**Information Technology Advisory Commission (Tech Commission)**

**Minutes**

**Wednesday, January 25, 2023, 7:30pm**

**In-Person Commission Meeting**

**2100 Clarendon Blvd., Azalea Room (#101) Arlington, VA  22201**

In attendance:

Frank Jazzo, Chair

John Burke, Vice Chair

Mike Cornfield

Jackie Snelling (attending virtually from home in Arlington; medical excuse, approved)

Laura Gross

Kevin Robins

Phil Caughran

Gary Thayer

Absent:  Jonathan Adelstein, Andrea Wingo

Members of Public: Louise Anderson, Verizon (remote); Kevin Broadhurst, Comcast (remote); Tommy Clinton (remote); Angela Easterwood (remote)

County Staff: Richard Archambault, Commission Staff Liaison

Norron Lee, CIO

**1. Meeting Called to Order.**  The meeting was called to order at 7:31 PM.  Chairman Jazzo recognized a quorum (6 in person, 1 virtual).

**2. Public Comment.**  There was no public comment.

**3. Chair's Update.**  Chairman Jazzo reported that he and John Burke have been reappointed Chair and Vice Chair for 2023, respectively, by the County Board earlier in the month.  The Commission's new County Board liaison is Vice Chair Libby Garvey. The Commission is looking to meet with her to update her on the Commission's recent activities.

Earlier in the month, Messrs. Jazzo and Burke participated in the County Manager's Commission Chair session on the fiscal year budget. A shortfall was reported as anticipated in the $20 to $30 million range.  John Burke reported for the Commission on the issues and priorities that the Commission discussed at last month's meeting and as outlined in the draft letter.   Messrs. Jazzo and Burke plan to participate in the Commission chair orientation session on Monday, January

30, where there will be an update on fiscal year '24 budget, procedures, more on the electronic meeting regs and a general sort of house cleaning.

Chairman Jazzo stated that the Commission still has three vacancies.  He will follow up with Libby Garvey and her assistant, Kathy O'Malley, to promote membership on the Commission.  Ms. Snelling noted that the county website now lists such vacancies, which is part of showing better transparency for committees.  Chairman Jazzo asked members to encourage applications to fill the vacancies if any member knows of a good fit.

_____ asked whether there had been any progress on the Commission's suggestion to allow more meetings to be virtual.  Mr. Burke said that stated such a proposal was included in the legislative priorities that the Board approved for the Virginia legislative delegation, so the Board has adopted a firm stance that more virtual meetings should be allowed.  _____ reported that both Houses of the state legislature have introduced bills with many sponsors to allow almost all commissions to go fully virtual in meetings, except for professional licensing and permitting, like Boards of Zoning. The Legislature's website shows proposed amendments to the FOIA because the Open Meetings Act falls under FOIA.  These bills are pending.

**4. FY24 Budget Letter Discussion**.  Chairman Jazzo thanked Mr. Burke for his work on the draft letter.  Mr. Burke shared the letter on-screen and introduced discussion, saying he had distributed the draft letter and that it was his attempt to synthesize the discussion that the Commission had in the last meeting about what the Commission's recommended priorities were.  He explained that one obvious difficulty is a lack of granularity on IT spending in the government, making it hard to make targeted recommendations, so his approach was to keep to general themes in breaking out priorities for the budget and then more general recommendations about how to navigate to budget constraints, because the Manager asked for recommendations on how to deal with the shortfall.  There are specific budget priorities we have about things we don't want them to cut. And then he added thoughts about how to navigate the budget constraints without raising taxes, since the guidance that the Board gave to the Manager was to propose a budget that didn't require an increase in the tax rate.

The draft set forth the Commission's budget priorities in order, then recommendations for navigating budget constraints.  The first three priorities are ongoing activities, and then #4 is something that is the highest priority to start.  The Commission discussed and revised these points in the draft:

- Budget Priorities In Order:
    1. Secure the County's networks, systems and data;
    2. Execute the Cloud transition funded in the CIP;
    3. Continue the digital transformation of the County's operations and services; and
    4. Create a government-wide privacy program.

- Recommendations for Navigating Budget Constraints:
    1. Create a Strategic Plan for Information Technology (which we don't now have);
    2. Defer or cancel projects that do not further strategic priorities;

3. Improve transparency of IT spending;
4. Engage with the private sector and non-profits on an innovation agenda to reduce operating costs and increase revenues.

Norron Lee stated that the strategic plan is done. Mr. Burke responded that this is our recommendation as a strategic plan for the entire County government to be endorsed by the County Board. We recognize that DTS has a strategic plan, but this is one that covers all subjects county wide.

Ms. Snelling suggested that we make that point clear: that they act as if technology is DTS, but the DTS budget actually only accounts for a fraction of total IT. Mr. Burke agreed, and noted that recommendation 3 says that the departmental spend of DTS is only 2.4% of the overall budget, which is tiny, but we know that there is a lot of IT spending that happens outside of DTS.

Ms. Snelling stated that IT spending is intentionally distributed: it's part of the budget structure that technology spending is distributed, not centralized. Mr. Burke asked if her point is that the County has a Federated approach to IT spending. Ms. Snelling agreed, saying that we have in the County decentralized technology services, and DTS is only a fraction of those, so if you try to look at technology writ large and you only look at DTS, you're not looking at all technology.

_____ stated that a proper comprehensive plan would include rationalization to normalize for the Federated approach that we have. Ms. Snelling agreed and says that a strategic plan needs to look at the pros and cons of that method; it should be strategic on what is centralized and what isn't. She added to Mr. Burke that the letter is excellent.

Members discussed past Commission recommendations to the Board and past initiatives, including on energy and broadband, which we felt were not successfully implemented because there was inadequate community-based planning element be put forward. Mr. Burke recalled that the Legislature mandated that any Comprehensive Plan "shall" include broadband.

Ms. Snelling asserted that the CIP and the budget for technology services should be broken out, transparent and easily identifiable. Norron Lee suggested that technology services and products should be included. Mr. Burke and Ms. Snelling stressed the importance of a Board-endorsed set of principles, goals, objectives and policies that recognize that the majority of information technology services and spending occurs outside the DTS budget. Revisions were made to the draft accordingly.

Members reviewed and discussed each of the numbered recommendations in the draft letter. Various additional edits to the draft letter were discussed and adopted, several of which reinforced the point that with better transparency and visibility to IT-related costs distributed among many budget centers, the Board and Manager will be better able to identify where economies could be achieved.

It was also suggested that we ask the County Board liaison (Ms. Garvey) for an update at an early date.

Chairman Jazzo suggested the possible addition of another point, i.e., that the County should seek federal funding for its budget priorities via current federal legislation, e.g., the Infrastructure and Jobs act (IIJA). It was noted that much of these funds will not be available during the current budget cycle. The Commission decided to include a general recommendation # 5 that the County should seek to maximize acquisition of federal and Commonwealth funding.

A motion was made to approve the letter as revised. Ms. Snelling seconded. The motion carried unanimously, with editorial changes by the Chairman authorized. All present Commission members thanked Mr. Burke for crafting an excellent letter.

[NOTE: Final Letter as edited and sent 1/26/23 attached as an addendum to these Minutes]

5. **Legislative Update-Frank Jazzo**.

Chairman Jazzo gave a Legislative Update:
- City of Cleveland TN (pop. 50,000) considering teaming with its municipally owned electric utility (Cleveland Utilities) (CU) on $72M broadband project; CU would team with Chattanooga's existing muni broadband network.
- FCC announced action to shut down homeowner-focused robocall scam campaign involving home mortgages.
- FCC proposing updated data breach reporting requirements.


**6. October 2022 Meeting Minutes**: adopted unanimously.

**7. December 2022 Meeting Minutes:** adopted unanimously.

**8. DTS Update** – Norron Lee/Richard Archambault  Mr. Lee reported that the DTS Strategy document will be published in the next few days, would share with the Commission and welcome feedback. Mr. Archambault stated that he would share the aforementioned two state legislative bills, and encouraged the Commission to lend its support in a letter or communication with the General Assembly.

Other updates: Reports on Safety Innovation Zone, broadband feasibility documents still in process. A question was also asked about why the CBRS [??] radio item failed. Dialogue with APS: recently resumed with new APS leader; question whether a new APS liaison to the Commission has been appointed; Ms. Snelling suggested that we invite Raj Adusumilli to brief the Commission on the APS tech budget. Mr. Burke stated that the most relevant topic for a briefing is digital equity. Mr. Broadhurst mentioned a Comcast partnership with Arlington (Connect Arlington) to provide broadband to APS students, as well Comcast's Internet Essentials program (employing the federal $30/month subsidy). It was agreed that once the Feasibility Study is released, the Commission would ask Comcast, Verizon and other parties (e.g, WISPA for wireless) to brief us on digital equity progress. A change of leadership at Arlington Economic Development was also discussed.

8. **Good of the Order**. No new matters

9. **Motion to Adjourn.** A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed unanimously at 8:46 PM.

Next In-Person Meeting: February 22, 2023, at 7:30 PM

**Attachment: ITAC Comments Letter on FY24 Budget (final, as revised per 1/25/23 ITAC Meeting)**

**ARLINGTON**
VIRGINIA

January 26, 2023

**Commission Members**
Frank Jazzo, Chair
John Burke, Vice Chair
Jonathan Adelstein
Phil Caughran
Kevin Robins
Jacqueline Snelling
Andrea Wingo
Gary Thayer
Michael Cornfield
Laura Gross

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Christian Dorsey
Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chairman Dorsey:

On behalf of the Information Technology Advisory (Tech) Commission, I am writing to you to express our priorities and recommendations for the FY 24 budget.

## Budget Priorities in Order

1. **Secure the County's networks, systems, and data.** Ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the County's networks, systems and data is mission critical and we recommend the Board accept little or no risk in this area.
2. **Execute the cloud transition funded in the CIP.** Adoption of cloud technologies will reduce costs and improve performance over time. Short term budget constraints should not delay or defer the execution of CIP Information Technology Enterprise IT Program Item 2 Cloud Migration or Item 5 Data Center Consolidation and Refreshment.
3. **Continue the digital transformation of County operations and services.** Digital transformation generally should be supported as it creates efficiencies that can be redeployed to higher priorities.
4. **Create a government-wide privacy program.** We reiterate our previous advice to create a government-wide privacy program and recommend that an initial investment is made in the FY 24 budget with a view to enhancing the program in future budgets.
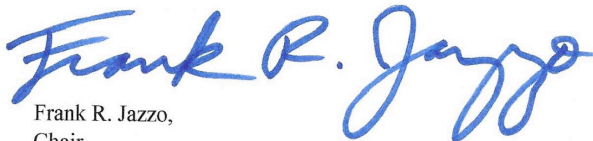
## Recommendations for Navigating Budget Constraints

1. **Create a strategic plan for Information Technology.** The commission has previously advised the Board that a Comprehensive Plan element or other Board enacted set of principles, goals, objectives, and policies would benefit the County Manager and staff in multiple ways. Informing the difficult trade-offs the Board and Manager have to make during the budget process is one of the most critical functions such a plan would have. This is especially important for Arlington given that the majority of information technology services and spending is outside of the Department of Technology Services.
2. **Defer or cancel projects that do not further strategic priorities.** Our primary recommendation for addressing the projected budget shortfall is to defer or cancel projects that do not further the County's strategic priorities. Not only will this eliminate direct

expenditures, but it will free existing staff to focus on strategic priorities and fill the gap of unfilled vacancies and deferred hiring.

3. **Improve the transparency of Information Technology Spending.** While the Department of Technology Services represents only 2.4% of the County's budget[1], the government's total spending on information technology is much higher and distributed throughout other departments. With better visibility, we would be able to identify where economies could be achieved.

4. **Expand engagement with the private sector including non-profits on an innovation agenda to reduce operating costs and increase revenue.** Difficult budget decisions can be alleviated by continuous attention to innovation. The County should not only look to staff to drive digital transformation, but should partner with other non-governmental organizations to achieve our economic and social policy goals and objectives consistent with our community's values and principles.

5. **Continue to maximize Federal and Commonwealth funding sources.** A substantial amount of Federal and Commonwealth funding is available through multiple grant programs for many purposes including information technology. The County should seek to maximize its share of these funding sources.

Respectfully,

Frank R. Jazzo,
Chair
Information Technology Advisory Commission
Arlington, VA 22201

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[1]Arlington Wallet FY 22 Actual Expenditures