

---

## **Open Work Session**

### **Discussion with the Maryland Department of Environment on Circuit Rider Program**

**October 18, 2022**

Deputy Secretary Suzanne Dorsey with the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) came before Council and said there are two separate issues, one is the suite of options that are longer-term options, and one is the contract that is available for the circuit rider. She clarified, those are two separate things. She said it is an honor and privilege to be on the Eastern Shore, and, specifically, in Wicomico County.

Ms. Dorsey explained, she is here today because the residents of Wicomico County need quality and timely septic permitting delivered with excellent customer service, and she wants the Council to know that the Maryland Department of Environment provides the delegated authority, but they do not have control of the salaries. She said they did support the salary review and the increase, and they continue to do that with their sister agency, the Maryland Department of Health. She said they have talked about this going on for a long time, and she is just going to go back to 2015. She clarified, she was not here in 2015, but staff in 2015 received concerns about septic permitting and began to review permitting in Wicomico County and they found a high number of permits to be deficient. She said they responded by having MDE staff on-site in the local Department of Health for retraining. She said they had staff here from October 2018 until October 2019, so a full year of retraining. She said, by 2020, they were again receiving concerns and complaints about premature septic failures, so, again, MDE staff came and did some additional training from May through December of 2021. She said Secretary Grumbles came in 2019, and she will be here whenever they call her, as she wants to get this done for Wicomico and for the residents. She said they have been at the meetings, and more recently Senior Local Advisor Les Knapp has been very involved, so they have really accelerated his involvement. She said she also wants to assure Council and the citizens that they are talking about Wicomico daily and weekly in Baltimore. She said this issue crosses the Secretary of Health, the Secretary of Environment, up to the Governor's Office as it is a huge concern. She said she also wants to admit that she is not a lifetime State Government employee, she ran a nonprofit for years, so she is impatient with how long things take at the State and local level, so forgive her if she loses her patience a little bit when she hears "can't." She said she is not letting that stop them at the State level, as it is not acceptable to her that anything hold this up. She said their citizens need relief right now, and Ms. Brewster needs relief right now.

Ms. Dorsey said there was a consensus at recent meetings that they need to move forward with the circuit rider and that, based on how the local government works, the contract should be signed by the Health Officer. She said they negotiated training opportunities with Maryland Environmental Services (MES) so they could become those circuit riders, and they have delivered that training to MES. She said MES will contract with the County or the local Health Department directly, and they put forward a set of principles that could be incorporated into a contract. She said she thinks it is really important that they not get wrapped around the axle with the set of factors in the contract. She then held up the contract and said she has permission to wave it, as MES is finalizing their attorney review, and it will be delivered this week to everybody sitting here including Ms. Brewster, but this is the scope of work. She said it is not highly prescriptive because MDE needs to get in, and they do not have a lot of staff, so they need to make sure that Wicomico has the services both in the office getting rid of the backlog and in the field responding to the devastating story of a family with sewage in their backyard because that is not

acceptable and she will make sure that one of her staff is on-site as soon as she can possibly get them there. She said she is going to read to Council what the scope of work says. She then read:

*Specifically, each project or task will support supplying Wicomico County with staffing and technical support for well and septic permitting. The specific service categories include environmental, technical assistance, compliance activities, program support, staffing, engineering services, GIS services, environmental management, planning, monitoring, and other field and non-field efforts. MES understands that Wicomico County has indicated they are experiencing staffing issues, which is resulting in the inability of the County to meet the needs of their delegated authority regarding on-site sewage disposal systems. The Maryland Department of the Environment shall oversee tasks and work completed under this MOU.*

Ms. Dorsey said they are going to take the burden off of their Health Department and make sure their citizens get the services they need and deserve. She said, to do that, they will move as quickly as they can, work on the backlog, address the failing septic systems in the field, and get things in the office back on track. She said they are also providing the citizens, and Wicomico is the first County that they will beta test, an online septic permitting portal for those who wish to use it, so they will have that septic portal available. She said she will admit to them right now that she has two purposes – better customer service, but also tracking for the County the turnover time for septics so that they can transparently and publicly transmit to the County how long it is taking for a basic standard residential septic permit to go through. She said that allows all of them to provide feedback to the local Health Department.

Ms. Dorsey said that is the circuit rider, and she knows they will have specific questions about that, but she thinks, with the sense of urgency, they need to move forward with that circuit rider. She said there are also longer-term solutions, and that is what she has brought. She said these have all been discussed at the meetings they have been to together previously, so for many of the Council these will not be new ideas, but it is a set of options they have transmitted to all the Health Officers in the State, and they will be transmitting to local governments later this week, and these are options for moving forward for long-term solutions. She said these have been vetted by both Maryland Department of Health as well as MDE and the Governor's Office, so they look forward to working with the County on these longer-term solutions. She said, with that, they will get Wicomico residents the services they need as quickly as they possibly can. She said she can have MES circuit riders if they are able to get this contract through, and the Council needs to review it carefully and have their attorneys review it, but she could have MES circuit riders here October 24, and she looks forward to making that a reality.

Mr. McCain asked if the circuit riders would have final authority because in the past they have talked about contractors, and his understanding has always been they could do that, but then MDH or the Health Department would have to review the contractor's work, so the holdup would still happen. He asked, if they pass a perk test, is that final authority, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, MES cannot have final signing authority. She explained, depending on staffing at the Health Department, they may need to pull the delegation back if there is no staff, or if there is staff they can designate locally to be the final signoff after review and assessment by MES, that is what they will do, so one of those two outcomes will answer that.

Mr. Cannon said people are going to say they are waiting for the State, so what will it mean directly when someone is waiting for an inspector, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, when the data is collected and the inspection is made, the inspection report is included and the file is complete, and they need to

be approved or not approved, but that final signoff/signature that either approves or does not approve they will try to retain at the local Health Department. She clarified, all the work that goes into completing that file, they will try to do that, but if there is no staff in the local Health Department, they will withdraw the delegation and MDE staff will have that final signoff. Mr. Cannon asked what the time period will be, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, they hope to get turnaround times back on track to be weeks and not years.

Mr. Holloway thanked Ms. Dorsey for stepping up and trying to help with this critical issue. He said he supposes that the folks Ms. Dorsey hires will have to have a pay scale large enough to bring them on board, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, yes. She said MES has hired and they have the ability to hire outside of the pay scale, which is the challenge Wicomico is facing right now. Mr. Holloway asked why they could not have just done that with the Health Department and brought people on, or why MDE has not done that, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, she shares Mr. Holloway's frustration. She said MDE advocated, but the employees of the local Health Department roll up to the State Health Department, not MDE. She said there was an annual salary review submitted, MDE supported that as vigorously as they could up to the level of the Secretary, and they were not successful in receiving that. Mr. Holloway said Ms. Brewster and the Council have all been fighting this for a long time, and he thanks Ms. Dorsey for stepping up, but it just kind of seems strange that they cannot hire people because they cannot pay them enough, but Ms. Dorsey can. Ms. Dorsey responded, MES does not work for MDE, so she cannot hire people either, but MES is the circuit rider that is the solution that they can get in place very quickly.

Mr. Holloway asked what the qualification level will be and how these people will be trained, or are they already trained, and do they know the difference in soils here compared to other counties, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, they will have different levels of expertise, and they will charge different hourly rates. She said they will try to be effective stewards of Wicomico County taxpayer money, so they do not want to throw a licensed engineer at a problem that does not need that. She clarified, if the environmental health specialist hired by MES can do those services, they will let them do those services. She said they also have clerical staff available through this contract because they have heard about the clerical needs. She said, again, MDE staff will support and come up with a plan to address what they have heard is a priority, which is backlog, but also address in-the-field concerns that people have with failing septic. She said they will work on business processes so they can build in efficiencies, they will use new tools like the online portal, and they will, hopefully, after a year leave the County in a much better place, ideally with a salary increase, or, should they choose one of the other options they talked about for a long-term solution, they can facilitate those changes.

Mr. Holloway asked, as far as new septic systems and perks, will these folks have the ability to design these systems like they have before, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, there is an inherent conflict of interest if someone designs and then approves a septic because, should they have a bad design, they are liable for that design. Mr. Holloway said there was a gentleman named Dan who told Council they are not liable. Ms. Dorsey responded, according to the attorneys who work for the Health Department and MDE, and they do a lot of permitting beyond well and septic, one does not design and then approve a design, which increases the business opportunity for the County's well and septic community, so they want them to design and the Health Department or County staff approve or disapprove that design.

Mr. Holloway said the Health Officer, Ms. Lori Brewster, is in the audience. He then asked Ms. Brewster to come before Council. He asked if the County Health Department does the designs, to which Ms.

Brewster responded, the health departments used to do the designs all across the State, but Ms. Dorsey can attest to the fact that all health departments were given a memo advising that they were no longer to design. She said that occurred in many jurisdictions across the State in September, she believes, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, they have been discussing for a long time the fact that it is not acceptable to design and approve. Mr. Holloway asked who they have that are qualified to design these systems in the County, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, many of the installers are qualified to do this. Mr. Holloway said a lot of people mentioned earlier that they should listen to what some of the installers say as far as how a septic works and whether it can be put in. He then asked if this means they will now be relying on installers to design a system, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, installers have to have a level of training and certification such that they should be able to do that. She said they do not have a perfect system and not every installer is perfect, but the idea is that they put forward the design, it follows the law and follows the physics associated with performance of a septic system, and then the local Health Department approves or disapproves it based on science and the law that is associated with it.

Mr. Davis said there is a lady in the audience whose septic is failing, so what would happen if a local installer goes there and says she just needs a drain field and not a mound system, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, they would bring that to the Health Department and they would agree or disagree based on the law and science. Mr. Davis said they are going back to the law and science again, but they say they do not really have the final say as the installer. Ms. Dorsey responded, the installer brings forward a design repair and the job of the permit riders and approvers is to evaluate that relative to the problem and provide the oversight that is protective of the citizens. She said they do not want a solution that will not work, so they want a solution that is acceptable that achieves the needs of that resident and is also protective of the neighbors and the next property owner, so they want the right solution to the right problem. She said it starts with the installers and is approved or disapproved by the local Health Department. Mr. Davis said he keeps hearing Ms. Dorsey say County and State employees. He then asked if the people who are going to be hired are State or County employees, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, they work for the Maryland Environmental Service, which is a quasigovernmental agency they use in situations like this where they need to provide immediate technical services to local governments. Mr. Davis asked where the funding will come from to pay for these people, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, the funding, as we discussed at some of their earlier meetings, comes from the County. Mr. Davis asked who she means by "we" because this is the first time this Council has heard of this, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, in order for this to move forward quickly, the funding comes from the County, and, as she understands it, the desire is the effective way to move it through the Health Department. She said Ms. Brewster has put a not-to-exceed number of \$50,000, and MES and MDE will work with whatever number they provide. She clarified, that is the County's decision and assessment about what number they can and want to put towards this. Mr. Davis said they know they have a lot of failing septic systems, and they are not that crazy to say \$50,000 is going to solve the problem, so they are still looking at a lot of money. Ms. Dorsey responded, she thinks at this point they need to get started, to which Mr. Davis responded, they know that, but they need to know the dollar number because, not only do the people here want this stuff done, but, as Ms. Ashanti said, these are taxpayer dollars, so they need to know what the dollar amount is going to be and what they are going to start with. Ms. Dorsey responded, the County can define what that dollar amount is and they will provide the County with the plan, and the County will be able to come out of a contract at any time. She said the intent is that MDE works with the local Health Department and their designee, be it the County Executive or anybody else, to determine what it is that the County needs. She said, as she hears it, the

County needs that backlog addressed and failing septic systems addressed, and they are here to respond to that need as the County defines it as quickly and effectively as they can. Mr. Davis asked if there is any State money coming involved in this, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, from MDE, there is no funding. She clarified, they cannot, for instance, charge the County residents a permit fee to be able to do that work.

Mr. Cannon asked how many circuit riders they are talking about, how many would be administrative, and how many would be engineers in the field, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, she does not want to write a contract that is so restrictive, but they have one engineer at the highest level, an environmental health specialist, a lower level engineer, and a clerical worker, and they will do whatever they can do to keep the costs down. Mr. Cannon clarified, there will be one in the office and two in the field, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, if necessary. Mr. Cannon said they recognize there is some vacancy funding in reserves that will help address these costs, to which Ms. Brewster responded, that is where she came up with the ceiling of \$50,000, which is in her budget from the County that is not being spent at this time due to vacancies, and she was not at a point to come to Council to ask for additional dollars to fund this.

Mr. Cannon asked if the Council gave a \$70,000 authorization more recently, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, in the FY2023 budget they put some money in contingency to increase the salaries of the environmental health specialists. Mr. Cannon asked if that is in addition to the \$50,000 in vacancies, to which Mr. McCain responded, the \$50,000 is coming from the Health Department's already existing budget. Mrs. Hurley said the \$70,000 came from the County. Ms. Brewster clarified, the \$70,000 is not in her budget. Mr. Cannon said they have that, and so many people ask why the County is paying for this because these are State employees and the State has created this problem, not the County, but he recognizes the fact that no matter the circumstances or how they point the fingers, he is not interested in that, they need to get this resolved and get it back on track right away. He said, keeping in mind they have the \$70,000 and the \$50,000, similar to what Mr. Davis suggested, they know it is probably going to be more than that. He then asked if there is any idea because they have to sign a contract, so do they have any idea how far this fiscal note will go beyond there just for one year, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, their intent is one year, and the contract parameters will be set by the County, but they suggest they leave it for one year with an opportunity to renew, but she hopes that is not necessary. She clarified, she hopes that within one year they can get the salary increases that employees deserve and, in addition, or alternatively, pursue another option as outlined on the paper she passed around.

Mr. Cannon asked what the current backlog is and, with these three individuals, how much time will be directed towards the backlog and how much time will be spent consistently towards ongoing permitting, to which Ms. Brewster responded, as of this morning they have 41 septic permits backlogged and 81 land evaluations backlogged. She said, again, many of the land evaluations are backlogged due to having to wait for wet season testing, which, as she said earlier, they have not had a wet season and hopefully they will have one this coming year. She said, as far as how far along the contract will take them, she has not seen the contract yet, and she thinks Ms. Dorsey has advised that. Ms. Dorsey responded, they will try to efficiently move this through. She said, if there are 41 backlogs, some percentage of them will be easy, and some will be hard, so they can get the easy ones out as quickly as possible. She said that will be their approach as well with the land evaluations with getting the easy ones out. She said, if MDE staff needs to come in and support with the more difficult ones, they will do that. She said they have been here, and they plan on continuing to be here, so the State is contributing significant time and resources of its regional staff, so they commit to continuing to do that until they move to the next step.

Mr. Cannon said it was suggested that the contract has been in Wicomico County for 60 days, and he is not so sure whether that is the situation or not, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, a month ago they authorized MES to approach the local Health Department with beginning review of the contract. She said, since that did not move very quickly, she apologizes, but she is inpatient, so they took it over and made sure the County had a contract they could review in front of them. She clarified, again, this will be to the attorney to review and alter, but they wanted to make sure this got done.

Mr. Cannon said any contract involves funding, so do they have any idea in that contract exactly what additional commitment Wicomico County will have to make, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, again, that is sort of a blank line in this contract for the County to fill in. She said they had a placeholder of \$50,000 as that is what they heard, but should this Council decide they want to alter that and increase that, they will provide whatever services the County needs. Mr. Cannon said they know they need the help, but they need to know what the three initial people are going to cost.

Mr. McCain said the question is what it will cost if they have the engineer, the assistant engineer, and a clerical person, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, the back-of-the-envelope calculation that she has done is, if they take the highest paid engineer and give \$50,000 towards that person, that is about 400 hours of their time. She said it may not solve the problem, but she thinks they can move along, and she thinks they can do less than that if they want a renewal option. She clarified, again, they will work with whatever parameters the County wants to assign to this, but they just want to move forward.

Mr. McCain asked, having not seen the contract, would it give the Council the option or availability to change this as they go along if they find themselves a few months down the road that the \$50,000 is not enough, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, of course.

Mr. Cannon said Ms. Dorsey made the comment of October 24 to get this done. He then asked Mrs. Hurley if this is a measure whereas the County Executive can sign off on this contract, or does it have to come back to the Council to approve it, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, she would have to talk to the Finance Director to see if they need to take the money out of contingency or if it is already imbedded in the Health Department's budget, so it may need to come back if it is still in that contingency for Council to approve the funding. Mr. Cannon said perhaps they could start a contract that is only for two weeks, which Ms. Brewster could do with existing funds, and that would give the Council time to meet again and by that time they could pass a full-blown measure as to maybe a year contract. Ms. Dorsey said, from the State perspective, she will work really hard to make that happen should that be the Council's desire. Mr. Cannon said that could possibly work, and he guesses it is up to the Council to have some type of consensus, not having seen the contract, but whether they are in favor of trying to make this happen and leaving it up to the discretion of the County Executive to move forward, and then in two weeks they would more formally agree to extending the contract or changing the contract.

Mr. Dodd said he thinks the Council is in favor, but he personally would like to see the contract. He said maybe the short-term proposal suggested would work. He said he wants to thank Ms. Dorsey for being here. He said a lot of people tell the Council what they want to hear, but he feels she is sincere and they do want to get this problem taken care of, so he thanks her.

Mrs. Hurley asked if it is three employees or four because she wrote down the environmental health specialist as being someone separate from the engineer, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, right now, if she recollects, she thinks there are three, but that could change. She said what she would like to do

from MDE's standpoint, again, not being so prescriptive, but put the right solution to the problem, and that could change over time. She said they have the right technical people available to them. She said the County will be invoiced and they can turn this off if MDE is not doing a good job or, if they are not collaborating effectively, they can terminate without cause. She clarified, their intent is to be collaborative, to assess the problem, and put the right people to the need at the time of that need.

Mr. Cannon said, with the timeframe in mind, he cannot imagine with the first contract being between \$50,000 and \$70,000 that they would go anywhere near out of budget, or at least preliminarily if that were to last them until the second meeting in November when a formal proposal could be brought to the Council on November 15. He clarified, they could get this in place tomorrow if they had to, but then any extension or changes would be on the agenda on November 15.

Mr. McCain thanked Ms. Dorsey and said she mentioned early on that they are looking for long-term solutions as well as short-term, and the circuit rider they just discussed is a short-term. He said, on a longer term, he just wants to plant a seed because he has been a proponent of this for a long time. He said the situation they find themselves in time and time again in Wicomico, and property owners can attest to this, as Mr. Payne's example is a little bit of a poster child for this, but they get these borderline gray scenarios. He said he does not know how many times when people have their perk test done or get a pre-test done, and it almost depends on what day they come out there and read that flow, but they are always just on the border. Mr. Holloway added, it can depend on what person happens to show up. Mr. McCain agreed that it can depend on who shows up and when, so timing can be a big issue. He said, if there is anything they can do to create more flexibility into the system, an example he always goes back to is that they have landowners and farmers with 100 acres and one house on that property with a failing system, and they have 100 acres to work with. He said whatever system they put in is going to be better than their failing system, so it is going to be an improvement, but their situation is much different than the person who lives in a subdivision that has  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre; however, those flow rates are the same. He said, with today's science and technology, the person with 100 acres has a lot more flexibility in terms of area to make something work; however, they have to abide by the same restrictions as the person in the subdivision with  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre, so, to him, those are very different scenarios. He clarified, he still realizes from a public health standpoint that they always have to protect their groundwater, as they should, but he thinks the science exists for the person with that space, the agricultural farmer compared to the typical subdivision person. He then asked Ms. Dorsey if that makes sense, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, it sure does, and, she thinks their job is to use science and follow the law, and innovation is really important. She said they are working with new septic systems to qualify for use in the State, and they welcome that. She said, again, their job at MDE is to make sure those systems will work, not just for a year or two, but for the expected lifetime, and they also need to make sure they have staff to inspect those and make sure their citizens are protected, so it is a balance, and they want to make sure they get solutions installed that are right. She said the subjectivity of whether or not it perks needs to be reduced, and she thinks with additional training they can reduce that. She said the bottom line is they need solutions for the residents, but in every case it may not be septic, and that goes back to the rigorous discussion they had about planning, and that is really the County's challenging job. Mr. McCain said they are working on that. Ms. Dorsey said those plans will be expensive, and there will need to be some local government input, but she saw the first tranche of federal infrastructure money go out last month and it went to counties that had a plan. Mr. McCain agreed and said they have to have a plan to get the money, so no plan, no money. Ms. Dorsey said millions of dollars are in a State revolving fund

that especially is designed to support wastewater treatment plants and water supply, so the County can take advantage of that State revolving fund. She said it can be a loan, and in some cases, depending on the medium income level, it can be grant funding. She said they have technical assistance available for the County, and they want to support the County and their residents as much as they can.

Mr. Dodd asked if that grant funding can be used towards their implementation of the water and sewer plan, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, yes, that is exactly what it is designed to do.

Mr. Holloway said he has the opportunity to go to people's homes sometimes before they sell them, and his latest experience was a homeowner who had a septic inspection done privately. He said the lender demanded it, and they usually do, but they said it would not pass. He said the homeowners said it works fine, but the purchaser's home inspector said it does not work. He said he thinks the word they used was that it did not have the flow. He said the homeowner hired their own home inspector who said it is fine. He then asked, who gives those people guidance on what should pass and what should not? He said he thinks people get caught up because he has heard this before, so who gives those people guidance? He said there has to be some guidance they are following. He then asked if the State has guidelines, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, there is a Board that is run by the Health Department. Mr. Holloway clarified, the State Health Department, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, yes.

Mr. Cannon said he is glad Mr. McCain went on this sidetrack because he keeps forgetting how really important this is, and he tries not to be cynical, but over the last few years they have all been given the impression that mounds and holding tanks are all they have to do. He said he really has been cynical enough to think that maybe because they do not have the staff or there are not enough people, or maybe because no one wants to really care enough, so why bother with perk testing, why go to all the time worrying about everything, just put a holding tank in or a mound system. He said he thinks it is possibly a lack of service, but he could be 100 percent wrong, and that could be the only solution, but he hopes that maybe they might be able to look at some other options and some more creative ways to do it besides holding tanks and mound systems because that equally destroys a property value. He said he and Mr. Holloway know that because they were on the outskirts of Delmar and some individuals here recognized the fact that a mound system in a front yard is not the best way to sustain property values, so they feel it is important. He said he knows some installers say to rip out the old drain field and put in a new drain field, and these are the installers who he thinks maybe have the hands-on experience. He said they could say that is completely ludicrous, but ripping out the old drain field and putting in a whole new drain field is being suggested, but at least they are not putting in a mound or a holding tank, and it is an option. He said he wants to be objective about all of this. Ms. Dorsey responded, when they get to those challenging situations, their local Health Department may not have within their agency the ability to see if there is something else they can do, so they encourage the County to bring that up to MDE. She said do not beat MDE over the head and say they have sent this to them and they will not approve it, but they will send experienced staff to see if there are any solutions, and they will work very hard to find solutions. She clarified, they are not always the solution the homeowner wants, as they have to be protective of the environment. She said Alan Gerard will beat her up if she is not, but they work to balance the needs of the residents and recognize the economic burden that comes in these scenarios where their system is failing and the easy solution is not going to work. She said they need to have that next level of innovation, and they will continue to work with new ideas, new septic installers, and new solutions, and they have to be protective of their natural resources and public health.



Mr. McCain said he wants to feed off one thing Mr. Cannon just said about going back into the existing drain field. He said, in Virginia they can do what they call a one-time repair where they allow them to replace the existing drain field one time. Ms. Dorsey said, depending on if that drain field is functioning, they could set a rule like that, but if the drain field is not functioning and they end up with raw sewage on the surface, they have not solved anybody's problem, and, in fact, have made it worse. Mr. McCain clarified, he is talking about redoing it and putting in new drain lines. Mr. Cannon asked if they are talking about water tables, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, yes, and she is talking about a number of different things. Mr. McCain said he just mentions this as another tool in the toolbox.

Mr. Holloway said he has asked Ms. Brewster several times if there has been any further movement on gray water and black water as far as the separation that would take some of the stress off the regular septic system, to which Ms. Dorsey responded, there are some new regulations that have passed, and she will tell Council that they do not go far enough, but for a water-rich state like Maryland, they are a step in the right direction in terms of gray water use, and she would be happy to share those regulations with the Council. Mr. Holloway asked that she send them to the Council, to which Ms. Dorsey agreed.

Mr. Cannon said they appreciate the audience participation, the public comments, and their patience with the Council for sitting through this work session. He said he thinks it was very productive. He said they really appreciate Ms. Dorsey taking the time and her sincere concern to address Wicomico County's health issues, as well as Ms. Brewster. He said they certainly look forward to working with Ms. Dorsey again within the next week to finalize this measure.

There was no further discussion.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John T. Cannon, President, At-Large

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ernest F. Davis, Vice President, District 1

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
William R. McCain, At-Large

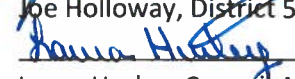
\_\_absent\_\_

Nicole Acle, District 2

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Larry W. Dodd, District 3

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Josh Hastings, District 4

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe Holloway, District 5

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Laura Hurley, Council Administrator