

Comments Received through April 7, 2020

Submitted March 18 through March 20

Name

Dennis Buracker

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

Governor raising tax on gas Now raising tax in Frederick County when does it stop Winchester raising tax on restaurants It's not just one tax look at the whole picture

Name

Deborah Laboy

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

Please fund the school's. With medical costs going up in insurance and taxes you have bus drivers living paycheck-to-paycheck and some have family plans in the medical a brand new driver can you make a month \$961 and then they will have a family plan which will take \$673.50 and that will leave them \$288 to pay federal taxes state tax and retirement and Social Security another driver that's brand-new just sign on the dotted line she is going to pay \$591.53 without Dental could not afford it he has \$370 left the pay the rest of the taxes with. I know that you guys pay a lot in insurance and do a lot thank you for helping. We will need a small pay increase if possible thank you

Name

Janet Gavin

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

I am writing in support of the proposed 5 cent tax increase. It is alarming that some of the board's members want to limit or reduce taxes at a time when our county's population and needs are growing. Our family moved here from an area with lower property taxes and saw the effects of this: shuttered fire stations and severely delayed response times to emergencies; overcrowded, understaffed schools with numerous structural and HVAC problems; parks with out-of-date and unsafe equipment. I urge the members to consider the long-term when making this decision. The current public health emergency is already affecting numerous industries, including real estate. It is probable that this will cause a sharp decline in property values, and subsequent assessments. This will mean a loss in revenue for the county, which will still have an obligation to provide crucial services to its citizens. Please vote in support of Frederick County and its future.

Name

Mike P Grim

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

I would sincerely hope that in light of the current National crisis you would reconsider ANY increase this year. There have been annual increases each year in one form or another since Mr. Shickle left office. We have all been asked to sacrifice much for the good of our country right now and I feel the Moral thing to do at the least would be to freeze the current budget for the next year to see where we are headed. Your citizens do not need more financial burden at this time. Thank You

Name

Jennifer Myers

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

I am in full support of a tax increase to fund the county's infrastructure. The reality of it is, while no one wants to raise taxes, we have a tax rate that has not had a major increase in years, from my understanding even low due to the recession years back. Costs go up, it is not reasonable for the county to operate on a tax base that hasn't been given the "cost of living" raise. Thank you.

Name

Susanna Gawrysiak

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

I support raising taxes and giving the school board a full budget so they can support our students to the fullest extent.

Name

Kristin Kuntz

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

I am absolutely in favor of a tax increase. Our county is growing at a crazy rate and our schools and our fire/police services can't keep up with this rate of growth. I am also not in favor of how some members of the board find it necessary to insert themselves into the decisions that the school board made. We elected the school board to do that job. I certainly did not elect the board of supervisors to make those decisions. I would also like to share my frustration with Mr. Graber. I spoke at the last meeting in support of a tax increase. I mentioned being a public school teacher in Loudoun. There were 4 of us who spoke at the meeting in support of a tax increase and only one person teaches in Frederick. Mr. Graber said that he found it interesting that those of us who spoke in favor of a tax increase are the ones who would benefit most from it. How do I personally benefit? If anyone benefits from it, I'd think it would be Mr. Graber and his family. He owns 6 acres and his wife's family owns more than 300 acres. I emailed him for clarification on the statement he made but I've heard absolutely nothing back. PLEASE vote for a tax increase. And please stop allowing more development in this county. Our schools can't handle it.

Name

Mike Paschke

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

I am a tax-paying citizen in the Red Bud district. You would have to be blind to not see the enormous growth in housing happening not just in my area, but all over Frederick county. There are over a 1000 new homes being built and planned. These cannot be stopped, as they were approved long ago. The only thing we can do is have the funds needed to support the incoming traffic, students, and safety issues. I am in favor of raising real estate taxes the full 5 cents. In reality it needs to be much higher. Our police and fire departments are overextended. Just about every school is overcrowded, and it isn't going to get better. We keep kicking the can down the road, but the road is nearing the end.

Name

Karen Parks

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

I fully support a tax increase for our schools. We are losing amazing teachers to counties that pay much higher. Our children deserve a wonderful education and our educators deserve to be paid better.

Name

Alison Behan

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

Good Afternoon, I sincerely appreciate being given the opportunity to write in regarding the county budget hearing given the circumstances. I am fully supporting the 5 cent real estate tax increase and feel it needs to be more. Hopefully we can do an additional 5 cents next year as well. If we do not start to recognize the budget needs for this county we will continue to drown. The can has been kicked far enough down the road and now we are at the dead end. Now its what we do at that dead end that will make the difference in this county. We absolutely need to fully fund Frederick County's school budget as well. Our children deserve the best education we can offer. As it is the schools are busting at the seams, almost every single one well over capacity. Even with the addition of Jordan Springs, likely it will be at capacity before you know it with the growth in this county. Under funding Jordan Springs from the requested original amount is already causing a detriment and it hasn't even opened yet! We need to think towards the future vs just trying to put band aids on current situations. We are bleeding, and in need of a trauma surgeon. I hope and pray that the BOS puts on a different hat and becomes those surgeons needed to repair our county. Please fully fund the school board budget and increase real estate taxes by the 5 cents and think about future years of continuing to increase, it may not be easy paying a little more but it truly comes down to the best for our county and the future of Frederick County. Thank you for your time.

Name

Charlotte Henning

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

I am a resident and taxpayer of the Red Bud district and fully support 5 cent tax increase. We need to fully fund our school budget and plan for the future growth that will be occurring, like it or not, due to the previously approved housing developments. Our fire and rescue and police department are also in dire need of staff and the replacement of their communications equipment, among other things. We cannot continue to turn a blind eye. There are extremely qualified, dedicated and knowledgeable individuals who have diligently worked to identify issues and prepare budgets for their various departments. They have been appointed or elected by the public to do so. Please trust their experience and research.

Name

Rebecca Hansen

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

Please, please look around and see the amazing, essential, selfless work that our educators and public servants are doing in this crisis. They are holding our community together. They do this everyday and are invaluable and worthy. We need to invest in them, they are the backbone of our community and they cannot afford to be stretched any thinner or taken for granted any longer. Please vote for a property tax increase. Please vote to fully fund our schools and public servants.

Name

Kara Wolfe

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

I am writing to express my concern over the lack of adequate funding for FCPS. I have one child who attends Millbrook and another who graduated last year. As the years go by and the necessary funding for our school system is not allocated, our children and our community suffer. We are losing highly qualified teachers to neighboring counties who offer higher pay at an alarming rate. We are attempting to educate students in an elementary building that survives with recycling bins that fill with water from a leaky roof that's needed a replacement for years. How can we continue to offer the best education to our children when funding doesn't meet our most basic needs? We aren't asking for funding to professionally develop teachers for a week in Tahiti. We are asking for functional buildings, a raise in teacher salary (that's long overdue), and funding to continue as we are at the bare minimum. What will it take to secure the funding we need? Our children will one day be taking care of all of us. Don't they deserve the best learning environments with the most highly qualified teachers from right here in Frederick County? We cannot continue to squeeze blood from a turnip. It's time to face the facts that our school system NEEDS your support. We not only need a fully funded budget, but I believe we need a tax increase (in which at least HALF of the moneys go to FCPS). Please, face the facts surrounding us in 2020 and support our future. Thank you.

Name

Margaret Myer

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

I would encourage all Members of the Frederick County Board of Supervisors to read and heed the message in the Letter to the Editor entitled "Frederick should rethink proposed tax hike" that was submitted by Karen Wade and that appeared on page A4 of today's (Friday, March 20, 2020) Winchester Star. As a septuagenarian living on a fixed income, I am watching my retirement savings dissipate as the stock market continues its free-fall and the entire country facing a recession that will be as bad as, or quite possibly worse than, the recession of 2008. I have neither the ability to work to replenish my retirement savings nor the years left to wait for an economic recovery. I join Karen Wade in urging you to reconsider the ill-advised plan to raise the real estate rate for county residents, especially in light of the devastating economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Margaret Myer (Mrs. Richard V.) Resident of Gainesboro District

Submitted March 20 through March 22

Name

Margaret Myer

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

I would encourage all Members of the Frederick County Board of Supervisors to read and heed the message in the Letter to the Editor entitled "Wrong time for a tax increase" that was submitted by Scott Anderson and that appeared on page A4 of today's (Saturday, March 21, 2020) Winchester Star. I strongly concur with Scott Anderson's opinion that even considering a 5-cent real estate tax increase during this pandemic that is devastating our economy is completely irresponsible, that this no time any tax increase, and that, if anything, we should be talking about tax cuts.

Name

Sandi Deitz

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

Under the current situation in this country, now is not the time to increase taxes. The current rates are already far higher than what can be viewed as acceptable for the region. With that said, increasing now would be detrimental to the citizens of this county

Name

Crystal Pruitt

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

I do not want my property taxes raised. We live off Senseny Road and can't even get a grocery store back. It is a higher inconvenience. I am against raising property taxes!

Name

Victoria Kids

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

Now is not the time to raise taxes. Period. Many of us are worried about even having jobs after this. Please, look out for the little guys.

Name

Casey

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

Very poor timing to raise any cost of living/ taxes. Put that on the back burner for next year.

Name

Kristin Parthemos

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

We should absolutely not raise taxes. Especially during this difficult time. Many in our town struggle to make ends meet as it is, and after this years events they will most certainly struggle more than ever. If we do anything with taxes, we should be lowering them.

Name

Wendy and Ronald Venskoske

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

Increase in property taxes at this time is a bad decision due to virus. Loss of jobs or decrease of hours. This will be a struggle for citizens of the county. It is being increased for the school budget and this could be done cheaper and don't need be all funded. Before to think of what this county is going through concerning this virus.

Name

Joy E Kirk

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

We are currently living in circumstances unlike any we have experienced before and none of us know when this will end. However, that being said we know there will be a future and we must be prepared. I ask you to vote in support of the five cent tax increase. Our public services, police, fire and rescue, and schools need to know that they have the funding to move forward not go backwards when this crisis ends. It is now more important for us as a community to fund the budget at the advertised rate of a five cent increase. As a community we want to know that the services we need are there for us. As a community we need to know that when we call 911 someone is there to answer and respond to the call and the equipment is in good working condition. As a community we need

to know that the schools our children love and the teachers they depend on are there to return to when the time comes. Now more than ever we need to retain the educators we have. We will need our stable, experienced workforce when this crisis ends to help us move forward. That stable, experienced workforce is equally important with our police and fire and rescue. As a community we need to show those who are serving us in this time of crisis our full support. It is not the time for us and them, it is not the time to nit pick every small detail, it is the time to come together and ask what is best for our community? What is best for the future of our community? What will ensure we have a future when this crisis is over? We need to stand up for our community and all that it offers. A five cent increase is a beginning, a beginning to moving forward. I ask you to please vote in support of the five cent increase.

Name

Timothy Parthemos

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

I believe this is unnecessary. Personal property tax is way to high to begin with and now you want more on houses. This is an outrage. What are you gonna do for us? How about you take away personal property tax instead? At this time I would strongly recommend not doing anything to raise a households expenses especially in this time of need.

Submitted March 23 through March 25

Name

Christopher Malone

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

I support the proposal. The classrooms are over populated and the need to open up Jordan Springs is necessary. The additional funding to payroll increase is also supported to keep competitive pay to attract teachers. Finally, I would like to see a big investment around technology. The Covid-19 challenge has pointed out major flaws in the education system to handle online learning if needed. I could spend the next 2585 characters pointing out the failings of the remainder 12 weeks of school but everyone should be aware of it.

Name

Mark Regan

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

The Board of supervisors meeting should be postponed for this year. Shame on these people.

Name

Kris Carty

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

(no comment submitted)

Name

Dana Taylor

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

Given the current economic status and subsequent unemployment or reduced hours that many people are experiencing, I don't think it would be prudent to increase property taxes this year. Let people recover, and reconsider it next year.

Name

Lucinda Klahre

Magisterial District**Comments**

Taxes are high enough. I can't believe they are even thinking about raising them again. Stocks are falling, people are losing jobs, maybe a recession. Have a heart and even thinking about it, stresses people out

Name

Mark Danzig

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

I first want to thank you for your leadership during this difficult time. I live and own land in an area that has very limited internet reception (Green Springs Area), we are very lucky to have Winchester Wireless. My family does find it very difficult not to have the support of all our own County Leaders to support Winchester Wireless and the required technological advancements utilizing internet reception in our County. Over the years, we have always paid our taxes on time while supporting any tax increases; I have never been put in a position to have to author a letter to our Community Leaders. I have no objection to raising taxes to make our County better, at the same time; you have a responsibility to your constituents to look out for our best interest, specifically; equal and accessible internet reception throughout the ENTIRE County you represent. Without companies like Winchester Wireless in place, the situation many of us and our families in your County are facing would be psychologically and physically worse, internet service is a staple in society. Please remember why you are there, to represent us; please ensure your community is treated fairly across the board. Thank you for your time.

Name

Michael Hern

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

Do not raise taxes. Look for inefficiency and correct accordingly.

Name

Janet Murphy
Red Bud

Comments

We need to go forward and raise our taxes as our 1st responders and our educators need a raise as they are on the front lines when all this is over. The school buildings still need to be updated and maintained. We will also have to address over crowding sooner than later as our street has gone from 5 kids to 25 in the last 6 months.

Name

Gregory Bradford

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

I would not support raising taxes for FY2021 due to a lot of people being without income so long with the virus going on. It will take months for people to recover financially to get back on their feet. Please do not do this at this time.

Name

Delsie Foster

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

Now is not the time to be raising taxes. There is too much worry as it is on how we are paying the bills for the ones that are out of work. Which is most of our area. We are struggling and don't need this at this time.

Name

Nick Horton

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

Do not raise taxes. Cut budget to anything but police and fire.

Name

Ann Stotler

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

I used to be proud to call Virginia home but now I'm angered by all the greed this county shown! Not taking into consideration that people whom are originally from here are suffering from those who have moved here but work across the mountain making a lot more income. They are here driving up the costs of housing causing impacts on our roads! We can't afford anymore taxes!!! Thinking those pushing for higher taxes try living on \$12 a hour! You can't!

Name

Lora Walburn

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

I wish to express my opposition, alarm even, at the proposed five-cent tax increase, which would be the second increase in two years, last year's following a reassessment when the Board did not opt to adopt the tax-neutral rate. I concur with Supervisors J. Douglas McCarthy, Blaine Dunn and Shawn Graber request for more details from the school division and with Dunn and McCarthy that the increase should only be provided if the school division justified its budget. While general government departments and Constitutional Offices are required to provide detailed justifications for not only current budget but any proposed increase, it does not appear that the Schools are held to that same standard. At this juncture, it is time for ALL to review expenditures and trim back unnecessary items. This is not the time to raise taxes - again!

Name

Sherry Keenan

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

No don't raise the tax it is time that everyone needs to tighten their belts.

Name

Wolfgang Winzer

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

May I suggest we review the 2021 Budget proposal thoroughly and carefully to identify "saving" potentials. Raising taxes should be an absolute last resort in order to balance any budget. In over 25 years in executive management I have learned many lessons about keeping businesses profitable in challenging times. In a first step I would suggest applying the 80/20 principle to identify the most "expensive" budget items and concentrate to tweak these large \$

items first. Chief amongst these will be the "School District Expenses" which need to be made completely transparent item-by-item before any actions can be taken. Every budget proposal I ever encountered and discussed with my teams always contained three categories: Must Have, Should Have and Nice to Have Items. A responsible approach would be to cut into the "Nice to Have" items first. Finally (and more generically) I would suggest Frederick County to develop a longer term strategic economic development plan. I have a hard time to understand why we are even having these budget issues in the first place. Frederick County's population has grown significantly over the past years - which should have led to higher tax revenue way above normal inflation rate. Instead of chasing major businesses into neighboring counties we should have an agreed upon, strategic plan to grow the business community/revenue stream. I would be happy to contribute to the process in more detail - feel free to contact me.

Name

Merle Spaid

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

Do not raise our taxes, we are being taxed to death right now. Start using the lottery money for what is supposed to be used for and you will not have to raise taxes on us!

Name

Theresa Moyers

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

Before we raise anything i think we should those that have not been working get out of debt. It has been hard on most. So before you to ower problems why not wait. We are looking at maybe 6 months of this.

Name

Vicki O'Donnell

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

I do not believe property tax rates should be raised at this time...unless you also start significantly restricting growth in the county. The number of new developments/houses in the area is out of control and infrastructure is not keeping pace with the population growth. The fix is not to raise taxes on current residents, it is to stem the influx of new residents.

Name

Aaron Clark

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

As a resident of not only Frederick county, but also the stonewall district, I am in favor of raising the tax necessary to increase the budget for our school system. I have been appalled at the lack of action to move forward on this.

My son will be attending James wood high next year and the school is in desperate need of renovations. The county continues to grow and our children deserve better than what this board has been giving them! So I am all in for raising the tax needed.

Name

Bernadette Monahan

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

I would like to thank you for considering a tax increase to fund our emergency services and our schools. I know that with the additional funding Frederick county will be better prepared to face the massive growth that is still going to come. With the added funds schools will be able to serve the most important members, our youth, our future. Our emergency services will provide much needed safety and protection of all our community members. We can no longer be shortsighted and not plan for the future. I am not a fortune teller but this crisis we are experiencing shall pass. The board of supervisors must pass a tax increase. Thank you.

Name

R. Beatty

Magisterial District**Comments**

Good Morning,

I want to voice my opinion on the upcoming budget. Now is not the time for increases for ANYONE. The schools are out of control with spending. I know as I was an employee for about 3 years there. I have seen tremendous waste and spending on non essential items. I can provide exact items, times, dates etc from my employment. My wife retired from the system with 40 plus years and has seen more waste than me. Our county and so called leaders are acting like Loudoun and Fairfax Counties. The Snowden Bridge subdivision with their school and now a park and swimming pool. If those occupants in those housing areas want these items, let them pay for it with extra taxes. That is what Lake Holiday residence have to do for the Lake repairs. Shawneeland residence have an extra tax for their area on roads and maintenance. The same is true for Mt. Falls Park. I don't live in either of these areas.

Just a couple of months ago we all came to the BOS meeting in trying to get support for the higher towers for internet. You had already made up your mind before the meeting. You better try and remember that WE THE PEOPLE of Frederick County thought we elected the correct officials. Now the majority have have found out that they made a BIG MISTAKE. Novembers will come in the near future and WE THE PEOPLE will be out well before election reminding the current and future voters of the mess that we have here in this county. I contacted my representative Mr. Graber before the BOS meeting and we had a long discussion. He explained the problems with the internet issue and I respected his position and views. We discussed other issues and he assured me that within a few days to a week that I would here from the various department heads on my concerns as well as others in the area. THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN as of this email. I have lost all faith in his representation as well as the one before him. I have two grandchildren in Fred. Co Schools now and one can't or hasn't received any online school work. The other grandson receives his everyday from a private school. I would be willing to bet that most of the teachers in the system aren't even trying to send work or don't have the resources to do so. If thats the case, the Frederick County School Systems needs to be reworked and responsible people placed in charged. I was the only one in my tenure at the time which setup and used Grade Quick at my school. The principal at the time wanted me to help the other instructors with the use. I tried and was told by a couple that they weren't interested and wasn't going to

be there that much longer. I've seen with my own eyes a person that was reassigned to assist the students in the various classes, sit in their office reading the paper for half the morning, eating donuts and drinking coffee. The person never came to a one of us instructors for our students. This person's spouse is still working and making terrible decisions for our system. I can mane them and the decisions just recently that were made. I have no problem testifying or bring this out if I thought it would do any good.

The county should lookout for the unregistered vehicles in Shawneeland and Mt. Falls Park for personal property tax and the amount of FARM USE tags running around in the Back Creek area. I understand but do not agree why our Sheriffs Office can't assist the Comm. of Revenue with this issue. I know that a lot of the offenders live in the same area and are possible friends with law enforcement. Therefore they don't want to write summons etc. I brought this to the attention of Ms. Murphy before the election.

The BOS I would hope will not raise the taxes for now or at least cut it in half. If the school system would have told me the same thing as Dr. Sovine said that the school at Jordan Springs will sit empty. My reply would have been to be sure to winterize it then, or come up with the Line Item list of their budget and realize that this isn't LOUDOUN and FAIRFAX CO.

I think that the BOS should consider Tax Relief for here, now during this crisis and extend the dead line in personal property and real estate taxes until September or October for the first half, and February or March for the second half. Then school system needs to be brought in line and the BOS have to MAN UP and not worry about the so called Loudoun Co. and Fairfax Co. people calling and wanting all these extras that we can't afford.

PAY DOWN THE DEBT FIRST and be responsible SUPERVISORS.

Name

Matthew Herbert

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

Please look beyond this moment concerning the Corona virus and place your eyes upon the future and the fate of Frederick county. Vote to support a 5 cent tax increase and pledge those monies to help schools, support our FD/PD/EMS, fix aging infrastructure, and design a better Frederick county top down and bottom up.

Name

Sue Anne Teal

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

I would like to address you on behalf of long-term Frederick County residents, senior citizens, retirees; people who are not making six-figure incomes---in short, the people who could be driven out of their homes by the rising cost of living in Frederick County.

Our local governments have a number of tools available to them which give them access to 'other people's money'. Property taxes, sales taxes, increased water rates, licenses, permits, fees---the list goes on, and it is like being nibbled to death by ducks! All of these increases in taxes, fees and rates accumulate and become significant.

If I told you that I'm going to have a hard time paying all this, you would probably reply that I should have done a better job of planning and that I'll have to tighten my financial belt. With respect, I could say the very same thing to you.

In the very near future, many of us are going to have to make some very difficult choices about what constitutes 'needs' and what are simply 'wants'. I would suggest that you take a long, hard look at the County budget and do what you have to do to avoid burdening us with additional taxes.

I object strongly to any property tax increase. Thanks you for your attention.

Name

Vaughn Whitacre

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

No, by no means. New growth should pay their own way and the school system needs to trim the fat and stop the wasteful spending. Any resident who feels the school system needs more money needs to put their name on a list and pay as much as they want. People are having a hard enough time making ends meet.

Name

Rhonda Sargent

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

Although I realize that the proposed budgets will not be voted on at the meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2020, I wanted to voice my support of the option for the subject proposed budget that was approved by the public works committee during their regularly scheduled meeting held Tuesday, February 25, 2020. This proposed budget option includes no sanitary district fee increase, no reduction of sanitary district staff as well as returning the amount allocated for snow removal in the current fiscal year budget to the reserve fund to bring it back up to where it needs to be. I respectfully request that the board approves the proposed budget option as recommended by the public works committee.

My husband and I have lived in Shawneeland since 2007 and have been very satisfied with the services provided by the staff. They work hard behind the scenes as well during emergency situations such as major snow storms and when we have high wind storms. During the latter they're out ensuring that if trees have come down onto the roads they're cutting them up and moving them out of the way so that both emergency personnel as well as residents have means of ingress and egress.

In addition, I would like to say that I worked for the county for 30 years, the majority of which were with public works (as you are aware, Shawneeland is an entity that falls under public works), I have somewhat of an understanding of how things work. I can also see where some of the residents that live here are coming from. I'm not the county's representative, but I do my best to try and explain certain things they bring up during the Sanitary District meetings in an attempt to help them understand. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. I try to look at things from both sides to help me make my decisions. I would also like to say that because of my time with public works, I know that there is a lot of necessary maintenance/work that the staff performs up here that many residents are totally unaware of. This may be where some of the confusion comes from.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Name

Pearl Underwood

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

We don't need additional tax increases. We need better management of our current funds. Population and building continues to increase and reductions need to be put in place.

Name

James Foster

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

Please do not raise our taxes we have enough stuff to worry about at this time. Trying to figure out how we are paying more taxes shouldn't be a burden that we have to face in this uncertain time.

Name

Dody Stottlemeyer

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

To the Board of supervisors and staff,

Thank you for allowing public comment in this manner, it is certainly appreciated by me, since the budget meetings usually go on so long. My job requires me to be in at 4 AM, it is often not a realistic option for me to attend one, then try to perform my job properly the next day. With the closures being forced upon the citizens of the County by the Governor, many businesses are not only shutting down, some will not make it back into the economic arena. The folks they employ are not receiving wages, which translates into less disposable income. I think that a tax hike in these conditions, particularly a 5 cent hike, is absolutely the wrong thing to do. Circumstances have been altered that would make this hike seem a normal event.

Optimistically speaking, however, the largest chunk of the budget, going to the school system, should be able to be reduced, since they should have monies left from the closures this year. They should conduct residual business wisely and carry over what monies are left from this calendar year, to next years' operations. That should reduce their piece of the pie for the 2021 budget. Another bright spot, a realization among the County as a whole, of the changing educational circumstances that this has produced (which could be sustained) for the children of the County. Seen now, the concept that instead of building a \$90M amusement/babysitting center, perhaps the wiser option would be to expand the broadband in the County, while maintaining what schools we already have. Then, perhaps, the school board will entertain a "work from home" option for those students mature enough to be able to be left unsupervised, attending online school from home. This could be a new option that would benefit the County as a whole, both taxpayers, parents, and schools, and the most benefit going to the student. Most kids that mature are already excelling in studies, and would benefit by not being held back in a classroom situation. Thank you for your time, and for this public comment option.

Name

Mike Faison

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

Thank you for taking the time to hear from us the citizens of Frederick county about our concerns and thoughts about the upcoming 2020-2021 budget. I first, would like to ask that the Board of Supervisors do something special for the senior classes of our local high schools, as these seniors now face uncertainty in their future educational pursuits and may not be able to enjoy the bachelorette ceremonies that are a traditional rite of passage in the education culture. Please think of some way to honor these graduates and the families that have sacrificed time, energy and other resources to get their kids to this level of success.

Speaking of success, I had the privilege to be a part of the Frederick County Public Schools 101 Class, earlier this month we visited the Dowell J Howard Center and got a chance to meet students who were excelling at the trades in which they were being trained and educated in. The students from Dow J Howard were recognized in Los Vegas for their outstanding work and brought home first place trophies in their respective trade fields. The automotive trade students also brought home top awards from the local Virginia state automotive competitions. I think it's imperative that the Board of Supervisors continue to fund these specialized programs, and fund the school boards budget so that the Frederick County Public Schools can help our students to advance their lives and careers, whether it be in the trades or any other professional career. At the end of the tour at the Dow J Howard Center, I asked a question, "Have any of the Board of Supervisors take a tour or visited the school?". The response from the staff was, "No". Which leads me to this question, How can you all question the school boards request of funds if you have not even taken the time to visit certain schools and talk with the staff about their needs? How can you challenge certain programs, like the deep equity program. When you have not participated in it or taken the time to read about it. How can you deny funding for school buildings when you have not toured them all and seen the lack of HVAC or other serious problems that our schools need to fix. Speaking of "needs", we have over 100 students in our county schools considered homeless that rely on school feeding programs. I commend the Bright Futures leadership, the bus drivers and local volunteers who are feeding kids while school is out. What has the Board of Supervisors done to help in this Covid-19 crisis?

In closing of my comments I recommend that the Board of Supervisors show Superintendent Dr. Sovine, his staff and the educators who work hard in educating our future citizens with respect. Respect is paying our teachers a livable competitive wage, respect is paying veteran bus drivers more money and offering other incentives to keep them on staff, respect is not questioning or having lack of faith in the school boards mission, it's empowering the school board by saying, "we will work with you." Please fund the 20-21 physical year budget with appropriate funding so that we can move forward with the list of CIP projects that will make a positive impact on our students lives

Name

William S Roberts

Magisterial District**Comments**

Not sure if this goes here but with tech changing real hard wired internet needs to be on the table. Years ago I was told it's a right of way issue with orchards etc. Internet is now more important than phone. Apple Pie Ridge needs this further out as do many areas I presume. Look at current situation, it's a need not a want. It's time to do something with these companies and stipulations. Thanks for hearing that out.

Name

Victoria Hitchcock

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

Do NOT raise our taxes !! Citizens of Frederick Co pay enough taxes already.

Name

Amy Hall

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

As a Republican and resident of Frederick County, I am in full support of a tax increase. With a fixed income and a husband on disability, I know the challenges of balancing wants and needs. The items requested by FCPS are needs. Yes, this will affect my taxes and it will cost me more, but I am invested in the future of our community and our children. And, I implore you to look past the current pandemic situation and consider the reality that once things settle that our schools will still be overcrowded and teachers will be leaving for Loudoun County to make a better living. Do not let the temporary, current status of our economy impact your vote. I ask this consideration by ALL elected supervisors. Thank you.

Name

Pam Wolfrey

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

Still planning to hold a public meeting? Actually didnt the governor close down restaurants, theatres, bowling alleys, etc to stop the spread? Arent gatherings of 10 or more frowned upon. Arent people being chastised for still going out and going to places where people gather? Now you have officials, adults, totally bucking the system and not listening to their own advice about social Distancing. What a fine example you are setting for the people and children of this region. You have lost all of my respect.

Name

Sarah Shoremount

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

I support whatever tax raises are needed to fully fund the school's budget! This county is falling behind and with so many more residents needs to step up school funding for the new schools such as Jordan Springs ES and cost of living pay raises/step increases to keep great teachers in the county.

Name

James Gillispie

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

Please seriously consider the funding request of Dr. Sovine and the FCPS division. With a new elementary school in need of adequate funding, a growing population, and a decreasing pool of available educators, our public schools need more than just adequate funding to meet the needs of all students.

Name

Amber Flynn

Magisterial District**Comments**

Please think of raising teacher salaries. Teachers are molding the leaders of our future and deserve it :)

Name

John Myers

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

Members of the Board of Supervisors, While I'm fiscally conservative, something needs to be done about addressing the overcrowding in our schools. My children are in classes of 30+ students and have been for several years. I don't like paying higher taxes, but I think it's time. As a result, I support the 5 cent increase and appreciate you doing the same. John Myers

Name

Julie Napear

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

I support a tax increase. Our schools do amazing things for our community and both deserve, and badly need, financial support.

Name

Ronnie Wilkins

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board, Let me begin by saying this Budget meeting should have been postponed. I am 100 % against any increase in Taxes at this time, with the current uncertainty in what is going to happen and how long this will last, this is Not the time to burden our County residents with even more worry. The Schools will have a surplus, as well as the Sheriff's dept. No Deputies needed for schools, therefore No overtime needed. This is the time for leadership to say, We need to take care of all the folks that will be hurting from the fallout of this situation we are in. Next year is another real estate reassessment, let's look at what's ahead and tell All Depts. to work with what they have and be thankful they have a job where many don't or won't. I thank you for your time. I will follow up with each of you to make sure you got this letter.

Name

Ashley Loy

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

We should not increase personal property tax as I feel it is already expensive enough. It is ridiculous that we have to pay tax on items we already own anyways.

Name

Heather McDowell

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

People are having a hard time now with the taxes so why raise them. You will make it worst on so many families that are already struggling, thank god we are not one of them.

Name

Mark Reddy

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

The current crisis will pass and we as a community need to look towards our future. I am in favor of the proposed tax rate increase so as to better fund the county's needs. We should not focus on bare bones funding if we wish to attract business and workers with their families. Growth is inevitable and we must plan and provide for the future. Thank you.

Name

David Michael Bowen

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

I fully support a 5-cent real estate tax increase in Frederick County in order to keep our county strong. I support any other measures that will bring our public services up to date, as we are way behind in providing necessary educational and other supports to our residents. Thank you for voting in favor of this much-needed tax increase.

Name

Lora Jarrell

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

While we are in unchartered territory and we are all impacted in some way, this is temporary...it will end. However, the decision regarding the proposed tax increase and funding for the schools will have long-term implications, reaching far beyond this time if we do not act responsibly. I urge you to keep the proposed 5 cent tax increase. This does not go into effect until July 1, when we will hopefully be looking back on this strange time. But education continues none the less. We still need to open Jordan Springs. We still need new teachers to support the growth in the county and the overcrowding in our classrooms and schools. We still need all of the things we needed when the budget was first presented. If we've learned anything from this experience, it's that education is even more vital to our kids than we thought. And schools and teachers do not just provide education. The only time some kids eat is at school. Over 900 kids get food packs to take home so they can eat over the weekend. They are getting emotional and physical supports that many parents are not equipped to provide. Kids don't get to make choices. They don't choose who their parents are or where they live. They have to live and hopefully thrive in whatever situation they are in. And, whether or not you agree, the schools play a critical role in helping kids learn and grow in circumstances many of us would not believe. It's not their fault. They need us. We have gaps in technology in this county that need to be addressed so every kid has access to internet and an equal opportunity. It is a difficult time. But we have to look past this and to the future. Voting on and passing a budget now needs to support our future and our growth. I urge you, please keep the 5 cent tax increase. Please fund the school budget. Our kids are counting on us. This is not the time to hold back. This is the time to invest in our county and our kids.

Name

Leah Marabella

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

Education needs to become a priority in Frederick County. The current budget doesn't allow us to even sustain our education system. A tax increase is necessary to do this. The fundamental problem is the development that has been allowed to continue with no plan in place on how to support the public institutions that are stressed as a result of this. Why can't we make developers pay proffers like they do in other counties? This combined with a tax increase would be a start. Step it up Frederick County!!!

Name

Douglas & Candace Adams

Magisterial District

Comments

My wife and I are 73 years old and live in a 55+ retirement community in Frederick County (Village at Harvest Ridge). We moved here six years ago to retire and escape the ballooning county budget and taxes of Loudoun County (after having moved from Fairfax County earlier for the same reasons). There are **many** retirees here in Frederick County who have limited/fixed incomes (like us) and are opposed to large tax increases like the one currently under consideration (potentially an 8+% increase).

When we lived in Fairfax County and Loudoun County, we watched as the school boards in both counties drove the costs of the county government excessively higher and higher, demanding large increases year over year. Their “game” was to ask for much higher than they actually needed to run the school system, and accept a lesser amount handed down from the county administrators which was actually what they wanted in the beginning. This style was used over and over again while they thought no one noticed.

The school board of Loudoun watched the Fairfax charade and learned from this “game”, enhancing the style and garnering very large increases every year. It now appears that the Frederick County school board has been “taking lessons” from their rich counties nearby and want to cash in. They constantly compare salaries and benefits to these counties, where the cost of living is substantially higher than Frederick County.

We realize that inflation is inevitable and fully expect to have some increase in county taxes as the years go by, but to be potentially facing an 8+ % increase (\$0.61 to \$0.66) is unnerving to say the least. During these difficult times dealing with the coronavirus and the selloff of the stock market (IRA and 401-K’S) is very hard. We depend on our savings to last our lifetime and hearing that our taxes will potentially rise so much makes it all the more difficult. Please consider the smallest raise this year especially with all that we are facing!

Name

Samantha Kilkus

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

My children attend Sherando High School. The school is overcrowded, which I’m sure you’re aware of. They are also both students in the band, and my husband and I are frequent volunteers. The band is too big for one instructor! The choir is allowed an instructor and an assistant with less students, so why doesn’t the band have an assistant? I can only assume it’s budgetary. Please leave financial space for an aid for the band. It’s irresponsible to make one adult oversee that many children (teenagers!) at once.

Name

Stephanie Hardy

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

More \$\$\$\$ to the teacher.

Name

Neila Harrigan

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

NO way am I in favor of cutting staff, or contracting any of the work out. As things stand as of today, we have a great team that is doing a great job.... No increase in taxes! A committee could be formed to work with the SSDAC to go over each item by item and make suggestion on what could be cut back or other ways to save money.

Name

Sonia Marfatia-Goode

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

if you had a child, and had to stay home with your child during this time, you would appreciate the teachers way more than you do. they deserve a 10% raise. this includes anyone that cares for our children, including our bus drivers, resource teachers, administrators. you would give the school board what they are asking for and trust that they are giving our kids what they need. that's what they were voted for. you would not micromanage them. that's what I would do. I support raising taxes and giving the school board, fire department, sheriff's office what they need. I support fixing our infrastructure. I dont believe you should pay for the radio system outright. it's not realistic to think we shouldn't have debt. I have debt on my house, my car, school loans. but I make sure I have money in the bank and give my kids what they need. that's how the county should operate. let's pay our teachers what they are worth, which is way more than what we are paying them now. lets build that new high school that the county has been talking about building for 7 years. lets make this county a better place to live

Name

Maria L. Bowen

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

I support the proposed 5-cent real estate tax increase!

Name

Jeri Swogger

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

The events of the past several weeks have clearly identified who the true leaders are in this community. While the school system has stepped up and provided food to students, communication to families, and support and coordination with local business, what have we heard from our local governing body? Crickets. As our hospital and health workers rally to prepare for and fight against this disease, what have we heard from our local governing body? Crickets. While our sheriff's department has set plans in place to be ready to address the needs of our citizens, what have we heard from our county government? Crickets. Even before our nation was dealing with

COVID19, we have known who the true leaders are in this community. Now, what has happened in the last two weeks only drives the point home even further. It's time for this community to put our money where the leadership is. As a resident of this county, I would ask that you support the tax increase as advertised (5 cent increase) and provide the schools and our essential services with the funding they have requested.

Name

Robin Young

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

March 25, 2020

Input on the budget:

I do not know that you have in place a procedure to read these before you vote so this may all be in vain, but here goes.

The lack of a professionally presented and cohesive document to review the budget from home was a great hardship. Knowing in advance that Covid 19 required you to cap attendance in the room, the county administrator's PowerPoint ought to have been put online. The county is still not thinking on its feet about the realities of life under a pandemic.

Revenue:

Absolutely go for the increase in occupancy tax at hotels. At the point we get out of quarantine, I81 will be clogged with people going to check on relatives or get to the beach. We are a key stopover point and though revenues will be done for this spring, they should climb.

As the Commissioner of the Revenue said, we would need to spend some more money on tourism development, that 1.5% gap, but we could and should. Increased visitation here puts money into our hotels and restaurants and gas stations.

On sharing revenue with the schools. Have you investigated how the schools will need/use/spend/receive funds while being closed down for months? We don't want to stint them and we absolutely need to keep our salaries competitive with (note I did not say equal to) surrounding NOVA. I would suggest you study this ASAP.

I would recommend enacting a cap of 5 cents increase but not imposing it tonight. We should fully support the schools, but we don't know what their level is.

The Tax collector has time to get the bills out.

I hope you realize that in the economic shutdown being experienced, many people might lose their homes. Do you really want to be another nail in their coffin? I would have supported the proposed increase, even though I realize that we are in this pickle because previous boards failed to take bold action when it was needed 6 -10 years ago.

Expenditures:

My beginning comment, after reading the detail on the fire department fuel requests is that this is the wrong year to implement strict controls. If you insist on giving them the amount you propose, which is less than they asked for, I urge you to place the difference in a reserve account. They are likely to use more fuel this and next budget years for two reasons.

- The medical emergency – when it hits Frederick County – will reduce mutual aid response. Units from other counties will be fully occupied there and our vehicles will drive more.
- More trips might be expected in transporting critical Covid 19 cases to Winchester Medical Center or in evaluating patients for transport at home. More calls.

I am pleased to see you approved more fire fighter/EMS positions. I only hope it will prove enough when ours go out on quarantine or fall ill. In New Orleans more than 25% of their paramedics are in quarantine.

From my years of experience in local government, if somebody asks you for a humble tractor, they must need it. Give it to them. Don't make them use some 1919 equipment, which I've known to happen.

Airport and Detention Center expenses, and revenue from the former should reduce due to decreased flights and prisoner release per pandemic policies.

If the federal government offers any debt relief provisions, this should be pursued for school debt amelioration. I see zero analysis on the two sanitary district funds so I don't know if we are running them into the ground or funding them appropriately.

I hope everyone stays safe and well

Name

Kerri Ann Kite

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

I support the advertised tax rate increase of \$.05. I understand we are entering uneasy waters. It may seem like a bad time to raise taxes on our county. I know this is a hard decision. With an almost guaranteed economic downturn coming, it is important to get this guaranteed income for our county. With massive closures, we are losing important revenue from our retail and hospitality businesses. Our actual revenue is likely to be less than our estimated. Sadly, the revenue will have to fall on the residents. This is worrying as we have many county services that are in great need now and that need will not go away. All the students in our schools will still need to return in the fall. Our fire and rescue will be challenged during this time and will likely be over budget for certain precautionary supplies like masks. During the previous recession, we saw property taxes go down. My property taxes were reduced by \$500 over the course of 5 years. This was due to falling property values and reduction in tax rates. I am concerned because public services like schools never returned to the funding they received prior to the recession. The communication received from FCPS has been stellar. From the moment the schools were closed, teachers were emailing parents ideas on how to keep their children learning and engaged. They were doing this in the evenings and the weekends. They have been working hard for the children in our community during these uncertain times. Please consider this tax increase for the upcoming year and reassess next year when we know more accurately the impact these closures have had. Also, I think this format should be introduced earlier in the budget process to assess the wants and needs of your constituency before the budget is mostly formed.

Name

David Kelly

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

Please do not raise property tax rates again. If you don't have enough money, it means you are spending too much. Perhaps there would be \$500,000 more revenue per year if the Board had not voted against the cat litter facility. The excuses for needing more money are the same every year. Do not raise taxes again.

Name

Dana Kelly

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

I am writing in order to encourage you to vote “no” on any and all measures that would increase the property tax rate in Frederick County. I also implore you to aggressively pursue a way to convince your fellow County Supervisors to do the same. It seems that your vote alone will not be enough. I have lived in the same house for over 19 years. Over that time period, my property tax has gone from \$2046 per year to \$2696 per year. That is an increase of more than 30%! The School Board and various other agencies ask for more and more money every year. It has been said that if the School Board does not receive all the money it is requesting, that they may not be able to open the new elementary school. If opening the new school is their lowest priority, then that may well be true. It is not my job, nor is it your job, to instruct the various agencies on how to prioritize their spending. It is your job to decide how much the residents of the county will be taxed. It is my position that our tax rate is high enough. A big reason that this county has experienced continued growth is that the sales and property taxes remain relatively low. Please find a way to avoid an increase in our property tax rate. Thank you for your service to the residents of Frederick County.

Name

Shaniqua Williams

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

My name is Shaniqua Williams, I am a resident of the Shawnee district and I serve as the president of the Frederick County Education Association.

I appreciate the chance to submit my remarks to you ahead of time, thank you for using your resources to hear from your constituents.

It is no secret that this time of year you often hear from many people that the needs of the county is great. I hope you know and believe that this is indeed true. It is essential that we fund the programs and services of our county, so they can continue to serve the community effectively. Being able to have the best resources for fire and safety, law enforcement, and the public schools will show the value Frederick County places on these programs. Rick Warren once said “to know where your heart is, just look at where you put your money”. Where is your heart? Are you listening to the needs of the programs that need you to fund them, are you listening to your constituents?

I'm writing to you today in support of a \$0.05 real estate tax increase. The nature of Frederick County appears to be that the words ‘tax increase’ are taboo. However it is shortsighted for the county to keep taxes the same. Failure to raise taxes, in a time when the needs are so great for all the programs that depend on this Board to fund them, will mean that the issues & needs will only increase & get worse as the time passes.

In particular for the schools if there are no additional funds given and taxes remain the same it is almost a guarantee that the school district will lose highly qualified employees, which as a ripple effect will increase the number of students served in one classroom, among other things; & for our students, including our most at risk students, this is an extreme disservice to their needs and their future.

Across the board, county supported programs and services will not be able to recruit, as well as they should, if they cannot make their program attractive; if they cannot make their program stand out from others locally.

Listen to your constituents, we know that the work is hard, we know that difficult decisions will be made, but reach out and be informed on the “ramifications” of some of the choices that can be made.

I encourage you to vote for this budget as if you have someone you love in every school,

every fire house, or in law enforcement, vote yes on the tax increase, your county is depending on you.
Thank you.

Name

Dan Cunningham, President Greenwood Volunteer Fire & Rescue Company

Magisterial District**Comments**

We greatly appreciate your support to the Fire and Rescue System. I wanted to make known to you my thoughts on keeping the Volunteer Budget request intact this year. We know the funds allocated to the Volunteer Companies (their budget) is a part of the Fire and Rescue Department budget. In fact, we have worked very hard to become the Fire and Rescue System. We don't want to be known as "Volunteer" and "Staff". So, any funds allocated to the Department are greatly appreciated. The greater part of the recent department budgets has focused on increasing staff to meet the current call volume. As well as providing individual equipment for the staff. With that said there are 11 Volunteer companies, each with unique challenges. Some have volunteers to respond to calls, some have volunteers to help with fundraising. The majority of Volunteer companies do not have enough volunteers of each category. Most Volunteer companies can be financially self-sufficient, with their own fundraising, for day to day expenses, until they must replace a piece of equipment. The Volunteer companies have operated mostly on a flat line of funding from the county for the past 8 years. That support funding and individual fund-raising efforts do not leave much cushion to offset from a Volunteer companies' day to day expenses to replace an ambulance (\$300,000) or fire truck (\$650,000). The support we ask for this year will help with day to day expenses while allowing for a cushion to be able to purchase new equipment or at least to secure a new equipment loan.

Name

Robert Dalton

Magisterial District**Comments**

Hopefully it's not too late to submit comments. Please see below... thank you!

I support Dr Sovine's recommended increase of \$10.9 million to benefit the children of Frederick County. Every aspect of this plan is important and critical to the quality of life in Frederick County. With Dr. Sovine's proposed budget, there would be a minimal impact to families' monthly budgets.

Frederick County remains one of the most desirable locations to live in the state of Virginia. We have access to the cities, but don't pay the city prices to live there. We have family owned restaurants in the county and Old Town Winchester, farms that are embracing the emerging agribusiness industry, along with the rivers and mountains that people drive hours to enjoy.

This area is becoming a wonderful place to raise a family. With that comes the community responsibility of quality education. Quality education does not just benefit those families with children or those parents who are teachers.

It benefits the entire community.... Childhood education forms friendships, teaches them how to be good people, and gives them a reason to come back to THEIR community to start businesses and pursue their dreams.

Dr. Sovine's proposal is in the best interest of our county.

1. 4% increase (\$5.2 million) for teachers, bus drivers other instructional staff. Over the last couple of weeks, if you surveyed parents who are at home with their kids, I think they would unanimously agree that the teachers, bus drivers and instructional staff deserve every penny of this raise. This increase is not making our teachers rich... it's not paying them like Loudoun County... it's paying them what they deserve and making Frederick County an attractive place to start a teaching career. We need a competitive starting salary in order to attract the best teachers to the area. Again, this is not to compete with Loudoun... We are the 2nd lowest paying county within a 30 mile radius... this is just to stay relevant in the Shenandoah Valley.
2. \$3.3 million for 22 classroom teachers due to enrollment growth, 5 behavioral specialists for children with unique needs, and 26 instructional assistants
 - a. The enrollment growth speaks for itself. More kids... you need more teachers. With growth you have more people paying taxes.
 - b. 5 behavioral specialists... Truth be told, family structure is so important to children, but not all children have family structure and guidance. Dr. Sovine is trying to address this issue with additional behavioral specialists. Some families, for better or worse, rely on the schools to raise their children. If we don't provide the support, and they're not getting the support at home, what chance do they have to become productive citizens of our county?
 - c. 26 instructional assistants (aides) – these may be the most important part of the county staff. They assist the teachers, not with the top students, but with the students who need the most help. They are paid \$15,700 per year (\$9.50 per hour based on 7.5 hour workdays and a 220 day year). \$9.50 an hour to help with the kids who need the most help. The work doesn't stop at 7.5 hours. These kids become a part of their life.. they think about them at morning, day and night.
3. I didn't address Jordan Springs Elementary. Dr. Sovine is simply asking to staff a school that you already agreed to fund. Not staffing a brand new school would be like giving someone a brand new BMW, but not including the wheels because it wasn't in the budget.

I'm not here for personal gain. My kids would not go to Jordan Springs. My wife (who is an aide at NREP) would not benefit from the pay increase. I'm here because I'm a resident of Frederick County, with some of the lowest property taxes in Virginia, and I'm willing to give a little bit in taxes so the future of Frederick County want to come back and make this place special.

Submitted March 26 through March 27

Name

Stasia Lane

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

I support a 5 cent tax increase. I am currently out of work due to COVID-19 and still fully support a tax increase to help with our schools.

Name

Christina Deignan

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

I support the \$.05 tax increase. The county has needs and this tax increase is NEEDED; not wanted. The county is losing money right now with the COVID-19 pandemic. The tax increase is only \$50 per YEAR on a house worth \$100k and \$150 per YEAR on a house worth \$300k. Expenses go up every year and people will adapt. Health insurance climbs each year; people complain but they pay it because their health is worth it. Our county needs are WORTH IT too. Please vote yes to the \$.05 tax increase. This vote is not about your personal agenda but what your constituents want and what the county you serve needs. Vote yes!

Name

Erin Sidlowski

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

I fully support a tax increase!

Name

Ken Melnikoff

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

We need this tax increase. I have 3 kids in the school system and I need my children to get the best education possible. I need them to be safe in and out of school which means I need the correct ratio of emergency, police , fire, and teachers for them to prosper.

Name

Sonia Marfatia-Goode

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

I support the .05 tax increase.

Name

John Henry Redden

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

While I am fairly uneducated about the total budget of the public schools, I do believe that Frederick County should enact more health policies and improve traffic to reduce the chances of another disease.

Name

Karen Wright

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

I support a tax increase of at least .05% to ensure that our schools are properly funded. A strong, innovative education system is key to success of our county as it grows. If we want to attract more businesses that will later reduce the burden on citizens, then its important that we have a community where people want to relocate and a large population of well educated citizens to be employed. A strong education system is truly at the heart of a thriving economy. We are at a pivotal place in our growth as a community. Stay stagnant or reducing services does not make Frederick County an attractive place for well-educated people and businesses.

Name

Stuart Wolk

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

I fully support a \$0.05 increase in the real estate tax rate which, unfortunately, will still leave us behind.

Name

Stephanie Reed

Magisterial District

Comments

I am in support of a five cent tax increase To help support our school system and police, fire, and rescue. Minimally, we need to have enough funding to open the new elementary school to reduce overcrowding. Hopefully the crisis in this country has shown you the importance of public education and it's role in the community. The staff of FCPS has stepped up to feed the people of this county and adapt instruction overnight. Show them you support them by approving the five cent tax increase!

Name

Tracie Rose

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

I support a tax increase. We must properly fund our schools and retain experienced, talented teachers. We are hurting our future if we don't improve.

Name

Amy Dzien

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

I fully support a tax increase to support the needs of Frederick County. I especially would like to see the budget for the school system fully funded. The county has been approving new houses and seems to expect that new houses will not need access to services. I would recommend that we not allow new housing developments, but we can all see these houses currently being built with more housing developments already approved. Since this growth is inevitable at this point, we need to be willing to fund the effects of this growth. My son was in 6th grade at Admiral Byrd this year in class sizes all above 30. While this might be higher than the average size, this was his reality this year and that is unacceptable for him and for the students in Frederick County. They deserve better. Please consider that we are a growing area. We can not be a growing area and also base our lives solely on those who live on a fixed income. We need to consider everyone who lives in the area and also the future of this area. The county for years has been putting off new buses, new hires, and new buildings. These things catch up and then cost more. If this county constantly acts like we are in a recession when the economy is good, then what position will we be in when the economy is not thriving? Please support a tax increase and a fully-funded school budget.

Name

James Carr

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

I have lived in the Red Bud District since 2003. During this time I have watched 1000's of houses being built around our little housing development. I have watched them fill up with families, and I have watched our schools fill to capacity and begin to over flow. Because of inaction, we are now behind in building schools, infrastructure and facilities to accommodate those who now live here. Many will argue that we do not want to Loudoun this county. It's too late for that, the Board allowed all of these houses to be built and now we must pay. I am in full support of fully funding the schools and raising the tax rate for this county. If this means the county will have more parks, facilities and an indoor pool, I would be willing to have the tax be even higher. I hope these letters will be shared during the budget meet as at this time we can not be there in person. Thank you for your service.

Name

Kris Carty

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

I support the tax increase

Name

Linda Jenkins

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

Hello.

I am a 60 plus year old native of Frederick County. The reckless spending and over development of housing subdivisions is appalling .

The new developments never seem to be able to support additional school needs or anything else needed. The schools that are built need to be more basic without the frills. It's ridiculous how the taxpayers are robbed to appease the "wants" of others.

I am an ex-employee of Frederick County Public Schools. The overpaid administration would be a nice place for cuts in the budget. Also, there definitely are way too many Chiefs onboard the system.

Why not do a study on what some of these overpaid employees actually do in a days time? Make this information public. Job titles are created to gain raises. Make the facts public and print in the local newspapers how many "specialists " are employed by the school system and what they are paid and what they really do all day.

The scare tactics of Dr. Sovine is just plain dumb. In his words if they don't get the money he says, then the new elementary school will not be able to open. If you believe that, I have lake front property to sell you in the Sahara. Scare tactics are his last efforts to get the money.

If the people that have been here all along can support what is needed, then why don't the newer developments bring in enough revenue to keep up with what is needed?

On another note, this is Frederick County, not Fairfax or Loudoun. If you want what they have, move there.

The way this county has been spiraling on spending frenzies, the lifelong residents will not be able to afford to live here.

Still you want to tax us more?

How about residents that are lifelong residents get our taxes at a cheaper rate?

So yes I am 100% against raising taxes. Trim the budget and cut the enormous amount of waste that I saw firsthand as an employee.

Name

Dennis Buracker

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

Governor raising tax on gas Now raising tax in Frederick County when does it stop Winchester raising tax on restaurants It's not just one tax look at the whole picture

Name

Doug Omps

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

The tax rate should be raised the proposed 5%. The county is growing at such a rate that we need more infrastructure and resources available to the community. The percentage allocated to FCPS should remain the same to challenge the spending and effective use of funds. The population is changing monthly and the many who want the increased programs and facilities should not be held back by the few that remain in denial. Doug Omps

Name

Norma Riley

Magisterial District

OpequonI

Comments

I am a resident of Frederick County, living in Stephens City in the Opequon District.

I would like to make a comment to the Board of Supervisors about the proposed budget for 2021. Although I am a senior citizen living on a fixed income I support the tax increase because we must do what is needed for the future. My grandchildren all graduated from Frederick County Schools and the schools must be supported for the sake of all children. Building a new elementary school and then not funding the staffing so that it can open makes no sense whatsoever. We cannot afford to lose good teachers to other districts that pay a better wage.

Name

Jody Sasser

Magisterial District**Comments**

I'm unclear where Supervisor Dunn is getting his numbers for the county's student population. Has this information been fact checked before it was publicly shared? These numbers do not match figures from our school division's budget, so you can understand why the citizens would be very confused on truths. Can you please clarify the facts at the next public meeting? Also, I'm unclear as to why Supervisor Graber is requesting an itemized list of school figures as a county supervisor. Isn't that the role of a school board representative? The school division's budget is on their website for all to view, and it is quite extensive-far more than three pages. I feel as though the public is being misled by these two gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to share my response!

Submitted March 27 through March 30

Name

Leo Clowser

Magisterial District

Gainesboro

Comments

I do not understand how this group can even consider a tax increase at this time. The additional hardships being placed on households with reduced income. You advertise that is only 5 cents. That is only \$50.00 additional. True but about the first \$500.00 . that is never mentioned. If funds are not available to open a new school. Let it set empty until funds are available. To the persons that want an increase, let them pay extra. I have lived in my house

long enough to have paid for it by the amount of taxes I have paid over the years. Give me a break. I could go on and on but it is no use. We need to learn to live on what we have available and not wanting more and more. Some things we simply cannot afford. I am opposed to any kind of increase. If anything, increase the meals & lodging tax.

Name

Katharine S Connor

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

I am against your increasing the real estate tax by 5 cents next year because you just increased it in 2019 for 2020. Use your current funds wisely. Nothing should be done during this coronavirus pandemic. It is cowardly to act in such a manner when the public isn't able to attend your hearings and voice their opinion!

Name

Katharine Connor

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

If the tax increase is going to please Snowden Bridge residents, their property tax alone should be proposed to be raised. Let's see how they respond. This affects all of Frederick County. No more apartment complexes and retirement communities. Plan for better residential development and property values naturally go up without increase in taxes. Use incentives for corporate development. Bring jobs and encourage people to buy a house!

Name

John Gorski

Magisterial District**Comments**

Now is not the right time for Frederick County to raise property taxes. Because of the COVID-19 crisis we are all inconvenienced, some suffering, some dying and almost all of us are in worse financial shape. Financially not only the individuals who have lost jobs but ones who have reduced work hours with reduced income. It will be a while (hopefully months, maybe years) before the County residential and business incomes return to the level before the COVID-19 crisis.

In addition, older folks who rely on Individual Retirement Account income to supplement Social Security have lost substantial immediate income. These people have saved many years for their retirement only to see those investment decimated over the last few weeks, it may be years before their investments return to previous levels. This loss of income hurts real bad!

Yes, schools are important, but we all need to tighten our budgets, be careful and creative with our existing resources and innovative with our assets.

This is not the time to raise taxes in Frederick County, the proud residents of this fine County, request you to closely examine the budget and the needs of all residents and keep the property taxes at the existing level. Raising taxes is not always the answer to all things - but probably the easiest thing to do! Do the right, ethical thing for the County residents.

Name

Dorothy Bruns

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

I fully support the \$.05 increase in property taxes. Our taxes are exceptionally low, and I recognize the need for public safety and school budgeting. As previous residents of Winchester City, and New York State, we know that we are paying very low taxes in Frederick County. As a result, budgets are much too tight, and yearly negotiations become lengthy and disappointing in unnecessary arguing over dollars. Public safety and education should not need to be argued in the ways I have witnessed at public meetings. Please consider at least a \$.05 increase so that we don't jeopardize the needs of our growing county.

Name

Jessica Brookshire

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

Please increase the real estate tax by at least \$0.05. This is necessary and must be done now!

Name

Jeanette Ashby

Magisterial District**Comments**

I just read the article in The Winchester Star from March 27th and have to give my opinion as a taxpayer in Frederick County.

First off, the fact that David Sovine cannot provide a line item budget is very troubling. He need to be accountable for every dollar he spends and doesn't seem to be held to that level of accountability. Someone needs to change this. A three page summary for a budget of 62% of the County government is NOT sufficient. Whose job is it to demand Mr. Sovine provide a proper line item budget? I don't know who he reports to but this gentleman is not performing an essential function of his job. This needs to be seriously addressed. Evidently this man doesn't even have a template of budgets from years past that he could plug projections into. He claims because the Board of Supervisors and State have not approved final appropriations, he cannot provide the budget. This is just not acceptable behavior or an appropriate answer to not doing his job.

Secondly, we spend A LOT of money in Frederick County and now I am concerned that there is a lack of accountability on many levels of our local government. If this can happen year after year with the School budget, how many other areas is there little to no accountability for our hard earned dollars?

Finally, I am not in favor of the proposed 5 cent increase in real estate tax. There are residents really struggling right now. Now is not the time. If the schools are shut down as are most government buildings, isn't there money being saved by not having the structures open to the public, staff, students? Less utilities, operating expenses? There has to be some money saved there. Short term, a tax increase is not a good idea.

Long term, you have to compete for good teachers, police officers, etc. I get it. I just question how responsible we are spending over half the budget now. Perhaps if we dig into that and hold people accountable, we will find we have the funds if spent wisely?

Thank you for your time and kind consideration.

Name

Scott Whitacre

Magisterial District**Comments**

I wanted to send a comment for the Frederick County Budget Public hearing.

We greatly appreciate your support to the Fire and Rescue System. I wanted to make known to you my thoughts on keeping the Volunteer Budget request intact this year. We know the funds allocated to the Volunteer Companies (their budget) is a part of the Fire and Rescue Department budget. In fact, we have worked very hard to become the Fire and Rescue System. We don't want to be known as "Volunteer" and "Staff". So, any funds allocated to the Department are greatly appreciated. The greater part of the recent department budgets has focused on increasing staff to meet the current call volume. As well as providing individual equipment for the staff. With that said there are 11 Volunteer companies, each with unique challenges. Some have volunteers to respond to calls, some have volunteers to help with fundraising. The majority of Volunteer companies do not have enough volunteers of each category. Most Volunteer companies can be financially self-sufficient, with their own fundraising, for day to day expenses, until they must replace a piece of equipment. The Volunteer companies have operated mostly on a flat line of funding from the county for the past 8 years. That support funding and individual fund-raising efforts do not leave much cushion to offset from a Volunteer companies' day to day expenses to replace an ambulance (\$300,000) or fire truck (\$650,000). The support we ask for this year will help with day to day expenses while allowing for a cushion to be able to purchase new equipment or at least to secure a new equipment loan.

Scott Whitacre
President Gore Volunteer Fire & Rescue

Submitted March 30-31

Name

Debbie Berg

Magisterial District**Comments**

I request the Board to avoid raising taxes and keeping the FY 2021 revenue neutral. Since costs regarding schools are a major percent of the budget, the County is saving a tremendous amount of money on bus repairs and maintenance, gasoline and utilities for the schools. Additionally, with the low gas prices all employees and departments that operate vehicles are now using gasoline selling at half the price from a month ago.

These savings should be set aside for 2021. In the current crisis, raising taxes should be avoided at all cost.

Name

Nancy Johnson

Magisterial District**Comments**

With all due respect to the Board of Supervisors, I do not know how you can even consider raising the tax rate at this time and expect citizens to pay more real estate tax when they are having trouble paying it now. Because of the VIRUS, people are losing their jobs and having their hours cut. Some are taking a 40 percent pay cut just to hold on to their job and do not even know how long they'll have the job. People will be lucky to make house payments and buy food. Do you want to be a part of the foreclosures that may be record number. Are the county administrators ready to attach liens and go through with tax sales. You do not have to bow down to the School Board's request for always wanting more money. They show that they do not respect you or the taxpayers by refusing your requests for budget information. They are afraid--yes, afraid that if they do, it will become expected of them for each future budget. No one I know would buy something sight unseen. Basically that is what we are doing if they do not disclose how they plan to spend OUR money. I feel that their judgement in spending has been lacking in the past. The proof is the way they spent money on the "new" Frederick County Middle School. There are ways to get the same benefit and not waste money doing it. Supervisor Dunn has gone to the trouble of researching how Northern Virginia schools have been able to build BIGGER quality schools for less money but the School Board is too stubborn to listen to anyone's common sense spending approach. I feel that with the loss of jobs and the economy tanking and the position it puts the taxpayer in, that you should give careful consideration to REDUCING the tax rate--at least for goodness sakes do not raise it. I was born and raised here and never left Frederick County (almost 74 years). I have seen a lot of waste of hard-earned taxpayer dollars. Big thanks to Supervisor Dunn, Supervisor McCarthy, and Supervisor Graber for watching out for hard-earned taxpayer dollars. I hope the other supervisors will do the same with this budget and vote NO to an increase of any kind.

Submitted April 1 through April 3

Name

Jose Campos

Magisterial District**Comments**

If the BOEd writes its own checks, then you can bet That it has a huge surplus of funds. Make the BOEd, use these funds to increase its own yearly budget. Every school board I audited during my past that paid its own bills accumulated surpluses each year and kept these funds for goodies that were not budgeted. Do not encourage this type of action of our school board. Find the surpluses and reduce their request by the same amount. Adding an increase to our tax bill shows that you do not know how boards behave when they request increases to their budgets.

Please consider this request.

Name

Laurie & Norman Letourneau

Magisterial District**Comments**

Hi,

I thought this article re: Fairfax budget might be interesting for supervisors to read in light of the current circumstances. <https://wtop.com/fairfax-county/2020/03/coronavirus-pandemic-drives-fairfax-county-budget-cuts/> Certainly hope you do the right thing and do not raise taxes for the third year in a row, considering we have already had one gas tax for I-81 area and Governor signed the bill for us to have two gas tax increases over the next two years.

I have expressed my concerns to my supervisor Judith McCann-Slaughter and appreciated her call back, unlike Mr. DeHaven who did not respond. As a senior citizen we live on a fixed budget, very fixed; with the current stock market crisis the little we have will probably be gone. I am sure that is the story of millions right now in the US. Whatever needs the County has can wait or do with less as many will have no job and businesses will be gone.

The situation in my district, since putting in the big development Snowden Bridge, is a nightmare. That development required another school to be built because the supervisors were not good stewards of the land.

I would like to thank the supervisors who were against the original proposal and hope the other folks on the board will be reasonable and not raise our taxes yet again.

Name

ROBERT WILSON

Magisterial District

Stonewall

Comments

With reduced revenue from sales tax and restaurant and lodging taxes, it is more important than ever to raise real estate taxes. Do not even consider lowering taxes. That would be incredibly irresponsible. This county is going to need all the revenue it can get. Do not be swayed by the anti-school and anti-public service people on the board. They will bring you ALL down. And I hope you will be reading public comments tonight and not cherry pick the ones that matches the agendas of the anti-tax, anti-government supervisors.

Name

Charla Quimby

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

I do not support any tax increases. It is the wrong to add tax increases due to the many expenses that our County will need to pay in order to recover from the financial impact of the current pandemic. We also should not add pay increases for teachers and firefighters for the same reason. Please consider all of the expenses and losses that businesses will have to endure and the job losses of many residents.

Name

Donovan Mark Quimby

Magisterial District

Back Creek

Comments

The Board of Supervisors shouldn't increase taxes, increase teachers' pay, or increase fire fighters' pay for 2021, especially now. The health of the public sector is dependent upon the health of its source of money - the private sector. The increase in FC government expenditures and proposed tax increase for 2021 were initially proposed when our economy was booming. We all know our economic situation has changed and its future is currently unknowable. People are hurting. Therefore, common sense dictates that any increases can wait until the economy stabilizes and is healthier. Public sector people shouldn't gain economically while the private sector - the source of their income - must tighten its economic belts. Asking people to pay higher property taxes when they're earning less income is unjust. Thank you.

Name

James Sherry

Magisterial District

Red Bud

Comments

For the several years I've lived in Frederick County I've been amazed and dismayed that the School Board has refused to submit a detailed, line item budget and to fully justify its planned expenditures. As important as education is, demanding budget increases that are not fully understood by the Board of Supervisors, and are insufficiently detailed to allow scrutiny by County citizens should not be tolerated. The School Board disrespects the Board of Supervisors, the citizens, the teachers, and especially the students when it claims additional funds are required but refuses to justify the increases in detail. Please deny further increases to the School Board budget until it submits a detailed, fully auditable, line item budget. And please do not raise our taxes unless we citizens can see exactly where and for exactly what the increase will be applied.

Name

Janice C Bowen

Magisterial District

Shawnee

Comments

I support the full 5-cent real estate tax increase. We cannot continue to ignore the need to upgrade our county's services and schools. The overcrowding in our schools is hindering effective student learning. AND WE MUST PLAN FOR CONTINUED POPULATION GROWTH!

Name

James Walterhoefer

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

I feel that the meal and personnel property taxes are too high in this county. New car prices have greatly increase and the average car or pickup truck is now \$30,000, \$40,000 etc with 8 year loans. One can now be paying more on their automobile (s) in taxes than their entire house , which is crazy !!! I say lower the car and eating out sales taxes and much up the difference on perhaps a slightly higher property tax rate.

Submitted April 7

Name

Steven Schultz

Magisterial District

Opequon

Comments

Please demand that the School Board produce a line item budget. I am all for raising taxes to give the schools the money they need, but I cannot believe that they are refusing to produce a line item budget for the BOS and the public to see. We need to know where our money is going in order to ensure that it is being spent wisely. I cannot think of an innocent reason for the School Board to hide where the money is going.