

Open Work Session

Capital Improvement Program and Budget: Public Works (Engineering, Roads, and Solid Waste)

January 2, 2019

Mr. Wayne Strausburg, Director of Administration, Mr. Weston Young, Assistant Director of Administration, and Mr. Dallas Baker, Director of Public Works, came before Council.

Mr. Baker said he will start with the Engineering section, where they have three projects, and the first is the funding for the Chesapeake Bay WIP projects. He explained, as Council knows, they have WIP goals they have to meet for reducing nitrogen and phosphorus from their watersheds into the local rivers, and they have \$200,000 in the CIP for that. He said they also have the Airport water main extension, which is a carryover from the previous year with the loan grant they are getting from the State to extend that water main. He said they also have a new project, which is the Wicomico River Dredging support. He said, in previous years, dredging has sometimes been covered by Solid Waste, and sometimes covered with funds from Roads, so they are trying to break that out to accurately reflect the costs of dredging, and support of those activities for the River by providing their own CIP item, which includes items such as wetlands studies, site placement location studies, as well as construction, and real estate acquisition for supporting the Army Corp with dredging.

Mr. Baker said, moving on to the Roads Department, the first three items are augmentations of projects that have shown up in the CIP previously, the first one being the Bear Swamp Bridge, which says replacement, but is, actually, a removal because they are replacing that. Mr. Holloway said they really need something done on Bear Swamp Road because he was there on Christmas day, to which Mr. Baker responded, they received the concerns, so they will be out there very shortly. He said the dirt roads this time of year take a beating. He said they are replacing that bridge with some culverts. He said they have found that some of the cost estimates in previous years' CIPs were not accurately reflecting the prices they were seeing come in as bids, so, again, this just augments, or increases that amount from what was in the previous CIP. He said it is the same thing with the equipment storage shed, and the dry storage shed at the Roads facility where they were in previous years' CIPs, and the bids that have come back have been a little bit higher than they anticipated.

Mr. Baker said the next project is the Hobbs Road pipe crossing at Beaver Dam Creek, which is over by the Bridge's house where there are several large pipes under Hobbs Road that need to be replaced. He said the idea is to do a design to build on these with a pipe lining. He explained, due to the size of the pipes there, and the volume of traffic that uses Hobbs Road, their thought was they could slip line the pipes, and still leave the road open during this process. He said, again, they are going to go with a design build on that. Mr. McCain asked, when they put those bigger pipes in, what does that do further downstream where it goes underneath the next road, and does that then become problematic, to which Mr. Holloway responded, that is a State road. Mr. Baker said, typically, they have to go in and take a look at the hydraulics of what happens downstream. He said it is especially critical if there is a dam downstream, but, again, if they are going in and slip lining the pipes, that is the primary goal. He said they are going to look at a potential emergency overflow pipe added in there. He said they have had instances where that road goes under water, so they would replace another pipe higher upstream, but they will have to look at the hydraulics of it. Mr. Holloway said the biggest problem with that particular crossing is stuff coming from upstream that comes down and plugs those pipes, so a higher pipe will help alleviate that problem, and he does not know what they do about what is being washed down

because there is a lot of swamp up there, and stuff is broken loose. He said he does notice that the road where it has been fixed before is starting to sink too.

Mr. Kilmer said he has been getting questions about the Westside collector, especially with Nanticoke Road being out. He said, when the rains happen, Pemberton Drive is also out, so people are saying if the Westside collector was completed, at least there would be more road network into that area when some of these washouts occur. He said he sees this as being pushed off another couple of years because of drainage concerns and whatnot, but, the longer it is pushed off, the more people are using Levin Dashiell Road to go to the Westside collector, and Levin Dashiell is a mess every time it rains. He said Levin Dashiell floods with even a small rain. He said he understands needing to incorporate the drainage concerns, but the fact is, with that road not being completed, it is really causing some transportation delays that is really exacerbating some of the problems the rains have already caused in that area.

Mr. Holloway asked if Council can get a list of the road paving projects, to which Mr. Young responded, they have been putting that on-line, yet Mr. Baker can send the link when they complete it. Mr. Holloway said he has people asking that question. Mr. Young said usually after winter they reexamine because, depending on freeze stall, what was a priority may not be as much of a priority compared to another road, such as Bear Swamp.

Mr. Baker reported, the next project is the Coulbourne Mill Pond Dam. He said they have the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) requiring them to armor the downstream embankment of that pond dam. He said it is very similar to what is being done at Morris Mill, but that has a little more extensive work because they have to replace the pipes under the road, and the outfall structure. He said, in the case of Coulbourne Mill, the pipes are in good shape, and they have an outfall structure that is in good shape, so they just have to armor that downstream embankment so that if water ever did come across the top of the dam, they would not have soil erosion to start eating its way back through the dam.

Mr. Baker said they also have drainage improvements on the Twin Tree Road area because that neighborhood also experiences flooding, so they are looking to go in and see what they can do. He said there is a small branch that runs through there that is heavily vegetated, and they need to go in and get that area cleared out, and make sure it is draining the roads adequately.

Mr. Baker said, moving into Solid Waste, which is also an enterprise fund, they have emergency generators for the landfill in the CIP. He said there are a series of regulated devices out at the landfill, such as the leachate pumps, and the gas monitoring, that need to have a continuous supply of power. He said, currently, a lot of those items do not have emergency backups, so, when the power goes out, the liquid level on top of the liner can rise, and they need to make sure they keep that under control because it is regulated by the State.

Mr. Baker said they also have the landfill scale house replacement in the CIP. He said that is currently under design, and initial construction cost estimates are higher than the funds available, so this is another one that appeared in a previous year's CIP, and they are just augmenting those funds to cover what they will need when the project goes out to bid for construction.

Mr. Baker said next are repeated projects to improve the convenience and recycling centers. He reported, putting in lights, cameras, and fencing at the convenience centers has dramatically decreased the amount of illegal dumping they have seen, and they are trying to make sure to keep those sites maintained, and reduce the nuisance that a lot of people view them as, which will, hopefully, help them

open up more centers throughout. He explained, a lot of times when they are looking for new locations for recycling centers, the big concern is how they appear, and this has really helped them out over these last couple of years.

Mr. Baker said the last project is the cell 7 construction. He said, as Council knows, they are currently building cell 9. He explained, the landfill has 10 cells associated with it, and six of them have either been used and filled up, or are in use, so they are building cell 9. He clarified, the numbers do not match sequentially, and they do not build them in numerical order. He said they are building cell 9 now, and, with the amount of time it takes to construct a cell, and with the amount of rain they have been getting lately, they felt it was prudent to start planning for the next cell construction now so they do not get themselves backed up against the wall in a few years when they are ready for cell 7.

Mr. Holloway said he knows with what has taken place in the past couple weeks with the Connelly Mill project that Mr. Baker has not had time to put that project in the CIP. He then asked, if anything gets done with that, where will the funding come from, to which Mr. Baker responded, he believes that would be out of operating expenses in the budget process. Mr. Holloway said they were talking about possibly doing fencing, or to start digging, to which Mr. Young responded, that happened after they pulled the CIP together, but, in terms of Public Works' budget, they want to consider what the best option is. He said, if they are not bidding it out to a private trucking company, they could get started faster. Mr. Holloway clarified, he was talking about fencing because they were talking about security for the convenience centers, to which Mr. Young responded, they would not, typically, put fencing in this type of budget. He said, while it is included in this CIP, that is for major upgrades to these convenience centers. Mr. Baker said it would, typically, be things such as new docks, new ramps, new retaining walls, and the concrete pads that the dumpsters sit on usually have to be completely reconstructed. Mr. Young said it would be departmental capital, which should be handled in Solid Waste.

Mr. Cannon said, in the references to Riverside Drive, and also, more importantly, the references to Twin Tree, that appears to him to be an extension of what they have probably been discussing over the last year or two as an overall County plan to address stormwater management, especially Twin Tree, and he is wondering how they decided in this CIP to put \$200,000 into the Twin Tree project when they have not established the priorities of where the funding for the County should really be going. He said they just spent \$30-some thousand dollars for a study at the Pratt Road area, but how do they know that is not going to be a higher priority. He said they also have received more recent emails in reference to Kaywood Drive, so how do they know that is not going to be a higher priority than Twin Tree. He clarified, no disrespect to that community, but he is just curious as to how they are defining the priorities if they do not have that plan based on the \$35,000 they spent on that study, to which Mr. Baker responded, that is a good point, and that might be something they need to look at as far as where the priorities are, and whether they need a storm drain improvement masterplan to see where they want to start spending their money first. He said they want to start working everywhere, but they just have to start picking locations based off of either the number of calls they have been receiving, or input politically from folks. Mr. Cannon asked what "input politically" means, to which Mr. Baker responded, if Council tells him to fix Pratt Road, he will go fix Pratt Road. Mr. Young said one difference is, with Twin Tree, they need permitting, but it is, generally, ready to go. He said the Pratt Road solutions mostly require easements that Mr. Baker would need to work on and prioritize, and Kaywood is under study. Mr. Cannon clarified, that was what he meant, the total package, and what is easiest to accomplish first based on what is a higher priority first, to which Mr. Strausburg responded, they know they have certain hotspots, they know they can move on those hotspots while the overall plan is being developed, and they are saying they know they have to address these, so they will go ahead and address these. He said,

when the masterplan is finalized, there may be higher priorities, but they have not engineered those yet, and they do not know what to do there, but that does not mean they should not move ahead with the projects they can move ahead with to alleviate known problems. He said Mr. Cannon's point is well taken, but, as one of the candidates for County Executive said, "When there is flooding, you just go out and fix it," so they are just going out and fixing it. Mr. Cannon said the only reason he asks is, if anybody were to see these documents and ask why the County is spending \$200,000 on Twin Tree, and who do they know on Twin Tree Road, as opposed to it already being established that there are huge problems elsewhere. He said Mr. Strausburg made a good point that sometimes they have to get the jobs done that they know they can accomplish while not giving up on the other projects, but he thinks that has to be made really clear. Mr. Strausburg said that is the balancing they have to do, and they have to keep moving on both. Mr. Cannon said he thinks there needs to be a plan that establishes that so the public can see that, just like they do with the roads. Mr. Baker said, oftentimes, there is a challenge in trying to prioritize. He said, going back to the meetings they had in March when they pinpointed on the map where all of their hotspots are, they can go in and address those, but that is not to say another hotspot will not show up in the process because some tree falls across a branch and starts clogging something up, or flooding somebody else, or a pipe collapses. He said it is a little bit of a moving target because, at any point, the location of the drainage problems can shift, and can also depend on where the storms are coming through. He said, with the storm they saw from the remnants of Michael, they did not experience a whole lot of flooding on the Northside of the County, but it was all on the Southside from Route 50 below, so, if they had a meeting then, the hotspots would have been on the Southside. He reiterated, it depends on the tracks of the storms, so they keep a record of the folks who are calling in, and they go out and try to address what is causing that flooding internally. He said the so-called low hanging fruit is usually when the problem happens within public right of way, or they have easy access to it. He said, if he can get a Gradall next to a ditch and clean it out, that is going to be hit as opposed to some branch that goes off through woods, through five or six acres into a field, and then through somebody else's culvert because that becomes a bit of a challenge. Mr. Cannon asked, when they meet in February, will the strategic plan Mr. Baker will be showing Council reflect this, to which Mr. Baker responded, no. He said what he will be showing Council in February is mostly what is related to the Kaywood study, and the places they have been addressing as far as cleaning out ditches, and things like that. He clarified, the masterplan is, literally, something that was brought up while they were sitting here today. He said it is something they can try to start developing, but he will not have an update on a masterplan in February. Mr. Cannon said, again, in February they will be discussing Pratt Road, and they will be discussing Kaywood, and yet they will be doing work somewhere else, so there is a disconnect there. He said maybe the following quarter will give Mr. Baker time to put a strategic plan together. He said the last thing Council wants to do is micromanage his office, but it just begs the question as to how they are defining the priorities. He said if there is a list everyone can follow so they are all on the same page, they can explain to people why the County is doing work in one place, and not in another.

Mr. Holloway said Mr. McCain mentioned creating a problem further downstream when fixing one problem. He then asked what that procedure is. He said he was at Walston Switch Road where it was overflowing, and the tax ditch ends there. He said the tax ditch associations sometimes have someone they call a Viewer who goes out and surveys the ditch. He then asked, when there is an initial problem, does the County have someone who goes and looks downstream or upstream to see what the problem is, and is that handled on a case by case basis, or is it done as a preventative maintenance problem, to which Mr. Baker responded, no, they do not do any preventative maintenance. He said it is a reactionary process where people will call in with an issue, and then either their stormwater inspector, Lee Outen, himself, or someone from the engineering staff goes and looks to see what the issue is whether it is

something clogging the branch, whether they have beavers, or whether it is a pipe that has collapsed, just to try to figure out why something is flooding the way that it is.

Mrs. Hurley clarified, as a refresher, the Capital Improvement Program is a five-year planning document, to which Mr. Strausburg responded, that is correct. Mrs. Hurley then asked, is what Council sees in fiscal year 2020 what will carry over to the capital budget Council will see for fiscal year 2020, to which Mr. Strausburg responded, yes. He said this is called a Capital Improvement Plan and Capital Budget, so the plan is for five years, and the proposed budget is for the first year, which is 2020. He clarified, this may change between now and when they submit the budget because they may find they do not have the revenue to support it, or they have other priorities that pop up in the meantime. He said, however, today, or when they submitted this, what they see in the first year is what they believe they are going to propose in the annual operating budget. Mrs. Hurley asked, if there is grant funding mentioned for any project, and for some reason that grant funding does not come through, what happens to the project, to which Mr. Strausburg responded, it depends on why the grant funding did not come through. He said, if the grant agency were to say they do not have the money this year, but they may have the money next year, or they may say they can probably fund that to a level of 50 percent this year, and defer 50 percent to the next year, they have to react to that in time, and come back and talk to Council about how that funding scenario has changed, and this is what it looks like now. Mr. Cannon said Anderson Mill is an example of that. He then asked where they are at with that project, to which Mr. Baker responded, as far as the repaving of it? He clarified, there are multiple facets to Anderson Mill. Mr. Cannon said it was a drainage project, to which Mr. Baker responded, that is the one where they replaced the pipes that had clogged up when the boat had gotten jammed in the outfall pipe, and damaged the pipe. He said they took the boat out, and went back in after a few months and replaced the pipes because that damage to the pipe joint was causing the road to start to sink in. He said they replaced those, they cleaned up the downstream and the upstream sides, and he wants to get that road repaved shortly. He said, in fact, just last month they got their new paving contractor back on board, so they will be out there shortly finishing that pavement up. He said that dam itself is unique in that it is privately owned on the upstream side, the County owns the right of way on the road, and then there is a private owner on the downstream side. He said, when MDE sends out their dam inspection letters, it goes to three different folks, and they will put maintenance efforts on their dam inspection reports that do not always involve the County. He said they will say things like they have to clean up within 15 feet of the slope to the dam, but the County does not own past the toe of the slope of the dam, so it ends up falling on the private property owners, to which Mr. Strausburg added, who may or may not have the funding for it, so it gets complicated. Mr. Cannon said, as it is right now, the problem is solved, to which Mr. Baker responded, as it is right now, the pipes have been replaced, it is flowing, and they have an emergency overflow pipe in there now, so, as far as the drainage goes, it is in great shape.

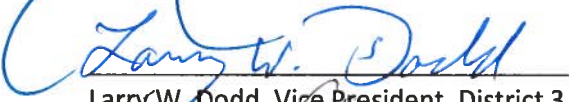
Mr. Holloway said they have to remember that back in 2007 they were replacing people's wells because it was too dry, and they were looking for funding. Mr. Strausburg said he was not with the County then, but he knows they went through a drought cycle.

Mr. Cannon asked if Mr. Baker anticipates that the work being done on Nanticoke Road will impact the downstream, to which Mr. Baker responded, the State has asked them about the improvements that are to be made downstream, and he can get Council that information. He said the State has to model whatever improvements they make upstream on the impact of what will happen at Anderson Mill Pond. He clarified, if the State wants to make their pipe bigger under Nanticoke, they have to do a model that shows how that will impact Anderson Mill Pond. He said several years ago when the State did a model, they showed that Anderson Mill Pond was overtopping at a storm event that just was not happening. He

said he thinks they said it was overtopping during a 25-year storm, and he knew from experience that just was not the case because, up until this last May when that boat got clogged in the pipe, Anderson Mill Pond had never overtopped, so they disagreed with the State's initial report, and they had to go back and revise it. He said he has not seen their report of any improvements they are making, but he knows they have asked the County what improvements they have made, and he has to get them that information so they can include that in their study. He said they do have to model it, but he has not seen the results of that model yet. There was no further discussion.



John T. Cannon, President



Larry W. Dodd, Vice President, District 3



Ernest F. Davis, District 1



Marc Kilmer, District 2

absent

Josh Hastings, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



William R. McCain, At-Large



Laura Hurley, Council Administrator