

**Open Work Session  
Countywide Tax Incentives  
July 6, 2021**

Mr. Holloway said this is very simple. He said, for any tax exemptions they give to anyone, they reduce the property tax rate in the next budget session by the same amount. Mrs. Acle said that sounds good.

Mr. McCain said he has zero interest in this, and it does not make any sense to him whatsoever. Mr. Holloway said, so Mr. McCain wants to give tax breaks to developers but does not want to give them to the general citizens of Wicomico County. Mr. McCain responded, they have a revenue cap in the County, and he is not sure if Mr. Holloway has been listening to the conversations they just had, but they are the only County in the State with a revenue cap and no transfer tax. He said they are now considered one of the poorest Counties in the State, so they cannot just blanketly say they are going to decrease their revenue, to which Mr. Holloway responded, but Mr. McCain is just blanketly saying they are going to give away taxes to the developers. Mr. McCain clarified, they are not giving away anything. He said the Bill they just spent the last hour talking about is a very narrow, specific Bill that provides incentives that increase revenue, so they are trying to increase economic incentives to increase revenue in the County. He said he is trying to reserve himself to describe this proposed Legislation. Mr. Holloway said he does not need to reserve himself, to which Mr. McCain responded, it is reckless and just irresponsible. Mr. Holloway said he could say the same thing about the HORIZON program, but he will reserve himself.

Mr. Cannon said he feels as if this Legislation came forward simply to poke an argument against the Ross project, and he does not know if it was legitimately really well thought out. He said, if Mr. Holloway really wanted to do this, he should have done it a few months ago when they voted on the budget because that is the time they decide the property tax rate, so if Mr. Holloway seriously wanted to give a property tax rate adjustment, that is when he should have done it. Mr. Holloway responded, this is for the future. He said they have not done HORIZON yet, and this says it is for the future to provide an equitable distribution, and they decide the tax rate every year, so the next time they do that they can decide this. Mr. Cannon clarified, that does not need a Legislative Bill. He explained, the next time they sit as a Body to look at the budget they will be asked if they want to keep the tax rate as it is or lower it for every citizen in Wicomico County, so they do that through the tax rate adjustment and do not have to do it in separate Legislation. Mr. Holloway said they do not have to, but they can. Mr. Cannon said it is not required. Mr. Holloway said he knows it is not required, but they can, and this guarantees it gets done if it passes. He clarified, he knows it is not going to pass, and he knew that when he put it in.

Mr. Cannon said he does not like the fact that citizen taxpayer money has been used to have the County Attorney put a Legislative Bill together that Council has never even had a Work Session on. Mr. Holloway said Mr. Cannon needs to read the Charter because it says the Attorney can work on a Bill. Mr. Cannon responded, it says that, but the public also depends on this Council to do it in a fiscally responsible way, to which Mr. Holloway responded, he thinks Mr. Wilber was very fiscally responsible, and he does not think it took Mr. Wilber very long and it was a very simple Bill to write up. Mr. Cannon responded, money is money, and he knows if it were his money he would not have asked Mr. Wilber to do it.

Mr. Cannon said another issue is this Bill does not talk about dates or amounts, and does not even have a fiscal note saying what the ramifications might be, which is what is usually in a Legislative Bill, to which Mr. Holloway responded, that is because they do not have it worked out yet. Mrs. Acle said it is a draft.

Mr. Dodd said this is a Work Session, to which Mr. Cannon responded, he knows this is a Work Session, and he stated his position, and he does not see how this is possible. Mr. Dodd repeated, this is a Work Session, so the intent was to discuss it.

Mr. Holloway said they can sit here all evening and talk about giving tax abatements to developers, but when somebody puts something up here to lower taxes for the citizens of Wicomico County it is suddenly that he has done something wrong. Mr. Cannon responded, this should be done during the budget, so Mr. Holloway should have done something three months ago if he really wanted to do this, to which Mr. Holloway responded, it is for the next budget, not the last budget. Mr. Cannon said they can do this in the next budget, and it will not be that long before they get to that, to which Mr. Holloway responded, then Mr. Cannon will say he should have done this three months sooner.

Mr. Dodd said Mr. Holloway also talks to a lot of the firefighters when they attend the Fireman's Association meetings every month, and they are looking for a tax incentive, so he thinks that could be part of this discussion. He clarified, not that this will pass, but they need to consider recruiting and retaining their volunteer firefighters, so that could be part of this, to which Mr. Cannon responded, that is a completely different subject, and he agrees with Mr. Dodd 100 percent. Mr. Dodd said he is talking about it because this is a Work Session, to which Mr. McCain responded, this Work Session has nothing to do with workforce development. Mr. Dodd said this is part of their goals, but he thinks Mr. Holloway made his point. There was no further discussion.



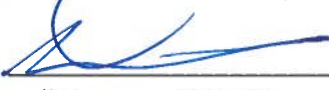
Larry W. Dodd, President, District 3



Joe Holloway, Vice President, District 5



John T. Cannon, At-Large



William R. McCain, At-Large

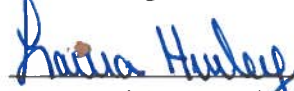


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