

**Open Work Session for 2017
County Council Priorities
January 17, 2017**

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Mr. Cannon said that in a prior meeting Council said they would be interested in knowing what direction they are taking, as what issues they thought were of concern. He said in the brief book is a list of what they have been tracking as priority items. He said he wanted to get a feel from Council on these particular items, or if there were additional items that Council would like to see added to the list.

Mr. Hall said these items are very worthwhile, but he is not sure they are Council's priorities, as he thinks they are the Administration's priorities. He said his intent of bringing this forward was finding Council's priorities. He thinks Council could go through this list and say, yes, these are things that need to be addressed, but there are more things that need to be addressed by Administration, rather than the Council itself. He said he thinks they are much better served if they hear priorities from Council members rather than priorities from the Administration. Mr. Cannon said these are County issues as much as they are Administration issues. He said that is why we are meeting today, if you are suggesting other initiatives you would like Council to take, we want to add them to the list.

Mr. Hall said he thought these were Administration priorities that are already on the books and are going to be looked at within the next period of time, except for maybe something like the Animal Committee or Personnel Manual update. He said if they were asking him what his priorities are, what he would like to see accomplished by the Council, he would like to share those ideas because he thinks there are items that have been ignored or failed to be addressed. He asked if that is what they were looking for, to which Mr. Cannon responded, yes. Mr. Hall said, these are items that when he ran for office that he said he would like to see accomplished or have been brought to Council by citizens who have voted in the community. He said it is not the Administration's initiative to take on these type of projects, it is Council's initiative to initiate these. He said as an instance, Council addressed the poultry house issues as far as setbacks go, and as far as operation goes. He said Council has not addressed what the rest of the community and what the majority of the people that attended these sessions attended for, which was for a health impact of the poultry industry on Wicomico County. He said Council knows that the Administration is not going to take this initiative. He then asked if Council should take the initiative. There are a large number of people that are concerned about these issues. Mr. Joe Holloway said he thought that Council discussed that this is a state issue. Mr. Hall said it is a state issue, but if the County does not forward it, then the state is not

going to take the initiative to do it. Mr. Cannon said it is also a federal issue, Environmental Protection Agency. Mr. Hall said and, again, if the County does not forward it, no one is going to take the initiative. Mr. Matt Holloway said it is a state issue and the County should leave it alone. Mr. Strausburg said that issue was raised in the Health Impact Analysis and our local Health Department encouraged the state to take on an in depth health impact study regarding air quality. He thinks it is not accurate to say that the Administration nor the County has not taken that on as their local health officer absolutely did take that on. Mr. Hall said he agreed with Mr. Strausburg, but if the County does not forward it and keep it in front of the state, they are not going to do anything. He said that is his opinion. Mr. Hall said moving on, these are initiatives that he would like to see. He said he noticed from different counties in the state that solar fields are now becoming an issue as to where they are placed, and if they are placed on farm property. He then asked if it should be the Administration's responsibility to look into this, or should the Council initiate looking into solar fields and the impact that they are going to have on farm property.

Mr. Joe Holloway said the problem is it is the farmers' property, not the County's property, and why would the County want to restrict what farmers can do to their property. Mr. Hall said that is open for discussion, these are just initiatives they have in other counties to keep solar fields from being put on good, high quality farm property. He asked should the Council go ahead and look at this and address it, or should Council wait like it did on the chicken houses, until it becomes a real issue. Mr. Joe Holloway said he had a 350-acre farm near him, tillable, high quality farmland that was just bought by an environmental group, to turn back into trees, that we lost. Mr. Hall said to Mr. Joe Holloway, that is one instance. Mr. Kilmer said maybe Council could ask the Planning and Zoning Commission to look at it and evaluate and make a recommendation. He said that may be a way to do that if Council wanted to go down that road. Mr. Hall said these are issues that Council will just have to look at.

Mr. Hall said one of the things that we have, and he thinks that the Administration will look at is raising the bid requirements over the \$5,000 minimum. He said he thinks that if Council took the initiative to do that it would be much more in our interest, rather than wait for the Administration to do it. He asked why don't we do this. Mr. Joe Holloway asked Mr. Hall to clarify the bid requirements. Mr. Hall said the bid requirements should be raised to a higher level. Mr. Cannon said let us get the initiatives on the table, and we will send them to Council members in a written form as well as the Executive Branch and ask for a response individually on what each person feels. The pros and cons of those initiatives. Mr. Hall said these are his initiatives, but he is sure other Council members have other things they would like to accomplish. Mr. Cannon asked Mr. Hall if he is saying that the \$5,000 minimum should be raised, to which Mr. Hall responded, no, he is saying that it should be looked at and evaluated, and

that if Council determines that it should be raised, then it should be looked at. These are things that Council needs to look at. Mr. Cannon then clarified that Mr. Hall is not suggesting that the County lower the bid requirement, to which Mr. Hall said he was not suggesting anything, other than that Council should look at it and evaluate it.

Mr. Hall said the number two resource in the County is tourism. He then asked if Council thought there were any initiatives or ideas that could come from the County Council to increase the amount of tourism in Wicomico County, which is the second largest impact in the County. He asked if there was anything that Council is not doing, that it should be doing, are there any initiatives that they would like to see.

Mr. Hall continued, he said something else that came up relatively recently is a bid preference for County contractors. The County contractors may lose bids by a very small amount. He then asked should the contract be weighted, should Council go ahead and look at that. He said if Council does not take that initiative, no one is going to take that initiative. There are counties that do weigh their contractors. Mr. Dodd said the Council briefly touched on that before, on whether it should have 10% for local contractors. Mr. Cannon said that is very worthwhile.

Mr. Hall said is there a need for a County sewer system. He said years ago it was determined that we should have a County sewer system and that it would be impacting us. He asked who is going to take the initiative to look at that. Should we go ahead and set up an initiative or have the Administration look at these things. Mr. Hall said these are things that we do not know yet and in order to get them on the table Council should look at them. Mr. Hall continued, he said some of the County's enterprise departments expenses might be a little high, and he thinks maybe Council should look at some of their enterprise funds; evaluate their funding. Mr. Hall said those are the items that he thinks would be interesting for the Council to look at, and he would like to see some of these looked at before his term expires.

Mr. Cannon asked for other suggestions from council members. Mr. Kilmer said he thought it would be interesting to look at the speed camera law. He said right now the County does not have a contract for speed cameras, as he understands it. He asked if the County is not going to have a contract, is there a desire to keep the law on the books. He said that is something Council needs to explore too.

Mr. Cannon said he will put those initiatives together and put them in a questionnaire form to Council members to get the pros and cons and bring them back for a work session. Mr. Joe Holloway asked that he send them to the Executive Office also, as Wayne Strausburg said they are already looking into some of these things. Mr. Dodd said he thought Council had a good list here

and Council can always add to it. Mr. Dodd said they should all get together and discuss this.

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John T. Cannon, President



Larry W. Dodd, Vice President, District 3

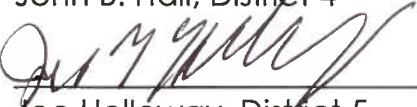


Ernest F. Davis, District 1



Marc Kilmer, District 2

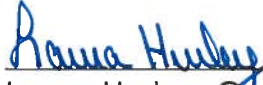
John B. Hall, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



Matt Holloway, At-Large



Laura Hurley, Council Administrator