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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fauquier County FY 2026 Proposed Budget Released

Warrenton, Virginia – Fauquier County Administrator Janelle J. Downes presented the FY 2026 Proposed Budget to the Board of Supervisors, with a focus on school funding, workforce investment, and capital improvements. The Proposed Budget aims to address rising costs while managing modest revenue growth.

The FY 2026 Proposed Budget totals \$441.5 million, with an overall real estate tax rate of \$0.973 per \$100 of assessed value. The proposed overall real estate tax rate increase is \$0.030, three cents higher than the FY 2025 Adopted Budget. This includes a 3.0 cent increase to the General rate, with no change to the Fire Rescue Levy or the Conservation Easement District Levy. The proposed tax increase is attributed to the School Division due to three main drivers: \$1.0 million in additional School capital improvement funds towards infrastructure and the Taylor Middle School project, \$1.4 million additional to the School Division Operating budget to support the Superintendent's Proposed Budget requests, and \$2.0 million in recurring funds to repair the School Division's health insurance shortage.

Under the recommended rate, the average homeowner's real estate tax bill would increase \$138.13 annually or \$11.51 monthly, using an average residential assessment of \$460,445 based on the 2022 reassessment values.

The following chart sets forth the real estate tax rates as included in the Board of Supervisors' FY 2025 Adopted Budget for Tax Year 2024 and recommended rates in the County Administrator's FY 2026 Proposed Budget for Tax Year 2025:

Tax Rate Change	Tax Year 2024	Tax Year 2025	Change
Overall Real Estate Tax Rate:	\$0.943	\$0.973	\$ 0.030
Real Estate – General	\$0.759	\$0.789	\$ 0.030
Real Estate – Fire & Rescue	\$0.180	\$0.180	\$ 0.000
Real Estate – Conservation Easement District	\$0.004	\$0.004	\$ 0.000

Annual Tax Bill Change	Tax Year 2024	Tax Year 2025	Change
Annual Tax Bill by Assessed Value:	\$0.943	\$0.973	\$ 0.030
Per \$100,000 of assessed value	\$943.00	\$973.00	\$ 30.00
Average Residential Assessment: \$460,445	\$4,342.00	\$4,480.13	\$ 138.13

Note: All tax bills also include a per-parcel fee for the County-wide Stormwater Management Fee, but not displayed above.

The County has advertised a tax rate for Tax Year 2025 of \$0.998. During the budget deliberation process, the Board of Supervisors may elect to adopt a rate lower than \$0.998 or may allocate the increase to another component of the budget, but the 2025 Tax Rate cannot be higher than the advertised rate of \$0.998.

In comparison to the FY 2025 Adopted Budget, changes consist of a \$7.39 million increase in the General Fund, a \$7.92 million increase to School Funds, a \$13.96 million increase to the County Asset Replacement Fund, and a \$0.93 million overall decrease in all other funds. Overall local tax funding increases by \$8,987,177 or 3.92% compared to the FY 2025 Adopted Budget.

The Proposed Budget continues to address compensation needs for current staff and includes a 2.7% cost of living adjustment and an average of 2.0% merit increase for general workforce and a 1.5% salary scale adjustment and one-step pay scale increase for public safety professionals in the Sheriff’s Office and the Fire Rescue System. The Proposed Budget also includes the addition of 3.00 FTEs, of which 1.00 FTE is dedicated to the Sheriff’s Office for the establishment of a Deputy Sheriff (Traffic Enforcement), 1.00 FTE dedicated to Social Services for the establishment of a Social Services Associate, and 1.00 FTE Deputy Treasurer I for the Treasurer’s Office. The Proposed Budget also includes the removal of 2.00 FTEs, 1.00 FTE Drug Court Coordinator in the Opioid Abatement Fund and 1.00 FTE Senior Assistant County Attorney in the Conservative Easement Fund. Overall, the Proposed Budget nets out an increase of 1.00 FTE.

In the Proposed Budget, the School Division’s Operating Fund totals \$182,834,357 which is a \$4.1 million increase over the FY 2025 Amended Budget. This is largely supported by increases in state funds by \$2.4 million and Federal funds by \$453,915, along with an overall increased local recurring transfer of \$3.4 million, which encompasses an additional \$2.0 million in recurring health funds and \$1.4 million in operating funds from the General Fund. The local support of the FY 2026 School Division’s budget is projected to fund 58.4% of total expenditures, including \$11.7 million in consolidated services within the General Fund, \$8.6 million in debt service costs (less credits received) in the Debt Service Fund, \$1.0 million in Capital Projects cash funding, and an operating transfer of \$106.1 million.

The County continues to financially support the Health Insurance Fund strategy that was presented in December 2023 to the Board of Supervisors, in an effort to minimize impact on the tax rate. The

operating transfer of \$106.1 million includes \$20.0 million in dedicated funding towards School Division health insurance employer costs, of which only \$2.0 million is now one-time, down from \$4.0 million in one-time in the FY 2025 Adopted Budget. The reduction of one-time funds and increase in recurring funds ensures a structurally balanced budget.

The Proposed FY 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) plan totals \$151.1 million over the five-year planning period. Of this amount, \$40.4 million would be allocated for School Division projects, \$29.7 million for Fire Rescue projects, \$6.0 million for a Library project, \$2.7 million for Parks and Recreational projects, \$2.1 million for Airport projects, and \$0.2 million for utility and infrastructure projects. In addition, funding is allocated for the design and construction of a new Judicial Center. Debt service for the County increases by approximately \$836,928 to support additional County debt from the Opal Water System, Central Sports Complex Phase II, and Taylor Middle School projects.

The Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on the FY 2026 Proposed Budget on March 20, 2025, beginning at 7:15pm at Fauquier High School, 705 Waterloo Road, Warrenton, Virginia. This public hearing will immediately follow the public hearing on the proposed revisions to the Department of Community Development's fee schedules that begins at 7:00pm. If residents cannot attend the public hearings, comments may be submitted to the Board of Supervisors by email at BOS@fauquiercounty.gov. Information about the FY 2026 Proposed Budget and Board work sessions can be found on the Fauquier County website at <http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments-h-z/management-and-budget>.

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