

**Open Work Session
Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Fiscal Years 2022-2026
Department of Public Works (Roads, Solid Waste, and Engineering)
February 2, 2021**

Mr. Mark Whitelock, Deputy Director of Public Works, came before Council. He said he will go through the CIP and give Council a brief summary of the projects, and then Council can ask any questions.

Mr. Whitelock said the first item under Engineering is the WIP program at \$200,000, which is more or less a revolving fund. He said they are expecting to receive a grant from the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) for cleaning out the stormwater pond at the Hunters Mill development, and the \$200,000 will be their match money for that grant.

Mr. Whitelock said the next item is Wicomico River dredging for \$350,000 to support the ongoing development of the property the County bought at the Sharps Point dredge site, and to support the activities in Deal Island for the next proposed dredge of the River.

Mr. Whitelock said the first item for Roads is MS4 projects at \$500,000, and that is pretty much a marriage with the WIP program. He said there are different things slated to improve pervious and imperious surfaces in the County.

Mr. Whitelock said the second item is the Northwood Drive and Naylor Mill Road traffic signal to assist with cutting down on some of the accidents that happen in that area, and to assist with left turns towards the Sheriff's Department coming off Northwood Drive. He clarified, that intersection has already had a traffic study, and it was accepted as an acceptable site for a traffic signal. Mr. Dodd asked why it costs \$200,000, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, part of that will be design, and there are some easements there that will have to be obtained. He said the other part is the construction of the light itself, and those are actually the State rates for putting in a traffic signal of that caliber.

Mr. Whitelock said the next item is Three Bridges Road for \$350,000, which is match money for grants, and that will be a bridge replacement. He said that bridge has an insufficient rating, and they did some design work with the State already. Mr. Holloway asked, when does Mr. Whitelock think that work will proceed, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, hopefully next year. He said they are in the design phase right now, and once that is done, they will work with the State to get it bid out and secure the funding.

Mr. Whitelock said, moving on to Solid Waste, the landfill cell construction is \$7 million dollars for building two new cells at the landfill. He said cell 9 is the current cell, and they are two years into it and it is probably at 50 percent capacity now. He explained, normally it would last a little longer, but trash coming into the landfill has increased, so they are not going to have the capacity if they continue to push it off. He said, instead of working like they did the last time where they were kind of pushed to get the cell built, they want to get it started so they will have the cell in place when they are ready to use it.

Mr. McCain asked if there is any particular thing Mr. Whitelock can identify to attribute to the increase of material being brought to the landfill, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, he always looks at the

building trends because, when building is up, construction materials are coming in. He said the population of the County itself has also increased, and he thinks when he first came to the County it was at 90,000 and now they are at 110,000, so it is just a growing County and a better economy.

Mr. McCain asked if Mr. Whitelock sees any trends as far as waste coming from outside the County, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, he thinks it could still be a problem. He said he thinks when they raised the tipping fee this year it leveled the playing field a little where it does not make it as attractive to run from Worcester, Dorchester, or Somerset to Wicomico because they are really trying to offset fuel costs, so he thinks that has helped. He clarified, Wicomico is still the lowest tipping fee on the Lower Eastern Shore, so they are always going to get a little saturation, but he does not think it is as bad as it was.

Mr. Dodd said not too long ago in December he knows Wicomico County got some complaints about people from Delmar, Delaware coming into the landfill. Mr. Whitelock said the struggle with trying to police something like that is they may have a contractor who lives in Delaware and has all Delaware plated vehicles, so he will come into their landfill. He said, basically, if the contractor says it is coming from a job in Wicomico County, they have no way of questioning that, so they have no policing unit to say where it is coming from unless they were to go out and actually follow a vehicle and see where he is going. Mr. Dodd asked if they are selling stickers to Delaware people, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, he believes it has always been a practice since they have had the landfill permits that if it is within a mile of a transfer station, even if it is over the State line, they will sell the sticker, but it is at an increased fee. He said he thinks it is \$165 for that permit, but they base it on the address they have and look on Google maps to see how far it is because it is hard to tell sometimes.

Mr. Davis asked how much life expectancy the landfill has left, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, he would probably give a 13-year life expectancy on the Brick Kiln Road side of the landfill. Mr. Davis asked if there are any plans for the other side, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, the other side is being permitted right now, and they should be fairly close to being done with phase 2. He explained, it is a 3-phase permit system, and they have already done phase 1. He said they are in the middle of phase 2, which is basically groundwater testing where they test different soil layers. He said, once they are past that, it is more of an MDE approval type permitting process that they normally go through.

Mr. Dodd asked if the life expectancy of each of the cells is 13 years, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, no, that is the whole area on the Brick Kiln Road side. He said, once that 13 years is done, the permitting process will be done for the opposite side of the road, and they have been told that is a 30-year expansion. He said most certainly Counties grow and they have more residents in the County, and more building and industry in the County, so those numbers are going to change.

Mrs. Acle asked, what is the estimated date of completion for the Hunters Mill project, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, they have some comments from MDE they are addressing, so he would say probably realistically they would see bidding out this summer, and probably construction more towards the fall. Mrs. Acle asked if Mr. Whitelock is in communication with the homeowners' association, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, yes. Mrs. Acle asked if it is the same with West Nithsdale, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, yes. He clarified, he actually needs to touch base with them, but yes.

Mrs. Acle said they keep moving the year back on Barren Creek, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, he thinks the design is done, and he thinks they are looking at somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1.4 million dollars. He said they are looking at a couple of other things because there was some other work that has to be done with that, like widening it out, even from the footprint they started with. He said, in the original design it did not call for guardrails, so they had to open the footprint up just a little bit. He said they are just basically putting the finishing touches on that now, so he would expect Administration to bring something to Council at some point in the near future.

Mr. Whitelock said the next item for Solid Waste is asking for \$150,000 to start putting in a perimeter fence around the landfill borrow pit. He said they have had problems in the past with people coming into the borrow pit, and they cannot police that. He said the water in that pit is deep, and his fear is that people will drown if they get in there in a bad condition. He said they will start on the trailer park side and fence it off, so they will stop getting some of the migration from the trailer park. Mr. Davis said they park in the back of his church parking lot and go in through there. Mr. Whitelock said he thinks, as they can afford it, they will start to segment the fence all the way around so they can close it in. Mr. Dodd said he thought that was already fenced in, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, no, and he is actually surprised that nobody has made them fence it in. He said, from his standpoint, they want to try and be a little more proactive, and maybe save somebody's life.

Mr. Whitelock said the last item for Solid Waste is the ongoing permitting of the landfill expansion, which is \$250,000. He said total expansion cost for permitting should end up somewhere in the neighborhood between \$500,000 and \$600,000.

Mr. Cannon asked if they are done with phase 3 of the westside collector because he knows they approved \$2 million in 2020 as the last commitment. He asked if that is finished and over with, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, no, they are not in phase 3. He said phase 2 is in, but phase 3 is not in. Mr. Cannon said, in going through the CIP and going back to old CIPs, he can see where funding was put in, but then just by the nature of how they work things, stuff just disappears. He said he had not seen any reference to phase 3 after 2020, so he is wondering what happened to that initial \$2 million dollar commitment. Mr. Whitelock said he cannot speak for what happened to the \$2 million dollar commitment because he did not have control over that, but he believes the former administration at some point wanted to build phase 3 because it ties in with some drainage projects they had over on the other road. Mr. Cannon clarified, this question is not really for Mr. Whitelock, it is more for the Acting County Executive. He said, if Council approves a CIP in 2020 for \$2 million dollars for a project, he is wondering what happens the next year when they look and that project is no longer there. He said he thinks there needs to be some type of continuity as far as what happens between one year to the next when these projects are in there one time and then they are gone.

Mr. Cannon said they had West Nithsdale for \$100,000 in fiscal year 2021. He then asked if that project is completed, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, no, it was their plan to do it this year.

Mr. Cannon said Kaywood Drive was thrown into 2024, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, Kaywood Drive has dropped off, but he knows they are doing work over there. Mr. Cannon said it is scheduled for 2024, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, they are doing work over there now. Mr. Dodd asked, what

does Mr. Whitelock mean when he says it has dropped off, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, he does not see it on his current CIP. He clarified, that is not to say it is not there. Mr. Cannon said it is not for this year or next year, they have it for 2024. Mr. Whitelock said the County engineers have told him they are still doing design work for that area, and he would expect to do some work over there.

Mr. Cannon asked what kind of success they are having with the fill dirt from Connelly Mill, as that is primarily why the County bought the property, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, it is very good dirt, and they are having very good success with it. He said they have a \$7 million dollar price tag for upcoming cell construction, but actually they are going to build two cells to give them a little breathing room between the next one. He said, actually, they currently bring dirt in from Connelly Mill to help offset the cost of that, and his hope is that they will shave somewhere between \$4 million to \$5 million dollars off cell construction by having the fill dirt on site when the contractors come in. Mr. Cannon said that would be good because that is really why they agreed to take the property on. He said Mr. Weston Young suggested the County really could save quite a bit of money, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, it is kind of an edgy thing. He said they are going to use the dirt for that and bring it over because they will save money on cell construction, but actually that dirt is slated for normal daily landfill operations, so any time they do something like that it shortens their distance between the goal line as far as their dirt goes. He said dirt is dirt, and at some point in time it will be an issue for Solid Waste.

Mr. Cannon said he would love to see a list of the MS4 projects. He said it is \$500,000 every single year, and that is a pretty large project. He said, if Mr. Whitelock has a list of what those projects are going to be over the next few years, it would be great to see that.

Mr. Dodd said he is glad Mr. Cannon brought up Connelly Mill Road and the dirt because there was a lot of discussion on how they were going to transport that dirt from Connelly Mill Road to the landfill. Mr. Whitelock said they had \$600,000 in the operating budget for Solid Waste, and they have private contractors plus two County dump trucks. He said his hope is, in the upcoming budget, if it is approved through Administration, they will probably ask for another dump truck, and then try to rely solely on their own forces for bringing that dirt. Mr. Dodd asked if the traffic will be going down Naylor Mill Road, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, the traffic is going down Naylor Mill Road. Mr. Dodd said there is already a lot of traffic there, and that is why he was asking. Mr. Whitelock said they are currently doing that, so it is not going to increase or decrease any.

Mr. Davis said he thought they said the reason why they got a contractor was that it was cheaper for a contractor than for the County to put their trucks out there to do it. He said there was a study done and they said that was the reason why they put it out to bid and the contractor came in, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, if that is what they said, then yes. Mr. Dodd asked, if that is what they said, then what is the truth, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, it is cheaper for the County to haul their own dirt.

Mrs. Acle said she was looking at the engineering fees, and they are about \$500,000 a year. She then asked if that is in addition to the Public Works Director, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, no. He explained, the Public Works Director and Deputy Director are split between Engineering, Solid Waste, and Roads, so each get a segment of the salaries of those positions. He clarified, it does not have anything to do with the CIP because these are just capital projects that Public Works wants to do.

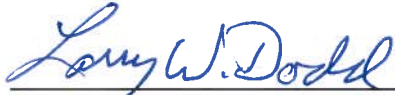
Mrs. Pam Oland, Director of Finance, then came before Council and said these numbers are just capital numbers, and this does not have anything to do with salary, benefits, or operating costs. She said it looks like the same number every year, but that is for very specific projects that the State requires them to do, such as MS4 projects, so it is all project cost, not salary, benefits, or operating. She said she just wanted to make sure that was clear.

Mr. Hastings said, since Mrs. Aclé brought it up, does the County have a certified engineer, and do they need to have somebody sign off on plans and work, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, they have a P.E. He clarified, the County just got him, and he just passed the test. He said they had been utilizing Ed Heatwole, a former director of Public Works who is retired, and he has been doing it as a consulting activity for signing off on stormwater plans. He said, as far as the flow of their work moving through, nothing has changed. He said the flow of the work still goes, it has not stopped, and there have been no hiccups. Mr. Hastings said Council will talk with the Acting County Executive, but they certainly need to make sure they have a Director of Public Works and a great Deputy. He clarified, Mr. Whitelock is doing a great job, and his team has handled a lot, but they still need to make sure they are staffing up.

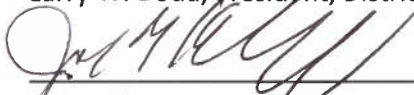
Mr. Hastings said a couple of years ago Lee Beauchamp was really great at looking at trying to find ways to save the County money, and he knows he put together a great plan for saving millions of dollars over so many years. He said he does not know what the County can do to continue to focus on those kinds of activities, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, they are still actively looking for grants and opportunities that will help them with their projects through Public Works and the County. He clarified, they never stopped that. Mr. Hastings clarified, he meant more for renewable energy type things, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, they have some solar things going on. He said the gas that comes out of the landfill is destroyed by INGENCO, and there was a time where they were receiving something called carbon credits, and they got paid for carbon credits by offsetting someone else's activities. He said it looks like now they can get back into that program again, which could be very beneficial to Solid Waste. He said they did it for two years before and he thinks they made somewhere in the neighborhood of \$300,000 in that two-year period, so they are still actively doing the Public Works things and what Public Works does to offset costs to the County.

Mr. Hastings said somebody asked him the other day about the timeline for Connelly Mill. He said there was a whole park talked about, but he did not have the answers, so he figured he would ask Mr. Whitelock while he is here, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, when they started that, they figured it would take ten years to dig the two ponds out and have that ready so they could turn it over to Parks and Recreation to be developed. Mrs. Oland added, if they look at Recreation and Park's CIP, she thinks it has something in it to do a masterplan for that property. She said she believes it is in their section of the CIP, so that part of the development, if she remembers correctly, is in Recreation and Parks. She said they have a masterplan in 2022, and she thinks they are looking to get mostly grant funding for that, and then they have a phase 1 plan in 2024 listed in the current CIP. She said she believes the part they are looking at is not only the water in front, but the woods in the back, so when they are talking about phase 1, they are talking about that section first, not the front section which has the water.

Mr. Dodd said he is glad Mr. Hastings brought that up because they had a lot of discussion before accepting the property with people in the Delmar area complaining about motorcycles. He then asked if they still have that problem, to which Mr. Whitelock responded, from time to time. He said he is not going to say it stopped, but it is certainly reduced by about 95 percent. There was no further discussion.



Larry W. Dodd, President, District 3



Joe Holloway, Vice President, District 5



John T. Cannon, At-Large



William R. McCain, At-Large



Ernie Davis, District 1



Nicole Acle, District 2



Josh Hastings, District 4



Laura Hurley, Council Administrator