Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2023 General Assembly Session | 01/09/23

In accordance with the provisions of 30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of legislation impacting local governments.

HB 1429: Local government; live broadcast and archive of meetings. (Patron: Delegate Marie E. March)

Bill Summary: Meetings of local governing body; live broadcast and archive. Requires localities to provide a live video broadcast of public meetings of the local governing body and to archive such broadcasts on their websites.

Local Fiscal Impact: Net Additional Expenditure: __X__ Net Reduction of Revenues:_____

Summary Analysis:

Number of Localities Responding: 7 Cities, 11 Counties, 7 Towns, 1 Other

Localities estimated a negative fiscal impact ranging from $0 to $0.3 million over the biennium.

Localities identified the bill's fiscal impacts as the net increase in expenditures needed to fulfill the public meeting broadcast and recording requirements of the bill. Some localities indicated that the bill would cause a one-time increase in capital expenditures due to purchases of technology equipment. Additionally, localities indicated the bill could cause recurring expenditures from increased employment costs (e.g., hiring additional personnel to conduct these live broadcasts), and/or changing licenses for their current webpage services.

Several localities indicated that the fiscal impact of the bill could increase depending on if the broadcast requirements extended to meetings beyond their primary governing body (e.g., Planning Commissions, budget subcommittees, etc.). Furthermore, a few localities stated that their estimate would also increase depending on how the requirement to maintain and make available an archive of these meetings was interpreted.

Some localities reported no fiscal impact and stated they already were in compliance with the bill's requirements.

Net Increase in Expenditures: Itemized Estimates by Responding Localities

Locality	Juris	Recurring Expense-Personnel		Recurring Expense - Operating		Recurring Expense - Capital		Recurring Expense - Other	
		FY23	FY24	FY23	FY24	FY23	FY24	FY23	FY24
City of Alexandria	City								
City of Harrisonburg	City								
City of Manassas	City			$25,000	$25,750				
City of Norfolk	City								
City of Richmond	City								
City of Virginia Beach	City								
City of Winchester	City								
Augusta County	County			$5,406	$5,568				
Fauquier County	County	$32,000	$34,000	$44,500	$47,000	$0	$0	$0	
Mecklenburg County	County								
Montgomery County	County								
Orange County	County								
Prince George County	County			$37,290	$37,290				
Rappahannock County	County	$30,000	$30,000	$10,000	$10,000				
Roanoke County	County								
Rockingham County	County				$40,000				
Sussex County	County								
Wise County	County			$11,000	$11,000				
Northern Neck PDC	Other								
Town of Blacksburg	Town								
Town of Chincoteague	Town			$2,500	$2,500		$0		
Town of Christiansburg	Town								
Town of Leesburg	Town								
Town of Luray	Town	50000	50000	25000	25000	0	0		
Town of Marion	Town	70000	$80,000	20000	20000	20000	20000		
Town of Scottsville	Town			2000	2000				

Net Increase in Expenditures: Itemized Estimates by Responding Localities

Locality	Nonrecurring Expense - Operating		Nonrecurring Expense - Capital		Nonrecurring Expense - Other		Penny Value of Increase on Real Estate Rate*	Total Increase in Expenses (Biennium Total)
	FY23	FY24	FY23	FY24	FY23	FY24		
City of Alexandria								$0
City of Harrisonburg								$0
City of Manassas							0.0005	$50,750
City of Norfolk								$0
City of Richmond								$0
City of Virginia Beach								$0
City of Winchester								$0
Augusta County							0	$10,974
Fauquier County			$25,000	$5,000			0.001	$187,500
Mecklenburg County							0	$0
Montgomery County								$0
Orange County								$0
Prince George County			$63,476				0.003	$138,056
Rappahannock County			$25,000				0.37	$105,000
Roanoke County							0	$0
Rockingham County		$60,000					0	$100,000
Sussex County								$0
Wise County							0.0003	$22,000
Northern Neck PDC								$0
Town of Blacksburg								$0
Town of Chincoteague			$4,200				0	$9,200
Town of Christiansburg								$0
Town of Leesburg								$0
Town of Luray			10000	10000			85000	$170,000
Town of Marion			50000	20000			0	$300,000
Town of Scottsville							0.003	$4,000

Locality	Expenditure Narrative by Responding Localities
City of Alexandria	At this time, this proposed bill represents a service the City already provides for public meetings. The City engages with a vendor to host and provide online access to recordings. Approximate cost per year is $75,000.
City of Harrisonburg	We currently provide a live feed and archived footage on our website so no increase in costs.
City of Manassas	The City of Manassas currently has live video of a majority of it's public council meetings, but not all (some work sessions and off-site town halls). This amount represents the total cost of providing live video for those meetings not currently being televised. The actual penny increase is $0.0005.
City of Norfolk	The City of Norfolk is currently in compliance with this language.
City of Richmond	The assumption with the determination is that by "meetings of local governing body" it is in reference to the meetings of City Council as a whole, not the committee meetings. A requirement for committee meetings as well may incur additional expenses. -If the State were to require a retention schedule longer than the retention offerings in Granicus for which we are currently paying in Granicus, then that will result in increased costs. -If the State were to require a retention schedule longer than the retention offerings available in Granicus, then we could have a need down the line to export from Granicus to alternative storage. That will trigger increased costs. -If the City were to exit Granicus software for whatever reason, then the archive retention requirements will be key requirements driving selection of a successor tool. That may result in significant cost increases over what we are paying at present if a similar, success software is not available.
City of Virginia Beach	The City of Virginia Beach already provides a live video broadcast of public meetings of the local governing body archives such broadcasts on their website
City of Winchester	
Augusta County	Current media contract is for $8650 for 24 meetings. Adding 11 worksessions, 1 budget worksession, 1 organizational meeting and 3 potential special meetings (joint meeting with School Board, etc.) adds in additional costs. Determined by per meeting cost.

Locality	Expenditure Narrative by Responding Localities
Fauquier County	The County currently provides this level of service for the regular monthly BOS meetings. This level of service is not provided for any Standing Committee meetings or special meetings. The amount noted assumes a more broad implementation, and does not include long-term archiving costs for server space, etc.
Mecklenburg County	The most likely impact is $0, yet, the estimate depends on the interpretation of "available to the public on the locality's website." We currently use a YouTube channel for video streaming, live and recorded. If a link to the YouTube channel suffices to meet the definition of "on", then there is no cost. However, if we had to host video on our website, it is possible that we may need to implement a different module that we have at present, which could involve cost.
Montgomery County	We have been providing live broadcasts of all public Board of Supervisor meetings since 2020 and recording these meetings on our website for several years. As long as this bill is limited to the Board of Supervisors meetings (and doesn't include other boards and commissions like the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, etc.), then we are already completing this task. Therefore, there is no new impact and/or additional cost to the County should this bill be passed. However, should this bill broaden the parameters to include all county-affiliated boards and commissions, then we would have a financial impact including additional staff, storage, annual subscription fees to live broadcasting services, etc.
Orange County	
Prince George County	Estimates include: FY2023 One-time Costs Capital - $63,476 Broadcast System (4 HD Cameras; 4 ceiling mounts; 5 cables; and related equipment) - $46,065 Streaming Appliance - $8,690 Caption Encoder / decoder - $4,190 Warranty - $4,531 FY2023 and FY2024 Ongoing - Content Delivery Package (up to 50 indexed meetings; 24/7 Live Stream and 120 hours specialty content) $37,290 (12 @ $3,107.50) per year - annually

Locality	Expenditure Narrative by Responding Localities
Rappahannock County	Rappahannock County does not offer this service today (but a local newspaper does record meetings, not live broadcast) and this estimate assumes a part time employee is required together with typical operating costs for licenses and hosting together with a capital equipment cost of $25,000. This is a very general estimate. Rappahannock County does allow citizens to participate (including providing comment) live via online meeting (Zoom), which platform shares the agenda materials, but that would not appear to meet the requirement of a "live video broadcast." The Zoom information is not archived as it does not serve as the official minutes of the public body. The cost to provide the online meeting service is a few hundred dollars per year with a few hundred dollar capital cost, much more affordable than live video broadcast that is archived (forever?). The $0.37 would only be the first year "penny value" as the capital cost is a first year number and then would be on a replacement cycle.
Roanoke County	If this action requires the broadcasting of all public meetings (work sessions, planning commission meetings, etc) this will be a personnel and equipment cost increase. We currently broadcast and archive Board Meetings.
Rockingham County	This will require Technology staff to be present during all board meetings and will require the purchase of software to handle the task.
Sussex County	
Wise County	Based upon a quote for this service.
Northern Neck PDC	No - small fiscal impact. Most localities offer livestreaming as a result of the pandemic, so any equipment would already be in place or need upgrades.
Town of Blacksburg	Town Council Meetings as well as Planning Commission Meetings are open to the public and televised live on WTOB Channel 2 and archived on the Town website. Town Council Work Sessions are also open to the public, but are not televised with no citizen comment due to the format of the Work Session. If the bill is to include Town Council Work Sessions and/or other committee meetings, then the fiscal impact would be TBD.
Town of Chincoteague	Investment of streaming equipment to cover meetings held at other than normal locations would be a capital cost in year 1. Recurring costs would be to pay a third party to archive video.
Town of Christiansburg	No new expense as we already do this.

Locality	Expenditure Narrative by Responding Localities
Town of Leesburg	The Town of Leesburg has been livestreaming the Town Council Meetings for over a decade using a service called Granicus. There is no increase in these livestreaming and archiving services from the FY23 to FY24 budget. In that case there is no direct decrease in revenue to the Town for the next two years.
Town of Luray	Requirement to produce and store videos on Town's website will result in establishing a new IT position, purchase data storage equipment, and update the website to link video data.
Town of Marion	Based upon hiring personnel to operate, maintain, and log sessions, plus equipment purchase and maintenance.
Town of Scottsville	For the public meetings in our small town, we currently stream the meeting video on Zoom. We then archive the video on a YouTube channel for public access. Changing the video archive to the Town website would require an upgrade to the service for file storage. With about eight hours of video footage per month, the file storage is much larger than what the current website supports. The $2,000 ongoing cost is an estimate for improved website services.

* Penny value is defined as the amount a locality would need to raise their real estate tax rate to cover the fiscal impacts of the bill, assuming no other changes to revenues or expenditures. It is represented in terms of dollars (e.g., 0.01 is a one cent increase in the real estate tax rate, etc.).