

## **Pantops Community Advisory Committee**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**March 27, 2023**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dick Ruffin at 6:15 PM

#### **CAC members present**

Dick Ruffin, Louis Falzer, Ida Lee Wooten, Michael Spatz, Ron Brownfield, Anne Oliver, Kate Kaminski, Judith Joyce

#### **County personnel present**

Bea LaPisto-Kirtley, Board of Supervisors; Donna Price, Chair of the Board of Supervisors; Khalilah Jones, Staff Liaison; Emily Kilroy, Assistant to the County Executive; Ryan Davidson, Deputy Chief of Budget

A quorum was confirmed to be present.

The Minutes of the February 23, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved as previously distributed.

#### **2024 Albemarle County Budget Overview/Update**

The main purpose of the meeting was to provide an overall view of the Albemarle County 2024 Budget and to give the community a chance to ask questions.

A \$551.5M budget for the fiscal year of 2024 was released by County Executive Jeffrey Richardson with no tax rate increase. 57% of the budget is for schools.

Donna Price and Bea LaPisto-Kirtley presented historical background and an overview.

Donna Price noted that it was the first regular order budget in four years. She reminded all that the tax rate had been reduced in 2015, with severe consequences for staff and school construction. It may not be possible to make a further rate cut now. Bea LaPisto Kirtley pointed out that federal grants relating to the pandemic come to an end soon and that inflation is upping costs across the board. The County wants to maintain its status as one of only 40 counties in the country with a AAA bond rating. This reflects in part our significant contingency reserve.

A budget hearing will be held on April 26 and a decision on the tax rate will be made by the BOS finally on May 3.

Here are some of the areas of discussion:

The budget covers money for a wide range of public services including transit, social services, parks, and public schools.

The potential cost of a new elementary school has been approved.

Police and Fire Fighter salaries will be increased by 4% in August 2023.

It is expected that property and Real Estate tax rates will remain unchanged.

Property assessments have increased by approximately 13 percent, increasing the yearly real estate taxes for County residents.

For more information about 2024 Budget please use the link below:

<https://www.albemarle.org/government/finance-and-budget/budget/budget-development-reports>

### **Public Comments/Questions**

Approximately twenty community residents attended the meeting.

One expressed concern about older adults on fixed incomes and asked if there could be an increase in the minimum income threshold to qualify for affordable housing.

Another asked about the change in ownership of CATEC. Bea LaPisto-Kirtley said that she anticipated that Albemarle County students would still be able to attend.

There were also several questions and comments about the tax rate, with some suggestions made about alternative tax revenue.

### **Liaison Updates**

Bea LaPisto provided an update on Free Bridge:

The Promenade design offers the greatest design flexibility, moderate maintenance cost to the County and immediate opportunities for partial implementation. The Promenade option was unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors.

### **Other Business**

A restaurant had been found for the Shops at Riverside.

The new Pantops Trail Crew will attempt to address the following concerns: a possible Climate Action grant, how to increase interest in the River, how to improve trails and park areas and how to deal with invasive species.

The next meeting will be held on April 24, 2023 at 6:15 pm at the Kessler Conference Room at Martha Jefferson Hospital Outpatient Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 PM by Chairman Dick Ruffin.

Minutes taken and transcribed by Anne Oliver, Secretary