

CULPEPER STAR EX-**PO**NENT

Soldier tied to Spotsylvania killed in Middle East comes home in dignified transfer

LOCAL, A2



This week's Dog of the Week, Draco, loves every single person he meets

COMMUNITY, A3

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Open, efficient and responsible government?

Another closed meeting follows chaotic week with new guard in charge

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

The majority of the board of supervisors continues to push through policy changes following a chaotic week in local government during which the at-will county administrator — a longtime public servant — was ousted.

Meanwhile, residents are

increasingly pushing back and defending the old guard.

With all members present, the seven-member elected body representing Culpeper County met in closed session for over two hours during a hastily called meeting Friday morning. The meeting continued a series of deliberate actions being implemented following a

sweep at the polls last November of three new Republican-backed candidates to the board of supervisors.

Those actions started in January with the implementation of a hiring freeze and the withdrawal of an offer of employment for the new deputy county administrator, culminating in last week's firing of county administrator Sam McLearen.

In documents going to the board at the budget work session that never happened on Tuesday, after he was fired, McLearen had highlighted a \$7.2 million budget shortfall and outlined potential tax increases.

The county has \$55 million in its unreserved savings account — money that, in the past, has been

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LIGHTFOOT APARTMENTS OPENS

BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD RESILIENCE



PEOPLE INCORPORATED HOUSING GROUP PHOTOS

People are starting to move into Lightfoot Apartments, an income controlled development of People Inc. in downtown Culpeper.

60-unit income-controlled complex at end of Lightfoot Street is 60% occupied

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

The town's latest income-controlled housing development is up and running and open to new tenants.

People began moving into Lightfoot Apartments at the beginning of this year, located at the end of Lightfoot Street, close to the Galbreath Marshall early education facility along Old Fredericksburg Road.

"You played a very important role in helping us complete this project," Bryan Phipps, president and CEO of People Inc., project developer, told the Culpeper County Board of Supervisors at its March 3 meeting.

Officials broke ground in August 2024 on the three-building, 60-unit apartment complex on about six acres of public land donated by the town, county and school division.



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A peek inside the kitchen in a unit at the new Lightfoot Apartments in the Town of Culpeper.

Melanie Flores Diaz & Grant Soderholm are in this week's Academic Spotlight **PAGE A2**

Weather

Mostly sunny and very warm
High 82 • Low 54
Forecast • A6

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