

**Open Work Session**  
**Proposed Grant Funding Legislation**  
**June 16, 2020**

Mr. Taylor explained, because of the spotlight on grants and how they are approved or not approved, he was asked to propose some revisions to that part of the County Code. He said, in Chapter 29, Article 2, which deals with grant funds and how they are accepted, there are two manners in which they are done, either by putting them in the Budget Bill, and there is a list of what they call anticipated grants and anticipated grant revenue, and then there are all the other grants, which are generally referred to as unanticipated grant revenue. He said the grants Council did today regarding the Circuit Court fall into the latter category as they were not in the 2020 Budget Bill, and, in fact, they did not come in until the last 30 or 60 days. He said they cannot be adopted in the initial Budget Bill because of the timing, so there is a provision for that.

Mr. Taylor said he tried to clean this up a little bit, and maintained the same twofold nature, anticipated and unanticipated, but he has provided for a lot more information to be provided to the Council in both cases. He said there is a suggested provision that the County Executive shall furnish to the Council promptly upon request such other documentation regarding a grant as Council may request, including correspondence between the County and the source of the grant, or its representative or agent. He explained, if Council wants information and it is not provided initially, Council can ask for it. He said it also requires that, when a request comes in, Council is going to get the basic supporting information. He said Council had to ask for that for the grants to the Circuit Court, and he thinks they should be given right off the top. He said it can be provided to the Council Administrator so, if Councilmembers want to see them, they can, and usually they break down to just maybe a couple of pages. He said there is a grant for funds they are going to talk about later in the meeting where there are a couple of letters from different grant approval agencies, so it is not tons of information normally. He said, if there are references to codes and COMAR, they can just be provided if Council wants to look at them. He clarified, he does not think they are talking about tons of documentation, but he thinks it is a good idea to know what the grants are, and not just have some general reference to them in a sentence or so. He said, just like with the grants Council did today for the Circuit Court, he suggested this to Mrs. Hurley, and she put in there the references to the documents that came out of the Administrative Office of the Courts for those monies. He said, in a couple of cases they are MOUs, and in a couple of cases they are grant approvals, but that is what he has tried to do with this. He said he eliminated any reference in there to the Finance Director, not because of their particular situation with the Finance Director or lack thereof at the current moment, but because those matters are basically covered in the Charter, and they do not need to be covered here. He said, if Council wants to change the Charter in some way in regard to that, that is fine, but they should do it that way.

Mr. Taylor said he also provided another one of these communication type items that Councilmembers and the Council Staff may directly but informally discuss any aspect of a grant with any personnel in the Executive Branch either before the anticipated or unanticipated grant revenue is approved, or thereafter. He said Council should take note of the word "informally". He explained, the Charter provision that Mr. Culver sometimes cites about "you can't tell any of us anything" talks about formal discussion, so they are talking about informally asking why they think the grant is needed, how they are

going to use it, and things like that, just general questions. He said that is provided in there, so there is a lot more legalized transparency, and, hopefully, Council will not keep getting these cold shoulders.

Mrs. Acle asked if they can put something in there that they need to keep Council informed every three to six months on how the grant process is going. She said there are Departments receiving grants, and they have had to give them back to the State. She clarified, she does not know about this one particularly if they have measurable goals they have to submit. Mr. Taylor responded, just a thought on that might be to put something in its approval. He said he is not sure he has anything in there right now at the moment that would cover that, but, if he does not, he could put something in there to the affect that, when Council approves a grant, they can put conditions on it such as that because Council might not want to do it for every grant. He explained, there are a lot of grants that are pretty rote, to be honest, and every year they are the same thing, so there is not a whole lot of need for oversight. He said, on the other hand, there is the other end of the spectrum, and that is where Council might want to do that. He said he thinks he put something in there about conditions, but if he did not, Council can certainly put something in there, assuming there is no objection to that.

Mr. Dodd asked Mrs. Hurley to talk about her conversation with Mr. Wilber. Mrs. Hurley explained, the issue with asking for a lot of the grant documentation is the time in which the grant needs to be accepted. She said there is normally a certain time period, such as 10 to 14 days, so the concern there was that Council asking for the additional documentation may slow down that process, and put them up against that time window in order to actually accept the grant funds. Mrs. Acle said, if they are applying for a grant, they would have all of that together, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, she thinks that probably would depend on each grant. Mr. Hastings said he does a lot of grants, and he wishes he could say it was not last minute, but it is. Mr. Taylor said he thought they addressed that somehow, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, she knows they talked about it, but she is not real certain where Mr. Taylor addressed it. She said she thinks a lot of the information is going to already be provided in the grant award letter, or the grant agreement that Council would be looking at when the request comes to them. She said she thinks the time-consuming part may be when they go to look for the additional regulations, such as in COMAR, and the federal regulations, which may take a little bit more time.

Mrs. Acle asked, what about the three to six month follow up on the grant, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, she did not have that conversation with Mr. Wilber, so she does not know of any concerns there. Mrs. Acle said she knows Ms. Bradley was doing that, but it kind of dwindled.

Mr. Dodd said, for the last six years, there has been a lot of discussion about the County having a fulltime grant writer, but that has never come to fruition. He said he thinks, if the County had a fulltime grant writer, they would be able to move these grants through quicker. Mr. Taylor said that is not addressed in this, but, if the County had a grant writer, it would be fine, and they would not have to change this. Mr. Dodd clarified, it would not slow things down, and that is where he was going with that.

Mr. Taylor said, in reference to this kind of need for prompt action, he has in there that they will promptly furnish a copy of each application or proposal, so he thinks that gets at that. He said normally, to have a grant, they are either going to apply for it, or get something like they got for the Circuit Court grants from the Administrative Office of the Courts saying they want to give the County some money. He

said normally, he would think they would have the basic documentation for the grant. He clarified, they might not have it when they apply for it, but it can certainly be specified in the application what it is and what it is going to be used for, so that would then short circuit it that way. He said he does not really see that the timing is that big of a problem, and he thinks it is more imaginary than real.

Mr. Cannon asked if there is a specific “ask” here? He clarified, what are they trying to lead to? Mr. Dodd then asked Mr. Taylor if this Legislation was his idea, to which Mr. Taylor responded, he thinks somebody wanted it revised. Mr. Dodd asked who that somebody is, to which Mr. Taylor responded, he honestly cannot remember at this point. Mr. Dodd then asked Mrs. Acle if it was her, to which Mrs. Acle responded, no. Mr. Taylor said he thinks he and Mrs. Hurley talked about it in particular.

Mr. Holloway said this is just more oversight so Council can keep track of things since Council does not get the information, to which Mr. Taylor responded, he suggests putting this in the form of a Legislative Bill and bringing it back in for first reading. He said, if there is any further desire to change anything in it, they can change it. Mr. Dodd said, with many of these grants, the only time Council sees them is when they are dropped on Council’s desk saying they need to be approved, to which Mr. Taylor responded, it is going to be hard to stop anything like that. He said Council could put something in this Bill, such as they will not approve a grant for so many days after it is submitted, but, as soon as Council does that, there will be some essential grant where Council may not want to adhere to that. He said, if Council wants more time for grants, they can always say they are going to discuss this in a Work Session before they approve it. He concluded, he thinks it would be best to handle that on a case-by-case basis rather than trying to do it through Legislative language.

Mrs. Acle asked, if Council wants to do a three-month follow-up to track outcomes, could they write that into the Legislative Bill, to which Mr. Taylor responded, he will go through the language just to make absolutely sure, but he thinks Mrs. Hurley thinks too that they have in there that Council can impose conditions, and he thinks that would be better, again, on a case-by-case basis than doing it in Legislative language because of what he said before. He explained, a lot of the grants are just for somebody’s salary, or something like that, so Council may not really want to have a three-month follow-up on that as opposed to something that may be more significant that they are going to use it for, such as a project. He said he remembers a fair amount of discussion about Pirate’s Wharf, so that would be an example of the other kind where Council might want to know something about it; however, if they had a grant such as the ones Council approved today for the Adult Drug Court and the Family Services, those are mostly things that are done by the Circuit Court. He said, if Council wanted to have follow-up, they could certainly ask, and he is sure they would be glad to tell Council, but it seems to him that it is just kind of make-work on something like that. He clarified, if Council wants to put that in as a condition when they approve those grants, they could do that. Mrs. Acle said she just feels that Council needs to have a policy on how Council approves grants, and how they follow up with them, to which Mr. Dodd responded, if she ever attends any of the Board of Education meetings, their grant writer attends every meeting and gives an update of all of the grants they have accepted, all the grants that are pending, and all the grants they have applied for. He said it is a substantial amount of money, and it pays for the position. He said he personally thinks the County is long overdue for a grant writer, and he thinks that position would be essential. He said then they could come in front of Council and give an update on all of the grants, and that way Council would know what money is out there, to which Mr. Holloway

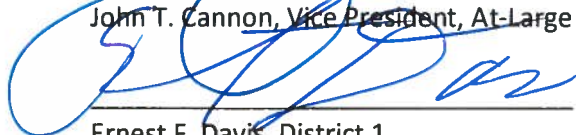
responded, they really do not need a grant writer to do that. He said Council would just give instructions that anybody who is writing grants sends a follow-up to Council, to which Mr. Dodd responded, it would be nice if they did that. Mrs. Acle said they have them in each Department. She said Public Works has their own person who is doing the grants. Mr. Holloway said Council could pass Legislation that says Council just wants to know what grants were applied for, which grants were approved, and how that money is going to be spent, to which Mr. Dodd responded, as he said, it would be nice if they did that. Mr. Taylor said, with the Board of Education, it may be that a lot of their grants are State money coming from the Feds with an awful lot of federal regulations or COMAR regulations that they really need to be pretty conversant with, whereas a good many of the County's grants are kind of just not as much bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo associated with them. There was no further discussion.



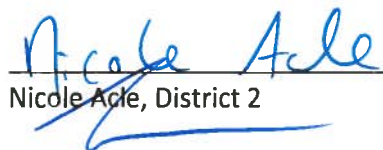
Larry W. Dodd, President, District 3



John T. Cannon, Vice President, At-Large

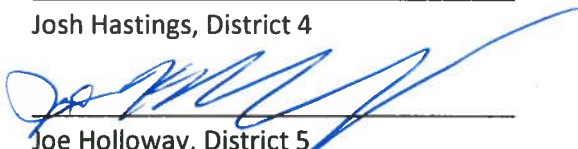


Ernest F. Davis, District 1



Nicole Acle, District 2

Josh Hastings, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



William R. McCain, At-Large



Laura Hurley, Council Administrator