

**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

December 3, 2013

3:00 p.m.

County Government Center, Building A

**1.) Roll Call**

**Present**

Ms. Robin Bledsoe  
Mr. Tim O'Connor  
Mr. Rich Krapf  
Mr. Al Woods

**Staff Present**

Mr. Paul Holt  
Ms. Tammy Rosario  
Mr. Luke Vinciguerra  
Mr. John Horne  
Mr. Shawn Gordon  
Ms. Fran Geissler  
Ms. Marie Hopkins  
Mr. John McDonald  
Mr. Alan Robertson  
Mr. Marcellus Snipes

**Guests Present**

Ms. Brittany Voll

Ms. Robin Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**3.) Old Business – FY15 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Requests**

Mr. Luke Vinciguerra stated that at this time the Policy Committee members should ask the directors any questions they have regarding their department's applications.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that the discussion will begin with applications from the General Services Department.

Mr. Tim O'Connor asked why it is necessary to acquire new land for the General Services Administration and Operations Building.

Mr. John Horne stated that land must be purchased from the James City Service Authority for the project. Mr. Horne stated that the purchase of an adjacent piece of private property is also being considered.

Mr. O'Connor asked what the building square footage would be.

Mr. Horne stated that it would approximately 19,000 square feet. Mr. Horne stated that that number is based on research that is three to four years old, and the number could be lower today based on current staffing predictions.

Ms. Bledsoe asked how many staff members are anticipated for the building.

Mr. Horne stated that the department has 83 employees but many of those work in the field. Mr. Horne stated that there would be approximately 50 people working in the office.

Ms. Bledsoe asked where their office is currently located.

Mr. Horne stated that the General Services office is located on Tewing Road and the Stormwater office is located on Palmer Lane, but the new office housing both would be located further down Tewing Road. Mr. Horne noted that the Parks and Recreation Division would move into the old office space on Palmer Lane.

Mr. O'Connor asked if the building on Palmer Lane is the Incubator building.

Ms. Fran Geissler stated that they are located next to the Incubator building.

Ms. Bledsoe asked if Parks and Recreation would still be in the Incubator building if they moved into the old Stormwater office.

Ms. Geissler stated that Parks and Recreation has outgrown their office space.

Mr. O'Connor stated that Parks and Recreation discussed this at the December 2<sup>nd</sup> policy committee meeting, requesting a new Administration building as well as an Operations building at Warhill Sports Complex because they must move out of the Incubator building.

Mr. Rich Krapf asked what impacts it would have on the Department to not receive the funding for a new building.

Mr. John Horne stated that they will continue to exist, but their office is very outdated and energy inefficient.

Mr. Krapf asked if property must be purchased before any actions could be implemented using the money from this capital request.

Mr. Horne stated that they already have design money set aside now. Mr. Horne stated that one of the first actions they will take using the new funding will be to evaluate the costs and benefits of purchasing the additional private parcel of land.

Mr. O'Connor asked if the request for \$5.9 million includes design costs or is only for construction.

Mr. Shawn Gordon stated that it does not include design costs, but does include site improvements such as employee parking, stormwater management, and improvements to the Tewing Road Convenience Center. Mr. Gordon noted that this makes the construction costs per square foot seem much higher than it actually is.

Mr. O'Connor asked if they have any usable furniture, fixtures, and equipment.

Mr. Horne stated that they have some but most of it is old, surplus items. Mr. Horne stated that it would be a great value to allow schematic design, as the Board has approved front-end design money, in order for the department to fine-tune its cost estimates.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that if there are no further questions, the committee will move on to discuss the Stormwater Division's application.

Ms. Bledsoe asked Ms. Geissler if Stormwater had specific projects in mind for the funds they were requesting.

Ms. Geissler confirmed and distributed a list of projects that need funding. Ms. Geissler noted that the neighborhood drainage improvements section includes neighborhoods that have undersized, aging, or nonexistent stormwater management systems.

Ms. Bledsoe asked if Brookhaven was the neighborhood experiencing sinkhole issues.

Ms. Geissler stated that the sinkholes are in the Fernbrook subdivision and are already being addressed with current funds.

Mr. Horne stated that that would be an example of the type of project these funds would be used for.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he is concerned that the County may be paying for things that should be taken care of by homeowners' associations.

Ms. Geissler stated that she understands his concern but the only homeowners' association on the list is Scott's Pond, where the work is driven by the need for water quality improvements. Ms. Geissler noted that the neighborhood has also provided the County with free easements in the past.

Mr. Al Woods asked if the Chesapeake Bay statutes influence the neighborhood stormwater projects, and if they are required to remediate the areas.

Ms. Geissler stated that many of the projects are to mitigate stormwater impacts, and that the stream restoration work will also count towards the County's Chesapeake Bay requirements. Ms. Geissler stated that since there is a time limit for the requirements, the money should be set aside now.

Mr. Woods asked if these actions are mandated.

Ms. Geissler stated that many are mandated, and the County tries to ensure that the funding spent to meet mandates are also meaningful at the local level.

Mr. Woods asked if Stormwater's projects are prioritized.

Ms. Geissler confirmed that the Stormwater Advisory Committee prioritizes the projects.

Mr. O'Connor asked what the consequences would be for not completing these projects.

Ms. Geissler stated the County's permit requires that their pollution load be reduced over three permit cycles; the first five year permit cycle requires a 5% pollution load reduction, followed by a 35% reduction in the second permit cycle and a 60% reduction in the third permit cycle. Ms. Geissler noted that the longer these activities are put off, the more difficult and expensive it will be to meet the requirements.

Mr. Krapf asked what actions take place during stream restorations.

Ms. Geissler stated that the goals are to recreate a self-sustaining system, to reconnect the stream to its floodplain, which decreases erosion, allows pollution to settle out, and reduces downstream flooding, and to have less sediment in the water. Ms. Geissler also noted that this leads to better wildlife conditions.

Mr. O'Connor asked what the penalty is for not meeting the requirements at the end of a cycle.

Ms. Geissler stated that the Environmental Protection Agency could fine localities thousands of dollars per day, but it is difficult to predict what the exact penalty would be.

Mr. Horne stated that it is very easy for the EPA to levy fines on local governments because they are permanent entities with a continuous revenue source.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that her experience on the Stormwater Advisory Committee has led to an understanding that if the County does not act now, the financial burden of meeting the requirements would be enormous.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that the committee will begin discussion of the Financial and Management Services' applications.

Mr. O'Connor asked if the applications were integrated.

Ms. Marie Hopkins stated that although the two requests were combined last year, this year they are two separate applications, allowing the option of moving forward on one project without the other if need be. Ms. Hopkins stated that the Content Management System is a web-focused project, while 3-1-1 is telephone-focused. Ms. Hopkins noted that the two systems could be integrated together very well.

Mr. Woods asked if there was a reason for not having an agency priority ranking on the applications.

Mr. John McDonald stated that it was inadvertently omitted.

Mr. Krapf asked if 3-1-1 is the higher priority of the two applications.

Mr. McDonald stated that the Content Management System is of a higher priority, as it can exist without 3-1-1, but 3-1-1 cannot exist without the Content Management System.

Ms. Hopkins stated that the department would like to be able to track citizen requests.

Mr. McDonald stated that in addition to requests for service, the department also receives questions and comments. Mr. McDonald stated that there are many things that the County can do in response to these items through a web-based system.

Mr. Krapf asked if the department anticipates additional staff being needed to operate these systems.

Ms. Hopkins stated that they are looking to leverage current staff from various departments who already wish to participate.

Mr. Krapf asked how these new systems would be a benefit over the current practices.

Mr. Horne stated that some agencies receive thousands of calls each month, and there is currently no way to manage those telephone calls in order to monitor responsiveness and track potential trends.

Mr. O'Connor asked if 3-1-1 would handle text messages as well.

Ms. Hopkins stated that it would not.

Mr. O'Connor asked who would manage the system.

Ms. Hopkins stated that she would be responsible for managing the 3-1-1 system overall, working closely with a designated person within each department, and the County's web team would be responsible for managing the Content Management System.

Mr. McDonald stated that once the data is collected, it would be up to each department how they would like to use it.

Ms. Bledsoe asked how frequently data would be provided to the departments.

Mr. McDonald stated that it depends on the system specifications.

Ms. Hopkins stated that a system can be very flexible in how the data is extracted.

Ms. Bledsoe asked if the system could be used for a Comprehensive Plan update, allowing citizens to call in and leave a recorded response to question posed by the County.

Ms. Hopkins stated the County has had some experience with a dedicated telephone number for citizens' comments on the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Hopkins stated that the 3-1-1 system would allow citizens to call a general number instead of having to know a number that is only advertised for the few months of the update.

Mr. McDonald asked if any of the Policy Committee members had questions regarding the Fiber Optic Ring.

Mr. O'Connor asked if this would be available to all of the schools.

Mr. Marcellus Snipes confirmed.

Mr. O'Connor stated that it was discussed last year to use the system for video classrooms.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that she believes one of the most important components of the system is that it is error free.

Mr. McDonald stated that it has advantages such as allowing staff at the Government Complex to fix a computer located in Toano. Mr. McDonald stated that currently some of the lines can face interruptions because they are overhead lines. Mr. McDonald stated that the development of new links would allow information to flow a different way if lines are down.

Ms. Woods asked if there is the option to continue the contract with Cox Communications.

Mr. McDonald stated that it is still an option.

Mr. Woods asked if there are additional benefits the County would receive with a new system that are currently not available through Cox.

Mr. McDonald stated that there is a limited number of strands within each pipe from Cox and the County is currently supplementing with additional strands to increase capacity. Mr. McDonald stated that changing out the electronics at both ends of the system would increase capacity dramatically.

Mr. Woods asked what the cost difference would be between Cox system and creating the County's own system.

Mr. McDonald stated that Cox is currently less expensive, but a new contract must be renegotiated every few years. Mr. McDonald stated that if Cox decides to make changes, the County could be at a loss.

Mr. Bledsoe asked if the purpose is to remove the dependency on Cox.

Mr. McDonald confirmed.

Mr. Woods asked what the cost difference would be between entering into an updated commercial contract with Cox for the system and specifications the County requires versus installing our own system.

Mr. McDonald stated that it would approximately \$25,000 per month for such a contract. Mr. McDonald stated that once a new system is installed by the County there would be no maintenance unless there is a cut. Mr. McDonald noted that any point in time, Cox could decide they would like their cables back to use for a different contract.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that it would be a benefit to the County for reasons of sustainability and security.

Mr. O'Connor asked if the County is sharing bandwidth with other Cox customers.

Ms. Hopkins stated that the County has dedicated streams.

Mr. Woods stated that some people believe it is cheaper to have long-term maintenance agreements with companies. Mr. Woods asked if it is cheaper in this instance to own the system and maintain it ourselves, as the County is already supplying their own strands.

Mr. McDonald stated that the County is building its infrastructure around the assumption that fibers will always be available, and the only way to guarantee that is to own them.

Mr. Woods stated that another option is to have a standard commercial contract.

Mr. McDonald stated that Cox is currently the only company to offer that service and the price is hefty.

Mr. Krapf stated that every contract has a renewal date, at which point conditions could change and become less favorable.

Mr. McDonald stated that his other concerns are in regards to capacity and the possibility of interruptions due to overhead lines.

Mr. Krapf asked if the CIP request includes the cost of moving cables from above ground to underground.

Mr. McDonald stated that it includes the cost of putting County cables underground to replace those that Cox currently leases to the County above ground.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that she compares the situation to leasing a house and paying for all of the upgrades, only to have the landlord decide to move back into the house themselves.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that the Committee will now discuss the CIP requests from Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools.

Mr. Krapf asked if the CIP request is for the total or the anticipated James City County contribution.

Mr. Alan Robertson stated that it was the total.

Mr. Krapf asked if it would then be apportioned among the other jurisdictions, causing an added challenge of getting the other jurisdictions to agree on the ranking of the projects.

Mr. Robertson confirmed and noted that the only other jurisdiction is the City of Williamsburg.

Mr. O'Connor asked if the County is responsible for 94% of the funding.

Mr. Robertson stated that the County is currently at 92% but it changes every year.

Mr. Robertson stated that since WJCC Schools' CIP projects have not yet been approved by the Williamsburg-James City County School Board, they are still a draft and the plans are in flux. Mr. Robertson stated that one of the changes to occur since the applications were put together is the removal of consideration for the new School Board and Central Office.

Ms. Bledsoe asked if this project is no longer a priority and should not be considered by the committee.

Mr. Robertson stated that that is correct, for now.

Mr. O'Connor stated that this creates a "chicken or the egg" problem because in order for the County to build a new middle school at James Blair, they must find a new home for the School Board. Mr. O'Connor also noted that if the building is torn down, the money previously spent on renovations would be lost.

Mr. Snipes stated that a feasibility study has been done to determine if it would be better to keep building in its current state and turn it back into a middle school, or demolish it and start over.

Mr. Robertson stated that those concerns were considered when putting together their requests. Mr. Robertson stated that for now the plan is for the current building to remain an office and the middle school to be a separate concept.

Mr. Snipes stated that it is difficult to predict what the priorities will be after consideration by the School Board.

Mr. O'Connor asked for the square footage of James Blair.

Mr. Robertson stated that it is 89,000 square feet, and approximately 60,000 square feet are being used as office space.

Mr. Snipes stated that a study determined that a new office would need to be approximately 40,000 square feet.

Ms. Bledsoe asked if the School Board remaining at James Blair means that WJCC Schools is looking for a new location for the middle school.

Mr. Snipes confirmed and stated that a study is being done to determine where the growth will be.

Ms. Bledsoe asked what has changed between the development of their CIP applications the present.

Mr. Robertson stated that the original plan was to renovate James Blair back into a modern middle school at a later date, but the study determined that it would not be the best use of funds. Mr. Robertson noted that building behind it could still be an option. Mr. Robertson also stated that once this determination was made, WJCC Schools began looking for where the school is most needed.

Mr. Vinciguerra asked if the School Board building should be pulled from the ranking options.

Mr. Robertson confirmed.

Mr. Robertson stated that a new middle school will be needed by 2017, which would accommodate approximately 950 students. Mr. Robertson stated that he believes this will be an adequate capacity for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Snipes stated that the County currently has 2,600 students, while ten years from now it is estimated there will be 3,100 students.

Ms. Bledsoe asked if there is a capacity cap of 950 students.

Mr. Snipes stated that after a study, the Middle School Committee stated they do not want more than 950 students in the school.

Mr. Robertson stated that there are currently 800 students who would need the new school, leaving room to grow. Mr. Robertson stated that WJCC Schools has been working with the Planning Division to determine where the growth will be, but the only land they already have dedicated is located in Stonehouse, which is not an optimal location. Mr. Robertson noted that he has heard questions regarding whether or not the school will be a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified school, and stated that there is no mandate to do so, but they have tried to incorporate as many aspects of the LEED requirements as possible.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he does not believe it is worth the money to have the school be LEED certified.

Mr. Robertson stated that he agreed. Mr. Robertson stated that this middle school is the only new school they see a need for at the present time.

Mr. Woods asked if the County has historically been accurate in projecting the need for building new schools.

Mr. Robertson stated that the track record has been alright. Mr. Robertson noted that the County was behind the curve before they opened Jamestown High School and had to have 25 trailers at Lafayette High School. Mr. Robertson stated that it is difficult to predict those needs because, although the County knows when developments are approved, they do not know how quickly they will fill in with residents.

Mr. Snipes stated that the County has 200 more students this year than had been projected.

Mr. Woods asked if the case at Lafayette High School was an exception to the norm.

Mr. Robertson confirmed and stated that, in general, they have been close to what was projected for the capacity of each new school.

Mr. Snipes stated that Hornsby Elementary School opened in 2010 with a capacity of 890 students, but currently has 911 students. Mr. Snipes stated that if this growth continues there will be overcrowding issues. Mr. Snipes also stated that expansions allow for additional classrooms but does not increase aspects such as cafeteria size.

Mr. Robertson stated that the rapid growth at Hornsby Middle School is what initiated the conversation regarding the need for a new school.

Mr. Snipes stated Toano Middle School is not yet at capacity but within a few years could be over capacity.

Mr. Woods stated that Hornsby was designed during a robust period of growth, yet has still become over-crowded despite the County facing a trough in growth.

Mr. Snipes stated that Hornsby was designed for 800 students, but the capacity can be expanded.

Mr. Robertson stated that it difficult to predict where growth will be.

Mr. Snipes stated that the small capacity of James Blair Middle School, the educational environment, plus the annual cost of \$2.1 million dollars were all factors in whether or not to close the school.

Mr. Krapf stated that 80% of WJCC Schools' CIP request was for fiscal year 2016, with only 20% in fiscal year 2015, and asked if the figure of \$8 million was for design only.

Mr. Robertson stated that the first year is exclusively for design and noted that all though the total request remains the same, the figure for the first year has changed to \$4,309,000.

Mr. Woods asked if the remaining amount of the requests shifted to fiscal year 2016.

Mr. Robertson confirmed.

Ms. Bledsoe asked if it is better to build schools proactively than reactively.

Mr. Robertson confirmed. Mr. Robertson stated that the experience at Lafayette High School is one the County does not want to go through again.

Mr. Snipes stated that is it very difficult to predict as far as ten years out.

Ms. Bledsoe asked how frequently the projections are made.

Mr. Snipes stated that they are done annually.

Ms. Bledsoe asked if a decision will have to be made within the next five years.

Ms. Robertson stated that the new middle school would have to be decided on very quickly because it will take 2 years to construct it. Mr. Robertson stated that another school may have to be considered within the next five years.

Ms. Bledsoe asked if they are planning for a second new school within the next ten years.

Mr. Robertson stated that it is possible but difficult to predict because trends can change quickly.

Mr. O'Connor stated that his major concern is getting the most out of the money that is spent. Mr. O'Connor stated that acquiring a site will require additional funds and asked why the location in Stonehouse is not ideal.

Mr. Snipes stated that it causes a transportation issue and children would be on a bus for too long.

Mr. O'Connor asked where the optimum location for a school would be.

Mr. Robertson stated that it has not yet been determined. Mr. Robertson stated that a major obstacle has been most of the County's growth occurring near the center of the County, resulting in many of the schools being close together.

Mr. Snipes stated that there are no schools in the Grove area, so if growth occurred in those areas it would make the decision very easy. Mr. Snipes stated that the buses must have enough time to make it to each tier of students. Mr. Snipes stated that many people try to look to York County's school bus system for comparison, but they function very differently due to having neighborhood schools.

Mr. Robertson stated that the County does own the design plans for Hornsby Middle School, which was not factored into the cost estimate.

Mr. Woods asked if this would allow for a "cookie cutter" school in order to save on design costs.

Mr. O'Connor stated that this would result in the plan only needing engineering for the chosen site.

Mr. Snipes stated that the latest educational model is to have flexible learning spaces outside of the school building, thus he does not recommend following the "cookie cutter" model.

Mr. Robertson stated that it must be considered whether or not a design will still function the way it was originally intended once it is replicated.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that she believes the infrastructure will change dramatically over the next ten to twenty years.

Mr. Snipes stated that the design of a school must change over time with technology. Mr. Snipes noted for example that giving all students their own device would result in a much smaller media room. Mr. Snipes stated that designs also change following changes in educational models.

Ms. Tammy Rosario asked if there is a designated cut off for the length of a bus ride.

Mr. Snipes stated that the average ride time is currently 23 minutes. Mr. Snipes noted that if students have a 45 minute ride they would be required to wake up too early and possibly get home after dark.

Mr. Robertson stated that there is no specific cut off regard the number of minutes a child can be on a bus.

Ms. Bledsoe asked if there is limit to the distance a bus can travel.

Mr. Snipes stated that there is not a specific policy.

Mr. Robertson stated that a previous rezoning determined that students should not be on a bus longer than 45 minutes.

Mr. Snipes stated that this is a very long time, especially for elementary school students.

Ms. Bledsoe agreed.

Mr. O'Connor asked how the cost per square foot for the new building was determined, as it is projected to be \$207, while the Department of Education listed last year's average to be only \$182 per square foot.

Mr. Woods asked what is included in this number.

Mr. O'Connor stated that it is only for the building itself, not including land, engineering, furniture, etc.

Mr. O'Connor stated that it is \$25 more per square foot than last year's average, totaling a difference of \$4 million dollars for the project.

Mr. Snipes stated that the projection must be conservative because it is for two years in the future.

Mr. Woods stated that there is not that much inflation.

Mr. Snipes stated that that is the architect's estimation, but it could end up being less.

Mr. Woods stated that there is not a history of coming in under the projection.

Mr. Robertson agreed and noted that that average is for the entire state, which has a wide range.

Mr. O'Connor stated that two-story open areas like those at Warhill High School must be heated, cooled and be spanned with metal, all of which drive up costs.

Mr. Robertson stated that WJCC Schools is responsive to what the community wants to build. Mr. Robertson stated that although people had those concerns about Warhill High School before it was built, students reported that what they liked most about the school was its openness. Mr. Robertson noted that schools can be built cheaper but it is up for the community to decide what type of school they want their students to be in.

Ms. Bledsoe asked which is more important, those feelings or the learning environment.

Mr. Snipes stated that it is difficult to determine if it is more important to listen to the education experts who determine what the best learning environment is or to listen to the parents who want to build smaller, less expensive schools.

Mr. Robertson noted that the Middle School Committee was made up of parents, educators, and business professionals, who determined this to be the type of school that should be built.

Mr. Snipes stated that there is wide range of school designs in the County, and what goes in inside the school is what is most important.

Ms. Bledsoe agreed and stated that she believes that is where funding dollars should be spent.

Mr. Snipes stated that the environment also matters, and the education experts have determined that this is the best environment for students.

Mr. Robertson stated that in an attempt to reduce the budget for Toano Middle School, the size of the hallways and other spaces were reduced. Mr. Robertson noted that although the students may not have cared how big the hallways looked, administration quickly realized that the school was too cramped.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the auditorium at Toano is also inadequate.

Ms. Bledsoe stated that if something will be a benefit to the students then it should be done, but she questions who a large atrium would really benefit.

Mr. Robertson stated that his goal is to determine what will be the best functioning environment.

Mr. Snipes stated that James City has the best looking schools in the area, and they are a source of pride for the community. Mr. Snipes noted that it is up to the community to decide what that pride is worth to them.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the schools are very well maintained and are an important part of making James City County an attractive place to live.

Mr. Snipes and Mr. Robertson thanked Mr. O'Connor.

Ms. Bledsoe asked if the Committee is at a point to begin making their choices.

Mr. Vinciguerra requested that the Committee members send their ranking spreadsheets to him by Thursday morning.

Mr. O'Connor suggested that in the future, the ranking spreadsheet contain the titles of the projects.

Mr. Vinciguerra stated that it will be changed for next year. Mr. Vinciguerra stated that the next meeting will consist of looking at scores collectively and discussing the top ten projects.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he will not be attending the next meeting but will add his comments to the spreadsheet.

**4.) New Business**

There was no new business to discuss.

**5.) Adjournment**

The meeting was continued at 4:35 p.m. to Thursday, December 5, 2013.

  
Robin Bledsoe, Chair of the Policy Committee