

**Open Work Session
County Council Goals for Fiscal Year 2022
August 3, 2021**

Mr. Dodd asked if anybody has an update on their goals, and he really appreciates everyone who had a lengthy discussion on their goals and some great ideas. He said he knows it has only been two weeks in.

Mr. Holloway said he is compiling his list of roads, which Mr. Psota will be getting. He said he has been asked if the County can earn any money for setting up a toll to charge for roller coasters on some of the roads in the County, but he will be getting that list to Mr. Psota soon.

Mr. Holloway said he had an opportunity to talk to someone today from the Liquor Board and they said the revenues were very good and they were hoping to exceed last year's contribution to the County, so that is a positive thing.

Mr. Dodd asked if Mr. Holloway is planning to set up a road trip like they did before, to which Mr. Holloway responded, he had not planned on it. Mr. Dodd said it was an interesting trip.

Mr. McCain asked Mrs. Hurley if it is possible to maybe get the goals organized in a timeframe. He clarified, just an estimate, but they have talked about some of these topics before, so maybe they can have some dates around them. Mrs. Hurley responded, she has no problems with that. Mr. Dodd said some of them are long-term.

Mr. Cannon said he was looking at Environmental Health as far as septic system inspections and approvals because they have a history of concerns since 2006 with how things are getting done, and the Council recognizes the shortcomings in Wicomico County and the issues they face with the State of Maryland as well. He said he met with Ms. Brewster and Mr. Williams, who is the Acting Environmental Health Director, last week for about an hour and a half, and they were very cooperative and are really trying to get this resolved. He said Ms. Brewster had charts and data with timelines of when applications and permits were submitted and success rates in chronological order, which was very good as well.

Mr. Cannon said he has also had conversations with the Assistant Secretary of the Maryland Department of Environment, Ms. Suzanne Dorsey, and she has been very helpful. He said he has met with her more than once and had more discussions with her today.

Mr. Cannon said they look to be headed, hopefully, to where the Council as a Body will be able to meet on a regular basis with the Health Department and Environmental Services to get a true accounting of how many applications come in, what happens to those applications, and how long it takes. He said he thinks that is really what they are looking for as a Council because, when constituents come to them and say they have a problem, they can take that directly to these individuals and they can address it. He said, if they have situations where someone comes to a Councilmember about a specific property, they can address it publicly, which they have not done before. He clarified, he strongly suggests having meetings with these individuals before it comes here to the table, but that is the direction they are headed.

Mr. Cannon said he has a draft letter he will hand out to Council that entails something that the Maryland Department of Environment is asking for, and it simply states that the Wicomico County Council will begin to take stronger oversight on their Environmental Health Department so they can have more accountability for the citizens of Wicomico County. He said, given the fact these individuals are

actually State employees, even though the County pays their salaries, the purpose of the letter is a means by which to say the Council is formally accepting that responsibility and wants the State to know they need that oversight and think it is necessary. Mr. Dodd said he agrees with Mr. Cannon.

Mr. Cannon said this letter will be sent to Secretary Grumbles, and Secretary Dorsey is fully aware of this. He clarified, he is not sure if it can be codified in the Delegation Agreement to Wicomico County, but at least it is a good first step.

Mr. Dodd said the Council keeps getting bounced around on this topic, and it has been going on for several years. He then thanked Mr. Cannon for working on that goal and said it was a short notice of two weeks, but he thinks if they talk about this every week they will get these projects rolling, so he appreciates everything on this.

Mr. Dodd asked if the Council is scheduled to meet with any of the Secretaries at MACO, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, there is an Elected Officials forum at MACO, but that is the only thing she is aware of. Mr. Dodd said at one time the Department of Transportation used to always meet with the Counties, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, her understanding is that the County Executive meets with the Secretary of Transportation at MACO, but Council typically does not attend that meeting. She said there is a Transportation meeting held in the fall that Council attends to talk about their Transportation needs.

Mr. Davis asked Mr. Cannon if they can talk about the process when he has these meetings. He clarified, they might have the same process for the whole State, but the Eastern Shore soil is totally different than what is on the Western Shore, so for them to try to say the Eastern Shore needs the same type of system as they need on the Western Shore he thinks is what they have to start looking into because their soil is different. He said the system cannot be the same because they have sandy soil around here and it is going to drain a lot better, and he thinks that is basically what a lot of the contractors are looking at. He said they are putting up all of these mound systems, and sometimes they do not even need them, but the State is saying they do because that is what they are requiring, but it may not necessarily be required here on the Eastern Shore because the soil drains.

Mr. Cannon responded, that is a very good point and can be part of the process. He said, in talking to Assistant Secretary Dorsey, that was part of their discussion, as well as whether they can have local consultants in the Wicomico County Health Department who specifically would be responsible for handling Wicomico County and then reporting back. He said right now everything is going to one or two individuals only, and they know who they are, to which Mr. Davis responded, that is the problem. Mr. Cannon said this would be a possible means by which to localize it a little bit more. He said Mr. Davis is 100 percent right, and they are trying to work towards that.

Mr. McCain asked if Mr. Cannon knows when his next follow-up meeting will be, to which Mr. Cannon responded, the letter is the first step, so they want to see if they can get the letter out. Mr. McCain said he would like to talk to them about the fact that they do not have to reinvent the wheel. He clarified, he had an experience on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in Accomack County, and they face the same exact thing, but what they do is different than Wicomico. He explained, they allow for a one-time repair to an existing system where they can repair and upgrade, so they can actually take an existing system and go back into that same drain field and basically go between the lines and put in new lines. He said they have to make an upgrade, and normally they have to do a pump, but they can do that without having to

do a total replacement, which he thinks is a good option, especially for replacement systems, which is one of the big things Wicomico is facing as opposed to going straight to the mound system.

Mr. Holloway said he talked to Ms. Brewster the other day about how he has had installers say they can dig out a system, backfill it with sand and make it work, but that is not what is happening, they are making folks take the system out. He said what is happening is there may have been one or two people living in a house, and when they go to sell the house the inspector says they might sell the house to somebody with three kids, so the system will not work and they make them upgrade. He said installers say they can do basically what Mr. McCain said, or something along that line, and fix the system to make it work as good as new or better, but Ms. Brewster said State regulations will not allow that. He said, at some point they have to move beyond the local State Government and get some action in Annapolis. He said what Mr. McCain said about putting a drain field between the other drain field makes sense.

Mr. Holloway said there is another process he read about with the two kinds of water that go in septic systems. He said there is gray water and black water, but it all goes together, so they could take the gray water, which is the dishwashing liquid, shower water, etc. and put it into a separate system, and that would take the load off the black water tank, so that is something that could be done. He said they are doing that in the country, but there are houses in the County right now where they will not even let people put a septic tank in, so they have to pump their tanks every two to three months, and some of these folks are getting hit with bills up to \$20,000, especially if they have trees in their yards. He said the other thing that realtors need to remember, and he thinks most of them are on board with this now, is that before people put their houses for sale they need to get it inspected to know what they will be looking for and whether they will be having to spend \$20,000 before they sell the house.

Mr. Dodd asked if Mr. Cannon needs a consensus on the letter, to which Mr. Cannon responded, yes. Mr. Holloway suggested the Council have some time to read it over, to which Mr. Cannon responded, he expects the Council to take time to digest it, and he does not think it needs a formal consensus publicly. He said, if the Council wants to share their thoughts with Mrs. Hurley tomorrow, that would be okay.

Mr. Cannon said Mr. Williams and Ms. Brewster have been absolutely fantastic with this. He said he met with them on Friday for almost two hours and then met again this morning for another hour, and they are just making themselves completely accessible. He said they can turn this into the same type of meetings they have quarterly with the Board of Education where everything that everyone just shared could be done on a quarterly basis, to which Mr. Dodd responded, that is a great idea, and he thanks Mr. Cannon for working on this because it is important.

Mr. Hastings said he has a number of constituents who he would have thought were in the City, but are actually not a part of the City and are on well and septic and want to be hooked up to Salisbury sewer and/or water. He said last week there was a major business in Salisbury that he would have thought was hooked up to the City, but they are not, so they want to go through the process to do so. He said, with that said, they desperately need to get the water and sewer masterplan and move forward with all components of that, which he thinks they will actually have in hand next month. He said he did some research and he will compile that, but they talked about the water and sewer authorities in other Counties. He said Mrs. Hurley actually reached out to Mr. Sanderson, the Executive Director of MACO, to try to get some understanding, so now he has some information on Hartford County, Washington County, and Calvert County on what they do and how they address it. He said Wicomico is the only County in the State of Maryland that does not have County-run water and sewer, so he thinks, once they

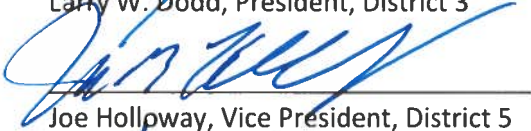
get the full plan in hand, they will actually know where they can expand. He said without a doubt the State of Maryland has zero desire to continue seeing more septic systems installed, so they really need to figure out how to hook up more areas to sewer, and they need to do that in order to meet EPA goals for Baywater Restoration. Mr. Dodd said doing it in the County is inevitable, it has to be done. Mr. Hastings said he will pull together more information on that to make sure they can hit the ground running and have the information in hand to make sure they can expand water and sewer, and hopefully service areas that would like to be serviced throughout the County.

Mr. Dodd asked Mrs. Hurley to reach out to the Health Department about Mr. Cannon's request to meet quarterly, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, she will.

There was no further discussion.



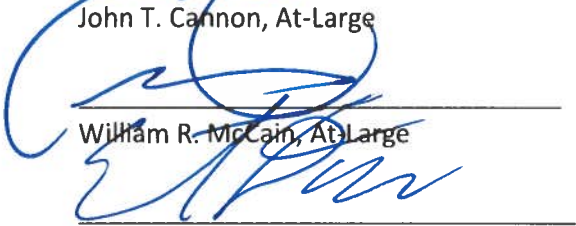
Larry W. Dodd, President, District 3



Joe Holloway, Vice President, District 5



John T. Cannon, At-Large



William R. McCain, At-Large

Ernest F. Davis, District 1



Nicole Acle, District 2

Josh Hastings, District 4



Laura Hurley, Council Administrator