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District 1 Update: April 2025

OVERVIEW OF COUNTY-WIDE ISSUES

York County Budget – Capital Improvement Plan

The York County Board of Supervisors met to discuss the budget on five occasions from late January to early April. We have three more scheduled meetings, the public hearing on April 15 and the work sessions on April 17 and 22.

Following up on the Jan 31st discussion, County Administrator, Mark Bellamy, presented an updated status of the 6-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the Board of Supervisors at our most recent workshop held on March 4th after the Board's request for reductions in capital spending.

The County Administrator, Mark Bellamy, has taken a first pass at reductions in our Capital Plan, reducing the original request by 25 M\$. Acting on our directions, Mr. Bellamy proposed a further reduction of \$11M in the County's CIP. Our concern as a Board was that the Capital spending originally proposed would result in a debt load too great to handle. In the FY26 Proposed budget the debt service is roughly \$15 M per year. The preliminary CIP presented in December would grow debt service to approximately \$20 M or 9.22% of the general fund budget within 6 years without changes. After several budget work sessions on the CIP, the proposed CIP presented on March 18 has debt service reaching just over \$19 M or 8.63% of the general fund budget.

We have also spent considerable time and scheduled a special session to review the York County School Division proposed Capital spend. Most of this is at Tabb High School over the next two years. After considerable discussion, we have aligned on the first year of the Tabb HS Capital spend, with some remaining work to quantify the figures for next year's Capital request.

York County Operating Budget – Fiscal Year 2026

The York County Administrator has proposed an FY26 budget totaling \$288 million for all funds. The general fund or what is commonly called the County's operating budget is \$200 million.

Revenue for the general fund comes from your real estate tax, personal property tax, sales, meals and other local taxes. Also, business licenses, fees, and other charges along with state and federal aid add to the revenue.

Compared to last year's budget, the FY26 (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026) General Fund budget revenue is projected to increase by \$11 million or 5.8% after tax increases.

The real estate tax revenue will increase by \$5.4 million and personal property tax revenue will increase by \$2.1 million.

Expenditures for FY26 include \$2.5 million for a general wage increase and benefits for the County staff, \$2.4 million increase for Public Safety, \$1.0 million increase in support for our schools, \$1.3 million for increased operating costs and a \$3.8 million increase in debt service, our local share of social services and contractual commitments to other regional partners.

To make all of the above balance out, the County Administrator proposes a real estate tax increase from \$0.74 to \$0.78 and an increase in the personal property tax from \$3.80 back to \$4.

Last year, we were able to reduce the overall property tax rate by 3 cents, the personal property tax rate by 10 cents, and eliminate the vehicle license fee altogether. In total, that savings to the taxpayer last year were \$6.3 million. This year we need to return to FY 2024 rates on property tax and personal property. Vehicle license fee of \$1.7 M remains eliminated.

The slide below shows a comparison of the burden the proposed real estate tax rate of \$0.78 will be as compared to our surrounding jurisdictions and also looks at the cost as a percentage of income for our residents relative to other communities in the Peninsula.

How York County Compares

Locality	Real Estate Tax Rate	Median Home Value*	Household Tax Burden	Median Household Income*	Tax Burden as Percent of Median Household Income
Isle of Wight	\$ 0.73	\$ 333,600	\$ 2,435	\$ 96,118	2.5%
York County - Proposed	\$ 0.78	\$ 411,200	\$ 3,207	\$ 108,326	3.0%
James City	\$ 0.83	\$ 419,200	\$ 3,479	\$ 107,046	3.3%
Williamsburg	\$ 0.62	\$ 393,200	\$ 2,438	\$ 70,206	3.5%
Poquoson	\$ 1.14	\$ 403,000	\$ 4,594	\$ 120,919	3.8%
Suffolk	\$ 1.07	\$ 329,600	\$ 3,527	\$ 90,089	3.9%
Hampton	\$ 1.15	\$ 234,100	\$ 2,692	\$ 67,758	4.0%
Newport News	\$ 1.18	\$ 243,300	\$ 2,871	\$ 64,962	4.4%

So how will the proposed 4¢ real estate tax increase impact you? If your home is valued at \$411,200 which is the median value for the County, you will pay \$164 more for a total of \$3,207 for the year.

Since we pay our tax bills every six months, you can divide the increase in half to see your semiannual bill.

What is driving the proposed tax increase? Why are we seeing an increase this year?

After new revenue associated with growth, there was a \$6.4 million gap between revenue and expenditure.

We must remain competitive with the market. Other municipalities have introduced compensation adjustments, in addition to the annual raise to remain competitive.

This is why the Administrator is proposing a \$2.5 million increase to support a market adjustment of 4% plus a \$500 pay raise.

Recent data, obtained as we have interviewed for open positions suggests that the gap may be greater than 4%. We have agreed to a mid-year review of salaries for County staff, Deputies, Fire & Life Services and 911 Center. Currently, we have agreed to fund this, and any correction we need to make this year, without a further tax increase in this year's budget.

Another driver for the tax increase is \$2.4 million investment in Public Safety. In FY 25, we added four Sheriff deputies and three firefighters that were funded for a partial year and those positions need to be fully funded in the FY 26 budget. The FY 26 budget includes two specialists paramedics for a state mandated

pharmacy program and two information technology specialists to support the Sheriff's technology requirements.

Currently, the Sheriff is asking for five more deputies (four for traffic and one for court security). We are working with the Sheriff to determine if this cost can be met by reductions in the Sheriff's operating budget and other cuts the Board has proposed to the general fund budget.

In summary, the proposed tax rate will increase by four cents to \$0.78 and personal property tax will increase by twenty cents to \$4.00. You can find a complete summary of the budget online at www.yorkcounty.gov.

York County Business Licenses

As I stated in March, many business owners across the County have expressed frustration with the renewal process for business licenses. I have heard back from our Commissioner of Revenue, Sarah Webb and she has agreed to work with the County staff to review and make improvements. I raised a specific request for staff to meet with the Commissioner and report back with improvements. I have yet to hear an update on that subject but will be reaching out again shortly.

DISTRICT 1 SPECIFIC ISSUES

Queens Lake Dam, Spillway and Lake Funding

I continue to pursue funding for the Queens Lake Dam and Spillway repairs to prevent environmental damage to Queens Lake estuary and a major loss of property values for residents of Queens Lake.

I had an opportunity to meet with Congressman Rob Wittman recently and we discussed the National Parks' current position, that they are not responsible for costs associated with drainage from the upper Queens Lake basin. Congressman Wittman has met with the new Secretary of the Interior, Doug Burgum and discussed this issue. Secretary Burgum does not fully agree with National Parks' stated position and is looking into the issue more fully.



New Businesses

The number of new businesses in York County continues to grow, with 24 new businesses licensed in March and 9 business closures.

The latest business licenses to be approved in District 1 are as follows:

- Prime Convenience & Vape Inc, a commercial business located at 108 Cooley Rd.
- Stanley Park Auto & Mike's Towing LLC, a commercial business located at 1570 Penniman Rd.
- Chiefs Premier Landscaping LLC, a home based business located at 115 Starboard Ct.
- RC Squared, a home based business located at 478 Penniman Rd, offering repair, maintenance and installation services
- Keeley L Williams-Garrett, a home-based business at 114 Old Hollow Rd. offering Bookkeeping and Accounting services
- Hackworth Controls LLC, a home-based business for architectural, engineering and surveying services, is located at 117 Bastille Ct.
- Joyce Country Café LLC, a home-based business for retail merchandise, is located at 606 Marks Pond Way.

I value your input, Please become a regular recipient of this newsletter.

I value your input and am happy to address questions or concerns on these or any other topics for the district. Please don't hesitate to contact me.

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