigation, they felt it was important that the surrounding counties levy the cigarette tax as well. She said they felt that Albemarle County should at least attempt to do that so that customers may not cross over a different jurisdiction's line to purchase cigarettes.

Ms. Allshouse said she wanted to give a shout-out to Mr. Jason Inofuentes, who is the Project and Policy Analyst in OEI and did a lot of research on the impact of cigarettes on specific groups of people. She said based on this research, Mr. Inofuentes found that individuals that are low-income are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) are more likely to be smokers than other populations.

Ms. Allshouse said nationally, the highest smoking prevalence is among those struggling with mental illness or substance abuse. She said Mr. Inofuentes also found that cigarette taxes can lead to negligible decreases in smoking in the lowest-income households and that the financial burden may often fall hardest on the poor, those in BIPOC households, and those experiencing severe mental illness and Substance Abuse Disorder. She said Mr. Inofuentes was present to answer any questions.

Ms. Allshouse said with the equity assessment tool looks for ways that the tax would impact certain populations or groups. She said staff then thinks of ways of how they can help mitigate the impacts. She said Ms. Russell and Ms. Savides reached out to the Blue Ridge Health District (BRHD) to talk to them about this, and they discussed a multi-prong program that could help mitigate some of these impacts. She said it would be targeted towards smoking cessation and mental health services, and it would include policy systems and environmental initiatives.

Ms. Allshouse said additionally, there is a program called Counter Tools that the Virginia Department of Health already does in partnership with retail establishments to sell tobacco products. She said it is basically a tool to encourage marketing of reasons to bring people into the stores other than tobacco.

Ms. Allshouse said something staff had wanted to do anyway was a regional approach as they consider this tax levy to work with other jurisdictions.

Ms. Allshouse said this was a lot of information done by many people on this equity assessment, so she wanted to stop to see if the Board had any questions.

Ms. Palmer asked Ms. Allshouse if she would be talking about the percentage of increase she talked about when she gave the Board the estimate of how much this would bring in in tax dollars.

Ms. Allshouse replied yes. She said staff looked at it through a formula that other jurisdictions are looking at in thinking about a tax-per-person, population, and other things. She said as a holding place in the budget, they identified about half a million dollars for FY 22 if the tax was started mid-year, and possibly \$1 million for FY 23.

Ms. Palmer asked if this would be the full 40%, as the Board is allowed to put the 40% tax on it. She asked if anyone looked at 10%, 20%, or the like.

Ms. Allshouse replied that the estimates were based on 40 cents.

Ms. Palmer said she was not at all surprised that poor people and those with mental health issues will be impacted by a cigarette tax. She asked if there was any way to quantify what percentage of the smokers this would be, and if there was any idea about whether there is a 20% or 40% tax on that impact.

Ms. Allshouse said she would open this up to Ms. Savides for her thoughts.

Ms. Price clarified for Ms. Palmer that the tax is a maximum of 40 cents, not 40%.

Ms. Palmer thanked Ms. Price for correcting her, clarifying that her question was about a maximum of 20 cents.

Ms. Phyllis Savides, Director of Social Services, said she did not have this information at the ready but would imagine she could reach out to the Health Department, who might be able to quantify the numbers of people in the low-income and mental health categories that this would impact.

Ms. Palmer commented that the Board was thinking about this for the general revenue, and if they end up starting new programs with the money or they start targeting the money, it was not as if the new programs would not be better, but they would run the risk of not doing the cigarette tax for the reason they have suggested in the past.

Ms. McKeel said she appreciated the thought and connection with equity through OEI. She said she had a couple of clarification questions. She asked if "regionally" meant the City of Charlottesville as well as Greene, Nelson, and others.

Ms. Allshouse replied that she would present a couple of slides on that momentarily, and Mr. Blount was present from TJPDC. She said they are looking across the region at the areas served by the TJPDC as well as a bit outside of that when thinking about the central part of the state.

Ms. McKeel said she appreciated that there would be a larger discussion about that. She said she was unclear about whether or not everyone currently charges a cigarette tax. She said she was sure they had to charge some sort of tax, but she wondered if there was an additional cigarette tax on top of regular sales tax.

Ms. Allshouse replied that cigarettes already have federal and state taxes on every single pack, and some cities and towns are permitted to also put a local tax on it. She said what staff is looking at is how the rest of the counties in the state are now permitted to also place a tax on the cigarettes.

Ms. McKeel said she supposed the Board would get more clarification later as to what jurisdictions have what taxes.

Ms. Allshouse replied that staff could send out a list of all the cities, towns, and counties and what the taxes are across the state. She said this was coming up in the presentation soon.

Ms. McKeel said she was also interested in Counter Tools but that they could come back to that later.

Ms. Mallek said she was very interested in all the presentations so far and while she did not have any questions, she thinks that successful smoking cessation programs and extra care for the people who need it, if funded by this, would be a worthy goal.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said she did not see the necessity for developing an additional program, but they could certainly put a portion of the monies they collect into the BRHD because they already have programs. She noted that New York has a tax of \$4.35 per pack on their cigarettes, and Albemarle is talking about 40 cents. She said she thinks Virginia was the lowest or second lowest in the nation for cigarette taxes. She said smoking has gone down because cigarette taxes have gone up.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said one thing she saw missing here was the effect on children. She said this bothers her because cigarette smoke has a huge impact on children. She said as many people as the County can help get off of cigarettes, they need to help them, and certainly by raising the taxes, she thinks this helps perhaps a certain population to hopefully quit. She said she believes this has happened in other states, and Ms. Allshouse could give the Board statistics on that. She said to her, this tax is a no-brainer, but perhaps the monies are only needed in BRHD for a year or two. She said perhaps after that, it could go into the General Fund. She said she supports the tax and looked forward to seeing what else Ms. Allshouse would share with the Board.

Mr. Gallaway apologized for joining the meeting late and said he did not have any questions at that time. He said he did agree on coordination with the BRHD and that this was of interest to him.

Ms. Price said she would echo primarily what a couple of the other Supervisors mentioned. She said she believed the consensus was clear that the Board members were all in favor of this. She said her concern was that if they target the use of these funds, they establish a threshold or base amount if there is an existing program as either a dollar amount, a percentage of the budget, or some other mechanism by which they can tell today what they are spending on this program. She said if it is a new program, they can start from the beginning. She said they need to ensure that the funds generated through this tax are actually utilized for that purpose.

Ms. Price said one of the frustrations she thinks many people around the country have had is when the government says they are going to raise taxes for a particular purpose, and then they do not actually use the money for that purpose. She said for example, when the lotteries first came out, everyone said that the money would go to the schools. She said the money may go to the schools, but they then decrease the contribution from the general funds towards the schools, thus robbing Peter to pay Paul. She said she wants to make sure that in Albemarle County, they do not do this.

Ms. Price said she wants to establish what the baseline or threshold is today, identify where the funds are going to go, and not end up shorting those programs by reducing other funds because of some other need. She said then, they can actually show that they are using the money for these purposes.

Ms. Price said her second comment was about how appreciative she is of OEI as a part of the very beginning of this thought process. She said this prospective use of the equity lens is so important.

Ms. Allshouse asked Ms. Russell and Mr. Inofuentes if they wanted to add anything regarding the equity lens.

Ms. Russell thanked the Board for their continued leadership in the community, and especially in the regional community, around incorporating equity and inclusion into their work. She said she did hear some of the questions and points that were brought up, and staff will be able to provide some answers to the Board that were specifically related to the equity piece, likely in a memo.

Ms. Allshouse said she would talk about the work staff is also doing at the same time working closely with TJPDC on the development of a regional cigarette tax board. She said County staff believe it is very important to take this regionally versus doing it individually as one county. She said the TJPDC is leading the effort to explore the potential development of a regional board in this area. She said they are lucky in that there is a Northern Virginia cigarette tax board they can model and learn a lot from. She said this board has been doing this for many years, are very helpful, and are eager to help other areas of the state.

Ms. Allshouse said on March 9, TJPDC convened a meeting, and although it did not have everyone in the region, it had a large sample that included Charlottesville, Fluvanna, Albemarle, Orange, and Louisa. She said they reviewed process flows of how this would work regionally versus doing it locally, as well as a tool that can be used to formulate potential funding scenarios. She said the funding will be different depending on who will join and who will not join. She said staff started working with that tool with TJPDC.

Ms. Allshouse said TJPDC's next step is to reach out to localities throughout the region and throughout the state to obtain resolutions of interest from the governing bodies. She said this would be the County's next step as well to have that resolution, and TJPDC will send the County a model to use and submit so they can take it further in their development.

Ms. Allshouse said there were some new things being considered in the current General Assembly, which is encouraging regional tax boards from the state, and they are setting up a taskforce to development methods to modernize the stamping and tax collection processes. She said there is a real effort from the state to encourage these regional approaches.

Ms. Allshouse presented a timeline. She said the County cannot put together an ordinance or have a public hearing until they know exactly how they are going to administer it. She said staff's thought was that in May, they would ask the Board to approve a resolution of intent for TJPDC to say that they are interested in a regional board.

Ms. Allshouse said July is the time staff believes they will need to determine which way they are going to go, so hopefully, the process can move along quickly at the regional level, and they will know that the regional level will move forward. She said if not, one thing that some of the Board members said to staff on December 2 is if they cannot do it regionally, they can implement locally. She said they could go locally for a while if they had to until perhaps a regional board emerges, but they are really pushing for a regional approach.

Ms. Allshouse said that in September, the Board would hold its public hearing and have the ordinance, which would include the administrative process. She said by November, the goal would be to stand up this administrative system, and it would be January 2022 when they start the tax levy in Albemarle County. She said it will take a while to get things started, and there will be startup costs to get it moving. She said when looking at the FY 23 budget at about this time the next year, the system will be in place, and then the Board could discuss how to spend those General Fund revenues in a broader context with the FY 23 budget.

Ms. Allshouse noted that Mr. Blount was present to answer any questions.

Ms. Palmer said that at the very beginning of the discussion, she believed the Board was told there are studies which show that cigarette taxes do not decrease cigarette smoking. She asked if she heard this correctly and if staff could tell the Board more about that study.

Mr. Jason Inofuentes, Policy and Project Associate with OEI, replied that the research staff did on the demographics side led them to a few studies, particularly one from the University of Pittsburgh that specifically looked at historical behavior modification following a cigarette tax. He said what the study showed is that there is an overall decrease in cigarette smoking, though not necessarily an overall decrease in tobacco use, so some people might be switching to cheaper forms of tobacco, such as smokeless, cigars, or cigarillos.

Mr. Inofuentes said there is also a tendency for that effect to have a paradoxical response, and so where they see the highest decrease in smoking is the highest incomes. He said this was the point made on the prior slide, that this effect has a negligible decrease in smoking in the lowest income categories. He said overall, there is some amount of decrease, but there is not any noticeable decrease in low-income communities.

Ms. Palmer asked Mr. Inofuentes if he remembered what percentage of this study was in the low-income versus the higher income.

Mr. Inofuentes replied that he could not recall exactly the end of lower-income versus higher-income, but he could recall one particular statistic, which was that following a 25-cent cigarette tax increase, there was an overall decrease in cigarette smoking rates by 6%. He said that within low-income communities, it was less than 0.06%.

Ms. Palmer asked if there was a starting point on the price of the pack of cigarettes or a tipping point once they get to a certain level. She said she did not know what cigarettes cost in Pittsburgh, but she was curious as to if they were to start at a higher cost, if it was more effective or less effective.

Mr. Inofuentes replied that the method for this study was simply to take all of the cigarette taxes and all the smoking data for those regions across about a 30-year timeframe nationally. He said they did not have a specific starting point, and it was just more of, as a whole, if they started the clock ticking from the moment a cigarette tax is implemented, what is the change in the smoking rate one year later.

Ms. McKeel said she believed her question was answered with the last response.

Ms. Mallek asked Ms. Allshouse if a timetable is known for this update taskforce from the state. She said usually, those things take a long time, and they may answer some questions for the Board, but she also did not want to wait around for them if it was going to take five years. She asked if there was any promise for a report by November 2021 regarding that taskforce.

Ms. Allshouse asked Mr. Kamptner if he had the answer.

Mr. Kamptner replied that the recommendations are supposed to be submitted to the General Assembly by November 1, 2021.

Ms. Mallek said this was a great timetable. She asked if it would help the TJPDC to continue to get organized if the Board stepped up its notice of intent sooner. She said it may take more months they are thinking to wrangle other counties together to join them, and she wanted to give as much time for this as was reasonable.

Ms. Allshouse asked Mr. Blount if he could answer the question.

Mr. Blount replied that when the TJPDC meets on April 1, they will have a presentation about the efforts thus far and the undertaking in conjunction with Albemarle and the other counties to make sure they are comfortable with the path they are on. He said that probably shortly thereafter, within several weeks, TJPDC would be sending out some information and materials about the effort as well as the draft resolutions of interest, and they would probably ask that those be considered and acted upon in May. He said they were probably in good shape timewise with where that could occur within 4-6 weeks.

Ms. Mallek said it sounded like they had it covered. She said as a matter of transparency, she thinks it would be important that they have decisions about the general categories of where the funds would go before they go too far with the ordinance only because people may feel as if there is a bait and switch if they do not have it laid out very clearly ahead of time about where this would go.

Ms. Mallek said she would provide a good example of success. She said that back in 2015 or 2016, the County added 0.7 cents to the tax rate for water resources and stormwater programs, and she thinks this is a good and carefully managed model. She said she knows the money goes where it is supposed to go, so she would use this as an example.

Ms. Mallek said her last thought was that from all the data, her question was if the smaller decrease in smoking in lower-income people is because they have fewer points of access into cessation programs and fewer obstacles to stop. She said she did not want to not do something because they had not seen the data somewhere else so far. She said they need to take this into account and not make the same mistakes others have made.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said Ms. Mallek brought up a good point that they want to make sure that the cessation programs with the lower-income people do work. She said if it does not work, there is no sense in doing this. She said she also agreed about laying out where the money is going to go. She said she has no problem taking a regional approach and thinks it is good because it helps the small businesses and convenience stores.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said if they lay it out first and make sure what they are going to do works, but not necessarily tie themselves in because of something they find out a few years down the road is not working, they can then move the monies into education or something else that would be popular with the residents also. She said this would not lock them in forever, but it will show them if the regional approach works and if more people quit smoking.

Ms. Price agreed with Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley's last comment, which was that if they identify a fund for which these revenues should be used and later decide that there may be a better use, they want to have the flexibility, and they then need to make sure, as she spoke of earlier, they articulate this to their constituents so that they understand why the change is made, and they are not simply shifting money around.

Ms. Price said with regard to the regional approach, which she wholly supports, they must draw lines, and no matter where they draw those lines, there will always be a question. She said if their region is going to be the TJPDC, which is helpful for the County in so many areas, it is good, but it leaves out Rockingham, Augusta, Greene, and, particularly for those people in the southern part of Albemarle County, Nelson, and Buckingham Counties. She said she was particularly thinking about the businesses in the Town of Scottsville. She said if the County were to use a regional approach to levy a tax, but across the river in Buckingham they are not doing it, then the regional approach may look good, but it did not really help all the businesses.

Ms. Price said understanding the lines must be drawn and that the region will be divided at some point, she would also hope and ask that Albemarle County coordinate or communicate with counties nearby or adjacent to them that may not be within that region so that hopefully, they will all be doing about the same thing and do not end up putting some of their businesses at a disadvantage because the county just across the line from them is not imposing a tax.

Ms. Price thanked staff for the clarification on Nelson and Green, noting she had missed that during the presentation. She said the point was that if there were other counties not the region, she would like to work with them.

Ms. Palmer said she knew Ms. Price and Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley were not on the Board when this

was discussed over the years, and while she had no problem with putting the money into something specific, they never said that the reason why they were instituting a cigarette tax, or any other taxing authority, was to put it toward smoking cessation. She said as she remembers, most of those discussions were about trying to do anything they possibly could to reduce the dependency on the real estate tax. She said this was just a comment on her part and it was not an argument not to do it, but she felt compelled to say it.

Ms. Price said Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked the question of whether they know exactly what the region will be. She said ideally for Albemarle County, they would want every county that touches their borders to be part of their region, but then each of those counties probably have the same desire. She said that at some point, boundaries will be drawn, and adjacent counties will be in different regions for this taxing purpose. She said she did not know who the appropriate person would be to try to address that question as to exactly what they will anticipate their regional boundary to be, and which counties would be included.

Ms. Allshouse asked Mr. Blount if he could answer.

Mr. Blount said he did not know at that point what the boundary might be. He said the TJPDC counties are Albemarle, Louisa, Fluvanna, Greene, and Nelson Counties. He said as Ms. Allshouse mentioned, Orange County, which is to the north and east, was added into the discussion.

Mr. Blount said he has also had some discussions with both the planning district commissions to the north as well as with those over the mountain, to the west, as they have started to receive inquiries from their county officials. He said they are interested in what TJPDC is doing, so it may be that they are able to ultimately have some of those areas show a greater interest in being part of a regional effort. He said this will probably require more discussion about how far they cast the net in terms of what this particular region might look like.

Ms. Price said she believed this answered one of her questions, which was that the region for this tax would not necessarily coincide exactly with the TJPDC region.

Mr. Blount said this was correct.

Ms. McKeel said to follow up on this, she heard Mr. Blount say there was a regional approach in Northern Virginia.

Mr. Blount said yes.

Ms. McKeel said of course, Northern Virginia is very different from Albemarle population-wise, but she was curious as to how broadly they cast their net as far as their region.

Mr. Blount replied that he had not particularly looked at who was in and who was out there. He said his feeling was that it was all confined within the borders of Planning District Commission #8. He said for example, there are the counties of Fairfax and Arlington that are authorized to levy cigarette taxes currently, and he believes that only Fairfax County is part of the regional board, while the rest are the cities and towns that are levying the tax. He said he was not sure if all of the eligible localities there are part of the regional board, but he would look into that.

Ms. McKeel said she recognizes that they are very different creatures, to some degree, but she was curious as it seems as if their approach has been successful.

Mr. Blount said it has been successful.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said to piggyback on what Ms. Palmer said, they do have to be careful because if they put money into a certain program that is not working well, this is why she wanted the flexibility of being able to use it for something else.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said the other thing she just thought of was about decreasing property taxes, which was what they were originally talking about, and that they do not know how much money they are going to be receiving from this cigarette tax. She said if it is a small amount, it is not going to make a difference on property taxes. She said if it is a huge amount, there may be enough for both the regional approach and something else, such as schools or a decrease in taxes. She said they just do not know how much the amount is going to be.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley he said perhaps Ms. Allshouse could let them know, but she did not think it was going to be millions of millions of dollars, and this would also determine what they do with the money.

---

Agenda Item No. 3. Department of Voter Registration and Elections.

Mr. Bowman said he would introduce this topic before turning it over to Mr. Jake Washburne,

County Registrar, and his team for any comments they wished to add. He said they would then open it to the Board for questions and discussion around the voter registration budget.

Mr. Bowman said that over the past year, the County Registrar and his team have been in regular contact with the Budget Division on a number of changes, both as they navigate the new early voting election law and as other distinct guidance comes out. He thanked Mr. Washburne for continually keeping staff aware of the latest information from the state and their needs and requirements, which has allowed staff to plan and be responsive in both the current fiscal year (FY 21) and next fiscal year (FY 22).

Mr. Bowman said he would begin with a high-level look at the voter registration and elections budget. He said the FY 22 proposed budget includes \$1.1 million for this office's operations, which is an increase of about \$161,000 (or 17%) over FY 21. He said this does include the impact of increased early voting, both in-person and by mail, as was seen during the 2020 election cycle, which was significant.

Mr. Bowman said looking ahead in terms of what they learned from the current year to help with next year's request, there are four other topics staff has been in discussion with the Registrar's Office about, the first of which is space and parking at the County Office Building on 5th Street. He said one of the reasons the Electoral Board cites as what was the best of that program in the fall during the November election was that the office space that was available to them and the availability of parking, given that the County Office Building was in a different building posture than it would be in a typical year.

Mr. Bowman said County staff in the Department of Facilities and Environmental Services has been coordinating with the Electoral Board on a plan for the Calendar Year 2021 elections, and he understands the plan is agreeable to the Electoral Board.

Mr. Bowman said the second item staff has been working with the Registrar's Office on is the potential for a second primary election to be held during FY 22, which is one more than they would typically see. He said they have addressed this by including in the proposed budget one-time funding for a second primary, recognizing that a second primary would be an unusual occurrence where one-time funding would be an eligible use.

Mr. Bowman said the next topic was election officer management software. He said as the number of election officers has grown as a result of early voting; this is about having a better tool to manage all the associated data. He said staff has been coordinating with the IT Department, Registrar's Office, and Project Management Office to look for solutions that will work for them. He said staff will be recommending an appropriation in FY 21 of \$33,000 at the April 7 Board meeting, and there will be additional details on that at that time.

Mr. Bowman said finally, there is some state-mandated equipment coming, which Mr. Washburne had alerted staff to going back to the summer. He said they were still getting additional guidance from the state as recently as the past few weeks. He said this refers to the replacement of equipment for disabled voters and well as the pollbook program. He said there is funding in the FY 21 reserve contingencies and if for some reason there is not a need for a second primary election, that funding could be repurposed for that.

Mr. Bowman said they want to make sure they do not purchase the equipment too late, and they also do not want to purchase it too early before the state has made all their determinations. He said they are looking at what is appropriate for the timing and the equipment certification. He said there are a couple of options on how this will be funded, and it will be a matter of confirmation from the state and from Mr. Washburne's team on the best way to proceed.

Mr. Bowman concluded his comments and welcomed Mr. Washburne and his team to add any comments.

Mr. Washburne thanked the Board for allowing him to join them for this work session. He said one thing the Electoral Board was concerned about back in December, when he put in the annual budget request, was that the Supervisors might have a look at it and wonder why additional funding was being asked for. He said he wanted to reassure the Board of Supervisors that it was mostly because the effects of the new early voting law required operating in a different landscape. He said he was very glad to see that in the interim, between sending out the letter in late December from the Electoral Board requesting this work session, OMB has recommended the requested budget, which was encouraging.

Mr. Washburne said in case the Supervisors had any questions about these large expenditures for the disabled voter equipment and electronic pollbook upgrades, those two will be required by upgraded security standards that were adopted by the State Board of Elections. He said it looks like the County is going to have to have those implemented after June 30, 2021. He said they continue to receive different information from the Department of Elections and vendors, but it looks like they may be able to use their electronic pollbook program through the November 2021 election, upgrading it immediately after that.



Mr. Washburne said as to the replacement of the handicap-assisted voting equipment, however, they may need to do that sometime in July or August and have it ready for the following election cycle.

Mr. Washburne said in a perfect world, these would have been better characterized as capital improvements, and they would have had 3-4 years to put a little bit in every year to get the capital fund where they needed it. He said this has happened suddenly, however.

Mr. Washburne said as far as the election officer management software, Ms. Clarice Schermerhorn was available to answer any questions about it. He said trying to manage all of the elections officers they had last fall with the system they had been using for about 20 years, they almost had a meltdown. He said Ms. Schermerhorn, Ms. Erin Davis, and Ms. Lauren Eddy bore the brunt of all of that, and they need a better way to take care of all of that.

Ms. Palmer said she could not imagine anyone being concerned about requests for more money this year after what the Elections Board went through last year and how wonderfully they worked with the systems that they had, so she certainly supports it. She asked Mr. Washburne if he could remind the Board what percentage the budget went up in FY 21 to cover what they could in that budget cycle, adding that perhaps it was covered outside the budget cycle.

Mr. Washburne said although he did not have the numbers in front of him, as he recalled, they grabbed some additional funding as a budget carry-forward from the previous fiscal year, but they had a little left in the bank from that. He said then, they got some funding from the CARES Act of about \$80,000 from the state which, in turn, had received it from the federal government. He said between the CARES Act funding and the carry-forward, he believed they were able to cover most of the additional expenses, but they were significant.

Ms. Palmer said Mr. Washburne did a wonderful job.

Ms. McKeel noted that the slide said, "Includes impacts of increased early voting, in person and by mail." She said she knew there was some discussion about mailing absentee ballots out in some states, and she was embarrassed to admit that she was not sure where Virginia stood on that. She asked Mr. Washburne if Virginia is currently only mailing ballots to people at their request.

Mr. Washburne replied that in Virginia, it is currently only at the person's request. He said those requests increased last year due to COVID and the to the new "no excuse" early voting law. He added that the Presidential Election created a trifecta that increased the request for absentee ballots by mail.

Ms. McKeel said this was what she thought, but that she hears a lot of chatter. She said to be clear, it looked to her that what the Registrar's Office was requesting was included in the Board's budget.

Mr. Washburne said he believed this was correct. He said what they requested in the regular FY 22 budget request was recommended by OMB, which was very reassuring. He said the three additional items that they really were not aware of until fairly recently, however, included that they were going to be required to purchase upgraded handicap-assisted ballot-marking devices, and this was not in the FY 22 request. He said they will not be cheap, and the price tag on that will be about \$118,000. He said it looks like they will have to do that sometime this July or August so that they will be ready for the fall election cycle.

Mr. Washburne said that with the upgrade to the electronic pollbook program and heightened security standards, it looks like they will be able to use the current program through the November 2021 election. He said right after that, however, they will have to get the upgrade, so it will be in FY 22, and the price tag on that is about \$67,000. He said this is not cheap, either, and it was not included in the FY 22 regular annual budget request.

Mr. Washburne said thirdly, the election officer management software was something that they had not really figured out and had not realized how time consuming it was going to be last fall until they were into it, where they not only had to recruit a lot of election officers to work on Election Day, but they also had to recruit a lot to work during the full 45 days of early voting. He said managing that whole process has become much more complicated.

Mr. Washburne said that when Ms. Schermerhorn started out 20 years ago, there were about 200 election officers in the County, and they now have over 700. He said although they probably will not need to use all 700 in any election, they are still in the system. He said they still have to keep track of all of them, get them recruited, set a training schedule, and figure out who can work for the early voting and what precincts they can work in. He said to try to do that with individual emails and phone calls back and forth to all of those people nearly killed Elections staff last year.

Mr. Washburne said when the dust settled and they tried to figure out how they could possibly improve the system, this was when in December and January, they looked and found that the larger localities as well as some of the middle-sized ones in Virginia have begun using election officer management software that is specifically targeted for these many interrelated tasks, and it appears to

work very well.

Mr. Washburne said in terms of the amount of time that Ms. Clarice Schermerhorn, Ms. Erin Davis, Ms. Lauren Eddy, and Ms. Anne Schermerhorn spent trying to keep track of all the election officers last fall, there was so much going on that they did not account for every hour spent on this, but he is sure that it was probably over a full-time position in and of itself. He said all of the feedback they have received from this particular software has been very upbeat and so although it is not a mandate, he is afraid that if they do not get it, they will have trouble in the future.

Ms. McKeel said this information was very helpful. She said she was certainly in favor of helping the Elections Board with their financial needs. She said it is very important they make sure the systems are up to date, whether it is in Mr. Washburne's department, or in the Health Department statewide. She said all of these systems and software applications have to be kept up to date. She said it is critical, and many of them have not been. She said she was all in favor of this, and she was just trying to make sure she understood what the different pieces were.

Ms. McKeel said the Elections staff have done an outstanding job, and the Board wants to continue to support them and make it as easy as possible for community members to vote in a smooth and effective way. She said she thinks the pandemic has peeled back the onion and shown them where many of the technology gaps and others are, and they need to get in and start fixing them so that they have a handle on all of this. She thanked Mr. Washburne for the information.

Ms. Mallek said she is incredibly supportive of this and knows how much work went in by people up and down the chain last year to try to get training and reference materials out to all of the staffers. She asked Mr. Washburne if he included enough in his request to make sure he has ample funds to get the reference materials and directions out to everyone. She said all those hundreds of notebooks cost money. She said she understood that just the day prior, Governor Northam signed the bill approving Sunday early voting as well, and this will increase the amount of staff they have to have to cover all of those days.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley stated that she was there at early voting, and that from what she saw, Mr. Washburne's office looked like the proverbial duck on the water, where everything was smooth sailing. She said she knows that underneath that, however, the staff were pedaling fast because she saw the stress on Mr. Washburne's face. She said everything was so smooth and ran so well, and she knows Mr. Washburne and his staff worked well. She said she was supportive of the request.

Mr. Gallaway asked if there was any funding help coming from the state on the equipment replacement since the state mandated it.

Mr. Washburne replied that there was not, as far as he knew. He said the only help he had heard about was that the state may delay the implementation of one of the components until after the November 2021 election. He said that as far as funding, however, he would need to look at that. He said they may have put a little help into the budget bill for return postage for mail-in early ballots. He said they did this last fall as part of the emergency legislation in the special session toward the end of last summer, but it was just for last fall. He said he knew that it was an amendment to the budget bill, and the Governor has not yet signed the bill, which is about 10,000 pages long. He said there is the possibility that they may get some help on the postage.

Mr. Gallaway said Mr. Washburne has been doing this for a while, and he was sure that his world has been full of different state mandates at different times. He asked if the state has ever followed through with funding on state-mandated items in the past.

Mr. Washburne replied that when the state was encouraging everyone to switch to electronic pollbooks from the old paper ones where one had to scroll through every page to find one's name when they went in to vote, the state was creative on that. He said at the time, the price tag from private vendors on those was about \$1,500 per laptop, with software. He said that at the time, the Secretary of the Department of Elections had the great idea to refurbish the laptops at state agencies where they had to be replaced due to the election schedule, and they cut a deal with a pollbook software vendor so that they got them for \$50 each, which was a bargain price back then.

Mr. Washburne said that beyond this, it has mostly been a state mandate, with the funding having to come from the County.

Mr. Gallaway said he supposed it was a matter of the degree of whether or not the state will follow through with resources. He said these mandates come down just like any other mandate the state puts in place and then, the resource burden gets put to the locality. He said this always needs to be pointed out because any time the Board has to use local resources to offset mandates that come down from the state, that means those local resources are not going to other local needs. He said it was not that this was not important or that he was not being supportive, but he thinks the state should follow through with some sort of funding obligation when they have mandates.

Ms. Price said there are many things the County does, but there is nothing they do that is more important than ensuring free and fair elections. She said having been an election official in several jurisdictions and multiple precincts over the years, all of whom did very well. She said no one, however, does it better than Albemarle County. She said the admiration, respect, and appreciation that she has for the integrity and reliability of elections in Albemarle County is as high as anything that she has ever seen, and she wants to ensure that the Election Board, staff, and volunteers all know how much the Supervisors appreciate that.

Ms. Price said as did the other Supervisors, she supported the funding request, adding “raise my rent” to her list of changes. She thanked Mr. Washburne for his presentation. She asked Mr. Bowman if he had anything to add before the recess.

Mr. Bowman said so that there was no confusion, he wanted to clarify that Mr. Washburne was correct that the bottom two items on the slide, election officer management software and state-mandated equipment replacement, were not included in FY 22. He said they will be bringing back appropriations in FY 21 to address those items because if they need to move forward prior to July 1, staff wants to ensure there is flexibility provided.

---

**Recess.** The Board recessed its meeting at 4:10 p.m. and reconvened at 4:23 p.m.

---

Agenda Item No. 4. **Work Session:** Transit.

- Regional Transit Partnership.
- Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT).
- JAUNT, Inc.

Mr. Bowman said the final topic for the afternoon’s work session was a discussion around transit agency contributions, as were noted on page 127 of the recommended budget document. He said he would kick things off on this topic before turning it over to staff from the TJPDC, Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT), and JAUNT for their further comments, and then to the Board for discussion and questions.

Mr. Bowman said he would start with the themes of the FY 22 budget that were covered in the County Executive’s budget presentation. He said during the work sessions, they had touched on the fact that FY 22 is a transition budget. He said there was a lot they learned during the 12 months of the pandemic that they did not or could not know 12 months ago, but the reality is that even though they do know more, they are still in a pandemic and in a time of uncertainty. He said although the economy is stabilizing, but it has not yet stabilized.

Mr. Bowman said that like much of the budget and recommendations that were made, the framework of being a transition year was applied to transit just as it was to many other services. He said transit services currently continue to adapt to the pandemic. He said much has changed around state and federal funding that continues to play out as they learn more. He said there are studies currently underway that will shape the future of transit in the coming years.

Mr. Bowman said they would discuss this in more detail as they hear from the agencies, but he would briefly cover the highlights of those agencies using a donut chart of the budget recommendations, starting with the smallest piece of the chart and working up to the largest.

Mr. Bowman said the smallest piece was hardly visible on the chart and is the proposal for the County to provide \$6,000 to the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission. He said this provides the County’s match to the Afton Express, which is a transit route that will connect the Shenandoah Valley area with the Charlottesville-Albemarle area. He said localities on both sides of the mountain and UVA are planning to contribute to this effort as a match towards state dollars.

Mr. Bowman said the second item, shown in yellow on the chart, was the Regional Transit Partnership, which is staffed by the TJPDC. He said the FY 22 budget includes \$69,000 as the County’s share of current operations as well as the second half of funding for the County’s match towards the development of a Regional Transit Vision Plan. He noted that in FY 21, the County’s match for two grants is already funded. He said those two grants include the first half of the Regional Transit Vision Plan and an Albemarle-specific transit study. He said Ms. Christine Jacobs of the TJPDC would be speaking about those in more detail momentarily.

Mr. Bowman said the next piece of the chart was CAT, shown in blue, which is recommended to be funded at \$1 million. He said this reflects the County’s share of CAT after the leveraging of state and federal revenues, including CARES funding, at the time of the County Executive’s recommended budget. He said it also reflects CAT’s efforts to improve system performance, reliability, and their future state funding prospects.

Mr. Bowman added that County staff spent the better part of an hour with the Regional Transit Partnership last February for CAT to share the analyses that had been recently done with their consultants and look at the improved data collection they have on ridership and the evaluation and transit planning principles they can use to better optimize system performance. He said there is time outside of the budget to have a work session with the Board in more detail about shaping what transit will look like in the future.

Mr. Bowman said Mr. Garland Williams of CAT may touch on that in some of his comments later that day. He said it had been an informative presentation but was much more detailed than was planned for the present work session. He said it also speaks to where they are in this transition year with these studies being underway.

Mr. Bowman said finally, the orange piece of the chart was JAUNT funding, which is approximately \$2.2 million for the services they provide, including paratransit services in the vicinity of CAT routes, Rural Area services throughout the entire County, and the commuter routes they fund such as Crozet Connects and the Route 29 North routes in the Hollymead area. He said there is a decrease that is requested and recommended for JAUNT, which reflects how they are applying federal CARES money to reduce local shares for all regional partners in FY 22.

Mr. Bowman said he would turn it over to Ms. Christine Jacobs with the Regional Transit Partnership. He said Ms. Jacobs is the Interim Director of the TJPDC, and she would be elaborating on the PDC. He said there would be a pause after each agency speaks to take questions.

Ms. Christine Jacobs, Interim Executive Director for the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC), said that prior to her current role, she served as Chief Operating Officer for the TJPDC. She said some of the Board members may know her from her work directing the housing program and the management of the rent and mortgage relief program. She said the interim role was a little different, and she appreciated the Board having her there to talk about the Regional Transit Partnership (RTP).

Ms. Jacobs said RTP was established in 2017 after a regional transit coordination study that recommended a regional transit advisory board. She said in 2018, some strategic planning was done, and by 2019, an MOU had been signed between Albemarle and Charlottesville for funding for the RTP. She said in 2020, UVA was added as voting membership.

Ms. Jacobs said the overall vision of the partnership and the regional transit system is to be an efficient high-quality, integrated regional network of transit services. She said in FY 21, the major initiatives were applying for and being awarded two different transit grants that they are very excited to be a part of implementing.

Ms. Jacobs said the first grant is the Albemarle County Transit Expansion Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan, which looks at expanding service in three particular areas: Monticello, north of Route 29, and the Pantops area. She said this is a Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) grant, with Albemarle matching half of the total budget for that. She said the timeline for that is to be completed by the end of the current fiscal year, and the advisory group was appointed by Albemarle County for that process.

Ms. Jacobs said the second grant the RTP is excited to be working on is the Charlottesville-Albemarle Regional Transit Vision Plan, which has a budget of around \$350,000, with Albemarle contributing a quarter of that, matched by a quarter of the City of Charlottesville, with the remaining half from DRPT. She said the RTP will serve as the advisory group for that process, and the timeline for completion is the end of next fiscal year (FY 22).

Ms. Jacobs said in terms of next year, in administering these two DRPT grants, they are really trying to set the RTP and TJPDC up to apply for implementation funding. She said both of these are planning-type grants and will be looking at other grant opportunities to move forward.

Ms. Jacobs said the RTP is currently in the process of developing its FY 22 work plan that still needs to go to the RTP for discussion and approval. She said some of the items in that work plan include a spring virtual series with peer regions to look at what they are doing in terms of regional transit, looking at consolidated ridership reporting across all the transit agencies, exploring Smart Scale opportunities, as transit agencies are eligible for direct Smart Scale funding, exploring ongoing informational series, bringing other players into the RTP to do some informational sessions, and looking ahead for the next strategic planning effort for FY 23.

Ms. Jacobs said the TJPDC is grateful for the County's support of the RTP, and they look forward to working with them. She offered to take questions, noting that as she was nearly five weeks into the interim position, she would do her best to answer them. She said she may also need to take notes and reach out to others if the questions become too technical.

Ms. McKeel said the presentation captured everything well.

Ms. Mallek agreed, adding that the ridership reporting is a high priority for her because it will lead into her questions later about how various aspects are attributed and how the ridership counts are actually happening.

Ms. Price said the Board recognizes the importance of transportation in the area and thanked Ms. Jacobs for the presentation.

Mr. Bowman said he would turn the presentation over to Mr. Garland Williams, Director of Transit at CAT.

Mr. Garland Williams, Director of Transit for Charlottesville Area Transit, said he would be presenting CAT's overview for the FY 22 budget.

Mr. Williams said CAT is defined as a small urban transit agency. He said in FY 22, they had about 1.3 million total passenger transfers at approximately 3,635 passengers per day. He said in their system, they have about 327 bus stops, one park-n-ride lot, and one transit center. He said they have 36 fixed route buses, and 13 fixed route bus routes, with which CAT has been providing service to Albemarle County since 1978. He said that of those 13 routes, nine of them operate in the County. He said in a normal year, outside of the pandemic, they provide service 364 days per year, roughly 19 hours per day Monday through Saturday and 11 hours on Sunday.

Mr. Williams said the breakdown of revenue associated with CAT is approximately almost \$1.9 million in federal money and \$2 million from the state, with those two numbers adding to approximately 39.2% of CAT's total revenue. He said the local share is 24.5%, which is \$2.5 million from the City of Charlottesville, and a requested \$1 million from Albemarle County, representing 9.7%. He said CAT has directly generated approximately \$130,000, which represents 1.3% of revenues.

Mr. Williams said last year, CAT received a total of \$5.3 million in CARES Act money, and they are spending \$1.5 million of that in the current fiscal year. He said CAT proposes to use \$2.5 million of the CARES Act money to offset FY 22 for a total of \$10.1 million.

Mr. Williams said CAT's operating budget breaks down the expense side. He said the budget categories are Operations, Administration, Maintenance, Marketing, and Safety and Security. He said personnel takes up about 75% of their total budget on the Operations side, with \$5.4 million being the largest expenditure said. He said Operations is the largest portion of the budget, at \$6.2 million. He said the Administration side is approximately \$1 million, Maintenance is \$4.2 million, Marketing is \$148,000, and Safety and Security is \$225,000, for a grand total of \$10.1 million.

Mr. Williams said CAT is receiving additional amounts of money based on the American Rescue Plan Act. He said it is currently estimated to be approximately \$5.3 million, and with the split being 75/25 between CAT and JAUNT, CAT (acting as the direct recipient) will get the \$5.3 million, and it will be appropriated at approximately \$4 million going to CAT and \$1.3 million going to JAUNT.

Mr. Williams concluded his presentation and offered to answer questions.

Ms. Palmer said she was slightly confused and asked Mr. Williams to go back to the revenues. She asked if the \$4 million was included in CAT's revenues.

Mr. Williams replied that the \$4 million was not included in the revenues. He said CAT has proposed to take the remaining balance of the CARES money and the additional money they will get from the American Recovery Plan, which he did not know when this would come to them, then use that to balance their budget over a five-year period of time. He said the majority of the money will be spent in three years, FY 22, 23, and 24). He said this allows CAT to keep the amount of money that is coming from the City and the County down, keeping the appropriations to CAT at \$1 million from the County in FY 22 and FY 23, and going to approximately \$1.2 million in FY 24 and FY 25.

Ms. McKeel said last year during the budget discussions, if she remembered correctly, they talked about Charlottesville Public Schools transportation. She said she believed that for the first time, Albemarle and CAT had that discussion, and Mr. Williams separated this out for the Board somehow or another. She said she believed it would be helpful because many understand that Albemarle County pupil transportation is an entity that comes under the schools, and it is a separate funding mechanism that can easily be separated and described. She said because CAT has a contract with Charlottesville Public Schools, CAT runs both systems.

Ms. McKeel said in these presentations, she would like some clarity to make sure that the Board understands where the line is and some more transparency, since it was not mentioned. She said she was not saying there was anything wrong, but it would be nice to have clarity around any comingling.

Mr. Williams said there is no comingling.

Ms. McKeel said she understood this was the wrong word to use. She said it would be nice for the Board to see a slide or some information about the Charlottesville Public Schools transportation. She asked Mr. Williams if he could see where she was going with this.

Mr. Williams replied that he did. He assured everyone that for the public side of the house at CAT, all the federal funds are separate. He said there is a small portion of his salary that is allocated to the school system, but that is the only portion of this budget that is there. He said what the Board saw before them was strictly the public side of the house at CAT in terms of the \$10.1 million proposal.

Ms. McKeel said they had talked about that for the first time last year, and she understood. She said she probably used the wrong word when she said "comingling" and she did not mean it that way. She said all she meant was that Mr. Williams, as the director of CAT, also runs the Charlottesville Public Schools' transit system. She said it would be nice if there was just some reference for the Board to know that, perhaps for future presentations, even if it was just one line. She said she was interested in what that amount was for the current year, as she thinks it is important.

Mr. Williams replied that he believed it was \$8,000.

Ms. McKeel said she knew it was not very much, but she thinks that for transparency for the public, it is important for people to know.

Mr. Williams noted this and said he would make sure it is there in the next presentation.

Regarding the slide on the American Rescue Plan funding, Ms. Mallek asked Mr. Williams to explain how the split is determined between JAUNT and CAT. She said this was similar to questions she would ask about the routes and attribution of County versus City percentages of responsibility for the routes.

Mr. Williams replied that the percentages were development in an agreement between CAT and JAUNT many years ago. He said it is a written agreement that spells out the 75/25 split. He said CAT is the direct recipient of funds, meaning that from the FTA's point of view, they are responsible for all of the money that comes in, regardless of whether it goes to CAT or JAUNT. He said based on that agreement, they split it 75/25.

Ms. Mallek asked what the metric was that was responsible for this, pointing out that something may have changed in the 20 years or so since this was done. She said she did not know, but she is being asked by others and would like to be able to tell them something reasonable.

Mr. Williams replied that this is 5307 money, which is urban money that is normally used for running a fixed route transit system. He said JAUNT gets the 25% because they are the provider of ADA paratransit service. He said the 25% is spent on their paratransit service as a sum of CAT for that purpose.

Ms. Mallek said that the slide, then, was only about City operations.

Mr. Williams said it is City and County for ADA. He said JAUNT can spend the \$1.3 million on the ADA portion. He said this is the normal 75/25, and there are less restrictions for the money, whether it is CARES or the American Rescue Plan Act, where they have not seen the description of what it can be spent on yet. He said the \$5.3 million represents what the Senate Budget Office estimates the breakdown will be for the Charlottesville region, and this number may change.

Ms. Mallek said Mr. Williams did not have the charts in his package, but the Board received the charts in their packets, and she had a couple of questions on those so that she could better explain to others when they ask. She thanked Mr. Williams for listing the descriptions of the routes, as this helped her to know where she was. She said she supposed that #9 and #10 were the interesting ones, as downhill to Rose Hill (#9) is attributed 18% to the County. She said she did not know what that meant. She said #10 (City to Martha Jefferson Hospital) is taking lots of City residents to work, and this was attributed 71% to the County. She asked Mr. Williams if he could help her understand those.

Mr. Williams replied that the percentages represent the amount of time the bus is running in the County versus the City. He said the number of trips it does on a daily basis, which continue to add up every single day, or Saturday and Sunday, culminate into what Ms. Mallek saw in the first column, which gives them the total number of hours per year. He said they can look at where the bus enters the County and where the bus exits the County, and the amount of mileage associated with the time is how they pull together the percentages.

Ms. Mallek asked if there are logs on the buses that help them to determine that. She said there had been a discussion for years about having rider passes that would allow CAT to keep track of them, and she did not know whether or not that had been adopted.

Mr. Williams replied that the way they are finding out the percentages is strictly by GIS (geographic information system). He said the AVL (Automatic Vehicle Location) system is a GIS or GPS (Global Positioning System) product that allows them to know when the bus enters the City versus the County. He said as long as it is in the County, it is counting the mileage in the County and how much time it is spending, which is how they get the percentages.

Ms. Mallek said at a future time, it would be great to see how many people actually go on those. She thanked Mr. Williams and said she did understand this better now.

Mr. Williams said CAT is working on giving the County very detailed information on ridership and placement.

Ms. Price said she wanted to recognize the challenges that exist in public transportation, particularly in the smaller markets. She thanked Mr. Williams for his time and presentation.

Mr. Bowman introduced Ms. Karen Davis, Interim Director for JAUNT.

Ms. Davis said many of the Board members knew her, as she previously served as Chief Operating Officer and has been with JAUNT for 12 years. She said she stepped into the interim role in December, in the middle of budget time. She said there has been a steep learning curve and a lot of excitement. She said she would answer any questions from the Board.

Ms. Davis presented a slide with a quick overview of the types of things JAUNT does for Albemarle County. She said in the past fiscal year, to date, there have been 246,000 trips. She said JAUNT has a fleet of 88 transit vehicles, and 122 employees. She said there have been 2,933,830 miles traveled and 82,692 revenue hours. She said this equates to the ADA service for Albemarle County as well as commuter routes

coming into the City from Albemarle County, 29 North, Crozet, the Scottsville area, and a lot of demand response to rural areas.

Ms. Davis said JAUNT has worked hard to keep their budget request level with FY 20 so that there would not be extra burden on the localities. She said they are including a staff wage increase, however, because they have struggled to keep parity with other transit agencies in the area. She said she is very focused on making sure their drivers are paid a living wage. She added that healthcare costs went up as well. She said JAUNT was able to ameliorate much of this using CARES Act money to keep the requests level with FY 20.

Ms. Davis said the Board did not get to see Mr. Williams' full slide deck, and he did an amazing job at looking ahead. She said she put out a couple of ideas that JAUNT is keeping an eye on, including looking at parity for drivers and ways of keeping the system fare-free, at least coming out of COVID. She said she has spoken with Mr. Williams, and she wants to make sure JAUNT is prepared to match whatever CAT might be thinking, as she thinks it is important for ADA riders to go fare-free if the fixed route does.

Ms. Davis said there is a lot of demand for on-demand, and JAUNT cannot wait to move forward with it, knowing it is something Albemarle County is very interested in. She said in terms of sustainability, she has put in a request this year for a study so that they can look at the infrastructure, make sure they are set up well, and have an analysis of where they can implement electric vehicles strategically and effectively. She said once this plan is in place, it is JAUNT's hope, desire, and expectation that DRPT will have some electric vehicles on state contract that they will then be able to move forward and purchase, which is preferable to retrofitting an already-existing gasoline engine and vehicle.

Ms. Davis provided an overview slide of JAUNT's FY 22 budget request and stated that the overall request is for \$2.18 million. She said they are trying to stabilize the request rather than increasing it, utilizing some CARES Act funds to supplement and keep the amount even. She said capital requests go toward vehicle expenditures and the like.

Ms. Davis said much like what Mr. Williams stated, much of the expenditures go directly into wages, with drivers being the largest portion of JAUNT's staff. She said there is a smaller portion of administration staff as well as facilities and other expenses. She said for capital, the largest portion is for vehicle replacement, with other portions going to support vehicles, parts, minor facility improvements, and technology. She offered to answer any questions from the Board.

Ms. Palmer said she had one question about the parity issue. She asked where JAUNT drivers will be with the 4% increase in comparison to others, given that the County is increasing their wages.

Ms. Davis replied that she would go back and analyze that, especially after whatever wage increases were about to occur. She said she knows the starting wage for drivers is still about \$14, and she would like it to be at least over \$15. She said traditionally, if they bring someone in and help them achieve their CDL, they do give them a \$1 increase, which helps to bring them up once they achieve that level of professionalism.

Ms. Palmer asked Ms. Davis if she did an analysis of what it would take to bring the drivers up to \$15 from the get-go.

Ms. Davis replied that she would be doing this shortly.

Ms. Palmer said she agreed with Ms. Davis in terms of how important this is and would be interested in seeing what this actually does to the impact for Albemarle County.

Ms. McKeel asked Ms. Davis to elaborate on the healthcare costs of 14%. She said this took her back to the days in Albemarle County, when their costs were going up 14% or 15%, which is tough. She asked Ms. Davis to explain if JAUNT is self-insured or how their healthcare is structured.

Ms. Davis said she would provide her answer and then, the Chief Financial Officer could also participate in the discussion if she misspeaks. She said currently, JAUNT is not part of the public option. She said they did make gains to finally become a part of the public option or have the option to do so, and then in that year, their actual healthcare costs were significantly reduced. She said suddenly, the cost to transfer to the public option did not seem like a viable option at the time. She said now, once again, they are increasing in this way, and it is something that she and the CFO will be taking a look at. She said it will take a significant amount of work to transfer JAUNT over, but it is something that they would love to stabilize.

Ms. McKeel said it is hard for it to be sustainable at that rate, and it is a real concern. She said she had suspected JAUNT was self-insured. She said this was helpful and worth some consideration.

Ms. McKeel asked, since it was a good opportunity to do so, if Ms. Davis could make sure that everyone understood the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) services and how they run around the County works. She said she thinks it is important for people to understand it.

Ms. Davis said she would try to explain it as succinctly as possible, and Mr. Williams could jump in as well. She said basically, in the United States, if there is a fixed route system like CAT, there must also be an ADA paratransit service. She said this is curb-to-curb or door-to-door service for people with disabilities who are unable to meet all their needs on the regular fixed route system. She said it is not a matter of not

being able to drive, but it is a matter of not being able to navigate a system or get to a bus stop to catch it and use it effectively.

Ms. Davis said there is an application process, and the application actually goes to CAT, who approves or does not approve accordingly. She said CAT lets JAUNT know who is approved, and those people ride on JAUNT. She said the hours are the same as CAT's, so if CAT runs until midnight, JAUNT runs until midnight. She said the bare minimum of an ADA service is three quarters of a mile around the fixed route system and right now, the ADA boundary is tight to exactly that. She said a locality can choose to expand the ADA boundary if it would like, but three quarters of a mile is the minimum.

Ms. McKeel said this was a great description. She said while the ADA service is critical, the County has to keep in mind that as the fixed route service is expanded, the ADA coverage service is also expanded.

Ms. Davis said yes. She said the corresponding cost always needs to be under consideration.

Ms. McKeel thanked Ms. Davis for the help she had provided her the week prior. She said she had a citizen who contacted her and told her she was newly blind, and she was trying to figure out how she could ride transit with JAUNT.

Ms. Davis thanked Ms. McKeel for reaching out with that concern. She said JAUNT likes to solve problems like this.

Ms. Mallek said it was an excellent presentation, but on the graph showing ridership since COVID, she was interested to see how the rural routes and the commuter routes stayed quite consistent throughout the months, and the urban ones seemed to have the largest spikes. She said to her, it was only an example of how essential the door-to-door on-demand service is for rural residents because many of them live in family groups, but they cannot drive to work and really depend upon the JAUNT services to get them where they need to go. She said many people are able to work but cannot drive. She said she is grateful that this service is available and still plugging along.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said she is also very thankful for what JAUNT does with their on-demand service, and she would like to see it expanded. She said there is a lot they can do, especially with the rural areas and smaller roads, and perhaps even working with the school district to pick up some of the children that are far out in a rural area so that they do not have to use the very large school bus.

Mr. Gallaway said he did not have any questions, but he wanted to also endorse the on-demand program. He said in the way they visualize or conceptualize the way this could work for County residents moving forward, it has been something the Board has been talking about for a while. He said it is something he is very interested in, as he thinks it could help solve some issues where fixed routes likely will not be the solution in some of the areas in the Urban Ring. He said that while there are grants to conduct some studies, at some point, they have to start putting actions in place, and he hopes they will get there sooner rather than later.

Ms. Price said she did not have any real questions, and she very much appreciated Ms. Davis being there. She said that while CAT and JAUNT, collectively, are essential for public transportation, by geographic area, JAUNT covers the largest area. She said the County is so dependent upon the services they both provide.

Ms. Price said late last week, the Board had a briefing from VDOT that Virginia 20/Scottsville Road will be closed for a scheduled period of March 29 through April 9 in Scottsville, just south of the Dollar General store. She said there are two detours that can be used, with one for smaller vehicles on Hardware Street, which is very narrow at the fork, down in the Town of Scottsville. She said that during this time period, JAUNT will need to use their smallest vehicles to get through because otherwise, it is a very long, circuitous route for the larger trucks and other vehicles. She said JAUNT was likely already aware of that, but for her residents down in the Scottsville area, she would be talking more about that in a few moments.

Ms. Price thanked Ms. Davis and Mr. Williams for the services that JAUNT and CAT collectively provide to the County.

---

#### Agenda Item No. 5. Meeting Summary and Next Steps.

Mr. Bowman said his final slide was a wrap-up slide. He said the next steps include the March 29 work session to talk about the County's Federal American Rescue Plan funding, followed by the public hearing on the proposed tax rate and budget on April 28, then adoption of the budget and tax rate on May 5.

Ms. Palmer said she had a comment related to the budget that they would not be talking about at that time, but that she hoped they would talk about later. She said given that UVA, the County, and Charlottesville are up at a \$15 minimum wage, as they go forward into the budget discussions and the Federal American Rescue Plan, she thinks they need to talk about an agency that is as important to the community as JAUNT is.

Ms. Palmer said she recognized this would take conversations with the City as well, and she did not know if staff had already done that and what kinds of conversations had taken place behind the scenes, but she did think it is something the Board should be finding out, understanding, and considering



in trying to get JAUNT drivers up to \$15 per hour as soon as possible.

Ms. Mallek said she knows they probably will not do anything about this immediately, but for keeping this item in the front of people's minds so that when things start to stabilize and they can do something more directly, she wanted to raise the issue of the staff person needed in engineering in order to be able to follow through on plans to reduce the square footage for soil disturbance from 10,000 square feet to 2,500 square feet. She said the Board went through this over the last couple of years many times, and it was one of the items that the Board felt was very important, but would require the extra staff, so they did not do it. She said Ms. Amelia McCulley sent the Board a memo with all the background, which she very much appreciated.

Ms. Mallek said the problem is that as they do not address this issue, they are getting more and more situations throughout the County of terrible, unregulated erosion. She said then, they have to turn around much more expensively with structures in the urban areas, where the soil finally piles up and where it costs more to fix it later than to prevent it in the first place. She said she was pushing the idea out again for everyone to be thinking about because she hopes they will get back to this sooner rather than later.

---

Agenda Item No. 6. From the Board: Matters Not Listed on the Agenda.

Ms. Mallek said she and Mr. Gallaway would be co-hosting a townhall for the Earlysville and Rio sections of White Hall and Rio Districts at 7:00 p.m. on March 23. She said they hope people will come. She said they had received many questions from people via email already, with a great interest in talking more about the firehouse. She said Chief Eggleston will be there, as well as senior staff, to listen in.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said she would be having her townhall that evening with the Pantops CAC at 6:15 p.m. and invited those in the Rivanna District and others to join.

Mr. Gallaway said he would be participating in the townhall the following evening with Ms. Mallek.

Ms. Price said she had two items. She said one was that she wanted to give a shoutout to the Monticello Ruritans and their president, Mr. Wayne Shifflett, who organized a highway cleanup the day prior. She said there were 10 to 15 people there who spent three hours picking up trash, and they collected over 30 bags of litter. She presented pictures on the screen of the volunteers and trash bags collected. She said when they finished, it looked beautiful, and they had covered Route 53 and James Madison all the way down to Rolling Road, and about halfway down to Woodridge Market.

Ms. Price said there was an unfortunate, sad postscript to this. She said after they did the cleanup, she went into town, washed her truck, filled it up with gas, and came back. She said the time she came back an hour later, there was already litter on the road. She said that afternoon, as she drove into the present meeting, there was enough litter that it was very noticeable. She said it was such a disappointment. She said it only takes a minute to leave a cup, can, or bottle until one gets home to put it in the trash. She said there is a beautiful community here, and it is just laziness on the part of some people that takes away from the community spirit of so many others. She said they had a great time cleaning up the day prior, but it broke her heart to drive down the road an hour or two later and that day and already see visible signs of trash.

Ms. Price said there would be another cleanup the next Sunday, and she was not sure if she would be able to join them. She said they met at the Slate Hill Baptist Church at about 8:00 a.m., and she hoped others would be able to join.

Ms. Price said the second item was that as she mentioned a moment ago to Ms. Davis, for the scheduled time period of March 29 until April 9, VDOT will be closing Virginia 20/Scottsville Road just south of the Dollar General store. She said for local traffic, though it was not showing up clearly on the map on the slide, Route 795 is Hardware Street, and local traffic can use James River Road and Hardware Street to get around the section of the road that will be closed while the major culvert is replaced. She said that for larger vehicles, particularly tractor trailers, one could see on the map that there will be a very long detour to get around.

Ms. Price said Community and Public Engagement will help to get the word out to as many businesses as possible in the hopes that people will be able to use an alternative route during this time period if there are large vehicles. She said at the southern part of Hardware Street, it is very narrow where it comes back onto Scottsville Road. She said the smaller JAUNT vehicles will be better there.

Ms. Price said VDOT is hopeful they will be able to finish this work early, but it is scheduled from March 29 through April 9.

Ms. Mallek asked Ms. Price if VDOT has put up big signs for the tractor trailers to keep them on Route 29 until they get to Route 6 in order to not even come through Scottsville. She said this will be a disaster to have 18-wheelers on those tiny roads.

Ms. Price said they did talk about what VDOT will do to try to ensure that people know that the road will be closed during this time period to take alternate routes. She agreed it will not be easy for big trucks for that almost-two-week period.

Ms. McKeel said she did not want to bring up another time-consuming topic, but Ms. Price made a very good point about the litter. She said she knows staff's workload is full as well as County Schools', but she wondered if there was a way that the Board of Supervisors and School Board could get together to work on some sort of immediate campaign against littering. She said if they can reach the children who can embarrass their parents or older siblings, they can sometimes make a difference. She said she remembers a littering campaign when she was young that was run through the schools and community. She asked if there is a way they can connect with the School Board to think about having a media blitz campaign together.

Ms. Price said this was a great idea. She said they have spent a lot of time talking about how when they were kids, there was the "Give a hoot, don't pollute" campaign and many other public service announcements they used to see that made an impact on America. She said as soon as the meeting was over, she would send out a joint email to the Board of Supervisors and the School Board. She said obviously, commercials on television and radio cost money, but there are things they can do in the community that do not cost money.

Ms. McKeel said she thinks radio is still required to do so many public service announcements or ads in a certain period of time, so they may not have to pay, at least for radio. She said if the boards can get together to be thoughtful about it, perhaps they could make a difference.

Ms. Palmer said she had two things to say. She said first, while she did not know whether or not they still do this, the Wildlife Center used to have a good presentation on how littering ends up killing owls and raptors. She said Keep America Beautiful has a whole host of informational, educational materials to look at and borrow. She said she thinks Ms. McKeel's idea is great, and there are educational materials out there to use.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agenda Item No. 7. From the County Executive: Report on Matters Not Listed on the Agenda.

Mr. Jeff Richardson, County Executive, thanked the key outside agency partners for joining the meeting that afternoon. He said he appreciates their consistent hard work and the relationship they have with Albemarle County government. He thanked staff as well for their continued hard work as they move through the budget process.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agenda Item No. 8. Adjourn to March 29, 2021, 3:00 p.m., electronic meeting pursuant to Ordinance No. 20-A(16).

At 5:17 p.m., the Board adjourned its meeting to March 29, 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

Approved by Board
Date 03/01/2023
Initials CKB