

Open Work Session
Priority Funding Letter to MDOT
August 16, 2016

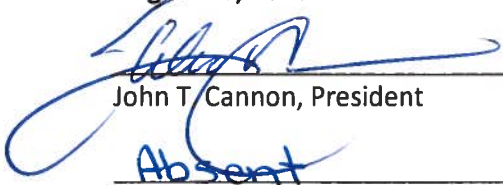
Mr. Keith Hall and Mr. Weston Young came before Council. Mr. Hall said every year, as part of the state budgeting process, there is a provision for counties working with cities and towns to submit their priority projects to the state that they would like for consideration with capital program as part of their six-year budget. As Council may recall, it went through this same exercise last year. To emphasize some of the changes, Council will see there are a variety of recommended roadway improvements. It may be bridge related or the relocation of a weigh station or expansion of turning lanes and airport facilities. Mr. Keith Hall said when they came before Council last time there were several recommendations made regarding the formatting of the letter. The first thing that was expressed is the letter had no priority. They kind of left all the projects out there and said to the state you go ahead and prioritized them. He said that is one of the first formatting revisions Council will see in looking at the letter. The second is that Council recommended that they create some type of logical categories to group the projects. The state is in the process of updating its capital program in its six-year budget and Wicomico County wants to get out ahead to make sure the state understands the County's priorities. Another component is working with the municipalities on what their priorities are. Mr. Keith Hall said staff at Public Works and Planning and Zoning got together and created four major categories: (1) road & facilities improvements (2) airport (3) planning initiatives and (4) pedestrian and cyclist improvements, and below that are the municipal requests. Mr. Keith Hall said given that the municipalities in the County should work together on submitting a joint priority letter, at this time, staff does not recommend incorporating the municipalities requests into the prioritization that the County came up with for their projects because this reflects with what the cities and towns want. It is not an endorsement of their projects, nor is it saying the County does not approve of them; however, it does carry forth their message moving forward for capital budgeting concerns. Mr. Kilmer clarified that the priority letter is about state roads within Wicomico County, to which Mr. Hall responded state roads in Wicomico County as well as the airport. He said there are some roadways that are not state roadways that a city or town may be requesting funding for an improvement. Mr. Joe Holloway said the priority letter has nothing to do with County roads. Mr. Kilmer asked if Barren Creek Road is a state road or a county Road. Mr. Young said the County has been maintaining Barren Creek Road. He said they are still in the process of doing all the surveying and the deed research to see who owns what. Mr. Young said Barren Creek Road used to be a state road but when Route 50 came in, Barren Creek Road was transferred around 1956 to the County. They are looking to find documentation to confirm ownership. Mr. Kilmer said some people say it is a state road. Mr. Kilmer then asked if Barren Creek Road is the County's responsibility. Can the County ask the state to help? Mr. Young said the County may not be able to get State Highway assistance but other areas of the state may help. Mr. Keith Hall said the County is asking the state for any assistance it can get for help. Mr. Kilmer asked if the County could put the request in the priority letter or is it not proper to do that in this letter because of the type of road it is. Mr. Young said if it is a state road that the County felt needed improvements, then it could go in the letter. Mr. Hall said there is still time if it is determined that it is a state road. Mr. John Hall said in the priority letter is the Salisbury-Ocean City: Wicomico Regional Airport, which is a new category. He would like to see the airport category moved to the top of the priority letter. Mr. Joe Holloway said Mr. John Hall is micromanaging a little bit. Mr. Hall said, in spite of micromanaging, he thinks it would get more attention if it were moved to the top of the letter. He said it is the most economically worthwhile project the County has going on that has never got any attention from the state. Since it is a new a category, it is important for the state to acknowledge that the County has the second largest airport in the state. Mr. Keith Hall said this letter does give the County an opportunity for those types of projects to be noticed. He said staff agrees with Mr. John

Hall's recommendation to move the airport category to the top of the letter. A lot of the improvements that are recommended come from various studies. There are some small projects that do not have a large price tag to them. The planning initiatives, while planning is intensive, it does not have a large price tag to it. When you talk about extending a runway 600 linear feet and a price tag of millions of dollars, you want to draw the state's attention to what is your biggest wish list item. The biggest wish list is the airport, but not only the runway, it is also all the accompanying improvements that are recommended. Mr. Joe Holloway said it may be unless you live by one of those intersections. Mr. Hall said the great thing is when you look at number one, because of the great coordination between the State Highway Administration, Wicomico County, and the municipalities, the State Highway has now committed to putting in a signal. They had not made that commitment previous to this past year. Mr. Keith Hall said another big one for the County, when looking at how to rank the list, is the truck weigh and inspection station and the relocation of that. Another recommendation is to move number two to number one. He said number one is already being done. Mr. John Hall said, in getting back to the airport, he has spent a lot of time on the Airport Committee. The new planes with the airport extension will be quieter than the planes they are now using. Mr. John Hall said they usually get one complaint for noise every six months. Mr. John Hall said that is someone flying off the radar is what that amounts to, not necessarily the commercial planes. They are hoping to bring in new planes and, hopefully, they will be adding 230 more jobs over at the airport. If the airport does not get noticed, it is not going to get done and that is why he would like the airport category moved to the top of the letter. Mr. Matt Holloway said he supports moving the airport category to the top of the letter. Mr. John Hall said it is interesting because the Secretary of Transportation is the chairperson of the Maryland Aviation Association, and he has been to one of their meetings recently, and they did not even acknowledge that Salisbury has the second largest airport; it is all about Baltimore. Mr. Cannon said last time Council had a work session on transportation projects, it discussed a lot of the concerns that citizens and council members had in reference to the ramps surrounding the Bypass. Mr. Keith Hall clarified that Mr. Cannon is speaking of the entrance on and off the Bypass from Route 50 and Route 13. He said that project is under the planning initiatives category as number one. Mr. Keith Hall reiterated that the formatting of the letter has changed. He said last year this was discussed for the first time at a legislative session when they were seeking a joint resolution of the County and the Executive. He said to his recollection there were recommendations to move forward with projects that have carried forward. Mr. Joe Holloway said another project that is going to come up is the roundabout near Wor-Wic Community College. He said the roundabout works really nice if there is just one vehicle in it. He said when the college lets out around 3 p.m. or 4 p.m. in the afternoon and people are coming and going from the Royal Farms, it is going to be like being at a boat ramp on a Sunday afternoon. Mr. Keith Hall said it is going to be a behavioral change, therefore, in anticipation of that when you look at the third from last page, you will see there is a recommendation for an Access Management Study to give Wor-Wic Community College direct access. Mr. Joe Holloway said the state has turned Wor-Wic down for years for the egress. Mr. Keith Hall said the state has been opposed to it; however, it is something he recommends that Council include at least as part of a planning initiative. He said if Council recalls, the state also opposed adding any lights to intersections on U.S. Route 50 on the Eastern Shore. He said that took some public debate and heated conversation, but they have been able to make an impact on that policy. Mr. Joe Holloway said it seems to him that would be a reasonable inexpensive thing to do, to get the egress. Mr. Keith Hall said Wor-Wic owns almost all the land from Walston Switch Road to Forest Grove Road, and they are not asking for it to be year round. Wor-Wic is only asking for to be during the time school is in session. Mr. Joe Holloway said the roundabout is designed really well but there is going to be a massive amount of traffic. Mr. Matt Holloway asked if the roundabout is open. Mr. Joe Holloway said they are building it, but it is open. Mr. Joe Holloway said the other day he saw a tractor just drive across the entire roundabout; the tractor did not make the turn. Mr. Keith Hall said the

roundabout is designed with an apron because the tractor will never be able to make the turn. Mr. Matt Holloway said he is okay with Mr. John Hall's recommendation to move the airport category to the top of the priority letter. There was a consensus among Council to move the airport category to the top of the letter. Mr. Cannon asked if the change is done by making a request to the County Executive. Mr. Keith Hall said he thinks that can be taken care administratively. They will coordinate with the Executive's Office at the staff level. Mr. Cannon said he thinks Council should send notice out. Mr. Keith Hall said it would be taken care of. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if the airport could be deviated from the highways since it is the airport. He understands that the airport is a high priority. He said the airport is a different type of infrastructure than roads. Mr. Keith Hall said the discussion is to move the airport category up to the top of the letter and then each project within the categories is prioritized. He said from a state perspective, he does not know if there is a benefit from pulling the airport out as its own separate letter. Mr. Young said MDOT looks at all modes of transportation. Mr. Hall continued he said in looking under the road and facility improvements category, it is recommended that the Route 13 truck and weigh inspection station be moved to number one. He said if the state makes the investment of 11 million dollars to improve the current facility, that facility, if expanded, will not move anywhere for decades. Mr. Keith Hall said if there is Council consensus, staff will advance the project to number one in that category. Mr. Kilmer clarified that the weigh station project in Delmar is something that the community wants. Mr. Keith Hall said this is a direct response to what the County Executive and community desire. He said he does not want to speak on behalf of the Town of Delmar. Mr. Bunky Luffman, Deputy Mayor of the Town of Delmar, went to the podium. He said the residents would rather see the weigh station somewhere else and, if it cannot go somewhere else, then do not expand it. He said Delegate Anderton talked to the residents about a different place to move the weigh station. Mr. Luffman said, personally, if the weigh station is moved, it should not be moved north because between North Salisbury and the Delaware State Line is prime location for commercial growth in the next 20 to 30 years and, if the weigh station is moved north, the County will run into the same problem. The weigh station should preferably be moved south. The weigh station has to be located between the Virginia State line and the Delaware State line. Mr. Joe Holloway said the weigh station was turned down back in the late 80s early 90s. It went through all the motions and some folks found a letter from the state indicating that the weigh station should not be built there. He said he talked to a gentleman from the state and their main issue is safety. They have a lot of room on the southbound lane to put in their pits and inspection lane. When trucks are leaving Maryland, they can fine the drivers for the problems they are having, which he thinks sometimes it is more about the money than anything else. He said if it is really about safety, they should have the inspection lanes coming into the state, which would be on the south side. Mr. Joe Holloway said they want to expand going out of the state, and he thinks they might be able to raise the revenues that way. Mr. Luffman said Delegate Anderton will be talking to Secretary Rohm on Thursday this week and they will be discussing this project. Mr. Cannon asked if the weigh station has to be located on north Route 13, to which Mr. Luffman responded they were told that the weigh station has to be located on Route 13 between the Virginia State line and Delaware State line. Mr. Keith Hall said they would advocate that MDOT- SHA find a location that does not have current capability issues or future capability issues. Mr. Creamer said if Council has a concern about the location or future location of the weigh station, the transportation meeting is an opportune time to discuss the project with state representatives. Mr. Keith Hall said staff will make the two changes as recommended and bring the letter back for adoption by resolution.

Signatures are on the following page.

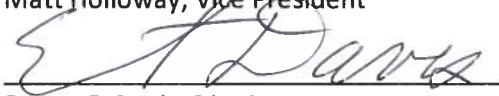
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John T. Cannon, President

Absent

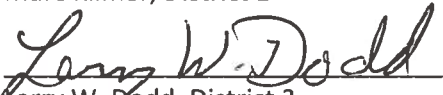
Matt Holloway, Vice President



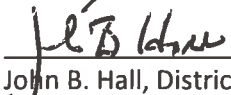
Ernest F. Davis, District 1



Marc Kilmer, District 2



Larry W. Dodd, District 3



John B. Hall, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



Matthew E. Creamer, Council Administrator