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[00:00:02] All right. Good morning. I am Supervisor Palczyk, and we are here for our 11 a.m. environmental committee meeting. This will be a very, should be a pretty brief meeting. We have only one agenda item, and that is our solid waste management update. As many of you are aware, we have some issues to deal with both in the FY28 budget as well as FY29. So I appreciate that Chris Harrington and his team are here today to discuss the options and what is being looked at for the next few years.

[00:00:39] Chris, take it away. Thank you, Madam Chair. Christopher Harrington, Director of Public Works and Environmental Services. So our focus here today is really to talk about our hauling operations. So it is our Refuse Disposal Fund. It's 40150 is the number of the fund if you're following along at home.

[00:00:58] And so we've raised some issues. I'll go back through them. And we'll present our plan for the next several fiscal years to address our financial challenges. Just for clarification purposes, we're not talking about trash collection. So we're not talking about hands-on cans for today's conversation.

[00:01:15] That is operationally and fiscally separate from our hauling operation. And as we have previously briefed the board, and just to remind the viewing public, as we discussed in March, we are not pursuing the countywide unified sanitary district model for collection.

[00:01:31] So we are effectively status quo for trash collection into the foreseeable future. We are going to explore some potential improvements thanks to some feedback we had through Supervisor Herity and Supervisor Jimenez hosting a forum for our private haulers and through some of the feedback that we've gotten from the board.

[00:01:49] But to ground us again on our refuse disposal fund, primarily the purpose of this is the operation of our transfer station at i-66 at the westox complex to receive almost 600,000 tons of waste annually and then move that waste over the road down to the reworld facility in lorton where it is incinerated and then the ash is disposed of in the county's ash monofill at i-95 our fund 40150 additionally is where we pay for the diversion the free to the community diversion

[00:02:26] services that we provide, like household hazardous waste, our Purple Can Club, as well as our enforcement and our education and outreach programming. Just to remind the board, the problem that we've identified is that our reserve funding that we have used to mitigate the rates that everybody pays in Fairfax County for disposing of trash, we've been using that to, sorry, let me start that over again. I said that incorrectly. So our financial situation there, you can see the reserve fund balance in the left-hand bar graph, and you can see the tip fee charge in the

[00:03:04] right-hand graph. The tip fee is what everybody pays to dispose of trash, regardless of whether you're bringing it straight to us or you're paying a private hauler. Our reserve funds that we have used to mitigate those increases in tip fees, which you can see the inflection point in the graph, are becoming exhausted. So we will run a deficit in fiscal 28 of approximately \$6 million based on our current estimate, and then that deficit grows into the future as the reserves are fully exhausted. As a reminder of our concerns about liability, flow control or the county's ability

[00:03:42] to regulatorily determine where trash is managed and disposed of in Fairfax County is a critical component of our current system as the tip fee rises we lose economic flow control as it becomes more economically beneficial for private haulers of the community to take trash somewhere outside of the county for disposal an additional concern here is that we're running a transfer station right so a landfill gas recovery system we're talking about everything that goes with a pretty significant industrial facility in the middle of the county with no emergency reserve So if there is an issue, and we have had issues at solid waste facilities in the past, we certainly remember the fire at ReWorld, then Covanta,

[00:04:22] we would be looking to the general fund to provide whatever funds we would need to recover from the emergency. You have asked us to look at our regional partners, and so we have had some really great meetings talking to our neighbor jurisdictions.

[00:04:39] You can see here one of the aspects that we've been describing. or fiscal year 2026 tip fee comparisons regionally our tip fee for 20 for the current fiscal year now that we're in july is 98 so we've already started to bump that up even higher but we do have higher than our government comparators in terms of our current tip fee for disposing of waste this is some more detailed information you can see kind of it is a mix of different collection systems in terms of some are USD and some are not USD, but that middle column, residential systems benefit

[00:05:16] charger fee. This would be equivalent to the sustainability fee that we have previously proposed. If you see there, I think the key pattern that stands out to us is that there's a direct relationship between the benefits charge and the tip fee, and that most of our neighbor jurisdictions have a base charge, a benefits charge, a sustainability fee to help fund operations and to offset costs for their tip fee.

[00:05:43] In some circumstances, the tip fee is effectively zero. You can bring trash for free as a resident to the county facilities. One thing before I move off this slide, and I'll hit it again at the end. Not many of our neighbor jurisdictions are particularly excited about partnership opportunities.

[00:06:04] And so there is some interest, in particular to our immediate neighbors to the east, at finding an opportunity to grow compost and organics processing. We're all sort of going to the same place that has a capacity limitation in Prince William County. But in terms of, you know, is Prince George's county running out of landfill space?

[00:06:23] They say no. Are other entities interested in sort of more collaborative models? They're generally not. And so this is something that we would be asking the board for assistance through, like, COG, if there could be some help to get that ball going with more momentum for us.

[00:06:41] Bring us all the way back to the core of the problem. And so we presented some general discussion items, some options at our March briefing. The things that we've heard the board not be supportive of are shown here in red, but are presented so the full range of options is considered.

[00:06:59] So we kind of have two key levers if we're talking about resolving our financial insufficiency at I-66 and with our refuse disposal fund, which would be to increase revenue. And so that would be the sustainability fee or something like it, the base charge that we see in our neighbor jurisdictions or allocating money from the general fund. We've heard that those are not preferred by the board.

[00:07:24] And so we've presented some other options here. If you recall, in fiscal 28, our revenue gap is about \$6 million to \$8 million. It will grow to at least \$14 million probably in fiscal year 2029. And so there is no silver bullet here in terms of the remaining options presented in the black font for us to be able to immediately generate sufficient revenues. But we effectively will be pursuing all of the options that you see in some combination to resolve our revenue insufficiency for fiscal 28. Similarly, so the other level, if we can't raise more money, Can we decrease what we spend and reduce our operating costs?

[00:08:05] And so there is no obvious option here that completely closes our revenue gap. And so, again, we heard, you know, we could close on Sundays. It costs us the same amount to operate on Sundays, but we generally get very low volumes. And so that could be a potentially \$1 million a year savings.

[00:08:23] We could eliminate some of the free services, household hazardous waste collection, electronic waste, paint, things like that. at the transfer station but those alone aren't sufficient we know that that would be significant inconvenience for the residences for our residents and customers and it has the potential we lose the diversion benefits and it has the potential to increase dumping potentially of hazardous materials in the community which we know that the board and the community are certainly not happy about so again showing options of the board has previously expressed preferences against in red here but we

[00:08:58] are looking at the other cost decrease options. They're in black. None are in black text. None are clearly going to solve this problem. They all come with risks, and particularly the deferral of non-mandatory CIP is problematic for us. Our facilities need attention, both to improve the employee experience as well as the customer experiences. And we're on a closed landfill.

[00:09:23] And so things move around, as we just recently experienced. And so we're trying to get ahead of that. But if we freeze that non-mandatory spending, then we're just deferring that maintenance. It increases the possibility of emergency costs that are ultimately more expensive. But these are the things in

combination that we will be pursuing to present a balanced budget to the county executive later this fall. We know we've heard other options, and so I didn't want to lose these from the discussion. We've heard we could move to an entirely private market system and abandon flow control given our current contractual obligations with re-rolled through at least 2031. We don't believe that that would be financially prudent to make that decision.

[00:10:02] If that is something that the board is interested in because we are in active negotiations for the extension of the lease agreement with Reworld at I-95, we need to know now. But in any case, that would not resolve our funding problem for next fiscal year.

[00:10:18] We've also heard about closing the I-66 transfer station or moving effectively the I-66 transfer station to I-95. And so as you have correctly identified from a first principles perspective, touching trash twice is inefficient.

[00:10:34] But that is the model that we currently have. It's also critical for us to continue to maintain flow control that the trash comes to a county facility. So direct haul to I-95 is potentially problematic for us for flow control. It's also problematic from a traffic control perspective just in terms of the roads in and around the I-95 facility.

[00:10:57] So this is something, and we don't have the funds, right, because we're talking about a revenue insufficiency for the tens and tens of millions of dollars and the many, many years that it would take for us to effectively build a new transfer station at I-95. So we can't get there from here. And so we don't know that that is the prudent option for us to solve our immediate challenge.

[00:11:17] And then again, just to make sure there's no confusion, the unified sanitary district model is off the table. So we've removed that. And that wouldn't have resolved our immediate fiscal challenges because that was a mandatory five-year waiting period before we could implement those. So we will be using the combination of those options that we've shared to present a balanced budget. We do believe that the long-term solution is for us to catch up to our neighbors and add a base charge that will unlock our ability in fiscal 29 and beyond to increase our diversion and start to chip away at our CCAP diversion goals, standing up zero waste centers distributed

[00:11:55] around the community, increasing our education and outreach. That also enables us to have a steady funding stream that we can use for bonding purposes so that we can do some of the larger capital improvements that may get us to where we want to be in the longer term. And so, but we are continuing all of these other things that we've heard previously. And so any support that we could get from you in terms of motivating our regional partners to collaborate would be very helpful.

[00:12:23] We always are welcome any outside expertise, and so we have been meeting with Jennifer Gerard and your audit team to identify if they could leverage some of their significant expertise to help us if I'm missing something. Through things like the Holler Forum that Supervisor Herity and Supervisor Jimenez hosted, we're continuing to look at operational efficiency improvements, and we welcome feedback there.

[00:12:50] And then with Jennifer Van E, we have a list of legislative asks that we will be bringing forward for the board's consideration for our next legislative agenda to increase our authority and to provide some more flexibility for us going forward. But the short story is basically we will be cobbling together a set of options to be able to provide a balanced budget in fiscal 28.

[00:13:14] We will exhaust our reserve funds between this fiscal year and part of next fiscal year. So we're going to be operating at increased risks, and then we will be asking fundamentally for a steady revenue stream for fiscal 29 and beyond to support CCAP and our solid waste operations.

[00:13:33] With that, I'm happy to close and attempt to answer any questions you may have. Thank you so much, Mr. Harrington. Before I turn to the chairman, I just want to clarify a couple points on here, and clearly there are no easy answers or solutions, no silver bullets. So for our next fiscal year, which is 2028, you are estimating about \$6 to \$8 million, which once we no longer have the reserve, we'll have to come out of the general fund.

[00:14:01] And that likely will increase to about, you said, \$14 to \$20 million, I believe, for 2029. Is that correct? For fiscal 28, our hope is through the combination of strategies listed on the tables in the black text that we will be able to close our \$6 million to \$8 million revenue insufficiency without having to come to the general fund, but we will have fully exhausted all of our rate stabilization and reserve funding. Can you just remind us, where did that stabilization fund come from? Yes, ma'am, and so when we were sharing in the revenues from the sale of energy from the now re-rolled then

[00:14:40] Ogden Martin we were getting benefits that so we and we stored them but our savings account our piggy bank is exhausted and when the board chose not to exercise the option circa 2016 to take to continue ownership of now reworld we no longer have that source of revenue. Thank you that was it well I would just say let's continue to do that we would prefer not to have to go into general fund but it looks like unless we find some silver bullets or great options we either have to look at a fee following that, which I would say let's make sure we have some analysis

[00:15:18] both through the auditor. It's great that they're available, I don't think, for this round, but potentially for the next one, as well as what are value adds, additional things that we can give to the community or to our CCAP initiatives or both if we were to implement a fee versus going to the general fund. That's at least my request. But it is helpful to hear that it could help with bonding capability which is definitely we know we have aging infrastructure in every way and yours is not exempt from that so being able to have a little bit of diversity in that revenue and i'm also very concerned about the dumping hazards i was recently in a conversation about we are a region

[00:15:57] right and where we have different standards we do see illegal dumping happening across jurisdictions so that to me is a a big concern and something that i i would say as we have the conversations with our regional partners whether it's through the chairman or the members of the COG board that we we look at ways potential ways but it doesn't look like any conversations we have will help us through the immediate needs of 28 and even 29. Correct yes ma'am and so in terms of our conversations with partners it didn't sound like there was a revenue enhancement or cost reduction option that

[00:16:31] was immediately on the table and so that's why we're effectively we can get I think not comfortably and taking risk we can get through fiscal 28 but then beyond that without subsidy from the general fund or the sustainability fee for the benefits i think that you will describe that's what we're looking for and so this is again something entirely separate from our collection system challenges that we've previously discussed uh with the board and while we won't discuss active negotiations you know publicly i do think uh as you mentioned with reworld anything we can do in those negotiations would be appreciated as well.

[00:17:09] Let me turn it to the chairman and then my colleagues. Yeah, I'm not sure there's much more to say. I would say we are going to have that conversation about the contract. I do appreciate, in closed session, I do appreciate the work that staff has done to look at what other alternatives are here.

[00:17:28] I don't think anyone will challenge you that we're not looking at every possible alternative. I think the only challenge is we don't necessarily, sitting here today, definitively know the outcome of all of those. And so I appreciate that that conversation is ongoing and that we can get through a short-term period of time.

[00:17:48] I still have concerns over the fee. I've mentioned them before. I think you don't need to hear those again. But I do appreciate the regional systems chart that you showed us that shows what is happening in other jurisdictions. We are not alone in facing this problem. We may have to go that route down, you know, down the road a bit.

[00:18:08] I just think the timing right now is really difficult to be adding that cost on the backs of, you know, homeowners. And so I am concerned about that, but I appreciate what's laid out here because this is, we had been operating as if we had a very abnormal situation here.

[00:18:25] And the reality is, is what's abnormal is we don't have this fee. And I'm not saying I'm for it. I'm actually still very much opposed to it at this point in time. But I do think looking at every other option that we have before getting to the conclusion that that's the only thing left is absolutely what we should be doing at this time, given that while we don't have a lot of time, what you have demonstrated is we do have some time to try to figure this out.

[00:18:52] In terms of use of the general fund, I would just say on the one chart, general fund subsidy that's in red is something that has been ruled out. I haven't ruled that out at this point. I'm not sure that long term that is sustainable, but as a short term mechanism, I certainly haven't ruled that out as a possible way to help solve this issue.

[00:19:15] Understanding it puts pressure on all the other operations within the county that we fund through the general fund and that there are tradeoffs and conversations that have to happen before something like that would occur through a budget process that that could occur in the future. But I really just wanted to take an opportunity to thank you because no one wants to get this news.

[00:19:36] Most people don't understand it. I still think there were some real benefits of the USD, but now that that's off the table, we now as a board have to grapple with, now how do we solve for the same problem that potentially that particular proposal could have solved?

[00:19:54] And, you know, I still think it was rejected for some of the wrong misleading reasons. But we now have the same problem that we have to solve for, and looking at every creative way to do that is the only thing that makes prudent sense right now. And, you know, we'll see how the conversation goes on the lease negotiation.

[00:20:14] Hopefully we can get some regional conversations going because there are, you know, what this chart shows is that while there may be fees in place in some of the other jurisdictions around us, there still may be ways that they can improve their bottom line at the same time as we do.

[00:20:33] And so I'm interested in continuing those conversations before making a declaration at this point. But I appreciate that you're going to come forward with options that get us through a short-term

period of time, understanding that none of those solve the long-term problem and that that's still out there.

[00:20:49] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've been requested to go to Supervisor Alcorn, followed by Supervisor Herity. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you to staff for pulling this together. And just a few things. I'll try to go quickly.

[00:21:06] First of all, in terms of using general fund money to subsidize our solid waste fund, I believe this is not the first time we've had to do this. When the I-95 facility was first built, I know it was paid for with bonds, revenue bonds, than the Supreme Court rule on flow control.

[00:21:26] And I believe at the end of that bond period, the last year or two required some general fund subsidy. Is that your understanding as well? That predates me. I don't have that history. So we can research that to confirm.

[00:21:43] That's the case. Yeah, some of us remember it. There you go. It was painful. It was painful. So, you know, so at one point, you know, we, the county, decided not to basically maintain control of the facility.

[00:22:01] There were contractual arrangements put into place. But now we're in a situation where we have to get enough trash to feed that beast contractually. So, again, we're looking at a situation where basically that facility, in the way that it's structured, continues to drive more trash, at least as much trash as we can put in there, in order to avoid paying a fee.

[00:22:33] So that's one piece. The other piece is, and I believe you estimated at the last meeting, committee meeting or discussion, that our total cost on the transfer station, about \$30 million. Is that right?

[00:22:49] And is that the transfer portion or what is that number? So I'll put up the fund statement just to give you the complete total. So total expenditures would be \$89 million for the Fund 401-50. About \$30-ish million is the direct hauling operation from 66 to 90.

[00:23:10] And that's per year? Yes, ma'am, correct. And that's the current fiscal 27. So, yeah, that's what I want to focus on. So this is the direct hauling estimate, about \$30 million. You know, not the consumer-facing, you know, go and throw your bottles into, you know, a purple can there or, you know, the other things that we all do from time to time when we go as consumers to there.

[00:23:33] Is that correct? So it's about \$30 million for the transfer portion. That is effectively correct. And so the transfer only happens, there's all the fixed costs of the facility and the personnel and the necessary things that we have to do to comply with our regulatory obligations. And so they can't necessarily be separated, but you're correct, the trucking cost.

[00:23:52] Okay. All right. So I know – so I have a suggestion that's not – and I appreciate looking at all the options. Frankly, I'm not sure if we're going to be able to maintain flow control long term.

[00:24:09] We're in a situation – if you look at the tip fees for the other jurisdictions in the area, leakage, which I think you're referring to as dumping, is actually – it's some – it's a thing. And it does – there's an economic incentive.

[00:24:26] Clearly, for haulers to cheat and to basically take their loads to cheaper locations. This is going to continue to be a problem. But the fundamental problem we have is our cost structure is too high for

how much we're actually bringing in in terms of revenue.

[00:24:47] And I know we're pushing it all on the tip fee right now. And I know the answer is, you know, let's create the sustainability fee. But fundamentally, we're running out of money, right, to cover our solid waste expenses on the back end. I mean, that's the issue, right?

[00:25:03] Expenses exceed revenue. You're correct. Yes, sir. So there could be some other ways to reduce expenses that I would encourage you to look into. If we can actually start moving, and this is not going to happen overnight, And I know you mentioned, you know, the possibility of creating a new transfer station at I-95.

[00:25:27] That's super ambitious. But are there things we can do short-term to get more of what's currently going to 66 to go to 95? And if I may, Professor, I think when we mean short-term, clearly not for next year.

[00:25:43] Oh, no, definitely for next year. Absolutely for next year. For the 28 budget. Absolutely for next year. For the 28 budget. Absolutely for next year. because basically we need to stop buying semi-trucks. We have 40 of them. We need to reduce the amount that we have to ship in our trucks from I-66 to I-95.

[00:26:07] How much more can we put into I-95 that's currently going into I-66? I don't know. That's something to look at. We're looking at up, and thank you for saying the regional tip fees, is now 98.

[00:26:23] And you have another slide in there that shows us going next year to what, 108? The tip fee for this year is 98. And yes, I think, sorry, I'm going the wrong direction. Okay. What if we, for next year, basically kept 95, I-95 at 98, and then basically put the tip fee higher at I-66?

[00:26:45] Could we do that to basically incentivize more trash trucks to go to a place where we don't have to spend money to move it again? So several critical points to talk about that, starting with flow control. So if trash goes directly to re-world, it doesn't touch a county public facility first.

[00:27:03] That creates liability for the county's flow control. Thank you. Under the today. But if we set up a facility next to 95 that's a public facility, we wouldn't have that problem, would we? Correct.

[00:27:19] And that was what I was alluding to, to a secondary transfer station. It would need to be covered. And so then we're dumping trash on a flat floor to try to get that back into a truck to drive around the corner to get it into re-world. So that I don't necessarily think would achieve the same efficiency savings that you're proposing.

[00:27:36] And that's what I'm saying. we don't have the funds to do the capital work that would be necessary for us to duplicate the transfer station at 95 in the short term. So are you saying we actually then cannot afford to do this unless we increase taxes? No, sir. I'm saying that if we were to direct haul to reworld, if we were to incentivize more direct haul to reworld, we're incentivizing a challenge to flow control and increasing our liability to do so. If we were to try to reduce that liability by creating or recreating something like the transfer station, we're actually moving to a less efficient system in the sense that at the transfer station, we're pushing trash into a

[00:28:15] hole in the floor into a truck. If people are coming and dumping trash onto a concrete pad, we have to then scoop it up to figure out then how we can get it into a vehicle or onto a conveyor belt that doesn't exist into re-world to be able to manage that. Right, but we're not shipping it 17 miles and then shipping those trucks back empty. And that's what we're doing now.

[00:28:35] And you're correct there. There's very little that we can backhaul for a beneficial use from Lorton back to the transfer station. So I think that is a fair argument to be made in that circumstance. I think it's very critical to realize that right now, anybody can take trash to 95 or 66. So it is a choice. So for us to incentivize a challenge to flow control only exacerbates our revenue and our legal liabilities from my perspective.

[00:29:06] And I think that's the... But it would reduce our costs. It could reduce our operations. This is why I was saying there's one thing short-term, like immediate, what can we get done in the next few months? It does sound like we need to get legal and financial and operational reviews of the sort of, I call these outside-the-box ideas that we want to consider.

[00:29:27] I don't think we want to run straight into what may seem great in the short term, but increase our liability and cost. So I don't know if Jennifer Miller wants to answer that. Yeah, no, I agree. But I think I didn't understand this point until Chris and I had a conversation last night and this morning that I think really helped me understand the flow control issue.

[00:29:44] And that was this what does to not violate the Commerce Clause, what the Supreme Court has looked at. And I was rereading the cases, not weighing in from a legal position here. But the fascinating thing is we actually have to, in order for us to be able to direct it to go to re-world, have to touch it, push it on the floor, scoop it up, and deliver it to re-world.

[00:30:03] Doing anything short of that is not sufficient government control, which sounds kind of crazy, but it's a commerce clause issue. And maybe other people understood that. I really did not understand that until this morning. I just thought, why not go straight to 95, deliver it to re-world? Then we don't have the sufficient government involvement that we need to not violate the commerce clause issue.

[00:30:23] with that. Could I wrap up? Final comment because I want to make sure we all get a chance. Yeah. Honestly, if keeping flow control means we subsidize the trash part and basically to the tune of \$30 million plus a year, and we're not putting that into waste recycling, basically waste reduction strategies, organics, all the things we need to do, I'm done with flow control. I'm done with it. And I think we need to have that discussion as a board because we're currently

[00:30:56] on a path where we are basically to keep flow control. We're putting a lot of money and we're about to put general fund money into trash. And that should not be our emphasis. And frankly, I am not happy with re-world anyway. I know we're not going to talk about the contract publicly, but I think we need to take a hard line on this because I don't want to.

[00:31:27] I do want to clarify one thing. Are we going to general fund revenue for 2028? No, ma'am. Our objective is to not impact the general fund. Let's just make sure it is not for 2028. But what Supervisor Alcorn is raising is if we're not going to do flow control, we have to come up with a plan for that, which will cost, I'm not saying a lot, I'm not sure, I'm not knowing how much it's going to cost, but we're going to have to come up with a plan to offset flow control and the commerce clause, if I'm not mistaken, right?

[00:32:01] If we were unable to meet our contractual obligations to deliver approximately 650,000 tons per year of trash to re-world, then we have to pay re-world a penalty that would be in the tens of millions of dollars, is my guess. It's very hard to predict what would happen if we lost flow control, but that is the consequence, is we would no longer be able to compel private haulers to bring their trash to us.

[00:32:21] They could bring it to anybody. As you can see from the regional tip fee comparisons, there are cheaper places to bring it than us. And then we would be left holding the bag of less revenue coming in to us and more of a payment for no benefit to a for-profit company.

[00:32:37] Okay. So just to keep us on track, 2028, to clarify, there is no general fund revenue going toward this gap in the service fee.

[00:32:53] That absolutely is the hope. But I'm not going to say it will not happen. But yes, that is the hope. That's where we're going. And it seems like in the meantime, as we get ready for 29 and beyond, A, we are looking at the re-world contracts. Yes, ma'am.

[00:33:09] And B, and I recommend at this point, it would probably be helpful to really make sure we are working not just with your team, but with the support from Jennifer Girard's team and our auditor and their expertise to come up with potential options to look at risk, all types of risks and benefits associated with moving forward.

[00:33:32] Is that appropriate to say? And Supervisor Al Gore, I think that addresses what you and I think many of us are feeling of almost none of us I think were here when the contract was created but let's, the original contract, let's look at both options and let's be cautious while we do that. No, I appreciate it. No, my big frustration is we didn't have this conversation three or four years ago. Yep.

[00:33:56] Honestly, that's my biggest frustration so thank you. Okay. Supervisor Herity and then I'm going to move us forward. And I'm going to kind of start there and echo it because what we need is a long term strategy that balances what we're trying to do with zero waste, the Covanta agreement, and all the penalties associated with it, and the impact on our residents. And without looking at all three globally, you can't come up with a long-term strategy. But this board went and signed on to zero waste, which would have, as I've said once

[00:34:33] before, if we met our zero waste goals of 90% diversion, would have cost our taxpayers millions and millions and millions of dollars in covanta penalties so even a small reduction even if we do organics even if we do organics and we're able to do organics that's going to cause us penalties so we need short term and long term as was just said so the county the county reached out to a pretty reputable firm rrs and in 2024 they issued their final report this is something the board i

[00:35:10] don't think you've seen at least we didn't see it we didn't discuss it but interesting in here and i'll just ask you a couple of questions zero waste is part of ccap right yes the waste diversion strategy is a component of ccap yes sir so the goal of ccap is to reduce co2 emissions i don't want to speak to the board's policy and uh in that regard i think ccap has many different um directives does just changing our current processing of organics to collecting and

[00:35:45] recycling organics reduce CO2? Does collecting and recycling organics, so does it reduce CO2? Depends on where the organics are processed and the nature by which they are processed. So it's a complicated question. Okay. According to our study from RRS, which is pretty reputable, the, if we were to, if we were to go away from what we do now with organics, which is burn it, which is highly efficient, one of the most efficient, to collecting and recycling organics,

[00:36:18] According to this study, it'll actually produce an additional 1.124 microtons of CO2 emissions. It is actually less efficient to recycle, to collect, and separately process than it is to do what we're currently doing.

[00:36:39] And we'd be adding on all these. And we continue to talk about putting money into recycles. While I'm on recycling. While you're on that, will you kindly share that with us? Oh, it's their study that we did. And I want to ask you more questions because I want to make sure everyone has a chance.

[00:36:58] You know, the other thing we can do kind of immediately, because it's going to take a while, but it needs to be done immediately, is in that waste hauler meeting, there is now technology that allows for the recycling of glass. And we have Evergreen's recycling glass, waste management is.

[00:37:16] I'm going to go up and see their facility next Wednesday. Go next door where we're taking our glass and see what they're doing with it. But they're doing it single stream, which A, our residents want.

[00:37:34] B, is a more efficient way of collecting it. You're saying there are other options for us to look at? Yes. Okay. I just want to make sure everyone has a chance. Yes. But this is important. Yes. We have one MRF that doesn't currently take recycled glass because they didn't make the investment in upgrading their infrastructure.

[00:37:56] Because of the Purple Can Club and because of USDs, they weren't sure they were going to have contracts and that sort of thing. So they're willing to do that, which would allow us to move glass back into single stream. That's a short-term strategy that will, if we walk down that path, and I know you're doing that with the haulers, and I'm happy to help.

[00:38:19] That gets us to glass back in single stream. It increases your recycle content. It helps with zero waste and all those good things. So we're looking at short-term things that we can do. And I would ask that we look at our, when we get that, our current cost.

[00:38:37] I know there was a reason a couple of boards ago why we shifted to the purple recycling. Absolutely. Because it wasn't being recycled. So I think all the data, we all want it to be effective. So if you found a more effective method, excellent. But there's a reason we've moved it. I didn't find it. The haulers found it.

[00:38:52] Waste management found it. They're doing it. We need the other MRF to make the investments so we can, as a county, go back to what I helped us move away from because it wasn't being recycled. It was being landfill. I'm giving you another minute. Page three of this slide.

[00:39:10] I think it would be useful for the board to see that \$89 million broken out by those items. And I understand there's legacy landfill liabilities. I mean, page four. Oh, broken out by those items. Yeah, broken out.

[00:39:26] It's on the screen there. I know there's some things that we can't – that legacy landfill liabilities is a number that we need to understand what is. We don't have a choice there. And some of the other things, I just think – I've looked. I haven't seen it broken out by what that is, and that may be difficult.

[00:39:45] You may have to make assumptions, but I think that would be very, very helpful. Do we have the ability to put a floor next to Covantus, a ReWorlds floor? Have we looked into that? Do we have the ability? We'd have to obviously go through a permitting process for the county and for the Department of Environmental Quality at a minimum, and then we'd have to come up with money for it to be able to fund it.

[00:40:08] And so at this point, we're actually deferring capital projects, not trying to take on capital. Well, I think – and this is where I think you've got to get outside of whatever box you're in and that we're not

going to spend capital money on something that's going to save us operational funds for a lot of years.

[00:40:26] I think if, to me, sitting here as a former CFO and an accountant, touching trash twice, we've all agreed, makes no sense. If we can drop it on a floor next to Kavanaugh's floor and push it in, I mean, that's going to take, that goes back to long-term strategy, but is there a short-term way we can do that?

[00:40:46] Not dumping it to top of the hill, loading it on trucks, and hauling it down and dumping, that doesn't make any sense, I agree. But getting it directly there. So I think we've heard directions to review the feasibility and speed at which we could do that.

[00:41:01] And any potential risk, even if some of that may have to come to closed session, I don't know. All right. I've got a lot more than you obviously don't want to hear it, so I'll let you read about it. No, feel free to share it. I just want to make, between you and Supervisor Alcorn, we've taken out quite a bit. So I want to make sure my colleagues have a chance. Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[00:41:18] And I think we definitely can start with lots of options. And I know 10 years ago we talked about an option, and frankly, I don't think it's gone anywhere. That's in Norfolk and how they're going to zap it and blah, blah, blah. I'm interested in finding a way to reduce costs and make sure that we have a way to recycle the ingredients of that trash as much as possible.

[00:41:43] But in the end, reducing the amount of heavy metals and other noxious items that come out of the chimneys at the re-world. I mean, that's a health issue, not significant. I understand we've done a number of things, but only we all recognize that's not the ideal is to send it up a smokestack and hopefully that it goes away somewhere.

[00:42:06] And so I'm interested in trying to avoid those kinds of things wherever possible and find economic, you know, incentives to encourage us doing the right thing and meeting our zero waste recycling goals. So I think I've not changed a bit on that.

[00:42:22] The board hasn't changed its position on that. Zero waste recycling is our policy, is our commitment, and we need to stay focused on that. I'm looking for all different kinds of ways to do that. It doesn't have to be a set formula or a set process, but I'm still deeply committed to that. So I just want to be on the record.

[00:42:38] I think the USD would give us that opportunity. And as Chris knows, I've offered up, you know, in the Mount Vernon area, we have county solid waste pickup, And there's ways that we could do some sort of a USD there that could help to demonstrate that this isn't the bad boy.

[00:42:56] This is, in fact, frankly, a good option for us and a good option, I think, for solid waste haulers as well. So I don't want to stop it. I want to actually have the conversation, which we never really had. And I know because it was cut short by business interests that were fearful that it was going to hurt there.

[00:43:15] And frankly, they would have to be more competitive. If they couldn't charge similar rates that they charged, they would have to be competitive with others. So I think those are opportunities to explore that without stopping it prematurely, which is what I think we've all done already. So I think we do need to find a way to do that.

[00:43:32] I don't know if this is appropriate for this conversation, but I'm going to throw it out, and we can move it to a closed session if that's more appropriate. But I think re-world, we need to understand fully what our liability is to the re-world contract after 2031.

[00:43:49] Supervisor Stork, definitely closed session. Yeah, I just wanted to be on record in public session as that. I understand that we're not going to do that. Sounds like it's scheduled, so I appreciate it. So I think we have opportunities to do more, and I think we should reopen at least on a pilot basis to look at an USD because I think it offers some ways of checking on some of the options that we should be pursuing more broadly.

[00:44:16] Thank you. And I appreciate that. And just to confirm, we are still operating under the Board's mandate absent the specific timeline of CCAP to look for ways to achieve the 90% diversion goal that has been established by the community and adopted by the Board. And so one of the things that we had been talking about, just to remind folks, is that a request for expressions of interest will be published soon.

[00:44:37] It will be open for about three months. And so that opens the door for any of those innovative technologies that we've been hearing about to come and make a pitch to us on the county. It is a broad request, and so it does touch on some of the collection issues that Supervisor Herria was raising, as well as some of the refuse processing and disposal issues.

[00:44:57] And so we're excited about that. So we're still trying to look for innovative opportunities within our financial means. I think some of the collection issues that you're raising, and we'd be happy to provide you a line-item summary of the expenses for the 401-50 fund, we can provide that. And I think it would be illustrative, just for the glass example, that's a really positive example of what diversion can look like in innovative ways.

[00:45:20] I don't know that we're ready to go back to the glass in single stream until we're confident that those private material recovery facilities are actually pulling that glass back out. So I appreciate that you're going to do some investigative work there at some of our private hauler facilities that we partner with, because we're not confident that that glass is actually being recycled to the benefit that it feels like it is when you put glass in single stream.

[00:45:43] Which gets to my point. I don't want to have wishful recycling, but I also don't want to have wishful technology. And we've heard a lot of wishful technology over the last many decades. So we need to make sure it does what we think it does, which automatically reduces our carbon emissions and has some other beneficial effects.

[00:46:00] Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Stark. Supervisor Seismur Heiser? I really recognize that this has been a saga for a long time, and I'm walking in fairly new to this. So fairly new to some of my thoughts, and I'll try to be quick. I know we talked about regional solutions, and I noticed in the charts, and I don't see page numbers on the slides, I can't refer to page numbers, but the regional systems chart, have we looked into how their fees were so much lower? What am I missing here? Because I know it's a long history, so it may be in the history that I haven't found yet. The key for the difference is that they have a base

[00:46:34] charge. And so they have what we're calling a sustainability fee. And so if you refer back to our March briefing to the Environment Committee, we actually, our plan would be if we were to add the sustainability fee is not only to cover our revenue insufficiency, but also to create a revenue stream where we could start doing additional work. And then that actually enables us to lower the tip fee over time so that we come back into economic flow control and balance with our jurisdictional partners. That's the key. They're paying for all of the things that we have to pay for out of our tip fee with this base charge. Thank

you for reminding me of that. I wasn't clear from that from March. I really appreciate that because that's helpful to know. And I think

[00:47:14] that goes to kind of my second point is that, as my colleague said, you know, if the solution of USD is off the table or not, wherever it may be, and it sounds like right now it's off the table, we need to be really clear with the community. Here's what we listen to you, right? We're not pursuing this route currently. However, that means these are the challenges, these are the realities, and if it comes out of general funds, that means it's even tighter on some of the programs that, you know we couldn't fully fund this year and um and here's how our surrounding jurisdictions do it

[00:47:50] they all have this fee right so we're an outlier because i don't know it wasn't really clear to me but it may not be clear to our public and i think when we're building a why for why are we pursuing something if we have to go down a route that may not be as popular i think it's helpful now to start building that why yes ma'am so that's my two cents on that thank you uh supervisor lust Followed by Supervisor Jimenez.

[00:48:12] Now, I'll just say this is a pretty vexing problem here and don't envy the position that you're in, but thank you for the information you've provided here today. I'm going to agree with Supervisor Alcorn on the point about the use of general fund dollars.

[00:48:30] I personally am not excited about that as a way to address this issue. I can hear if it's a short term, but to have this as a sustainable model to me doesn't appear to be the right thing to do and i note on is it slide five slide 10 excuse me you make reference to meeting with the regional partners you've mentioned cog have you begun that or do you need help doing that what's the status so i have not approached cog staff and i think that that's a good suggestion i've really just been in and the team had been talking with our jurisdictional partners directly our our staff peers around the region okay because i mean i'm

[00:49:09] I'm on the COG board, so is Jimmy, and so is the chairman. So if there's something that we can do to support you in that effort, we're certainly willing to make that happen is what I wanted to say. And just appreciate what you're doing here. Thank you. Yeah, and thank you, Supervisor Los Gnosos, just sidebar with the chairman.

[00:49:26] I said on the environmental committee, several of you on the board. So we'll work to give guidance and a request formally from the board because I think staff doesn't have that yet. They don't have the formal request. So we will work with you, those of you who are on COG board, And as happy to support that effort and work with Clark and others. Thank you. Thank you. All right Supervisor Jimenez and then Supervisor Beerman. Thank you very much Madam chair, and thank you all obviously a tough tough set of news here that you know, I think we're all tracking I Do appreciate you all trying to throw gum at the wall. I think that's

[00:50:02] What we need to think I think mr. Herity said it but supervisor Herity said it best You know, we've got to really think outside the box here and try to find a solution. I was just really curious on one part. On slide seven, you have listed corporate sponsorships. Can you talk to me a little bit about what that would look like and are any other jurisdictions anywhere in the country using corporate sponsorship?

[00:50:25] Like what would that corporate sponsorship look like, I guess? So selling ad space on our trucks and on facilities, basically. And so we are aware of other jurisdictions, Chicago, where there are

similar models. And so it's ads, selling ad space.

[00:50:41] All right. Yeah, thanks. I thought you were going to say we were going to have our own waste management open at the Laurel Hill Golf Club, but that's for any golf fans here. So it would be nice for us to have a chart that shows us the actual effects on an individual homeowner of each of these ideas.

[00:51:07] So for instance, bottom line, I'm seeing that on slide four, we go from spending – having \$8 million left in our fund 401k to having \$6 million in 2028 to having – sorry, less than – having minus \$6 million in 2028 to having minus \$20 million in 2029.

[00:51:31] So is the general fund subsidy about \$14 million a year? So no general fund subsidy today, that would be one option for fiscal 29 and beyond. Yeah, I'm just saying, bottom line, on page 7 you say general fund subsidy, what is that number?

[00:51:50] Is that number \$14 million a year? Is that \$15 million a year? Is it \$30 million a year? What do we think it is? It would be at least \$14 million a year for fiscal 29, and then it would grow from that point forward, and it would be in the \$6 million to \$8 million range for fiscal 28.

[00:52:05] six to eight million does that what does that presume we do none of the other things that are in here because right now you haven't given direction on that so that presumes everything in here is not done and we don't know what the chip away values are correct i'm just trying like if there was a chart we had with every potential option how much does it cost like you know um i had somebody uh in my office looked at this and the first question she asked was what exactly is the general fund level of support. So bottom line, what's that number? Second thing, can you remind

[00:52:40] me, because we don't have it here, what the sustainability fee was supposed to be and how much revenue it was going to... So the original proposal was, or the last iteration of the proposal and what we presented in March was about \$25 million of revenue that it would generate annually. And so that would cover our revenue shortfall and then provide additional 10, approximately million dollars for us to start funding the uh some of the facility improvements and the additional diversion work like the distributed zero waste centers and what was the average hit to the uh 59 dollars is the for an average residential home it would be 59 dollars

[00:53:18] per year 59 dollars per year and 14 million is about 40 percent of a penny what's that the tax rate for \$14 million would have been \$0.0044. Okay, which is about what to a resident? \$33.90.

[00:53:36] Yeah, less. Okay, okay. So \$34. It's a little bit less just out of general fund support because we're trying to overshoot a little bit with the sustainability fee. Is that correct? That was my proposal. Yes, sir. Yes. And then, okay, so just so people know, I believe I know the answer to this, but how many tons of trash does your average resident household produce per year?

[00:54:02] Hi, this is Matthew Adams. The average house, Fairfax County, the general resident produces about five pounds per day, which if you do the math out is about two tons a year if there's two people in the house. So it's about a ton per person per year. Ton per person per year. So when the tip fee went up from, say, 72 in 2024 to 90 in 2026, that's 18 for a ton. So that would generally be passed on about \$36 to, you know, in those two years per household, generally,

[00:54:39] something like that. Is that about right? Sounds about right. We got \$36 in tip fees going up. we've got \$42 in general fund support. We got \$57 in sustainability fees. I mean, I think that every option

should be on the table, which is also why I think that you should consider some of the more outside the box ideas, pushing the trash in, the capital costs, and what that hit would be to the taxpayers to engage in that capital cost. And it would be nice to have this all, I mean, I know it's trash talk, but it'd be nice to have a pretty chart that tells us what

[00:55:18] we think would be the actual hit to taxpayers of each of these options. And then it would also be nice to have a ranked order of what you think on the options to increase revenues or options to decrease costs are. Because, I mean, I hear you saying increased enforcement, unreliable, not permanent. Well, you know, but we should have a better idea of what that actually would bring in.

[00:55:45] You know, the other stuff that you have, you know, let's put it all together. Let's package it up and let's, I think the question that everybody at this table wants to know is the same question that our taxpayers want to know, which is, what's it going to cost me? And, you know, I think that is going to drive the choice that we end up making. But I also very much hope that when we make that choice, we are not just thinking about tomorrow, we're thinking about 10 or 15 years down the line, because I don't want to be in this situation. I don't want us to be in this situation

[00:56:22] yet. So Supervisor Berman agreed, and we are implementing all of those recommendations. So even the one to endless doesn't matter. We're doing all of them. And so what's left with the deficit is what we can't fill by implementing those things, other than the ones the board already took off, which we understand. Nobody wants to close on Sunday. So we're not doing some of those things that people said were not palatable. In terms of the longer-term options, yeah, and I'm sorry, and Chris mentioned it, but I know we started right after the last committee meeting. This is just, hey, we've been looking at USDs as the solution the last two years. Understand right now we're not going forward with that. So we have a short-term problem.

[00:56:58] The long-term problem, I mean, I think we've spent probably 1,000 hours, but we're still on it. We're in it. We're talking to the trash haulers. We're talking to you all. We totally get the long-term solution needs to be resolved, you know, and we're still working on that. So this isn't intended to be here's the long-term solution.

[00:57:15] It's USDs are off the table. You guys said come back to us with more data. What are we going to do short-term? We're there now, and now it's what is our longer-term fit. I totally see that you guys are working very hard on this and coming up with lots of ideas. What I am trying to tell you is what the information that gets brought to us next, what it could look like to help us better make the decision.

[00:57:40] That's all I'm suggesting. Thanks. Thank you. Mr. Smith, I think you wanted to add something. Just briefly, I think it's complicated because I get this feeling that there's this magic solution. We don't need more money.

[00:57:56] The magic solution doesn't work. So then if you need more money, where do you get it from? And so that's where I was looking at what that tax rate would be, right? We have the invasive pet tax rate. We have the stormwater tax rate. It's transparent to the public of what we're doing.

[00:58:11] And then I look at the penny on the real estate tax rate to the average homeowner is \$83, \$86. And so then you look, are you putting this fee in? And if you calculate it, I calculate it on my house. I'd be about \$45. And so the question isn't just how much money is it going to be.

[00:58:32] The question is, what is the result we need to get and how do we get there? And so there is some frustration. I heard you. Before I turn to Supervisor Stoke, I do want to say I think this is a helpful, healthy, robust discussion, so I appreciate that.

[00:58:47] And if I heard correctly as we close out this meeting is short-term, we understand we're likely hopefully not touching the general fund and we are doing everything we currently can do from here until next year with any of the topics that we have not said not to move forward with and read and then long term we are looking both at all of the options the options we currently maybe do not have authority for that we'll be asking for authority including a potential pilot program and we are also still reviewing the re-roll contract in closed session and understanding

[00:59:25] it wasn't overnight and it wasn't you that got us to where we are. It was a combination of past us and other boards giving direction in one way. And as Jennifer pointed out, we have asked to shift to the other way. So we are looking at that and those long-term solutions will take quite a bit more thought. So I would just say before it turns to Supervisor Stork, if any of you, especially Supervisor Alcorn and those who have given specific recommendations, Harry to be given, please share them so that we can all be in those conversations. I think there are some side conversations it would be helpful just let me know if you want to have had any side conversations in the last month uh so okay i don't know what was happening right behind before this

[01:00:04] meeting but um let's just make sure we all hear what you're what you're thinking about and if you're having um meetings with haulers and coming up with new ideas let's let's discuss them bring them to staff bring them i'm happy to help facilitate but let's make sure we are considering everything because that's where we are now is all of the above. Supervisor Stork? I think that's the point I was trying to make is we're not considering everything because we didn't start a clock that's going to take five years to click down. And so that's really what my advocacy is, that we start this clock so we don't tie one arm behind our back as we're trying to decide how best

[01:00:42] to go forward. So that's really where I come back to is we need to start that clock so we have all the flexibility that we might want to have even if we end up back where we started but we we don't we can't do that until we start that five-year clock that the that the state requires us to do so i hope we take another look at that thank you okay we can absolutely look at it again i think this board did not have majority support for that at the time we are looking at legislative options to maybe not have that army on our back of the five-arm clock and to look at other options but I do want to clarify that the unified sanitary district model is not on the table now it doesn't

[01:01:19] mean that it will never be on the table it doesn't mean that we are not considering impacts and ways to be more efficient we would all love to save money and be more efficient and save the planet all at once we may not get to all of those goals together but I just want to thank the staff Chris and Eric your entire teams and everyone involved it is not easy but we will please share any other thoughts or ideas you want us to look at. I know Supervisor here already had others share them so they can all be reviewed and we can come back to you with helpful charts and potential, I would say, mid- to long-term solutions because the short-term have pretty

[01:01:57] much been looked at. So to that, I believe we are adjourned. Thank you.



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