

AT A GLOUCESTER COUNTY TOWN HALL MEETING, HELD ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2023, AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE PETSWORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAFETERIA, 10658 GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL HWY, GLOUCESTER, VA 23061:

THERE WERE PRESENT: Phillip N. Bazzani
Ashley C. Chriscoe
Kenneth W. Gibson
Michael W. Hedrick
Christopher A. Hutson

THERE WERE ABSENT: Kevin M. Smith
Robert J. Orth

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Carol Steele, County Administrator

Ms. Steele stated that she would be providing a presentation on the bond referendum and the projects included on the referendum. She asked that questions be held to the end as some of the questions may be answered in the presentation. She then reviewed the three focus areas of the referendum to include fire and rescue services, public schools, and public parks. She provided a breakdown for each of the projects to include the description and cost. She reviewed the referendum wording. She advised that if approved the referendum would allow the Board to issue bonds in a maximum amount of \$39,582,993 which would result in an estimated real estate tax increase of \$0.02. She noted the impact of the tax increase on the monthly real estate taxes based on the average home value. She reviewed the real estate tax rates of surrounding localities, noting that the tax rates were impacted by the level of services other localities offered. She noted the projected timeline for the borrowings and the start of the projects. She advised that all projects would be funded by 2031 and completed by 2033. She reviewed upcoming election dates. She provided additional details for the projects.

After the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and comments from those in attendance.

Citizens asked when the tax increase would go into effect, if the tax increase would remain in place permanently, and whether the increased tax amount would be segregated for the specific projects. Concerns were raised about the low priority projects being included with the fire station and affordability of the debt.

Ms. Steele noted that the tax increase would go into effect to coincide with the borrowing. She stated that if other revenues were higher than expected, the loan could be paid off faster.

Ms. Calloway, Director of Finance, advised that the additional taxes would be in the General Fund and the amount of the tax increase was based on the amount of revenue that would be required for the debt service payments. She stated that the level of debt that the County would hold was in line with the County's debt policy.

Mr. Chriscoe noted the different options for borrowing that the Board had discussed.

Mr. Bazzani asked what would happen if the referendum failed.

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Mr. Chriscoe stated the County could not hold another referendum for five years but if it had the capacity could borrow by other means.

There was an additional question on the ownership of the fire station.

Ms. Steele noted the County would own the building, but it would be for the use of Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue. As there were no other comments, she noted that another town hall would be held on October 4 at Page Middle School.

The town hall ended at 8:30 p.m.

Christopher A. Hutson, Chair

Carol E. Steele, County Administrator