

March 16, 2021

Robert W. Warren, Chairman
Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Pittsylvania, Virginia
1 Center Street
Chatham, Virginia 24531

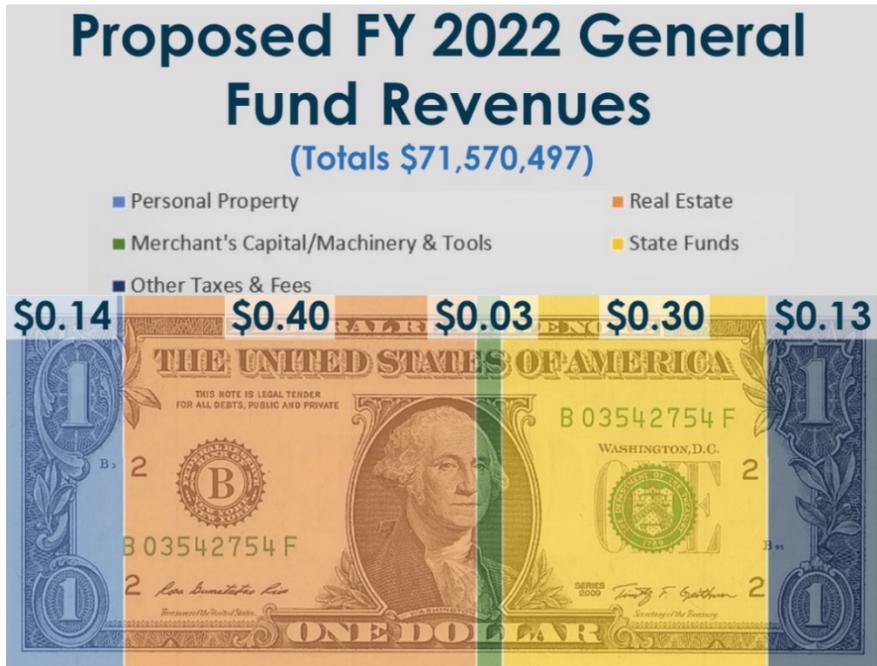
Re: FY 2021-22 Budget Message

Dear Chairman Warren and Honorable Supervisors:

Presented herewith, in accordance with Virginia Code 15.2-1541 and 15.2-2503, is the FY 2021-22 budget for the County of Pittsylvania, Virginia. This \$211,321,028 budget is \$25,204,499 more than the FY2021 budget of \$186,116,529, most of which is State and Federal Funds. The General Fund budget of \$71,570,497 is supported by a proposed real estate tax rate of \$0.62 per \$100, which is identical to the prior year rate. Other than updates to the County's fee schedule, there are no tax rate increases proposed herewith.

The FY2022 proposed budget does realize revenue growth of \$1,654,745 due largely to a robust Local Sales Tax climate (\$285,802) and increased Personal Property (\$1,252,156) revenue. Revenue growth has been quite small during this four (4) year reassessment cycle, falling below our conservative estimates of FY2018. However, it appears that higher consumer activity due to Federal stimulus payments and better point-of-delivery sales tax collection methods are contributing to unanticipated revenue growth in these two categories.

The FY2022 budget requires a minimum fund balance contribution of \$159,824; Personal Property revenue growth is sufficient to cover significant cost increases. Significant General Fund expenses budgeted herewith include \$507,772 for the County's Virginia Retirement System (VRS) required contribution, \$207,000 for the final phase of salary increases for the Sheriff and Jail Departments, and \$242,595 for Reassessment.



More than half (57%) of the FY2022 proposed budget is utilized for Education and Public Safety functions, while 14% of the total is earmarked for debt retirement.

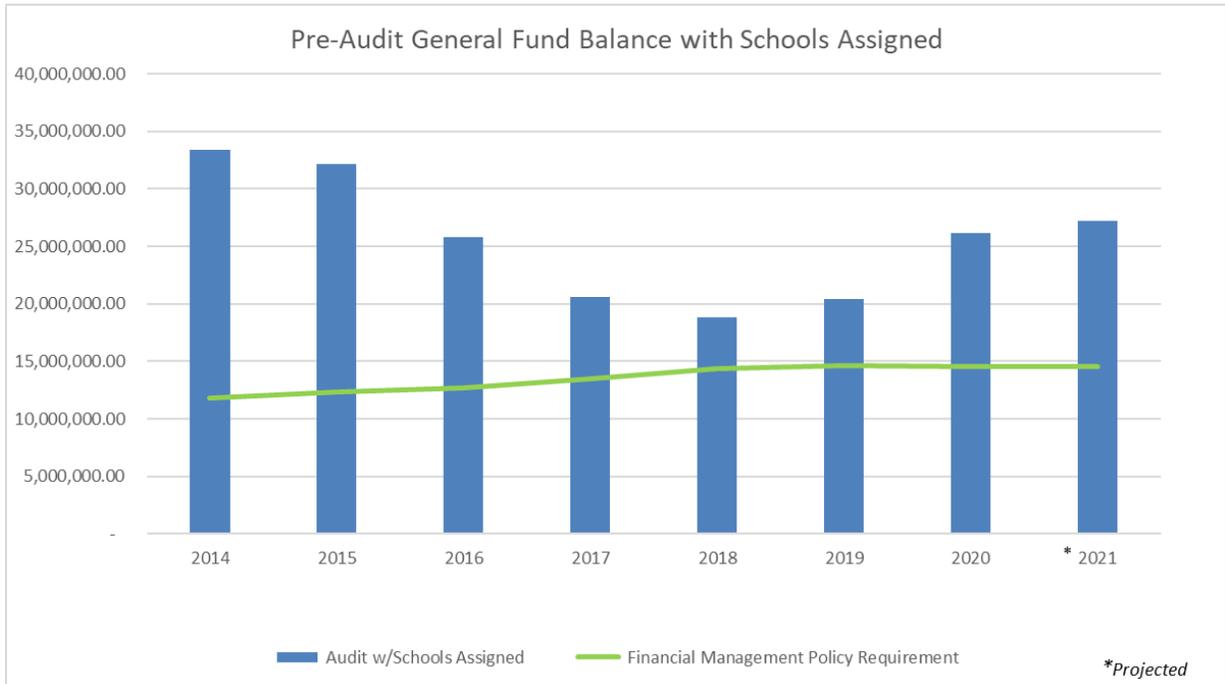


A financially healthy local government of Pittsylvania’s size should have an unrestricted General Fund balance around 20% of annual operating cost. On June 30, 2020, the County’s Unassigned

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Fund Balance stood at a healthy \$26,177,140 balance as shown in the chart below. This shows that our fund balance is well above the Board’s fund balance policy. This policy requires that the County have at least 20% of the previous 3-year average expenses in the bank and available for appropriation. Based on the FY2018-20 audits, there should be \$14,522,374 available.

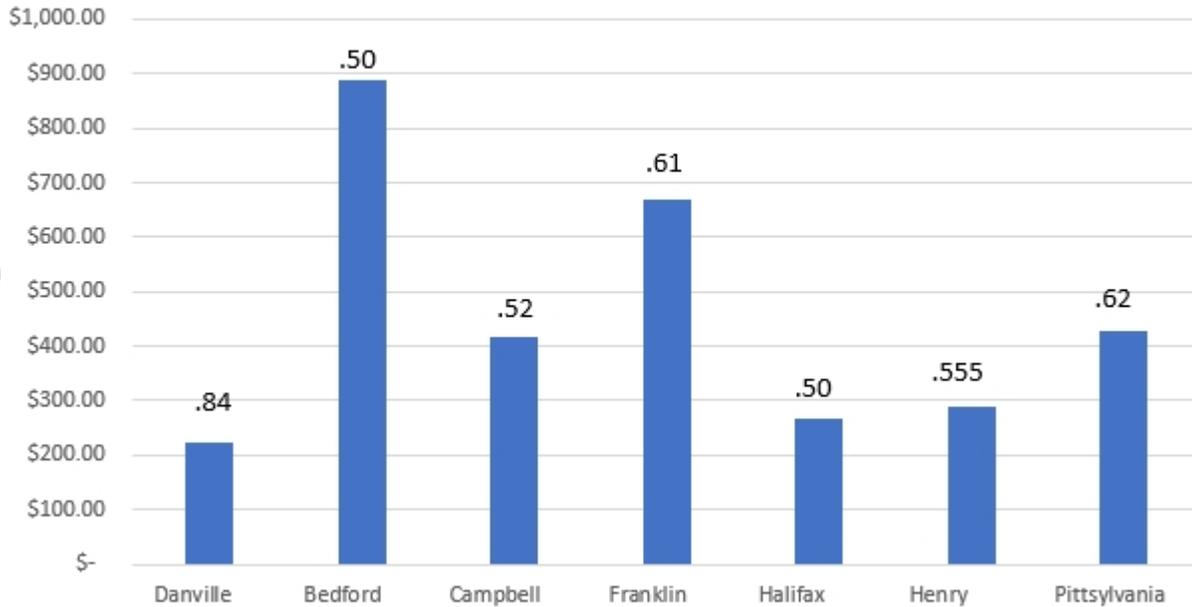


County Administration’s goal three years ago was to create a financial plan that would carry the County through the four-year reassessment cycle without the need for revenue rate increases. This budget fails to realize that goal. Annual revenue has not kept pace with expenses, particularly as it relates to Economic Development and personnel. While the County full-time workforce has decreased by six (6) employees since 2017 (273 to 267), related expenses (salary, retirement, insurance, etc.) have increased \$1,054,385.

This time next year the Board will have received the reassessment results and will contemplate an appropriate tax rate for the following four-year cycle. County Administration, in partnership with the Board’s financial advisor, has adopted a modeling tool that should help develop the financial forecasts necessary to set an appropriate tax rate to sustain operations until the next reassessment. We believe that significant revenue increases will be necessary.

Pittsylvania continues to be among the lowest taxed areas in Virginia and in the United States; there are only 10 states that have a lower tax burden than Virginia. While Pittsylvania has a higher tax rate than a few area Counties, the real estate tax burden on Pittsylvania citizens is often less than our neighbors. Unlike the others below, Pittsylvania County deferred \$3.5M in revenue to the Agricultural Land Use Program, more than nearly every locality in Virginia. Halifax County does not have a similar program at all.

Real Estate Per Penny Amounts



The FY2022 proposed budget certainly does not address all the needs and desires of Department Directors or the Board. Below are unfunded requests that the Finance Committee may wish to consider; however, it is understood that proceeding with the below funding may require a fund balance contribution or commensurate expenditure reduction.

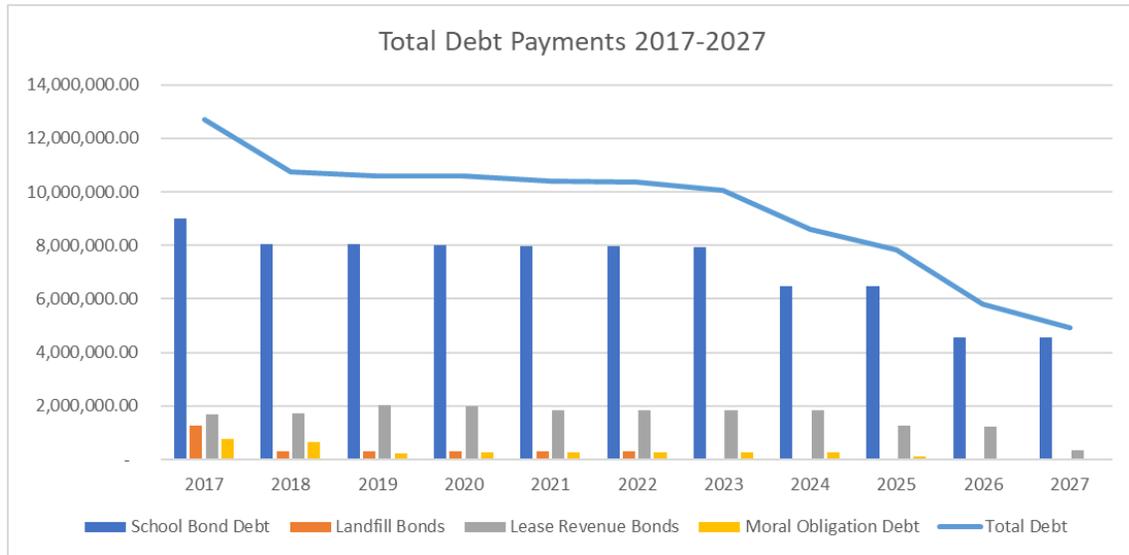
BJA Bulletproof Vests	9,875.00
Circuit Court Clerk Position+Benefits	44,336.00
Jail-1 Van and 1 Explorer	78,750.00
School's increased Contribution	830,648.00
Treasurer's Office-Legal for Tax Sales	20,000.00
Jail Part-time Salary and Fringes	56,875.00
TOTAL	1,040,484.00

The County continues to faithfully retire debt incurred after the 2007 \$70 Million high school and 2001 \$39M middle school construction bond referendums. We have paid down \$55M of school debt since 2016, the last year of paying only interest on the 2007 Bond issuance. Despite an average annual payment of approximately \$8 Million, there will still be \$45.2M outstanding at year-end. These obligations will be satisfied in FY2031. Regardless, the County has plenty of debt capacity; \$153.8 Million according to the 3% threshold stipulated in its financial policies. This policy states that outstanding General Fund Debt as a percentage of the estimated market value of all taxable property (real and personal) in the County should not exceed 3%. The following chart illustrates outstanding debt obligations and the effect on debt

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capacity. School debt retirement accounts for 11% of the presented FY2022 General Fund budget.



This budget does continue the County’s multi-year effort to increase the County’s educational per-pupil contribution above its third-from-the-bottom rank of 2017. Over the past four years the Board of Supervisors has improved per-pupil funding to \$9,931, ranked 122 of 132 Virginia School Divisions. We propose herewith a \$250,000 increase to the County’s \$19,736,709 local appropriation, bringing the County’s four-year increased investment in school operations to \$2,500,000.

THE STATE OF THE COUNTY

The COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges this past year, beginning with the Board’s adoption of the FY2021 budget. The County struggled to secure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as we scrambled to consider how the unknown year ahead would affect finances. It wasn’t until the receipt of CARES-Act funding in June and a Fall review of Local Sales Tax receipts were we assured that the County would be financially whole.

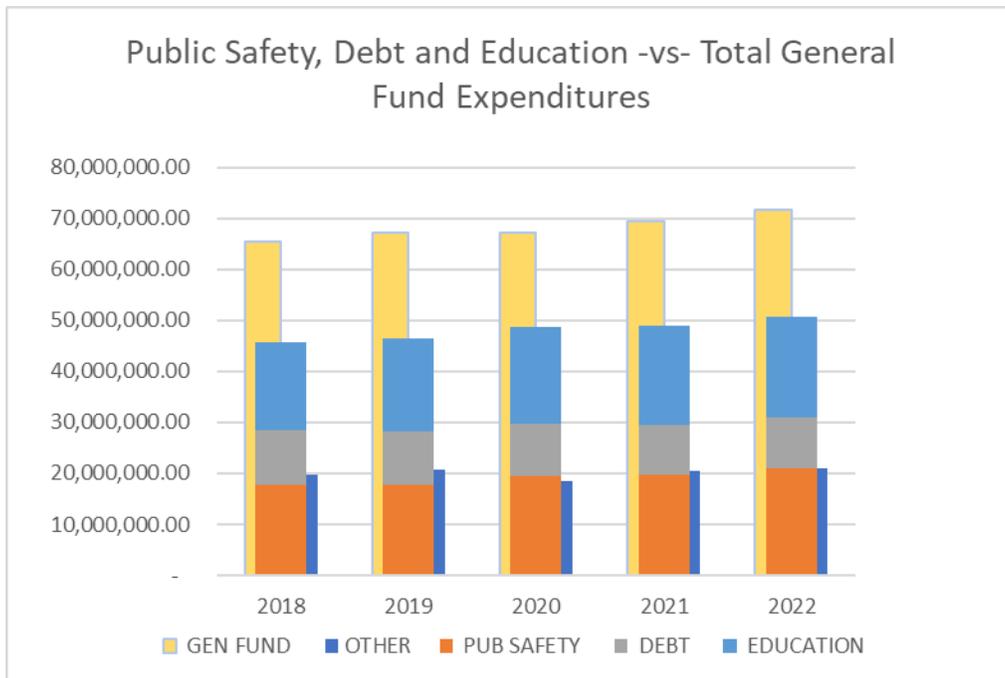
The Board of Supervisors wisely used its CARES Act proceeds not only for pandemic response but to advance strategic priorities. It purchased durable goods, constructed an EMS station, invested in technology advancements, and improved volunteer public safety agency preparedness. At the conclusion of calendar year 2020 the County finds itself in a good position organizationally and in terms of revenue integrity.

Real Estate Reassessment is presently underway. This State mandated effort to market adjust and equalize property values should reflect an across the board increase. The real estate

market is strong and new construction permits are at a high point of the past 10 years. Preliminary data indicates value increases above 10% on average. For comparison, the 2018 reassessment saw an average increase of 6.68%. The Board engaged a new assessment firm, Brightminds, LLC, to conduct a thorough review of all real property.

The 2019 reassessment left much to be desired for the Board. There were widespread complaints of inaccurate listings, incomplete site inspections and unequal application of value. Brightminds utilizes drones to review and measure structures which will hopefully provide a more thorough report of value later this year. Significant tax base growth will certainly help in next year’s tax rate adjustment.

Tax revenue growth has failed to keep pace with the Board’s continued investment in public safety services. This budget does fully fund Phase III of the Sheriff’s Department pay study implementation plan and includes a no-less-than 5% pay increase for all law enforcement officers. The County’s emphasis on volunteer agency, law enforcement and EMS improvements has outpaced investments in other General Fund activities.



Last year we implemented a standardized employee performance development and evaluation program that aligns performance criteria with organizational values. Employees were eligible for a 3% or 5% salary increase based upon individual performance. The Sheriff’s Department will become eligible for the program in FY2023.

We not only desire to appropriately incent and compensate our employees but also care about their health and happiness. Although COVID-19 prevented us from holding our twice per year all employee meetings, we continue to work on workplace satisfaction and wellness. One of the Board’s 2021 priorities is to improve employee wellness; this budget furthers the goal by

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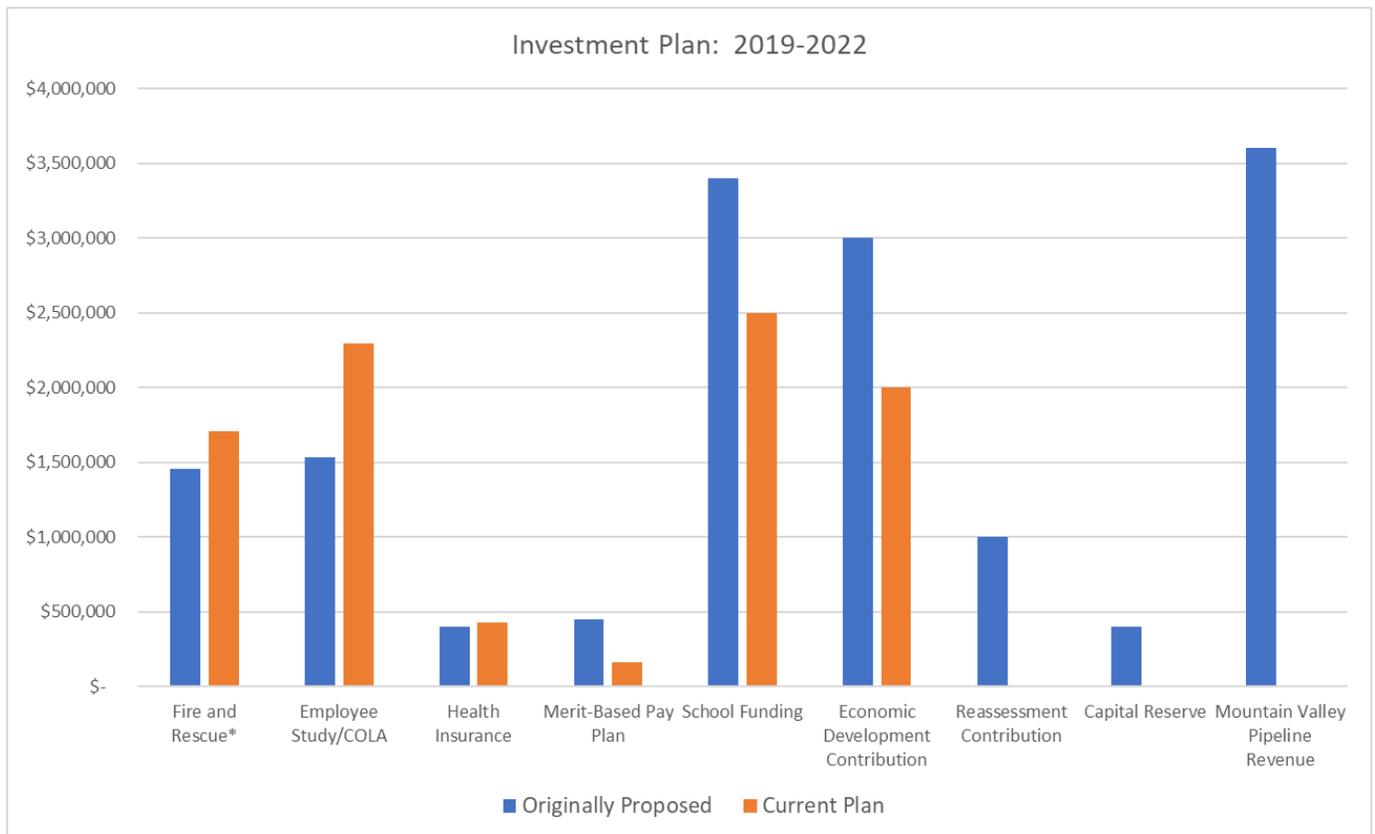
increasing the employer HSA contribution from \$500 to \$800 and establishes a \$10,000 budget to begin active wellness programming.

Our Human Resources focus, led by HR Manager Holly Stanfield, is paying big dividends - we're hiring high-quality employees that contribute to an improved atmosphere and overall achievement. On January 1st we reorganized to accommodate recent retirements and a new emphasis on information management. Investments in Geographic Information System (GIS) and data management necessitate focus on our business processes to ensure we can efficiently provide future government services. GIS applications will provide better business insights particularly for the Public Safety, Law Enforcement, Public Works and Community Development departments and will provide useful data for citizen communications.

The Board's 2020 priority of improving citizen communications by hiring a Public Relations Manager has been fully implemented and is achieving great success. We now have a weekly radio program, a podcast, regular Facebook communications, live streaming of meetings and digital message boards in County facilities. Soon we will have digital message boards at several Convenience Centers. Citizen communication, education and transparency continue to be paramount in all government activities.

CARES-Act funds were utilized to renovate the old Social Services building on Depot Street as the new modern and accessible Elections and Training Center, which will provide a location for early voting, storage of voting machines as well as a much needed employee training room. The 2020 early voting activities were housed at the Olde Dominion Agriculture Center at a cost of \$12,600. The new training room will also accommodate Board of Supervisors work sessions, staff meetings, Fire and Rescue meetings, the Industrial Facilities Authority, and will serve as the official secure County records storage site.

This presented budget continues portions of the four-year funding plan outlined in FY2019. Generally, obligations related to school funding, employee compensation and Fire & Rescue services remain largely intact; however, projections for reserve and economic development contributions, and Mountain Valley Pipeline proceeds have been compromised. A revised four-year projection is provided below.



**Does not include capital investments of \$1,587,500*

Our initial plan to sustain operational, capital and reserve investments are not to be fully realized. There are several areas we must work to improve in the FY2023 budget:

1. The Economic Development Fund will receive no net contribution increase in FY2022. A return to a minimum \$500,000 contribution is necessary.
2. Continued increases for School Division operations will be necessary unless expenses are reduced. This budget proposes only a \$250,000 increase; a \$1.08M increase was requested.
3. Fund balance contributions are necessary to return financial strength to the 2014 level
4. Capital reserves are insufficient to avoid the year-to-year appropriation cycle that strains operational budgets

We continue to seek appropriate monetization opportunities for the County’s greatest fiscal asset, the Dry Fork Landfill, which was returned to an Enterprise Fund in FY2019. Deputy County Administrator Richard Hicks has successfully transformed the operation into a business unit and profit center for our citizens. County Administration will continue to bring proposals that produce profit at the landfill so that we can reduce our residential customers’ cost.

The Sheriff's Department implemented a leasing program for procuring patrol vehicles. County staff supports this plan – it helped us cycle in 26 new vehicles in FY2021. While we are not planning to add new vehicles to the inventory in FY2022, we pledge to work with the Sheriff's team to develop a detailed vehicle replacement plan to help plan future vehicle capital needs.

The School Division announced \$45M of capital needs to maintain and renovate many facilities, including the County's Elementary Schools. A borrowing of this size would require an annual debt service appropriation equal to an estimated 5-cents of the real estate tax rate. The School Board recently informed the Board of Supervisors that it would like referendum approval to add 1% to the local sales tax rate for school capital needs. This additional sales tax is estimated to produce \$3.2M annually, which should be sufficient to fund the school's capital request without a real estate tax increase.

Pittsylvania County continues to attract a large number of utility scale solar projects. Currently there are approximately 11,781 acres of permitted installations; the Community Development Department reports that there are approximately 5250 acres of additional permits anticipated. These significant projects are changing the county and removing productive agricultural land from the landscape. The Board increased permit fees for utility scale solar projects from \$195 to \$5,000 in the FY2021 budget. The Commissioner of Revenue is unable at this time to provide an estimate of additional tax revenue that we may realize from these anticipated solar projects

FY2021 OVERVIEW

The General Fund base budget for FY2022 is approximately \$25,204,499 more than the adopted FY2021 budget. It fully funds a 1.4% Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) for all Personnel Policy-covered employees, and \$89,000 for performance-based raises. There are three new full time positions proposed in this budget. The first position has been budgeted for 6mos. for the Gretna Library Branch when renovations are complete. The other 2 positions are full-time deputies to staff the Courthouse Security Scanner.

The budget is balanced with a one-time \$600,000 contribution from the Solid Waste Fund as repayment for General Fund costs incurred in previous years. We anticipated an annual tax payment of \$1.2M from Mountain Valley Pipeline beginning two years prior, and there's still no known date by which the project will be complete. The MVP Mainline and Southgate projects will be game changers for Pittsylvania County when completed; these are anticipated to produce up to \$2M annually in tax payments.

The Administrator's proposed budget also provides a \$300,012 contingency budget for unknown expenses and grant matches. Potential use of this contingency budget could include an increase contribution to School Division operations, purchase of new Jail transport vehicles

and increased support for the Treasurer's delinquent tax collection efforts. Please be aware that additional fund balance appropriation may be required if the Board desires to fund items not included in this proposal.

Frustratingly, the General Assembly approved an across the board 5% increase for all Comp-Board supported positions. The mandate is unfair and counterproductive for Pittsylvania County as that we are in the midst of major pay adjustments in the Sheriff's Department. The mandate does not consider the on-average 5.75% increase that we provided in the past budget; therefore, creating inequities and salary compression.

To minimize the impacts of this action, we will adjust the Phase III pay study implementation upward to satisfy the 5% minimum requirement, but will not include affected Constitutional Office employees in future COLA adjustments until the 5% is "recouped" and parity is regained within the County-wide pay system. The Comp Board system continues to cause more problems than it solves. It far from fully funds competitive wages, requiring local supplement to equalize with market conditions. It is suggested that the Board's future legislative goals agenda advocate for the elimination of the Comp Board system and that State support be provided by way of block grant.

This proposed budget does not fund any new law enforcement vehicles and reduces appropriations for volunteer agency capital apparatus support. We will utilize FY2021 carryover funds to fully account for two new fire trucks but will not fund any ambulances this year. The Board may wish to fund two new Jail transport vehicles as outlined in the contingency list.

We still need to explore all options for courthouse security. This \$177,000 FY21 expense has exhausted the courthouse security fund's ability and must be paid for by General Fund tax revenue. Currently, the courthouse entrance is staffed with off-duty deputies at a \$30/hour rate. This budget proposes to discontinue this practice and instead provide two new positions in the Jail Department to fund full time scanner attendants, realizing \$68,000 in annual savings.

Final committed contributions for Gretna Library renovation and Wayside Park improvements are not included in this proposal but will be satisfied by FY2021 carryover. We have included additional Library funding for one full time and one part time position at the Gretna Library once renovations are complete

This budget marks the County's full incorporation of the Pittsylvania County Service Authority (PCSA) as the water and sewer division of Pittsylvania County Public Works Department. While water and sewer are still accounted in a separate enterprise fund, the PCSA entity (and identity) will no longer exist effective July 1, 2021.

SCHOOL DIVISION FUNDING

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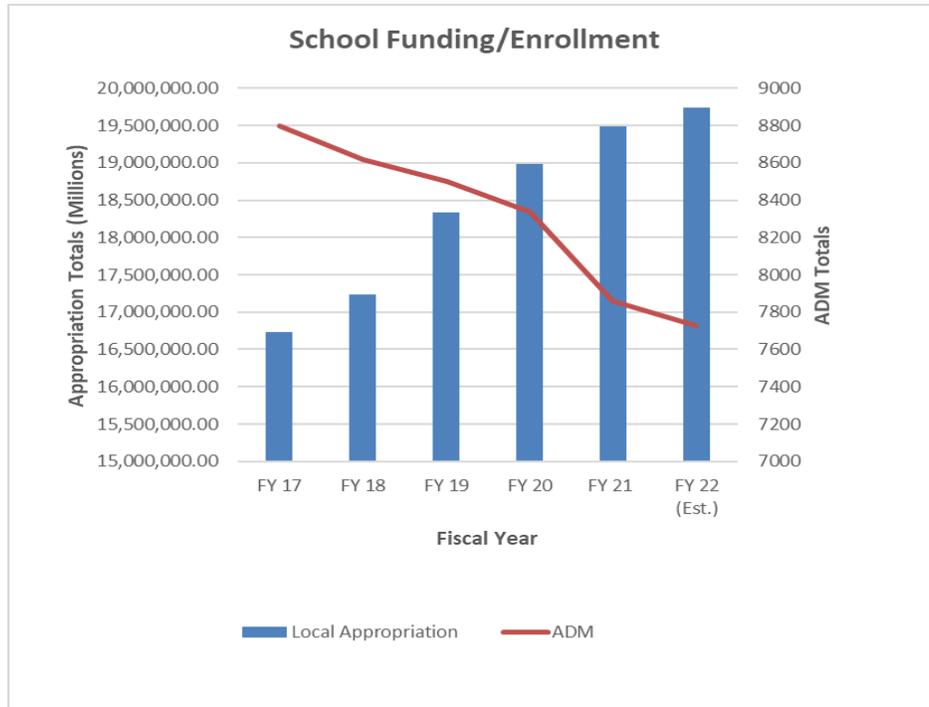
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The FY2021 adopted budget does not achieve our previously stated school funding goal. In FY2019 we adopted a plan that would see a \$20,136,709 appropriation in FY2022; this proposed budget falls \$600,000 short of the goal. The FY 2022 budget proposes only a \$250,000 increase over the FY2021 appropriation. The School Board requested \$20,567,357; this proposal contains \$19,736,709 for the School Division. If approved as proposed, the Board of Supervisors will have increased School Division funding by \$2,500,000 over the past four budgets.

Fiscal Year	FY19 Plan	FY20 Proposed
2022	\$20,136,709	\$19,736,709
2021	\$19,536,709	\$19,486,709
2020	\$18,936,709	\$18,836,709
2019	\$18,336,709	\$18,336,709
2018	\$17,236,709*	\$17,236,709*
2017	\$16,736,709	\$16,736,709
2016	\$16,910,298	\$16,910,298
2015	\$16,482,595	\$16,482,595
2014	\$15,979,601	\$15,979,601

**required \$500K reversion*

There is great empathy for the School Division’s current funding challenges; however, the School Division continues to lose student population. The Average Daily Membership (ADM), which determines State-level funding, has been reduced by 1,072.20 students or 12% over the past 6 years, while County funding has increased \$3,000,000 or 17.9% over the same period. As approximately 75% of school expenses are salaries, the school board may need to consider efficiency measures including school closure to reduce reliance on local funding.



PUBLIC SAFETY

The Fire and Rescue Commission recently completed its first year providing guidance and oversight of the County’s volunteer emergency response agencies. It made great strides in several areas, including:

1. Revised annual service agreement
2. Established universal equipment standards
3. Established minimum training standards for agency Chiefs and Captains
4. Created a new agency funding formula heavily weighted on calls for service
5. Improved response rate of underperforming Rescue agencies
6. Started working on the “One Service, One Team” systemwide strategic plan

During FY2021 we implemented the County’s first paid ambulance service with three (3) staffed ambulances and one (1) Quick Response Vehicle (QRV); the QRV is stationed in the Banister District and provides 13 hours of service daily. We also were able to purchase four ambulances for our volunteer agencies and one for the County’s Public Safety Department using CARES Act funds, which greatly advanced the County’s emergency fleet.

FY2021 saw the first annual service payment for the County’s E911 radio system at a cost of \$295,778. The Board’s Finance Committee challenged staff to consider alternate means for maintenance of this equipment, including hiring additional employees. Unfortunately, our conversations with the system vendor, Harris Corporation, have realized insufficient savings to supplement maintenance with County staff. Public Safety Director Chris Slep will continue to pursue this initiative and will provide updates to the BOS Finance Committee.

Call volume for both Fire and Rescue service is on pace to increase by 12.5% over FY2020. We receive more and more calls from “frequent fliers” – citizens that don’t need emergency care, but have no other means of receiving assistance. These callers routinely seek assistance with general movement (obesity handicap), minor ailments (fever, infection, injury) or due to alcohol abuse. Chief Slemm is investigating grant opportunities to deploy a Community Paramedic Program to triage these type calls in an effort to reduce ambulance dispatch.

EMS Primary Call Response			
Agency	% Primary Covered FY19	% Primary Covered FY20	% Primary Covered FY21**
Gretna	64	96	99
Chatham	22	59	78
Cool Branch	81	82	85
Bachelors Hall	56	70	73
Blairs	88	94	96
Brosville	94	100	100
Callands	26	42	48
Mt. Hermon	79	80	79
Ringgold	84	91	91
Tunstall	99	99	99
Mt. Cross/Cascade*	33	29	99*
North Halifax	80	72	61
DLSC	98	99	100
640 Comm	37	24	
Total Call Responses	7491	7863	**8848
*Callands data FY21			
**FY21 data annualized from data through 3/2021			

This proposed budget does not increase contributions for emergency apparatus. Chief Slempp's plan was to increase the County's share of capital equipment payment to at least 50%; unfortunately, this goal does not seem affordable in the near term.

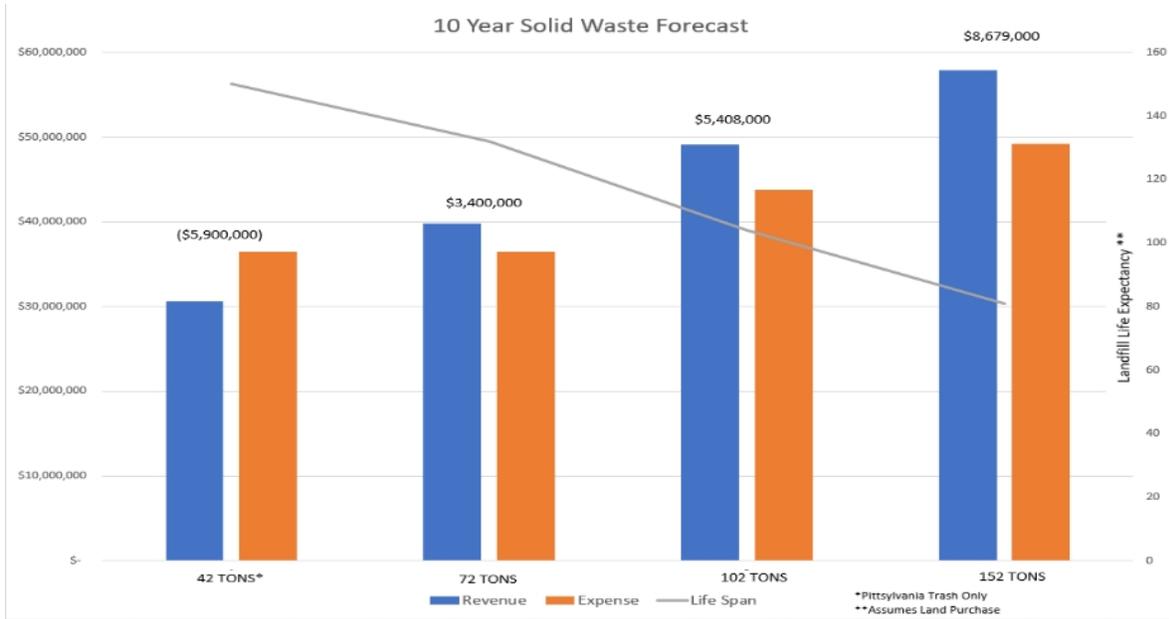
The aim of all Fire and Rescue initiatives is to enable one County-wide fire and rescue system. Additionally, we strive to better support all volunteers in hope of improving response times and the number of volunteers in the system. The County continues to make major strides in implementing the 2015 Fire & Rescue Study and consequently improving our citizens' emergency response services.

SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE FUND

Three years ago, the Board of Supervisors implemented a \$120 per household fee to fund the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund which covers the cost of operating the Landfill and to collect garbage from our 33 collection centers. Without this fee the real estate tax rate would need to be increased by at least \$.07 to fund Solid Waste services. The FY2022 Solid Waste Fund budget is proposed at \$13,050,352, an increase of \$8,856,292 over FY2021. This threefold increase accounts for capital investments in equipment, cell development and convenience centers.

At its Strategic Planning Retreat in January, the Board directed staff to proceed with the financing of certain landfill and collection site investments. This borrowing will assist with the development of landfill cells and replacement of equipment brought about by the increased daily volume. The County's external contracts are producing sufficient revenue to manage this debt and offset required taxpayer expense. The Board has directed staff to aggressively seek additional garbage tonnage and associated revenue to continue to reduce citizen cost.

The landfill has tremendous potential to offset known capital expenses by monetizing available space. Without this profit from out-of-county sources, the Board would be faced with difficult revenue decisions in the coming years.



Changes in compacting and burying tactics have greatly increased the landfill’s usable life. Staff will continue working to optimize efficiency and improve customer experience at both the landfill and our convenience centers.

Construction of three (3) new convenience centers will soon be underway in Climax, Strightstone and Whittles. The Whittles site will be our first true “regional” site and will offer additional amenities. These investments will improve efficiency and eliminate costs related to “green box” sites that will be discontinued.

Our SWAT (Solid Waste Assistance Team) efforts have resulted in clean sites, improved compliance and increased abuse enforcement. We are using the sites to enhance citizen education and have improved signage and cleanliness. Fines and fees are budgeted at \$25,000 which helps to offset the expense of the part time enforcement officer.

UNFUNDED REQUESTS AND CONTINGENCIES

This budget process began with approximately \$4.4M of requests greater than available revenue. Through several iterations we paired down the many requests to a small set of funding priorities. Unfortunately, those items that are not recommended herewith are not necessarily less important, but just not deemed as the highest of competing priorities. Among these are Sheriff’s vehicles, EMS, Elections and Recreation staffing, new consoles for 911 dispatchers and a new E911 CAD server.

The Board has done an admirable job the previous three fiscal years adopting a contingency fund for unknown mid-year expenses. It is important that the Board remain vigilant to our financial plan and policies to achieve sustained fiscal health.

Average contingencies of \$616,660 were funded the past three (3) years. In anticipation of the unfunded expansion items, this budget proposes a contingency line funded at \$300,012, to satisfy the below requests, which total \$1,480,484.

Budget items set aside for the Board's consideration include:

1. Bulletproof Vests Grant Match (\$9,875): The County annually seeks a grant through the US Dept. of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance to fund new bulletproof vests for County law enforcement officers.
2. Additional of position in Circuit Court Clerk's Office (\$44,336): Circuit Court Clerk Mark Scarce has requested that the County fund an additional position. The Board has not recently funding Constitutional Officer position/salary requests unless the elected official adopts the personnel policy. The Clerk's Office is not a member of the County's personnel system.
3. Jail inmate transfer vehicles (\$78,750): The Jail requested additional inmate transfer vehicles and requests a Van (\$38,750) and an SUV (\$39,750).
4. Increase School Division contribution (\$830,648): The School Board requested an additional \$1,080,648 of funding above the Board of Supervisors' FY2021 appropriation. The proposed budget allocates an additional \$250,000.
5. Increase legal services for Treasurer's Office (\$20,000): The Board asked Treasurer Vincent Shorter to increase enforcement of delinquent tax collection and foreclosure. The Treasurer requested \$20,000 for legal assistance to support the effort.
6. Include funding for a part-time administrative investigator to recoup outstanding inmate charges incurred by inmates while serving time in the Pittsylvania County Jail (\$56,875): The Sheriff requested that this position be included in the budget since there was no one with the credentials needed nor available time to research these outstanding charges and pursue them in court.

NEXT STEPS

It is proposed that the Board of Supervisors' Finance Committee meet March 16th to begin its thorough review of the FY2022 budget proposal. Additional tentatively scheduled budget development milestones include:

1. March 16: Finance Committee Budget review
2. March 24: Advertise FY2022 School and County Budgets
3. March 22, 25, 29 and 30: Community Meetings at high schools
4. April 1: Public hearing on proposed School and County budgets

5. April 8: Adoption of FY2022 budget for County government and School Division

County Administration will be taking this budget proposal throughout the county during March to hold community meetings. Additionally, there will be charts, graphs and other information published on the County website, Facebook page and left at popular gathering places county-wide to ensure every citizen has an opportunity to learn more about this proposal. Our aim is to arm every desirous citizen with the information necessary to form an educated opinion of County government. The Community Budget Meetings will be held at 6pm on the following dates:

Monday, March, 22, 2021 – Gretna High School
Thursday, March 25, 2021 – Dan River High School
Monday, March, 29, 2021 – Board Meeting Room, ECC Auditorium
Tuesday, March 30, 2021 – Tunstall High School

CONCLUSION

It is hard to accurately convey the progress the Board has made over the past 30 months to not only put the County back on a stable financial footing, but to improve the culture of our local government. Four years ago, we were mired in an internal struggle to set direction and still experienced remnants of the “good old boy” system where decisions were made politically instead of from a business viewpoint. The Board has now permanently rid the organization of this perspective where facts were not necessary, and ignorance was bliss. Today the Board makes decisions based on truth and fact and confronts adversity with courage.

The Board’s engagement with the Executive Team has resulted in an effective partnership that feeds on transparency, debate and mutual respect. We have built trust among one another and have a positive outlook and attitude where we believe we can create the best future for Pittsylvania County. The turnaround of this Board and the organization is remarkable. I am thankful that you have provided me the opportunity to serve and hope to be part of this team for many years.

On behalf of Finance Director Kim Van Der Hyde and our entire team, we look forward to supporting the Board during the coming weeks’ deliberations as the Board considers how best to build on its recent success.

Sincerely,



David M. Smitherman
County Administrator

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