

A joint meeting of the Board of Supervisors and the School Board of Albemarle County, Virginia, was held on December 3, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. in Room 241, Second Floor, Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA, 22902.

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

**SUPERVISORS ABSENT:** None.

**COUNTY OFFICERS PRESENT:** County Executive, Mr. Jeffrey B. Richardson; County Attorney, Mr. Andy Herrick; Clerk, Ms. Claudette K. Borgersen.

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMEBRS PRESENT:** Ms. Kate Acuff, Ms. Rebecca Berlin, Ms. Ellen Osborne, Mr. Graham Paige, and Ms. Leslie Pryor (left at 3:01 p.m.).

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMEBRS ABSENT:** Ms. Judy Le and Ms. Allison Spillman.

**SCHOOL DIVISION OFFICERS PRESENT:** School Superintendent, Mr. Matthew Haas; Chief Legal Officer, Mr. Josh Black; School Board Clerk, Ms. Christine Thompson; Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Rosalyn Schmitt; and Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Maya Kumazawa.

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Agenda Item No. 1. Call to Order.

The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m., by the Chair, Mr. Jim Andrews.

Mr. Andrews introduced the Albemarle County Police Department Officers present to provide their services at the meeting, Sergeant Jason Freishtat and Master Police Officer Stephen McCall.

Ms. Acuff called the Albemarle County School Board to order and asked School Board Members and staff present to introduce themselves.

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Agenda Item No. 2. Adoption of Work Session Agenda.

Ms. McKeel **moved** to adopt the work session agenda. Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley **seconded** the motion. Roll was called and the motion carried by the following recorded vote:

**AYES:** Mr. Andrews, Mr. Gallaway, Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley, Ms. Mallek, Ms. McKeel, and Mr. Pruitt.  
**NAYS:** None.

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Agenda Item No. 3. **Joint Work Session with the School Board:** Long Range Financial Planning.

The Executive Summary forwarded to the Board states that Long-range financial planning is part of the County's adopted financial policies. The Five-Year Financial Plan will include a review of revenue trends and expenditures from the prior years' projections of revenues and expenditures, as well as future costs and the financing of the Capital Improvement Plan.

A long-range financial plan is different from the annual budget in that it emphasizes where the County may be headed at the end of the plan rather than the coming fiscal year. This planning can provide a helpful framework to inform the annual budget to ensure funding recommendations are aligned with County priorities. It also provides a framework to illuminate discussion around questions such as:

- a) Are the County's operating and capital plans aligned? For example, if the County starts constructing a new facility in the capital budget, is it able to open and operate it in a future operating budget - can the decisions being made today be afforded in future years?
- b) What long-term strategies or policies could be considered to change the long-term trajectory of the financial plan?

The Five-Year Financial Plan is the next step in the County's long-term financial planning process:

- On August 20, the Board approved the FY 27 operating and capital budget calendar
- On October 15, the Board received an Economic Outlook Report
- On November 19, the Board held the first Five-Year Financial Plan work session that focused on initial revenue and expenditure assumptions, which are developed using the best information available at the time, and illustrate the financial plan's alignment with the Strategic Plan

Next, in accordance with the budget development schedule, the series of work sessions to review long-range financial planning information prior to the annual budget process will continue on December 3 with a joint meeting with the School Board. As a reference Attachment A contains the School Board

approved FY 27 - 31 CIP request, which was approved at the November 13, 2025 School Board meeting. The attachment contains the cost summary of these requests and additional details on the projects will be discussed at the December 3, 2025 meeting.

During this work session, the Board of Supervisors and School Board will discuss the development of the FY 27-31 Capital Improvements Plan and the Public Schools' capital funding request and long-range planning. The Five-Year Financial Plan assumptions will continue to be updated in the annual budget development process and subsequent financial plans.

Long-range financial planning connects long-range fiscal planning with strategic priorities and provides an important context for the annual budget process.

Staff recommends that each Board share feedback and ask questions on the assumptions used in the development of the FY 27-31 Capital Improvements Plan, the Public Schools' capital funding request and long-range planning.

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Andy Bowman, Assistant Chief Financial Officer, stated that as they began this three-hour work session, he wanted to frame their discussion in the context of the Board's strategic plan, which had been adopted three years ago this fall. This plan included six goals, one of which was education and learning. Education and learning was also the largest component of the County's operating budget, debt service, and capital budget. The Board of Supervisors had spent considerable time discussing their current status and progress made in all of the six strategic plan goals, but today they would focus on Goal 5.

Mr. Bowman stated that to provide a clear overview, he had prepared a chart that illustrated the County government and public-school debt service over the last 10 years, as well as the projected amounts based on the adopted Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He explained that when the County issued bonds every few years, there was a spike in the County's debt services that was gradually repaid over the course of 20 years. The downward slope from the peak reflected years when the County did not issue bonds, but debt had been retired for expenses.

Mr. Bowman stated that when looking left to right on the blue line in the chart, in 2016, the School Board had requested, the Board of Supervisors had supported, and the voters had approved a general obligation bond referendum for a series of projects, some of which were listed on the slide. After that, the Board of Supervisors had issued the bonds to implement those projects, and the debt service had been paid, with the Board of Supervisors raising the tax rate to support the debt service for that increased cost.

Mr. Bowman said that moving ahead to Fiscal Year 22, the next County body issuance had included improvements at Crozet, Red Hill, and Scottsville, as well as ongoing maintenance, school buses, and other expenses. They were highlighting these notable items as generational investments that they made with these current facilities. Then, in Fiscal Year 26, they saw the portions of the Southern Feeder Elementary School or Mountain View Upper Elementary School, and the Albemarle Career Exploration (ACE) Academy or High School Center 2, and the renovation projects begin to ramp up. This would continue in the current adopted CIP right now into Fiscal Years 27 and 29 as the debt service climbed with the expenses, building construction, and services provided.

Mr. Bowman noted that it was a significant increase, but it was within the County's financial management policies. He said that regarding other partnerships, when the schools were considering the location of Center 2, they were looking at land on the southern end of the County in the Development Area. He said that the Board of Supervisors donated the land to the School Board at no cost, which was now the site of Mountain View Upper Elementary. This was just one example of how partnerships could take place in the future, and they would discuss that further later today.

Mr. Bowman added as a note, not to ignore the County government line for the other five strategic goals, they saw an increase in Fiscal Year 24 and beyond, primarily driven by the General District Court building downtown, the renovation of the historic courthouse building for the Circuit Court, the purchase of the Rivanna Futures property, and the Biscuit Run Park in partnership with the state. He said that this was a summary of where they had been over the past 15 years, and now they were beginning to look forward to where they were heading.

Mr. Bowman stated that to begin, he wanted to ground their discussion in the work that had taken place to reach this meeting and the work that would continue. He said that looking at their upcoming calendar, it was clear that there had been extensive long-range discussions to date, and this conversation would continue. He clarified that no action or votes were requested by staff to be taken by the boards today. Today's conversation would continue and would be picked up in the budget process through February and April.

Mr. Bowman stated that considering the desired outcomes and agenda for today, as staff from the County government and public schools strategized, one outcome was to take time to ensure that all elected officials had a clear understanding of the County's current financial landscape and the adopted CIP. On November 19, he had spent time with the Board of Supervisors, and he would review the highlights of that presentation, as well as the adopted CIP. They would then move on to a review of the capital request from the School Division, which was provided in advance. They would allow for as much discussion as possible among the boards. After that discussion they could take a break, and then he would present strategies and next steps.

Mr. Bowman stated that he would review the highlights from their initial discussion on the Five-Year Financial Plan on November 19 so that they were all grounded in the same information about the County's current financial situation and potential future directions. He explained that long-range financial planning was a regular process for the Board of Supervisors, which involved considering whether decisions met day-to-day needs and could be afforded tomorrow. It also involved exploring strategies for shaping the trajectory in the long term, not just focusing on dollars, but also policy levers and other approaches.

Mr. Bowman said that this process provided a framework for the budget, but it was essential to remember that it was an exercise in planning, and they would continue to adapt to new information, strategies, and their impact. To illustrate this, they would look at the current Five-Year Plan. The bottom line he had shared with the Board of Supervisors showed a projected expenditure line in dark red, which included meeting the County's obligations and initiatives that moved forward the Board's strategic plan. The blue line represented projected revenue growth. He noted that the County was required to balance its annual budget, but it was okay to have a long-term plan that was out of balance.

Mr. Bowman said that this set the stage for what could be done differently and what could be transformative to shape the future. However, it was also essential to start now, as those efforts could take a few years to play out. He would like to clarify that the gap shown on this screen, which was approximately 1% growing to 3% by Fiscal Year 28, was specific to the County government's revenue projection. In this projection, they assumed that transfers of capital and debt service in public schools would continue to be made by formula.

Mr. Bowman said that to better understand the information and how they began to pivot, he would like to share a comparison of where this plan was last year compared to where they were now. In the top line, last year's County government budget had rejected a deficit of about 5%, growing to 9% by Fiscal Year 30; this was a very different picture. As someone who had been working on this for several years, he believed that this Five-Year Plan was significantly different from one he had seen before, and other staff members had shared this sentiment. Now, they saw that the gap was about 1%, and it really got to 3% around Fiscal Year 28.

Mr. Bowman explained that there were two major changes driving this, the first being the Board of Supervisors' increase in the real estate tax rate this calendar year. This additional revenue would be used to fund investments in public education, public safety, and housing that were contemplated in last year's Five-Year Plan but unfunded at that time. The second factor was the changing tax base and economic outlook in the out-years. In summary, the takeaway from the Five-Year Plan was that they currently had a very different trend than they had in the past.

Mr. Bowman stated that there was opportunity on the horizon, but in the short term, in Fiscal Year 27 and 28, they would face significant expenditure obligations, including grants for firefighters, fulfilling contractual obligations with regional partners, and opening two new schools next year. These operating pressures would certainly present challenges in the next couple of years. However, by adopting a long-term planning approach, there was opportunity to be met on the horizon.

Mr. Bowman said that to better understand this opportunity and shape the outcome differently in the County's revenue picture, he would like to focus on the composition of the County's tax base. He provided a chart showing the State Code categories and how properties were assessed. From 2015 to 2025, the County's residential tax base increased from 61% to 68%, while the commercial and industrial sectors declined, and the agricultural sector also declined. He explained that this mattered seriously because it was not just about revenue, but rather the expenditure side. While all these categories could generate revenue, they differed significantly in terms of the cost to provide services.

Mr. Bowman said that, earlier this year, the Board had received a report on the Cost of Community Services study. Although the analysis was similar across categories, the breakdown was different. The general point remained the same: residential development costs more to serve than it generated in revenue, whereas commercial and industrial development cost less to serve for every dollar of revenue collected. He said that on average, it costs \$0.32 to provide services for every dollar of revenue collected from commercial and industrial development; it costs \$1.31 to provide services to residential development.

Mr. Bowman said that over the past 10 years, they had seen a shift from 61% to 68% of the County's budget coming from residential while commercial declined from 15% to 11%. This shift had put a burden on the residential tax base. One reason residential services cost the most was because of providing public school services, which was the largest part of the County budget. This did not mean that rebalancing the County's tax base to generate revenue was solely focused on chasing commercial and industrial development. There was a plan for that, and the Board had adopted an updated Economic Development Strategic Plan earlier this year.

Mr. Bowman said that the Economic Development Strategic Plan targeted three industries: intelligence and national security, BioLife sciences, and agribusiness. It was not just about attracting businesses, but also about empowering talent and competing for investment. There was a strong emphasis on workforce readiness and education, as they needed to prepare their future generations for an evolving world. He said that when they talked about revenue growth, he specifically was referring to the new AstraZeneca location in the northern part of the County, the continued development of Afton Scientific as a homegrown business, and the related opportunities of those developments.

Mr. Bowman stated that additionally, the redevelopment of Fashion Square, with its anchor tenant, would also contribute to the tax base over time. He said that in October, the County received their annual Economic Outlook Report from their economic consultant at Virginia Tech. The key takeaways from their discussion were as follows: First, the national economy was slowing down compared to previous years, with modest growth still present. The economy had been resilient nationally, but there was significant uncertainty due to federal policy shifts.

Mr. Bowman said that second, Virginia's economy was cooling faster than the nation's economy, at least through the first half of Fiscal Year 2025. This was noteworthy because historically, Virginia had outperformed the nation in economic performance. However, due to its heavy reliance on the federal government and the fact that approximately 42% of Virginia's economy was based in northern Virginia, changes in the federal landscape would have a disproportionate impact on the state. As a result, they did not currently see an impact on County revenues, but they must consider the potential implications for future state budgets and how they may indirectly affect localities. They would continue to monitor this situation closely.

Mr. Bowman stated that currently, Albemarle County had a strong economic base, which, combined with the Board's approach and discipline, provided a solid foundation to navigate this uncertainty for the next few years. In summary, they were in a different trend from previous years, with two distinct periods in the Five-Year Plans. The evolving revenue outlook would result in projected growth, but at a slower rate than in the past. Additionally, the shifting landscape could impact expenditures. In the longer term, the strategies in place would enable them to continue meeting obligations and advancing strategic plan goals.

Mr. Bowman said that next, he would provide an overview of the current appropriated capital budget and adopted CIP. The schools would present their requests today, and he would briefly touch on County government's requests. To get them grounded, it was essential to understand there were some projects they were not discussing because they were starting construction or were currently under construction. He said that to clarify, the capital budget referred to the appropriated budget, which were under legal authority and was currently under contract.

Mr. Bowman said that the CIP, on the other hand, refers to years two through five of the plan, where projects are adopted and planning was underway for implementation. However, projects often moved forward one year at a time, and new projects were added in the later years of the Five-Year Plan. As they had discussed earlier, multi-year planning was essential, and they must consider the multi-year impacts of projects, including the cost of running day-to-day operations, annual debt service, and the long-term implications of these projects.

Mr. Bowman stated that capital projects were generational investments, and when it took 20 years to pay off the debt commitment, it was an ongoing commitment they must always be preparing for, as well as ensuring they were operationally ready to implement those projects. At a high level, they had \$323.2 million in CIP revenues over the next five years. The two main sources of funding for the CIP were cash equity and one-time money. Cash equity came from formula allocations by the Board of Supervisors, while one-time money could also be applied to the capital budget when it came in. Planned borrow proceeds made up the majority of the CIP, representing generational investments with 20-year debt service.

Mr. Bowman explained that the County would strategize for eligible projects, meeting specific criteria to determine the amount of bonds to issue and how to manage debt service. They managed this through the Board's financial management policies on debt service. He had provided two charts for context, one displaying the debt service as a percentage of the General Fund and School Fund revenues and the other displaying outstanding debt as a percentage of assessed value of taxable property.

Mr. Bowman indicated the red line on the charts, which represented the policy cap set by the Board of Supervisors, informed by national standards for a triple-triple A bond-rated organization such as theirs. Currently, based on approved major projects, the County's CIP was well within its margin of capacity. The tightest area was where there was approximately \$72 million capacity if they were to increase the policy rate to 9%. He said he would discuss this further at the end of the presentation.

Mr. Bowman said that for context, he would explain the County's triple-triple A bond rating. Albemarle County had two ratings retained in 2003 and attained a third in 2013. Only 54 of the 3,000-plus Counties in the United States had this rating, with 13 being in Virginia. When benchmarking with peers, they found that many Counties had similar financial management practices to theirs. He stated that this rating offered several benefits, including future flexibility, similar to an individual consumer having a perfect credit rating.

Mr. Bowman explained that the lower the amount of debt relative to their overall income, the more flexibility they had to allocate resources to other areas of their life, whether it was for their quality of life, basic needs, or other priorities. For localities with higher debt loads, this flexibility was limited, as debt was a significant constraint. Bonds were an essential tool for financing capital projects, but they came with a 20-year commitment. When one had a high credit rating, one could secure the best possible interest rates in the market.

Mr. Bowman said that if one needed to undertake a major home renovation or car repair project and having multiple contractors or mechanics quote their services, one would likely be in a favorable position, and this was exactly what happened when a County issued bonds. In 2023, nine major financial

institutions were willing to purchase these bonds, allowing the County to secure the lowest possible interest rate over the 20-year repayment period. Finally, in emergency situations, the County could access cash at the best possible rate relative to the market.

Mr. Bowman stated that moving to the expenditure side, the CIP consisted of various components. The public schools accounted for the majority, with 59% of the current five-year CIP. Ongoing programs, such as preventive maintenance on County and school assets, were the main components of the adopted CIP. These programs included replacing school buses, ambulances, and providing basic repairs and utility work on County and school-owned properties. Beyond ongoing programs, the CIP highlighted various projects, including those already underway and those approved for future implementation.

Mr. Bowman said that for Fiscal Year 2026, the appropriated public school projects beyond ongoing programs totaled \$88.9M. These included systemwide renovations, completing the Mountain View expansion, and construction of Mountain View Upper Elementary and ACE Academy school campuses. He said that on the County government projects beyond ongoing programs appropriated in the CIP, they had a variety of investments to include transportation projects, the Northern Convenience Center design, Rivanna Futures debt service, community non-profit projects, Biscuit Run Park, Darden Towe Athletic Fields, the urban pocket park, Woolen Mills Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) trailhead, core systems modernization, workplace facility renovations, courts construction, and Station 11 Monticello renovations.

Mr. Bowman said that he would not review the past debt service but would note that as the Rivanna Futures property continued to evolve, they would continue to analyze the best way to manage that debt service. He said that he would also highlight a few new projects. The Central Library renovation, located off Market Street, was a joint project with the City of Charlottesville. The renovation would focus on electrical systems, water and sewer systems, and some improvements sought by the library. The northern feeder pattern elementary school, which would be discussed by the public schools soon, was planned to be designed in Fiscal Year 27 with construction dollars to follow in FY28.

Mr. Bowman stated that he would not review the County's projects in detail, but he wanted to acknowledge that there were other needs on the horizon that they were analyzing and considering, with a timeline toward FY31 or beyond. The courts construction was underway but not yet completed. As with any major project, they were monitoring the budget to ensure it stayed on track. They would continue to watch the apparatus replacement cost for the Fire Rescue system and other equipment that meets the capital threshold. The regional Emergency Communications Center (ECC) facility, a partnership with the University of Virginia (UVA) and the City, had identified space needs that they would need to plan for.

Mr. Bowman said that this would be a substantial, multimillion-dollar facility in regional planning, requiring significant time to develop. Additionally, transportation and Rivanna Futures would continue to be considerations. He said that this covered their current CIP items and Five-Year Plan. He said that he would now turn it over to Dr. Acuff and Dr. Haas to present the public schools' information, and he would address questions and discuss strategies later in the work session, including where they would go from here.

Dr. Acuff stated that on behalf of the School Board, Dr. Haas, and the ACPS staff, she welcomed this opportunity to discuss how they could best partner to build for the future of their students and the community. They had provided the detailed capital priorities and background information for all of the projects listed, and she hoped that the County had had the opportunity to review it. The discussion of school capital investment was about building for the County's future.

Dr. Acuff said that schools were central to every community, providing a sense of place where students and families connected and engaged in shared life experiences. Schools also reflected the quality and image of the communities that they served and were critical drivers of economic development. When considering locating to a community, the quality of schools regularly ranked high on the list of priorities for families and businesses. They were proud of the learning opportunities they created for their students and the notable progress they had made to ensure that all students had the chance to learn, dream, and grow into the future they imagined for themselves.

Dr. Acuff said that she especially wanted to thank the County for prioritizing the funding for their new Mountain View Upper Elementary School and the ACE Center at Lambs Lane Campus, both of which would open next fall and provide wonderful learning environments for their students. They had also begun planning for the opening of North Point Elementary School in the 29-30 school year. These two elementary schools, combined with the 35,000-square-foot addition to Crozet Elementary School that opened three years ago, would make a significant dent toward expanding their elementary school capacity.

Dr. Acuff said that, however, they were still playing catch-up on their capital construction needs. There was no doubt that investment in school capital projects was essential for building a future for their students and their community. As the Yale School of Economics noted, capital investment in schools improved test scores and raised housing values. Together, they had an obligation to their constituents to provide school facilities that reflected the quality of life families and businesses expected in Albemarle County. Their proposed CIP placed an emphasis on both new construction to address critical capacity needs and essential renovations to modernize their aging schools.

Dr. Acuff said that prioritizing the projects would allow them to plan and fund construction, which

was critical. To that end, the School Board had focused on three criteria: improving school capacity, modernizing school infrastructure, and creating greater accessibility for their students. Using these criteria, new school construction emerged as a top priority. New schools improved capacity, promoted enhanced learning environments, met modern construction and equipment standards, and ensured accessibility. Building a new high school was at the top of their list of priorities; she acknowledged this may have surprised the County considering the significant cost of the project.

Dr. Acuff urged the County to view this and their conversation today as an invitation to think beyond the bricks and mortar of a new traditional high school. Her hope was that they could collaborate and establish a vision for how a new high school could be a catalyst for student success, economic development, and community development initiatives. A new high school, combined with the northern feeder pattern, could improve property values, attract a diverse workforce, support their growing biotech and life sciences business sector, and contribute to the overall vitality of their community.

Dr. Acuff said that it was clear that a new high school would be an expensive construction project; however, she believed it was an investment in the future, and together, they could make it a reality. She said that they would also discuss their aging school facilities that required modernization and improved accessibility. Their urban-ring elementary schools required particular attention, and they must find a way to support their growing pre-K population. They recognized that there were a number of critical unmet needs that needed to be addressed, and they were grateful for the Board's continued prioritization of the Albemarle County Public School System.

Dr. Acuff said that the Board of Supervisors bore a significant task in determining the tax rate, identifying how to fund the CIP, and budgeting for the ongoing debt services required for these projects. As they were all County residents, they understood that there were other important needs beyond public schools that the Board of Supervisors must consider. From first responders to code enforcement, economic development, Social Services, recycling centers, to park facilities, the needs of their community were immense. With that in mind, public schools remained a central part of their joint obligation to the future of their County.

Dr. Acuff said that this School Board had met with and lobbied their state representatives for the past two years to enact a \$0.01 sales tax dedicated to school capital projects, and they had some confidence that it would pass in this legislative session. If ultimately adopted, that additional funding could be a gamechanger, and would certainly ease the way forward. However, the projects they proposed remained a priority regardless of the outcome of that legislation, and they must identify a pathway forward.

Dr. Acuff closed her remarks by reiterating that although today they were focused on capital improvements to support their public schools, this CIP ultimately reflected their collective commitment to building a strong future for their community, their students, and for all who would someday become part of the Albemarle County community. With that, she would turn it over to Dr. Haas and staff to proceed with the presentation.

Matthew Haas, Superintendent of ACPS, stated that he appreciated opportunity to be here today and thanked the Board and County staff for the ongoing partnership that enabled them to provide learning opportunities and environments where every student could grow and thrive. He said that provided in the presentation was a photograph of students from Mountain View Elementary School during the topping-out ceremony for Mountain View Upper Elementary this fall.

Dr. Haas said that today's presentation reflected the School Board's priorities for ensuring that all students across every school and community had access to safe, modern, and engaging learning spaces. He expressed his appreciation for everyone's time, questions, and their commitment to strong public schools for Albemarle County's children. He said that before they moved into the full CIP overview, he wanted to pause and thank the Board of Supervisors again for the financial oversight and support that made these projects possible. Because of that partnership, they were making steady progress on three major construction efforts.

Dr. Haas said that these included Mountain View Upper Elementary, ACE Academy at Lambs Lane Campus, and the new second-floor connector at Albemarle High School, which were on track to open for students in the 2026-27 school year and the current school year, respectively. These improvements directly strengthened learning environments, and they were grateful for this continued investment in the success of their schools.

Dr. Haas stated that the schools CIP was where the priorities of both boards came together. The School Board was focused on student learning, and the Board of Supervisors was focused on community development. Research showed that school construction directly advanced both goals. Modern, well-designed facilities improved student performance, increased property values, and strengthened local economic growth. A study published in the American Economic Journal, Applied Economics, found that students attending newly constructed schools not only made significant gains in test scores, but also attended about four more days per school year.

Dr. Haas said that the same study showed a 6% increase in home prices in neighborhoods that received new school buildings. These were investments that supported students, families, and the long-term strength of Albemarle County. Given the strong return on investment that school construction provided, both for students and for the broader community, it was important that their recommendations came from a thoughtful, data-driven process. For ACPS, that process began with the work of their Long-

Range Planning Advisory Committee (LRPAC).

Dr. Haas said that their recommendations were grounded in five key pillars: creating high-quality learning environments, ensuring modern, safe, and accessible buildings, providing more space for a growing county, sequencing projects strategically to reduce duplication in cost, and making equitable needs-based investments across all schools. Every project in their CIP aligned with at least one of these drivers, and often several. This helped ensure that their capital requests were not only responsive to student needs, but also responsible and forward-looking for the entire community.

Dr. Haas stated that building on those five investment drivers, LRPAC brought an important level of independence and community representation to this work. Their strength came from relying on multi-year data and a deep foundation of master planning studies. This approach enabled them to consider the full picture, including capacity pressures, aging buildings, instructional needs, and fiscal realities, and develop recommendations that were strategic and grounded in operational reality. They now had several major master plans that laid the groundwork for their future CIP: the Lambs Lane Campus Master Plan, the 2023 High School Master Plan, the Middle School Master Plan, and the 2025 Elementary Feasibility Study.

Dr. Haas stated that each of these plans provided a long-term roadmap for modernizing learning spaces and managing growth. The Lambs Lane plan, in particular, had made significant progress with the ACE Academy, which contributed to bringing that vision to life. This transparent, viewpoint-neutral approach ensured that their capital investments delivered long-term value for students, families, and the entire Albemarle community. Their Long-Range Planning and Facility study highlighted an important reality for Albemarle County: Many of their school buildings were aging, and a number were now outdated in terms of infrastructure and instructional design.

Dr. Haas stated that over the past 50 years, they had opened only eight new schools, including just one in the last 25 years. To meet enrollment needs during that time, their strategy had often been to expand and renovate existing buildings. This approach had been possible due to the steady support of their community and the Board of Supervisors; support that was not always present in other parts of Virginia or across the nation. The timeline on the slide helped put that history into perspective. It showed how rarely they had had the opportunity to bring completely new facilities online, and how much their system still relied on buildings constructed decades and almost a century ago.

Dr. Haas said that additions had helped them meet growth, but they could not fully address modern infrastructure needs. As they looked toward opening ACE Academy at Lambs Lane Campus and Mountain View Upper Elementary in the fall of 2026, this timeline underscored the value of continued thoughtful reinvestment so that their learning environments kept pace with the expectations of their families and the needs of today's students.

Dr. Haas said that he had provided information on the extended life of their buildings, with the weighted age reflecting both the original construction date and the age of any additions to those buildings. Most of their additions were relatively small compared to the total square footage of a school. Even when newer spaces were added, the overall weighted age still reflected the much older portions of the building. For example, Murray Elementary School was built in 1960, so chronologically it was about 65 years old. However, because Murray received an addition that updated a portion of the building, the weighted age calculation extended the life of the school by about 20 years, therefore, it was estimated at about 50 years old rather than 65 years.

Dr. Haas explained that its small addition pulled the average age down, but most of the building still reflected their original 1960 construction. This illustrated how additions increased capacity and helped them stretch the life of older buildings, but they did not fully modernize the infrastructure. As their population continued to grow, the additions alone would not keep pace with future instructional and capacity needs. This was evident when looking across the School District. Their renovation efforts, combined with the construction of Mountain View Upper Elementary, had significantly alleviated several of their most immediate capacity pressures.

Dr. Haas stated that these projects had helped stabilize enrollment in parts of the County that were experiencing the most significant overcrowding. However, even with these improvements, several needs remained that required attention. In their urban-ring elementary schools, enrollment growth had been especially strong. All three of their comprehensive high schools were also above capacity, creating challenges for scheduling, programming, and common spaces. Furthermore, several of their lowest-rated buildings still required modernization to support today's constructional expectations.

Dr. Haas said that while they had made meaningful progress, the remaining needs in the urban ring at the high school level and in their oldest facilities underscored the importance of a long-term sequenced capital plan for the School Division and the County as a whole. As they considered the remaining needs in their buildings, it was important to recognize that their capital work extended beyond adding space or building new schools. A significant portion of their CIP must also support the day-to-day functioning of their existing infrastructure. Their aging equipment and building systems required consistent investment to maintain a modern, reliable learning environment.

Dr. Haas noted that this included ongoing programs for HVAC, roofing, plumbing, technology networks, buses, and essential maintenance and replacement cycles. These programs had projected annual costs of nearly \$25 million over the next five years and were essential for maintaining a safe, efficient, and uninterrupted learning environment. Sustaining these programs ensured that students and

staff experienced environments that supported learning every day, not just in newly modernized spaces.

Dr. Haas stated that with both their ongoing maintenance needs and their long-term facility challenges in mind, the School Board had worked carefully with the LRPAC to establish clear priorities for future capital investments. The Board had focused on three critical areas that reflected both current pressures and the long-term needs of Albemarle County. These priorities included increasing capacity where schools were overcrowded, modernizing equipment and facilities to support high-quality instruction, and improving accessibility so that every student could fully use and benefit from their school environment.

Dr. Haas stated that he believed these goals were essential as they planned for the next generation of students and for the County's continued growth. They also provided a framework for the specific project recommendations ahead. With that foundation in place, he had outlined the projects that rose to the top of the School Board's CIP request. These recommendations came from the LRPAC and had been reviewed and prioritized by the School Board as part of the approved CIP.

Dr. Haas explained that the list reflected a systemwide look at where capacity needs were most urgent and where modernization would have the greatest instructional impact and where accessibility improvements were essential for students. There was a great deal of detail behind each of these projects that was found in the School Board's approved LRPAC report, which was available for review. Their staff were always available to answer questions about the projects, and they would provide as much detail as needed upon request.

Dr. Haas said that for the purposes of today's presentation, he would focus on the School Board's top five priorities, which were the projects that offered the greatest combined impact on capacity, modernization, and accessibility. These represented the most significant steps they could take to ensure that their facilities kept pace with the needs of Albemarle County students and families. The first and highest priority project was the recommendation to build a new comprehensive high school. This project had drawn significant interest because it offered the greatest impact across all three of the School Board's criteria: capacity, modernization, and accessibility.

Dr. Haas said that the new high school would immediately relieve overcrowding across their current high schools, provide a fully modern facility built to today's instructional and safety standards, and ensure full accessibility for all students. It was also the most costly project for the CIP, so it was essential to understand the context behind the recommendation and the long-term benefits it provided for the entire County. Up to this point, renovating and expanding their ageing facilities had been an effective strategy. However, that approach worked best when population growth was relatively stable.

Dr. Haas said that the pace of growth they were now seeing in Albemarle County required them to look ahead with a different level of planning. He had provided a graph which illustrated this shift. Albemarle continued to be one of the faster growing Counties in Virginia, significantly outpacing statewide growth. Among the 27 Virginia localities with populations of over 80,000, Albemarle ranked ninth in growth. This increase had made capacity a central issue for their schools. Together, they had helped make Albemarle County a place where families and businesses wanted to be.

Dr. Haas said that the quality of life and the opportunities there had contributed to this growth, and their school facilities must continue to evolve in step with the community they served. As they looked ahead to long-term capacity, they relied on enrollment forecasts that were intentionally conservative. There was a saying that went, "it was hard to make a prediction, especially about the future," and that was certainly true in school planning. Even though Albemarle County was projected for considerable population growth, their enrollment model assumed student growth at a slower rate than the overall population growth.

Dr. Haas acknowledged that there were many unknowns, future housing starts, shifting market conditions, and the impact of major economic development projects like AstraZeneca. Still, even using these conservative assumptions, they projected steady enrollment increases across all levels of the School Division over the next decade. Their projections were built through a very detailed process. They used a cohort regression model, which was the industry standard, and also used by Weldon Cooper. This method examined historical enrollment patterns, transitions between grade levels, and variations unique to each school.

Dr. Haas explained that they also considered trends in homeschooling and private school enrollment. In addition, they worked closely with the County's Community Development team to model different housing scenarios, and they reviewed outside studies to test their assumptions. To give a sense of how their forecast compared, Weldon Cooper projected ACPS enrollment growth of 6% to 7% over 10 years, while PowerSchool, which was an application in their student database, projected a range of 8% to 18%. Those differences reflected the various methodologies used, but the consistent theme was clear: ACPS should plan for steady, sustained growth.

Dr. Haas stated that these enrollment trends led directly to one of their most pressing challenges: All three of their comprehensive high schools were currently operating above capacity. Even with careful scheduling and the use of every available instructional space, as well as some non-instructional space, the buildings were simply serving more students than they were designed to accommodate. When ACE Academy at Lambs Lane Campus opened next year, it would provide some temporary relief, primarily for Albemarle High School due to its proximity and the specialized programs offered there.

Dr. Haas said that although this added space would help, it would not resolve the overall capacity pressures they faced across the division, nor would it meet the level of growth they anticipated in the coming years. This was why long-term planning for high school facilities, including the recommendation for a new comprehensive high school, remained a high priority in the CIP. A reasonable question they sometimes heard was, "Why are you recommending a new high school now when the high schools had been crowded for years?"

Dr. Haas explained that they had been addressing capacity issues for decades. Albemarle High School and Western Albemarle High School, in particular, had received multiple additions and modernizations over the years to add space and extend the useful life of those buildings. He reiterated that this strategy worked when growth was moderate, and it allowed them to be responsible stewards of their existing facilities. However, they had now reached a point where additions alone could not meet the School Board's capital priorities or align with local government's long-term vision for economic development.

Dr. Haas stated that when comparing to similar jurisdictions with a major university presence, a similar total population, and a similar student population, a fourth high school was the norm at this scale. Their challenge was further compounded by Albemarle County's geographic size, which made it increasingly difficult to maintain attendance boundaries that ensured reasonable commute times for students and families. Given the growth they were experiencing and the current condition and capacity of their high schools, there was no question that they must invest in their high school facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Dr. Haas stated that the question of how they would fund a project of this magnitude was one that their two boards would need to engage with together, and they welcomed that conversation. While ACPS consistently and adequately funded ongoing maintenance, many of their school buildings now required more comprehensive renovations, projects that went beyond routine repairs and allowed them to update whole facilities in a more efficient and holistic way. These renovations would not only increase capacity at the selected schools but also modernize aging infrastructure and improve accessibility in the buildings where major upgrades had historically been deferred.

Dr. Haas stated that the elementary schools identified for these improvements and additions represented the highest priority for this type of investment. Their selection was based on a comprehensive facilities conditions assessment conducted across all ACPS buildings. For each of these schools, they also had detailed master planning recommendations that outlined the specific improvements needed to bring the facilities up to concurrent instructional accessibility and operational standards. These renovations would help ensure that their elementary schools provided safe, modern, and inclusive environments that could serve students and families for decades to come. To illustrate this, he had provided a graph showing their elementary school capacity and current enrollments.

Dr. Haas stated that to identify capacity issues, they looked to their current enrollment, which was anticipated to grow steadily over the next 10 years. Their CIP request focused on the group in the middle, which included their urban-ring schools, Agnor, Greer, and Woodbrook, and their oldest schools, Broadus Wood, Murray, and Stony Point. Even with the recommendation for a new comprehensive high school, it remained essential that they modernize their existing facilities and improve accessibility for all students.

Dr. Haas stated that the age and condition of Albemarle High School (AHS) and Western Albemarle High School (WAHS) positioned them at the top of the list for renovation. In 2017, the division had completed a high school facility planning study, which had identified AHS and WAHS as the highest priorities for renovation. A follow-up master planning study in 2023 had provided more detailed recommendations for improvements at both schools. These projects focused on updating instructional spaces, improving circulation and accessibility, enhancing safety systems, and creating collaborative areas for students and staff.

Dr. Haas stated that unlike the new high school, which would add new capacity, these modernization projects ensured that their existing high schools, some of the County's oldest and largest buildings, could provide safe, accessible, and modern learning environments that supported today's instructional needs. Finally, the School Board had also prioritized the construction of a new preschool center to increase capacity in their schools, where pre-K was currently held, and to expand opportunities for those students who qualified for pre-K but whose needs could not be met due to capacity.

Dr. Haas stated that the LRPAC recommended continued study to analyze alternatives for creating a central location for ACPS preschools in the urban ring. Most ACPS elementary schools hosted these programs, which served participants from both their respective districts and neighboring districts, as the programs could not be offered at all elementary schools in the students' districts or zoning. He noted that centralizing these services would provide a higher level of service, greater preschool capacities, and program efficiencies and quality control.

Dr. Haas thanked the Board of Supervisors for the opportunity to share the School Board's capital priorities and the work that had informed this plan. He said that they remained committed to working closely with the Board and County staff to ensure that their school facilities supported the needs of Albemarle's students, families, and growing community. He said that they appreciated the continued engagement, questions, and oversight of resources as they planned for the future of their schools.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that Dr. Haas had mentioned that 6% to 7% was the growth rate over 10 years for schools. She said that she wondered if that was comparable to the percentage of growth their

County was anticipating overall for that same period.

Mr. Bowman said that he would look that up and provide that information as a follow-up to the Board.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she would be interested in seeing if there was a correlation between those projections. She said that regarding the preschool center, she was hoping that Mr. Haas could provide details. She asked how having that one preschool center serving one area would impact the preschool programs at other schools.

Dr. Haas said that as a school system, they highly valued early learning opportunities for students. He said that these programs played a crucial role in closing the achievement gap, which typically began at 18 months for students who did not attend preschool. He said that one of the initiatives that County Executive Richardson and he undertook several years ago was to transfer preschool funding and operations to the school system. For many years before that, the Virginia Preschool Initiative grant was initially managed by local government, but the School Division took it over to integrate it into their instructional program.

Dr. Haas explained that in the urban ring, they had several elementary schools in close proximity to one another that hosted preschool classrooms within those schools. He said that this arrangement had two significant effects: It reduced the overall kindergarten through 5th-grade capacity of the school, and it also decreased the consistency of preschool programming across the schools. Given their opportunities to consolidate these programs with limited transportation time, they shared a common vision to provide preschool opportunities on a single site. He said that this would not only increase capacity at the elementary schools in the urban ring and surrounding areas but also allow other schools in the system to continue providing access to preschool, as they already did.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked if the new preschool center would allow them to offer more preschool classes.

Dr. Haas clarified that it would allow the existing pre-K classrooms in the elementary schools to be used for kindergarten through 5th-grade classes. He said that the relocated pre-K classrooms would then be consolidated at one site.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that this would prevent them from needing to increase class sizes.

Dr. Haas said that there was potential for that.

Dr. Acuff added that they predicted that 11 to 14 classrooms would be dedicated to pre-K in their existing urban-ring schools. Those schools, particularly Woodbrook, were experiencing capacity issues. This would eliminate the need to add on to three elementary schools, at a minimum, as they grew and instead concentrate on the educational experience in a single location. They had some land proffered in Brookhill, which was reasonably close to those three schools, and she thought this could be a good solution. One of their main challenges was transportation, so Hollymead or Mountain View Elementary Schools could potentially participate in the new preschool center, but Scottsville or Crozet were much farther, and the transportation times would be unfeasible for those areas.

Mr. Pruitt asked if there had been any changes in the enrollment projections for the ACE Academy.

Dr. Haas said that in terms of student enrollment opening in the fall, it would be fully enrolled. This was because there would be programming available that students would sign up for, and also because students could take classes that would normally be held at the AHS facility in December. He said that they would not aim to fully enroll all programming classes, however, because they needed to start up some classes first before they could achieve full enrollment. He said that their typical minimum enrollment for new programming classes, as seen in the past when they first introduced AP Calculus, was eight students. This approach balanced the need to maximize space with the need to maintain programs that may not yet have reached full enrollment numbers of 20 students.

Mr. Pruitt asked if they were still anticipating a significant drawdown from other comprehensive high school daytime student populations during the opening.

Dr. Haas said that they were anticipating a significant drawdown from AHS. He said that based on their previous research in other localities that had opened similar centers, they expected approximately 10% of the students to relocate from other schools. He said that he believed this was an underestimate. He said that the quality of the facility and the opportunities it would offer would likely attract students from other schools.

Mr. Pruitt asked why he would characterize it as an underestimate for Center 2 when enrollment at Center 1 had historically struggled and been under the mark.

Dr. Haas clarified that they had reached the maximum enrollment for programs at Charlottesville Area Technical Education Center (CATEC).

Mr. Pruitt said that he wanted to gain a bit more specificity and detail in explaining the gap between their projections for Center 2 and Center 1.

Dr. Haas said that the Center 1 issue was more related to recruitment. He said that the entering 9th and 10th grades for this year were fully enrolled, compared to last year, and they were already enrolling students for the 9th grade next year. He said that within two years, the school would be fully enrolled, and they expected to have a waiting list.

Mr. Pruitt said that the Board typically planned their operating budget over a three- to five-year period, not even talking about capital, and he generally did not question the School Board's long-range planning for schools. He was excited to be part of a County that was reinvesting in schools and moving forward with these future projects. When asked in the community, he had advocated for the center model, as the School Division's argument had been that it avoided complex and challenging redistricting efforts.

Mr. Pruitt said that there was also a host of other challenges that may come with another comprehensive high school, but as the representative for the Southern District of the County, he was frequently and intently reminded by his constituents that they wanted one. He said that he recently was raked over the coals in an interview with a student asking for a new comprehensive high school, and he had explained the School Division's plan involved a drawdown from all three districts at the same time, and they were not currently moving forward with this comprehensive school model.

Mr. Pruitt said that he had repeated this to many people in his community, and the County had built a capital plan to accommodate this strategy between the County and the School Division. However, after having programmed those funds, now it felt like they were being asked to revisit something that public had been demanding for a while. He added that his peers on the Board of Supervisors would likely agree that he was someone who was comfortable with taking financial risks when necessary, but he did not see a way to make this work on the proposed timeline.

Mr. Pruitt said that since he first ran for office, he had stood before thousands of people and said he would secure \$10 million for housing. He had fought for it and proposed significant cuts to achieve it. He had proposed cutting economic development, not hiring an additional sheriff, and raising their personal property tax rate. He would have to face his constituents and his priest every day, saying he had failed again and trying to do better next time. It was challenging not to view what was happening today as a significant failure in long-range planning.

Mr. Pruitt said that he had shared this frustration with his peers on the Board, and he believed it was essential to express it to the School Board as well. If they were to move forward, he must share his concerns with them. He said that if the School Division truly required this, they would attempt to find a solution, but if they did not have a laundry list for the existing programming, he did not believe it would be possible to provide a new high school. He clarified that he was fully supportive of building new schools, but he wanted to emphasize the importance of thoroughly reviewing their current facilities' needs before pursuing new projects.

Ms. McKeel thanked Mr. Pruitt for his comments because she shared his same concerns. She said that she had some thoughts on the need for more data, which she believed was very serious if they were to move forward with the request or if they were to move forward at all in terms of positioning themselves. She said that specifically, she would like to point out a couple of things that she was concerned about with data.

Ms. McKeel said that when she examined K-12 enrollment in Albemarle County in general, not specific to any particular school, in 2018, the County had 13,692 students. She said that in 2025, the number had decreased to 13,644 students.

Dr. Acuff stated that they had lost students from their school population during the pandemic.

Ms. McKeel said that the landscape of everything had changed after the COVID-19 pandemic, including school populations throughout the state, birth rates are down, and the makeup of the community. She asked Mr. Bowman if he had more information on the growth rate in the County.

Mr. Bowman said that he would first like to give a shoutout to Bart Svoboda, Deputy Director of Community Development for providing this information. He reported that over the past two years, the average annual growth rate had been 2.8%. According to projections from Weldon Cooper from 2020 to 2024, this growth rate increased to 4.8% during that time. He said that he appreciated the opportunity to address Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley's earlier question on that topic.

Ms. McKeel clarified that he was referring to County population growth and not school population growth.

Mr. Bowman confirmed that was correct.

Ms. McKeel noted that the population growth in Albemarle over the past decade had been driven primarily by an older population, with a significant number of people aged 65 and above. This was reflected in the proliferation of retirement communities and facilities catering to the needs of aging individuals. Like other communities across the state and the U.S., their community had an aging population. Since the pandemic and even prior to it, birth rates had declined. In their community, they had seen an increase in homeschooling, which had become more popular since the pandemic.

Ms. McKeel said that she believed this shift was largely due to the fact that many families,

particularly those with mothers who could afford to stay home, had chosen to homeschool their children. It was worth noting that their community was generally quite wealthy, which had contributed to this trend. So, they had homeschoolers, and they were also experiencing economic development impacts that were creating issues around their population. She said that she wanted to state this in order to frame this discussion around concerns about data going forward. She added that she truly appreciated the report from the School Division, which was well researched and well presented. The points were well-taken, and she appreciated the effort that went into it. She wanted to emphasize that there was no disagreement at this table about the importance of schools and education in their community.

Ms. McKeel said that she acknowledged the significance of education. She said that furthermore, she was strongly supportive of the preschool center being recommended. She said that she believed it was a fantastic idea that effectively addressed the needs for pre-K programs in the County. She was in full agreement with that particular initiative and did not have many questions about it.

Ms. McKeel stated that she agreed with Mr. Pruitt; she was taken aback by the change in the center model. She pulled out their March 17, 2025, minutes and it was clear that they all had been heavily investing in the center model at the time. That was what they all thought they were doing, and they had been discussing it for years. She said she had been arguing this point in her community as well, to her constituents, that they were utilizing the center model. They had Center 1, and they were planning to open Center 2 the following year.

Ms. McKeel said that she had been making this case for several years, and she believed they had a recognition that the Lambs Lane Campus was overcrowded due to the extraneous facilities, and they were going to create a master plan to free up space for another building or school, and the center model was part of that plan. Now that they had the center going in, and they had much more space on the campus. She said that with that being said, she was concerned about the data they were seeing. For example, AHS had been losing enrollment for the last few years, and she was hearing from the community that it was approaching 2,200 students, when in actuality, enrollment was only 1,875 students, which was even less than the year before.

Ms. McKeel said that she was focused on the data they were seeing and the implications it had on their plans. She said that she recalled there was a CIP request for a number of new school buses, and although she could not recall the ranking on the list, she would also like to know if they had done any forward-looking projections about alternative bus purchases, taking into account the transition to electric or hybrids and how that would impact their need for a new bus facility. She noted that they had a very aging, antiquated bus facility that may be too old for people to safely work in and it needed to be updated and modernized. She asked if they had looked at a forward-looking plan for replacing the diesel buses.

Dr. Acuff said that at the moment, the cost of electric vehicles was prohibitive without six grants to make that happen. She said that she believed that the recent surge in school bus requests was partly due to the compounded costs associated with the Great Recession and COVID-19, which put them behind schedule in replacing their 20 school buses. She said that as a result, the proposal was to purchase 30 buses per year over a five-year period instead of the original 20. Their main goal was to catch up on their replacement schedule, which was 200,000 miles and 15 years of service for each bus.

Ms. McKeel emphasized that forward thinking toward the future was necessary for the buses. She said that she often heard discussions about air quality, the environment, and congestion, not only from cars but also from buses. She said that it was worth considering when making future bus purchases, looking at data that might be advantageous.

Ms. McKeel said that regarding the center model, she would like some clarification as to whether it was being completely phased out by the School Division. She said that between March when they last met and now, the School Board had changed direction and that surprised her.

Dr. Acuff said that they too had faced significant pushback from the community regarding the schools, as well as from some of their School Board members. In September, they had asked the Long-Range Planning Committee to conduct a deep dive on the feasibility of a new high school. She acknowledged that she was surprised to see it at the top of their list as well. As a School Board, they had reviewed the recommendation and ultimately agreed on it. She explained that the center model was originally designed to be a focused learning center, but it also had the potential to impact capacity.

Dr. Acuff said that the original plan was to have multiple centers, possibly rented or leased space, to accommodate the growing population. However, this one was delayed for five years and was 30% smaller than its original design. She believed the center model would help alleviate their capacity issues in the short term, but she thought its most significant benefit would be its high attendance rate by their students. If they provided the right career exploration components, she had confidence that students would attend the center. For example, when they had the Math, Science, and Engineering Academy (MESA), they had received a very high number of applications from students across the County.

Dr. Acuff stated that she had been a strong advocate for the center model, but she had also been persuaded to consider a new high school. She said that she did not believe these options were mutually exclusive, and she was concerned about their reliance on trailers to accommodate students, even with the addition of the new center and the fluctuating attendance at AHS. However, she was also concerned that a new high school would require significant investment and disruption in the short term, including redistricting. Considering the projected growth along Route 29, they would need to add capacity.

Dr. Acuff said that perhaps a new center or a different type of high school could be built to meet the community's needs. She said that she believed there were possibilities for a new high school with a northern corridor pattern, which could be a major draw for the entire community. They could certainly explore the options, and it could serve as a strong connection between the business community and the economic development process that the County team had been working on. She empathized with the Supervisors' concerns about pivoting from the center model, as she too had been advocating for it and believed it should remain up for consideration.

Ms. McKeel said that she appreciated Dr. Acuff speaking on that point, it was helpful to understand her perspective on that. She said that Lambs Lane had land on it that they already owned, so she wanted to bring up the potential for constructing another building on that campus without expanding AHS itself. She said that across the County, they had a number of trailers that would be removed in the near future.

Dr. Acuff clarified that currently, they utilized 32 classrooms for high schools across the County.

Ms. McKeel expressed concern that the data trends they were beginning to see may require adjustment in their future planning. She said that Rivanna Futures alone would be transformational in many ways for their community, but they did not know what the growth patterns would be as a result of that development. She said that there was lower population, lower birth rates, and people moving out of public schools. They also saw Rivanna Futures, which could bring more students.

Ms. McKeel suggested that the School Board and the Board of Supervisors team up and reach out to the University of Virginia and the Weldon Cooper Center to ask for their help in understanding what the future might look like in their community. They needed more data before they spent \$200 million on a new high school. Currently, they were redistricting to fill schools and give elementary schools populations to prevent them from becoming too small. She said that considering the known issues, she would highly recommend they work together with UVA and Weldon Cooper to provide more robust data in order to inform how they dealt with those issues.

Dr. Berlin said that she understood Ms. McKeel's concern around agreeing on the data and using that as a single source of truth. She said that as a newer member of the School Board, she was still learning about common data sources, including population, schools, and types of growth, which included data from Weldon Cooper. She said that by agreeing on these sources and examining them together, they could either fund or request additional work in their community to support their goals. She said that she knew they were considering this, but she thought it was an essential piece of the puzzle.

Dr. Berlin said that what she was hearing from Ms. McKeel and others on the Board was that they wanted to ensure they were all looking at the same set of population data and examining it in conjunction with other relevant information.

Ms. McKeel said that she was glad they were using Weldon Cooper for their projections, but she was suggesting they look at it in the context of Rivanna Futures and other developments anticipated over the next 10 to 15 years. She said that this might lead them to conclude that they needed two new elementary schools and a new high school, or conversely that they did not need these facilities at all. She believed that not only did the two boards need this information, but their community as a whole needed it.

Ms. McKeel said that if they were going to convince their community to support a referendum and a \$0.01 tax increase, that approval must come from the community. She firmly believed that the population in their community, particularly the older population, had changed significantly since the last referendum. She was not suggesting that the referendum would not pass in this community, but she was saying that they must adapt to demonstrate that they needed to make these changes.

Dr. Acuff said that she believed they could certainly work together to develop a set of questions for Weldon Cooper or any other organization they may use. She said that she agreed that they needed to have a consistent set of data and be confident in its accuracy. She said that they also needed to be able to effectively communicate and sell the value of this data to their stakeholders.

Ms. McKeel said that their community needed to be informed that they required \$200 million for this school or \$600 million to modernize their older schools, so they did not have to rely on whatever the new bill might be. She would argue that this data would be informative not only for the schools but also for County government. She said that she would argue that data about the schools and Rivanna Futures would greatly benefit them as well.

Ms. McKeel said that she was very confident that their Superintendent and County Executive could work together over the next year to initiate this process. She said she did not know how long it would take Weldon Cooper to return that information, but she thought that this would position the two boards in a much better position to determine the CIP that they wanted to promote to the community.

Ms. Mallek said that she would like to express her gratitude for the comments shared by previous colleagues, as she agreed with many of them. She said that she would reference these points as she continued. She said that the presentation included several slides on benchmark Counties, and she would appreciate it if, in the future, they could obtain more comprehensive information about these Counties, including data on acreages, expenditures, and other factors such as test scores, per-child expenses, and community success stories.

Ms. Mallek said that she found the booklet provided to the Board to be superficial and lacking in supporting data, which was why she was seeking more information. She was concerned about the lack of transparency regarding the data used by the Long-Range Planning Committee, particularly regarding the committee's composition and the sources of the data. She said that she would like to know more about the applied economic study mentioned in the presentation, as it made some bold claims about the need for new buildings.

Ms. Mallek said that she was surprised to see that Broadus Wood Elementary School was described as being dilapidated, meanwhile it had won state-level achievement awards for its student accomplishments. Furthermore, she was surprised at the statistics about the schools that were under capacity, as it was only a few years ago when those same schools were reaching maximum capacity. She said that in the mid-2010s, Crozet Elementary was in danger of losing its librarian because it lacked students, and the addition certainly helped as it was now at 600 students. She said that Brownsville recently experienced an unanticipated influx of about 100 students, which was a crisis for them. She said that in the western pattern there was a bit more balance in the elementary schools, which she was grateful for.

Ms. Mallek said that on slides 34 and 35 of the presentation, she would like to understand the sources of the data used to support these claims. She said that additionally, on page 40, there were way more than 1,200 units at the circles in Crozet, so she would like to know more about that data and how that was used to predict their future changes. She said that she was interested in learning more about the preschool collection, primarily because of her experience as a substitute teacher in preschool before moving to the elementary classroom.

Ms. Mallek said that the children were extremely excited to attend preschool at the school where their older siblings were also students, and they could not wait to start kindergarten because they felt a strong emotional connection. She said that if they were bused to a different location, that connection would be lost, so she asked that this be kept in mind. She said that she was surprised to learn that all the rural schools maintained their own preschool programs. She said she may have missed something in the past year, but she was under the impression that there were no classrooms for preschool.

Ms. Mallek continued to state that she understood the challenges of predicting enrollment and the distances involved. As a student at AHS from 1964 to 1967, she recalled the kids in Scottsville having a one-hour commute, and there was no alternative. Ms. Mallek said that the only students who drove were those who attended CATEC, and she remembered the other students being very jealous that they got to jump in their cars and go there for the school day. She said that she understood the distances, but she thought it was concerning that since 2008, there had been a significant increase in projected student enrollment, but it had not been realized. She stated that she was waiting for more detailed information before she could fully believe the projections.

Ms. Mallek said that in terms of facilitating more collaboration with the business community, she would like for them to prioritize collaboration with their existing workforce programs in the community, rather than duplicating efforts at the schools. If they were concerned about the costs of education, perhaps they could partner with organizations already doing this work. Lastly, she wanted to address the maintenance of facilities, particularly the school buses. She was offended to see the northern part of the County's buses with rusting hoods, which could be easily sanded and repainted to improve their appearance.

Mr. Gallaway said that he would like to provide some commentary to the discussion as well, but would start with his questions. He said that regarding the preschool building, he did not see it in the report nor hear it in the presentation, so he would like some clarification as to how many students the preschool center would be designed to serve.

Dr. Acuff replied that it would have about 20 classrooms, and the total number of students would depend on the composition of the classes. She estimated that it would be approximately 200 to 300 students.

Mr. Gallaway stated that he thought removing the preschool classrooms from the elementary schools was a very smart move, given the capacity issues they were dealing with. He said that acknowledged there was a benefit to having the connection of a pre-K program to the school the students would eventually transition into, so he would be interested to see how they maintained those relationships, but that was the School Division's job, so he would not concern himself with that point.

Mr. Gallaway said that what he would like to know was whether they had conducted an analysis or had a conversation about the potential student enrollment numbers of 200, 250, or 300, and how that would impact the overall demand for preschool seats in the community.

Ms. Kumazawa explained that the report may appear to lack detail, but that was because a committee was currently studying the issue at a deeper level, engaging with the community, and collaborating with other preschool partners to determine the exact need. She said that this process was ongoing.

Mr. Gallaway asked if it would be fair to state that they did not know the true demand.

Ms. Kumazawa said that they were aware of the demand for the current preschool program they served, and it was clear that there was a higher demand than they could currently accommodate.

Mr. Gallaway asked if the capital investment in a preschool center not only freed up capacity in the elementary schools but also met the demand that they had at least recognized at present.

Dr. Berlin said that their school system, and part of their community, as well as United Way, had conducted analysis of the seats, which would provide them with the necessary information to understand the need.

Mr. Gallaway asked if Brookhill was the only site they had considered.

Ms. Kumazawa said that appeared to be a feasible solution at this time, but no decisions had been made.

Mr. Gallaway said that he appreciated the information. He said that on another topic, he thought it was a smart move to break out the southern elementary school into a lower and upper school as a model. He said that upon reflection, he believed this could help spread out or ease the operational impact. He said that if they were to build a new high school, they would need to hire new first-grade and second-grade teachers, which would be a significant undertaking.

Mr. Gallaway said that he was guessing that they would still need some existing staff, due to the growth they were accommodating. He said that by transferring existing staff, they were lessening the operational impact. He said that he found this approach interesting, as it did not eliminate the impact entirely, but rather reduced it. He said that for the northern elementary school, he was wondering if the decision was made due to proximity or if they were going to be separating it as well.

Dr. Haas said no; they made that decision because the schools would be able to see each other, rather than redistricting and going through the entire process. He said that this approach also ensured that students had parity in programming so that students could stay in the same school rather than splitting them up. He said that there were some overwhelming advantages to that approach.

Dr. Berlin added that it also came out of significant community input.

Mr. Gallaway stated that he thought that was a great idea when he learned about it. He said that as a student, teacher, or elected official, he had never been part of a division with both upper and lower levels. He was not aware if other communities had a similar setup where proximity was always the case. He said that he was curious to know if they had considered this approach or if the northern division would indeed be a standalone K-5 school.

Ms. Kumazawa noted that in terms of operating costs, building a separate K-5 school and separating the schools did not result in significant operating savings. Even if a K-5 school was built, they would still need to move half of the kindergarten teachers, which would incur costs. There were also numerous overhead costs associated with both models, and as they developed the budget this year, it was likely that they would still see significant operating costs.

Mr. Gallaway said that there was no way to avoid the operational impact.

Ms. Kumazawa said that she just wanted to clarify that the costs would remain with either approach.

Mr. Gallaway said that to jump into the question about the center model, the comprehensive high school, and the related aspects, he wanted to emphasize that the State often put them in a difficult position. He said that the School Board had to define the need, establish a dollar amount to meet it, and then the County had to determine capacity, funding, or other relevant factors. This process inherently created tension, but it was not the standard approach in other states.

He said that he took it seriously when the School Board brought forward a request and he took it to mean that it was what the Board of Supervisors must figure out how to do it. He said that it was disconcerting to hear that it was put out here to generate a discussion.

Dr. Acuff clarified that she meant that she knew it would generate a discussion because it was a priority that the Board had approved.

Mr. Gallaway asked if the operational impact of a new comprehensive high school, as well as the strategic plan to accommodate that over the requested timeline, had been thoroughly assessed.

Dr. Acuff replied no, as far as she was aware. She believed some basic figures had been evaluated.

Ms. Kumazawa said that during their review of the different alternatives, they estimated operational impacts for each option. They had an estimate of the expenditures, but they did not have any way of knowing how it would be funded.

Mr. Gallaway said that the top priority, as previously discussed, had undergone a change from last year's priority to this current CIP request. However, a full analysis of the potential financial implications for planning purposes in five and 10 years had not been completed. He said that this was the School Board's top request; a comprehensive high school. He asked if there had been a decision made

regarding the use of the Berkmar property or another piece of property for this comprehensive high school.

Dr. Acuff answered that they had looked at the Berkmar parcel to determine its feasibility for use, essentially. She said that it was possible to establish a traditional high school with playing fields on that property. She said that, as she understood it, and Ms. Schmidt may know better than she, there had been some issues discovered with the property, but they had not looked at other parcels yet nor did they know what the land costs would be.

Mr. Gallaway emphasized that this was the Capital Improvement Program they would be working with for the next five to 10 years. He asked when would the decision be made on which piece of property that it would be built on and when would the School Board decide whether to use the Berkmar property or acquire land for the high school. He said that he needed to know because he would not be very supportive of building a high school without knowing where it was going. He said that when they titled over land in the southern part for the center, it was the School Board's choice; it was their piece of property to move it over to an elementary school.

Mr. Gallaway said that this was a bit of a different investment. In that prior case, they had handed over land to the School Division to determine the appropriate use. He said that now, they were talking about a \$220 million investment in a CIP that had struggled to pull them out of a hole they had created for themselves, which they all knew. He said that to drop a \$220 million investment in there was a conundrum that none of the Board members could rationalize. He said that the School Board was asking the Board of Supervisors to figure that out, so he needed some other decisions to be made that were not his to make.

Mr. Gallaway said that the Board needed to know the School Division's decision on the Berkmar property as soon as possible, because there was a project already planned for that site, and money was being spent on it. He said that the Schools Facilities Director already said that to them in a meeting. He asked how they could keep spending money and planning for something that may not even happen. If they did not use the Berkmar property, they needed to figure out where the land was going to come from, and if they needed to acquire it.

Mr. Gallaway said that if they acquired land in the Rural Area, they needed to figure out how to service it. He noted that AHS was located in the Rural Area but had been serviced with public water and sewer. In fact, they had had to obtain approval for Center 2 because it was in the Rural Area. He emphasized that there were things here that should have taken place before this became the top priority on the already-overstretched CIP. Perhaps the high school should be the top priority for year 5 or 6, rather than the present top priority.

Mr. Gallaway stated that he was having difficulty comprehending that this other work had not yet occurred before this item made its way up to become a top CIP request. He added that he too had been defending the center model, which, in his opinion, seemed to have been pulled entirely from the School Board's plan and there was no request in the CIP for another center. He asked, therefore, how could a center model and a new comprehensive high school coexist, and what was the educational strategy for that. He said that all along, they had traditionally considered them as separate systems. They had discussed the center model in 2016 and 2017, and this past year the new high school had moved in, and if it was a justified need, he was happy to support it.

Mr. Gallaway said, therefore, he was curious about the other elements that brought up this item. As one of the officials who had had to navigate the complexities of securing adequate funding, he was also reminded of the frustrations he had shared as a School Board member for eight years with not being able to renovate the schools as necessary because they constantly had to deal with catching up with past issues. If they did move forward with this high school, it would overwhelm their CIP for a long time.

Mr. Gallaway said that on the positive side, they had the potential for \$25 million from a \$0.01 sales tax, and some creative solutions could help them build toward a \$200 million project. He said that he wondered what the School Board's discussion would be if they were to plan for this high school as a priority for year 5 or 6, rather than year 1, how it would change their priorities ahead of that. He said that considering the preschool was also a new item on the CIP, he would be interested to see how that was impacted if the high school was reprioritized.

Mr. Gallaway said that he had listened to their conversation and the rationale for placing that in the top five and did not disagree with that assessment. There was a significant demand for preschool facilities. He said that he was curious about how they planned to address the transportation aspect of this as well. If the estimated cost was \$54 million for that preschool center, that was comparable to the northern feeder pattern elementary school as well. He said that he was struggling with this big request for a high school.

Mr. Gallaway said that to bring this back to some of the other points that had been discussed, he would like to mention that their County had a history of successful projects that included work from Weldon Cooper. He said that their Strategic Plan and Rivanna Futures efforts were initially sparked by a Weldon Cooper study on the importance of the defense sector in their area. However, growth studies did not lead to a similar report. In addition to endorsing the idea, the nuances of what they were seeing in both their economic report, housing report, and differences in magisterial districts were not just about the raw numbers, but also about the impact on affordable housing units. For the past seven or eight years, they had struggled to address affordable housing issues.

Mr. Gallaway said that this mattered in terms of school populations. He noted that affordable units in a development could have a different impact than the overall number of units. He did not realize this until he served on the LRPAC. Prior to that, he only considered the raw number of units. He did not know that the location and demographics of the residents would make a difference, but the type of developments did matter to that extent. What they needed to do was analyze this type of data to get a better understanding of the impact on their long-range planning. As someone had said earlier, they needed to ask the right questions to Weldon Cooper.

Mr. Gallaway said that he had been on both sides of the debate, from the School Board's perspective and as a Supervisor. At the end of the day, he believed the community wanted them to work together to find a solution, rather than just arguing about it. If they needed \$570 million for school projects, they needed to do a different approach. He was thrilled that they were building two new elementary schools, which had taken 13 years to get into the CIP. He was not opposed to building a new comprehensive high school, but it needed to be done in a strategic and well-thought-out way. This was how they had earned their triple-AAA bond rating. He said that they would continue to discuss this with the School Board in March, but the School Board needed to have a more in-depth conversation about their priorities and how to get there.

Mr. Gallaway said that to return to his initial question, he wanted to ask the School Board when they would decide on the Berkmar site. He said that it was a pressing issue to determine whether or not that could be used for a high school.

Dr. Berlin replied that her understanding was that there were current questions related to remediation at the site, including groundwater. She said that they would need to perform that feasibility work, so there would already be an up-front cost just to determine whether or not they could use the site.

Mr. Gallaway said that they needed to figure it out as quickly as possible because dollars were being spent right now. He said that if his fellow Supervisors disagreed with him, they did not have to worry about what he was saying. He thought this was a critical issue that required a decision, one that would not only impact the high school but also affect other CIP projects that were already planned and funded. He said that he was concerned that this decision may have unintended consequences.

Mr. Gallaway said that he recalled a theoretical redistricting analysis that was presented, which showed how changing the school's boundaries could alter the racial demographics of the area. He said that although this was not the actual plan, he did notice a piece of data on the chart that he did not fully understand. It was not explained during the meeting when it was presented. He asked if the economic disadvantage of the student population was considered in the racial makeup of the area.

Ms. Kumazawa said that they likely utilized Gap Group 1, a combination of free and reduced lunch, English language learners, and special populations, which served as an indicator. She said that this indicator balanced out the demographics.

Mr. Gallaway said that he appreciated the clarification.

Dr. Berlin said that she would like to acknowledge that the comprehensive new high school was a change from their prior plan. She said that in her view, they needed the center model as an instructional piece, but as they examined the data, they must look at it together to ensure they were analyzing similar data. When considering long-term growth, it was clear that their high schools would continue to reach capacity, even if a center was fully utilized. In the long term, the only viable solution was a comprehensive high school. One of the reasons for this was that even if they were to implement a comprehensive high school today, the earliest they could start accepting students would be around FY31 or FY32.

Dr. Berlin said that this meant that a 4th-grader today would be a 9th grader by that time, and that was at the earliest possible completion date. She said that she believed part of the challenge was the lengthy process of planning, constructing, and opening a comprehensive high school, which was significant. She said that by moving this forward as a priority, they were, in effect, beginning to address some of the important work that needed to be done. The longer they delayed it as a priority, the more time passed, and the further away they were from opening a new high school, so a kindergartner today would be attending that comprehensive high school when it opened.

Dr. Berlin stated that she thought this piece was crucial as they continued to develop their northern region and address the growing demand for high-quality schools. Additionally, as they continued to promote economic development in the County, the quality of the schools would be a major factor in the success of that.

Mr. Gallaway said that he agreed with Dr. Berlin, but they still must plan for how to achieve it. He said that last year, he specifically asked about the comprehensive high school, and it was deemed off the table. He said that a year later, it was now back on the table. He said that when reviewing the CIP, they considered budgeting over a multi-year period, rather than just a single snapshot. They looked at the operational and capital needs for each year, taking into account the long-term implications. He said that it appeared that after the School Board was presented with the LRPAC report, they threw in this big item into their budget planning they had been doing since the last budget cycle.

Mr. Gallaway said that this budget season was going to be tough even if they had not put in this new item. He said that they had to start contending with that, so next year, even if new members were

sitting on the boards, the CIP still needed to remain in the same order so they could invest in it. He said that he believed that sound planning was expected of them. He said that he wondered if they, at the School Board level or division level, had considered the capacity needs and potential mechanisms for addressing these CIP items. He asked if they had had discussions about how to allocate resources and make the necessary investments.

Mr. Gallaway said that he believed the local government and School Division side were mostly in tandem on the prospect of the \$0.01 sales tax. He asked if the School Board had any other thoughts on what the County should consider in terms of opening up the capacity for this new high school or the other needs they must meet in the CIP.

Dr. Berlin said that in addition to the tax, they could consider another bond referendum. She said that it was a lot to ask from the community, but she knew that northern Virginia cities had undergone multiple bond referendums to play catch-up. It was a difficult ask, but they needed to continue to think about how to play catch-up. They could also consider public-private partnerships for building schools.

Mr. Gallaway said that in addition to Ms. McKeel's suggestion for more data, they did a lot of educational meetings with the bond referendums. He said that the bond referendums would not change the numbers presented; it did not change their capacity.

Dr. Berlin said absolutely.

Mr. Gallaway said that Fairfax County's extensive use of bond referendums was well known. He said that they had a \$15 billion CIP budget and a \$5.1 billion operating budget. He said that when reviewing their CIP request, it stated that they would follow the 10 financial principles outlined in this part. He said that immediately preceding that line, the first sentence said they would maintain their triple-triple A bond rating. What was interesting to him was that a jurisdiction that frequently issued bond referendums shared Albemarle's commitment to the financial approach.

Mr. Gallaway said that while bond referendums could maneuver what could be done, they did not significantly alter the overall capacity outlook. He said that public-private partnerships also did not change the capacity outlook, as they still needed to adhere to their capacity. He said that they were creative, and he believed it was essential to engage with those ideas. He said that however, he did not want to misrepresent the information; they needed to be on the same page. He said that he thought the 13 of them were probably more advanced than most in understanding this concept, but there were many community members who needed to be reminded about how bond referendums could be used as a tool to achieve their goals.

Mr. Gallaway said that in his first year on the Board, he recalled a presentation on public-private partnerships (PPP's). He said that it had been eight years, so he was rusty. He said that it might be beneficial for them to meet, either during budget discussions or outside of them, to refresh their understanding of their current situation and what tools were available to them, given their financial planning approach and strategy.

Dr. Berlin said that she believed that the School Board would be open to doing that. She said that there were presentations that some of them had seen, and some of them had not, and they could use an opportunity to become educated and re-educated together. She said that they could learn from what had been done while still maintaining the triple-triple A bond rating.

Mr. Andrews thanked everyone who has commented so far. He said that he had a few additional thoughts, but he would also be looking to Mr. Bowman for further input. He said that he was aware that a presentation was coming that would discuss next steps, including the impacts of a .01 sales tax and potential ramifications. He said that he believed that this presentation may help address some of the concerns raised and provide a clearer understanding of the capacity needed, depending on the year.

Mr. Andrews said that the first presentation had highlighted the County's reliance on detailed, precise, long-range planning and its disciplined approach to finances. However, the schools had been burned in the past with the Board's reticence to fund schools a decade or so ago, putting everything behind and the increased use of trailers. That definitely led to a sense of urgency to addressing needs that could be seen. He said, however, he thought that his fellow Board members had expressed the need for nuanced data, particularly when it came to the real impact of the center model, the community lab school, and the predicted 160 additional students there, CATEC, private school impacts, demographics, and population growth.

Mr. Andrews stated that it was essential to look at the actual build-out, not just theoretical or approved build-out, and examine the expected actual build-out, population growth, and demographics of the population growth, and preschool center effects. This would help them better understand the needs. He said that more detail seemed to be the request of today. If it turned out that the relevant data pointed toward a new high school, the question of Berkmar or another site became crucial. But if they had identified the need, they would need to figure out what to do about it, whether it was this site or another.

Mr. Andrews stated that he also wanted to emphasize the importance of comparing their population growth projections to those of other comparable areas. He said that they needed to understand how their population growth compared to the performance of other centers, including the distribution of students. He was not convinced that the number of high schools was as relevant as the rest of the data when determining whether they needed additional capacity.

Mr. Andrews stated that they needed to better explain the differences between County and school population growth projections and the flat nature of school population growth over the past few years. However, the time for a budget was approaching, so there was a lot of work ahead. Before he returned the presentation back to Mr. Bowman, he would like to bring it to the School Board's and provide them with an opportunity to respond and address any of these concerns.

Ms. Osborne stated she agreed with Dr. Berlin that both the center model and comprehensive high school model were needed. She stated that the center model served a great purpose, providing specialty instruction, and it was well-suited for children who required smaller learning environments.

Mr. Paige stated that he would not be here after December, but that he had a question that stemmed from his own curiosity. He said that he understood the significance of data, but he was wondering how much information the Supervisors typically gathered. He said that for instance, when a subdivision was planned or approved, how much information did they attempt to collect about the potential impact on the schools and the community? He said that he believed it would be crucial to obtain some information about the potential effects when something was being approved, but the data would be difficult to capture in terms of its impacts.

Mr. Gallaway said that it was a great question. He said that they had the same data, and it was not very nuanced. He explained that when every rezoning came in, it provided information on the district and the projected impact on each school. They usually had conversations about the transportation and roads impact, as well as water and stormwater runoff, depending on the location in the County. He said that it provided each school that would be affected and the anticipated number of students that the development would generate for each school. He said that it was the same data the schools' LRPAC had for projecting schools' growth.

Mr. Gallaway stated that the formula was nuanced to the specific district the development would affect. He said that this was why he would support more data being gathered to support the request for the new high school because they needed to be more detailed than currently available. He stated that currently, they were looking at the overall number of units in developments and general growth data, but they needed to be more specific in the data they were gathering in order to make better-informed decisions.

Ms. McKeel said that to address this, the data they needed should be somewhat future-oriented. She said that they had upcoming Rivanna Futures, population changes, and adding to that the consideration that the Development Area was not being expanded.

Mr. Gallaway stated that Mr. Paige's question was a valid one, as every single rezoning the Board of Supervisors considered included the anticipated impact on schools.

Ms. McKeel said that she had also observed that developers had used the presence of private schools nearby as a positive factor because it would lessen the impact on ACPS.

Mr. Andrews said that he agreed Mr. Paige had asked a very important question. He acknowledged that sometimes they did things that were not sufficiently nuanced. He noted that the estimated \$1.31 in costs of services for residential development, it was not a nuanced number.

Mr. Paige said that part of his reason for asking that question was because when they first considered the center model, they envisioned that the centers would be built alongside the renovation of all high schools. He said that it appeared that they were facing a similar situation now, 10 years after their initial conversation. He said that he wanted to ensure that they were aware of this issue and were taking steps to address it on all levels, including securing necessary funds and gathering all necessary data.

Dr. Acuff said that her takeaway from their conversation today and the many comments were that a new high school in the CIP was a surprise, at least. The price tag was such that they required more background data to support that. She said that it was fair that they did need more data and they needed to make a strong case, not only to the Board but also to the community if that was where they went. She also heard Mr. Gallaway suggest that the high school be moved to the out-years of the CIP, and they could look into that. She acknowledged the clock was ticking with respect to the upcoming budget, but she thought they needed to go back and address some of the questions the Board had raised.

Ms. McKeel said that regarding the Berkmar property and urgency that Mr. Gallaway had referenced, their Board of Supervisors had previously seen a schematic design presented by their staff, which included the recycling center and other facilities that were currently located on the Lambs Lane Campus. She said that this design had included a gas station, bus depot, car wash. They had already planned this design for that property alongside the recycling center, and all of those auxiliary uses fit on that property. To change it and use that property for a recycling center may mean the recycling center was in the wrong place.

Mr. Andrews asked Mr. Bowman to continue with his presentation.

Mr. Bowman stated that for the path ahead, this was not a calendar, but rather the work staff were doing to prepare the County Executive's Recommended Budget. They had in place the adopted CIP from Fiscal Years 26 to 30, and their goal was to keep that on schedule as much as possible as projects moved from one year to the next. They would be updating financial assumptions, examining projected

interest rates for borrowing, and assessing how project costs changed, as well as considering any necessary timing adjustments and potential capacity.

Mr. Bowman stated that between now and February 25, they would be evaluating which projects could continue to move forward, aligning with the six goals of the Board's strategic plan. It was worth noting that new projects tended to enter into the out-years unless there were extenuating circumstances, such as state mandates or significant funding. These discussions would continue in March. From a financial planning perspective, the challenge was that the current capacity was \$72 million using 9% of the 10% policy, but it could not be utilized due to affordability. This number would change over time, and it was essential to consider the ongoing debt service requirements.

Mr. Bowman stated that additionally, major projects, such as the high school, as an example, would require significantly more funding, potentially exceeding the current capacity. If the Board sought to pursue a transformational investment, it would require alternative options. The considerations included the impact on future flexibility, how related operating costs were planned for, and the County's ability to execute. To address these challenges, he had prepared five options for discussion, which were not recommendations and would require multi-year implementation.

Mr. Bowman explained that these options aimed to spark a discussion on managing the long-range challenge and finding ways to address the financial implications. The first step was to emphasize the critical importance of the 1% sales tax referendum, which would generate approximately \$26 million in annual cash, if it existed today. That would be a significant gamechanger in his memory for the County, as it would equate to an \$0.083 increase in the real estate tax rate, which instead would come through sales tax, paid by both local residents and out-of-town visitors.

Mr. Bowman stated that while the current capacity could not support \$200 million in bonds, with an annual revenue of \$26 million, that could be a reserve kept in future years. Considering the "what if" scenario, if the General Assembly approved the bill next year and a local referendum was passed, reasonably collected sales tax and revenue could be allocated in Fiscal Year 28. If this revenue was not spent in a reserve for four years, from FY28 to FY31, by the time FY32 came around, there would be \$115 million in cash available to provide flexibility for future projects. This, however, did not solve the problem and would require discipline to collect and manage public expectations because this would not immediately go back into improvements.

Mr. Bowman said that another scenario to consider was the reprioritization of future revenue growth. Currently, the County's financial policies allocated revenue among public government operations, County government operations, and capital debt, with a formula of 54% for Public School operations, 36% for County government operations, and 10% for joint capital and debt. If the School Board were to reallocate 44% of the revenue growth toward operations and 10% toward school capital and debt, this would have a \$1.9 million impact, requiring a 20-year commitment.

Mr. Bowman said that this decision would come down to the School Board weighing relative operating and capital priorities. If the School Board were to make this decision, it would provide \$23 million for capital projects but would also result in a \$1.9 million reduction in new school operations. This trade-off would be approximately 1% of the school's operating budget. He noted that this was a perspective, not meant to minimize the impact. The schools' staff may consider this trade-off in their long-term planning. He would not expect that to be included in next year's budget, as they were still working on that.

Mr. Bowman stated that if they were to plan for three, four, or five years ahead, perhaps that could be a lever to consider alternative options. However, this alone did not solve the issue. The underlying theme was that they would need to explore multiple options and have time and partnership to implement them. The Board of Supervisors also had the ability to allocate the formula differently in the future, although he wanted to emphasize that this was not a suggestion to revisit the policy, as the Board had reaffirmed and updated it just last month.

Mr. Bowman stated that another key strategy was investing one-time money, whether it was from unexpected revenues, savings, or putting it into the CIP to build up cash reserves or pay down existing debt. Over the last five years, the Board of Supervisors had committed approximately \$34 million, and the schools had contributed as well. This was one reason why they saw a CIP that could do more than they could historically.

Mr. Bowman said Option C involved taking a closer look at reallocation of existing projects in the CIP. This was not an easy task, but it was a possibility. For example, the ongoing programs in the northern feeder pattern had \$20 million allocated for school renovations over the next four years. He said that if the School Board's priorities were to change, that money could be redirected to a different source or put on hold while they evaluated other questions.

Mr. Bowman said another option was to slow down the rate of implementation before or after the CIP, giving themselves some breathing room as they implemented a large project. This was not about stopping but rather slowing down to give themselves some flexibility.

Mr. Bowman said third, evaluating unused parcels for the highest and best use was another strategy. He said both the Board of Supervisors and the School Board had properties that could be repurposed. He said that for instance, the Board had donated a property to the School Board in 2019, which reduced costs. There may be County-owned properties that could be repurposed as future school sites or properties owned by the schools that were not currently being used for a future school with a

different purpose, such as housing or economic development. He was not suggesting any particular parcel or recommendation; these were some of the partnership discussions that began when they had clarity on priorities and that would take time.

Mr. Bowman stated that finally, property taxes provided an additional perspective. The change in the tax rate, which the Board had implemented last year, provided \$3.1 million for real estate and \$100,000 for personal property. These numbers would be updated in the upcoming budget. He noted that the change in tax base was about making investments differently, restoring economic development strategies, and other initiatives to alleviate pressure on the residential tax base.

Mr. Bowman said that to justify a school CIP request of this magnitude, it would likely require a combination of several options, including time, multi-year planning, and a strong partnership. This topic would be part of a broader, long-term discussion, whether it occurred within this meeting or as part of the Board's multi-year planning.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley said that she appreciated the options presented by Mr. Bowman, which also indicated the Board needed to work more with the School Board to work through this information and consider their options. She said that they would need to be creative and think outside of the box to determine what was possible.

Mr. Pruitt stated that he first saw this information two days ago, which was why he emphasized and would reiterate that he did not see how this could currently be possible. He said that the path forward would not be options A, B, or C; it was all of them. If they put their debt spending to its limits, they still had an existing \$150 million in projects. He said that implementing the largest tax rate increase they had seen in a generation would mostly affect lower-income people. He said that while he supported the tax, he wanted to ensure it was not free money and would mostly fall on working-class people, and it still would not close the tax gap.

Mr. Pruitt said that implementing that and not spending it until FY31 would also not close the gap. If they reprogrammed every other priority, it still would not close the gap. He said the gulf of the gap was substantial, and they were struggling to address it. He said that he could understand why members of the School Board might find a \$23 million reduction in their new operating costs almost untenable. He said that the Board was grappling with four challenges simultaneously, which was why he believed something needed to be radically rethought.

Mr. Pruitt said that they could address these issues, but the strain on their available resources would be extraordinary. He said that he was not suggesting that he had the solution, but his frustration stemmed from the fact that they had just topped out a very large school that was not meeting this specific need, and now he was being asked to do something he literally could not do. He said that he was unsure how the School Division would grapple with that, but that was the issue he saw. He said that there were no students in that new school yet.

Ms. McKeel stated that building a new high school was currently beyond their capabilities. She said that she believed that there was time to explore options. She said that the School Board and the Board of Supervisors would need to work together to address this issue. She said that it began with reaching out to the Weldon Cooper Center with the right questions and gathering information about their future growth and its impact on schools. This may lead them to discover whether or not they truly needed a new high school. She said that was a starting point, and they had time to conduct thorough research and determine the appropriate action.

Ms. McKeel said that she was not sure what that would be, but she believed looking at their projected school and population growth would help inform their decisions moving forward. She said that she would like to ask the School Board to remember that when speaking to the public about today's developments, it was essential to avoid finger-pointing. They were all working together to solve these issues, and it was crucial that the public understood that this was a collaborative effort. She was not suggesting that it had happened often, but it was essential that they avoid laying the blame with either Board. She stated that working together to solve this issue would be the most impactful and important to the community.

Mr. Pruitt added that he would also assume that if they executed all parts of this plan, they would still experience significant project overruns because the estimates provided to them were based on the current year's dollars, and this project required them to begin as early as possible in FY31.

Dr. Berlin clarified that inflation was factored into the cost.

Mr. Pruitt stated that the inflation factor was based on their starting on a sooner timeline than what was actually possible.

Mr. Andrews said that Mr. Pruitt was assuming an inflation rate for the school that exceeded the inflation rate otherwise in real estate taxes and other factors, which may be true, but it was difficult to determine.

Ms. Mallek said that in closing, she would like to refer everyone to Mr. Bowman's second page. She said that for the first 15 years she was on the Board, in the only time they had experienced funding shortfalls, the only thing that was still funded was the schools. They were finally catching up on the other responsibilities of the Board, and she wanted everyone to be aware of this. She said that she would also

like to draw attention to the \$100 million in extra transfers provided to schools since FY18, because she had heard from community members that the School Board had indicated the Board had not given them what was necessary.

Ms. Mallek stated that working together did not mean that everyone would get everything they wanted; instead, it must mean answering the questions asked today and filling the information gaps raised today. She said that another point for context was that the school buses were taken out of the school budget in 2010 or 2011 and included in the CIP. She stated that she had not supported it at the time, but it was initially assured that state funding would maintain that cost, but now it was \$5 million out of the local government side. Out of the 40% of the new revenue for the County government came the money for the CIP, which was the source of her frustration.

Ms. Mallek stated that she would like to inquire about the status of the Northern Convenience Center, which has undergone extensive planning, design, and approval. She said that it sounded as though it was being reconsidered due to concerns about having a recycling center located near a school. She said that she would appreciate clarification on this matter, as they had invested 15 years in efforts to bring that project to fruition and were now at a point where it was ready to move forward.

Mr. Gallaway asked if staff had a way to theorize how, at the end of the year, if they ran a surplus, they could use those to offset some costs. He asked if the math did not change because it would come from surplus instead of operating.

Mr. Bowman confirmed that was correct; the strategy of the second option would be to use year-end funding for most of the \$34 million.

Mr. Gallaway said that they often committed those dollars before they even reached the year. He said that this led him to consider a strategy that could involve capping the amount of surplus funds that could be allocated to the CIP. He said that for example, if they allocated a certain percentage of surplus funds, such as 10%, to the CIP for a certain amount of years, it could provide a more stable option. This approach would not necessarily trade operating dollars for CIP, as it would be one-time money. If they were to allocate the first 10% of any surplus, both sides would likely commit to going to the CIP. He said that he was curious to explore what this strategy might turn into.

Mr. Bowman replied that a scenario could be developed to walk through the implications with both County government and schools.

Mr. Gallaway said that the other explanation he found difficult to understand was related to debt service, which could fluctuate due to the timing of previous projects. He said that even if no new projects were undertaken, the capacity to borrow could change over time. He said that for instance, last year, they had capacity if they allocated 9% of surplus funds to the CIP, but this year it was \$72 million. He said that he was still struggling to grasp how this played out year over year. He said that if they were to hold off on new projects, he wondered what happened five or six years. He asked if it was possible to theorize what the capacity might look like in year three or four with that \$72 million.

Mr. Bowman said that they could provide an example of what that would look like. He said that it would require a significant change to alter that over time. He said that there were none on the horizon, but if there arose an opportunity to refinance, the County would take advantage of that as they looked at debt and other strategies within the confines of responsible financial management. They could look at a hypothetical scenario of what additional capacity that could create based on what Mr. Gallaway had described.

Mr. Gallaway said that he was wondering if they just did not do a project one year it would result in additional capacity the next year, but he understood it may not play out exactly that way.

Mr. Bowman answered that it could create one-time capacity, but it would require major change to push something out of the five-year picture and create that space.

Mr. Gallaway asked if Mr. Bowman would consider digging into that as part of their budget discussions, more so to understand the logistics rather than as a primary option. He said that he also wanted to make a comment on the highest and best use of properties because there was an example discussed as part of the rezoning of Southwood Phase 2. He explained that the rezoning of Southwood Phase 2 presented an opportunity where a site was proffered for the schools in that phase. The School Division had a deadline of 2027 to make a decision on this site, after which it would revert back to the developer.

Mr. Gallaway stated that he brought this up because they had previously discussed the terms of the property purchase, and he believed they had locked in the developer's plans for the property at a price of \$620,000. He said that if the School Division decided they no longer needed the site, they would likely use it to develop more units. This was where those who had made the decision at the time were concerned, as it would otherwise provide approximately 50 affordable houses. In his opinion, the affordable units would be a more suitable use for the land than the school, especially if the School Division did not see it as a prime site for a school. This was an example of how these situations played out. He said that this land required a decision by a certain date due to the expiration of the proffer, unlike the other sites they may be considering.

Dr. Acuff said that this was an issue in terms of communication. She said that she was aware that

they had conversations earlier on with the developer about whether they wanted to locate a school site there, but the time horizon did not work out.

Mr. Gallaway said that the site itself was not ideal. He said that however, the School Division now had some new priorities the site could be used for. He said that this did raise the question of what the School Division's highest and best use for the site would be. He said that the County had already identified their highest and best use for the site as affordable housing units, but they could still come together and compare which option might be most effective. He added that the Board just had a conversation with their state legislators, and he appreciated how certain issues could intersect and impact one another.

Mr. Gallaway stated that it was Ms. McKeel who was pressing the issue of sunset provisions on developments again. He said that if a development was approved 20 years ago, it was approved at a different impact on schools than what the current impact was. If they waited 20 years to build it and then built it in 2026 after sitting idle for so long, it could catch them off guard. He said that this was a way in which old developments could have that effect. He brought this up to say that, for everyone, when considering what they advocated for and trying to get their state and federal legislators to support, the sunset provision would be a huge help to the County.

Mr. Gallaway said that it would allow them to predict what was coming out of developments and impacts, and also reset it, because if the approval sunsets it must come back before them, and they could reconsider what the current day impacts were. He said that this provision could have a significant impact on all of them and was relevant to what they had discussed.

Ms. McKeel noted that ultimately, if the General Assembly were to adopt that approach, it would not incur any additional costs for any levels of government. She said that it would simply be a sunset provision, and she thought it would be a great addition to their legislative packet.

Mr. Andrews said that he would like to review Option E as presented by Mr. Bowman. He said that he agreed with the comments made and would appreciate any feedback the School Board may have at this time. However, he suggested that this item be discussed further and brought back to them. He said that one aspect that he found particularly concerning was the change in composition of the tax base, which was not quantified.

Mr. Andrews said that this troubled him because they had referred to AstraZeneca's presence as a gamechanger in terms of their tax base composition, but it was important to consider the potential impact of 600 jobs versus 3,000 add-on jobs, and where these individuals would reside. This uncertainty could lead to unforeseen consequences, and he believed it was essential to gain a better understanding of how AstraZeneca's presence would affect their community. He did not want them to think that one company would take care of all their problems and there needed to be a better understanding of the true impacts of that development. He said that it bothered him when they did not consider all the related trade-offs that came with industrial development.

Dr. Acuff thanked the Supervisors for all of their input. She acknowledged that this was a significant ask, and she wanted to assure them that her intention was not to create an adversarial atmosphere. What she had heard was that they needed to revisit their plans and gather data so that both boards could feel confident about supporting the high school. She agreed with Mr. Pruitt's comments that even with these proposed changes, it may still not be feasible. She believed they needed to take a closer look at this as a School Board and reevaluate their approach; as she saw it, one crucial piece of data they needed was proof of concept for the center model.

Dr. Acuff stated that as they celebrated their topping-out ceremony, it was an exciting new space that would help alleviate their capacity issues. In her view, she thought it was essential that they consider having a high school in the northern feeder pattern at some point. They needed another one, although she was willing to consider additional data to verify this. She also thought they needed to discuss the potential of modifying their CIP request. She had been persuaded that the timeline needed to be rethought, and she would like to get the data that the Board had suggested as part of both boards' due diligence.

Dr. Acuff stated that she appreciated the comments and apologized if the introduction of the new high school concept was too abrupt, but she understood the surprise. She explained that they had received a lot of feedback from the community about the need for a new high school, but she thought they needed to document it further. Her colleagues may disagree with her, and they would need to have a more in-depth discussion at their next School Board meeting. She hoped that they could continue to work together in a collaborative manner, using the Supervisors' expertise to help them find solutions to their high school capacity issues.

Dr. Berlin said that she had been on the School Board for two years and had not had the opportunity to have in-depth discussions like this. She said they had done more educational and strategic planning meetings, so the next step they should make was for the incoming chairs and clerks to work out a schedule for planning work sessions and analyzing the data together. She said that she wanted to ensure they were learning together as they worked through the process.

Mr. Andrews said that he would not be present, but he believed that they would have a work session in the spring that addressed this portion of the budget.

Mr. Gallaway commented that the request for the new high school triggered the conversation around gathering data, but the need for data went beyond a justification for a project. He said that the data could inform school development in general, urban parks, and other projects in the community. He said that he did not want anyone to think it was simply to justify the need for the high school. They needed nuanced and more granular data for a variety of things that affected the schools and the County government.

Ms. Mallek said that she had learned over many years that when it came to word choice, she needed to pay attention to them. She said that to her, it was very important that they avoided saying they were going to get data to support a high school. Instead, they were going to get data to understand what the data was and then use that to determine where it was going. She said that to state that they were seeking data to justify their plans rather than objective facts was not an appropriate method.

Ms. McKeel said that Ms. Mallek made a good point. She noted that they referenced Fairfax County often, but that County had 200 schools. She said that they hired a consultant group every 10 to 15 years to prioritize their CIP projects because they knew they could not handle it on their own. She was not suggesting that Albemarle adopt that approach, but part of that agreement was that they had the Board of Supervisors and the School Board on record stating that they would maintain that prioritization and would not let public pressure or politics influence it. If they were to change that, it would undermine the entire process.

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**Recess.** The Board adjourned its meeting at 4:16 p.m. and reconvened at 4:28 p.m.

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Agenda Item No. 4. Closed Meeting.

At 4:28 p.m., Mr. Pruitt **moved** that the Board go into Closed Meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A) of the Code of Virginia:

- Under subsection (1) to discuss and consider the annual performance of the County Executive.

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

AYES: Mr. Andrews, Mr. Gallaway, Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley, Ms. Mallek, Ms. McKeel, and Mr. Pruitt.  
NAYS: None.

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Agenda Item No. 5. Certify Closed Meeting.

At 5:31 p.m., Mr. Pruitt **moved** that the Board of Supervisors certify by a recorded vote that, to the best of each supervisor's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the closed meeting, were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting.

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

AYES: Mr. Andrews, Mr. Gallaway, Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley, Ms. Mallek, Ms. McKeel, and Mr. Pruitt.  
NAYS: None.

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Agenda Item No. 6. Boards and Commissions.  
Item No. 6.a. Vacancies and Appointments.

Ms. McKeel **moved** that the Board make the following appointments to Boards and Commissions:

- **Reappointed** Mr. William "Rex" Linville to the Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority (ACEA), with said term to expire on December 13, 2028.
- **Appointed** Ms. Emily Logan 5th & Avon Community Advisory Committee, with said term to expire on September 30, 2027.
- **Reappointed** Mr. John P. Moore to the Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority (ACEA), with said term to expire on December 13, 2028.

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

AYES: Mr. Andrews, Mr. Gallaway, Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley, Ms. Mallek, Ms. McKeel, and Mr. Pruitt.  
NAYS: None.

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Non-Agenda Item. Motion to Authorize the Chair to Enter an Addendum to the Second Amended County Executive Employment Agreement.

Ms. McKeel **moved** that the Board authorize the Chair to enter an addendum to the Second Amended County Executive Employment Agreement.

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

AYES: Mr. Andrews, Mr. Gallaway, Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley, Ms. Mallek, Ms. McKeel, and Mr. Pruitt.  
NAYS: None.

**On File in the Clerk's Office.**

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Agenda Item No. 7. Adjourn.

At 5:33 p.m., the Board adjourned its meeting to December 3, 2025, 6:00 p.m. in Lane Auditorium, Albemarle County Office Building, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA, 22902.

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Chair

Approved by Board
Date: 03/04/2026
Initials: CKB