



2016 LOB Presentation Meeting Recap

Friday, January 29, 2016

Board Members Present:

Jeff McKay, Lee District, Budget Committee Chair
Sharon Bulova, Chairman
Penelope Gross, Mason District (Vice Chairman)
John Cook, Braddock District
John Foust, Dranesville District
Pat Herrity, Springfield District
Catherine Hudgins, Hunter Mill District
Kathy Smith, Sully District
Linda Smyth, Providence District
Daniel Storck, Mount Vernon District

Intro Remarks (Joe Mondoro)

- New online information highlighted.
 - Questions and answers to be updated each Friday - <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/2016-lobs-q-and-a.htm>
 - Tracking of long term issues to be updated each Friday - <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/lob/2016/lobs-long-term-issues.pdf>
 - Comments submitted online to be updated each Friday. No FAQs have been identified yet but they will also be posted each week on Friday. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/2016-lobs-comments.pdf>
 - Meeting recaps being added to the calendar page and will be posted within one week of meeting date: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/2016-lobs-schedule.htm>

DPWES - Wastewater Management (James Patteson, Randy Bartlett)

- <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/lob/2016/wastewater-ppt.pdf>
- Wastewater is a mature utility, stormwater is still growing/changing as a utility
- Operate on regional basis (8 plants), this is a strength
 - Not using all capacity at Loudoun facility, but nearing capacity at Blue Plains
- Supported primarily by customers/sewer service charges, very little General Fund support
- LOB #387 Planning and Monitoring largest LOB
- Capital Improvement Program (CIP) very important given assets at \$2.4 billion
- 17 years of 100 percent compliance with Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, as well as with other regulatory requirements.
- Coordinate with Stormwater staff to address issues effectively and efficiently
- “Growth pays for growth” policy-new customers pay when tap into system
- Maintain good bond rating, but weaknesses identified.
 - Mid-2000s had to change rate structure to address slower growth.
 - Important to maintain good bond rating.
 - Discussion took place regarding nature of sewer bonds as compared to County General Obligation bonds.
 - Revenue bonds are not included in County debt ratios and therefore do not compete with other priorities such as Schools.
- Average pump station 28 years old
 - Focusing on these with capital program to rehabilitate.
 - Have taken good care of these assets so there are not a lot of failures even with age.

- Discussion around what asset life is incorporated in financial plans followed
 - ✦ Staff responded that actual conditions are taken into account in financial plan and rates.
 - ✦ Also want to maintain industry best practices.
 - ✦ ? Supervisor Cook – What is the wastewater system’s actual average asset life versus industry average life?
 - ✦ ⌚ Follow-up with Environmental committee regarding wastewater asset management.
- Began recouping fixed costs through base charge
 - Increase in FY 2017 is proposed at 3.6% (3%-4% 2017-2020)
 - Double digit increases in the past due to transition from growth community, economic conditions.
- Rate increases have been smoother than surrounding jurisdictions due in part to Board of Supervisor policies.
 - Staff working to make waste an asset instead of a liability through reuse (ie, use methane gas from incinerators).
- Supervisors complimented system and accolades that have been earned.
- Consent decrees mentioned as possible driver for steep curves for other jurisdictions.
- A question was posed regarding the use of solar power and staff responded that it is being used, but not extensively.
- It was pointed out that the rate increases associated with Chesapeake Bay requirements have occurred with minimal complaints
 - ? Supervisor Gross- What the rate increases been over the last 10 years?
- ? Supervisor Gross- Has there been a decrease in lateral pipe failures which are responsibility of homeowners?
- Harborview Plant
 - ⌚ Supervisor Smyth - What is the status of the report that was to be provided to the Environmental Committee with respect to differential rates across the system? It was agreed that the issue would be brought back to the Environmental Committee.
 - ? Supervisor Herryty – Please breakout the payments to for purchased treatment from the rest of LOB 387.
 - ? Supervisor Herryty – How do Wastewater’s treatment costs compare to other jurisdictions locally and nationally?
- There was extensive discussion regarding the differential between capacity and actual utilization.
 - Staff responded that projections based on Comprehensive Plan and projections through 2040.
 - Considering selling some capacity to Manassas, will recoup costs.
 - No plans currently to expand capacity.
 - Staff cautioned that the amount of capacity sold must considered carefully as it may not be easy to add later when needed.
 - The possibility of renting capacity to other jurisdictions was raised as potential to raise some revenue and not give the capacity up forever.
 - ✦ Staff responded that this is being considered, but it is not ideal from perspective of other jurisdictions as it does not solve their wastewater needs longer term.
- ? Supervisor Foust-What are the wastewater reserves and how do they compare to industry standards? What are plans for the reserves?
- ? Supervisor Storck - Explain how fixed costs are captured through base and usage charges.
 - Staff responded that there was a policy decision to put in flow charges so that customers had more control over what they pay.

DPWES – Stormwater (James Patteson, Randy Bartlett)

- <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/lob/2016/stormwater-ppt.pdf>
- <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/lob/2016/stormwater-gf-ppt.pdf>
- LOB #292 Forest Pest Management
 - Revenues shared with Health Department
 - Annual program presentation upcoming
 - Pointed out that Urban Forest Management placed in Stormwater since urban forestry/trees have significant impact on stormwater.
- Chesapeake Bay is big driver of work.
- Stormwater penny has helped to maintain infrastructure.
- Saving customers that need to purchase FEMA flood insurance about 20% on premiums.

- Stream restoration protect facilities and properties in addition to environmental factors.
- Must take care of currently held assets.
- Stormwater still growing
 - Currently funded at \$6.5 million project needs to be approximately \$16.6 million.
 - Discussion took place regarding dredged material.
 - ✦ I-95 Landfill using as cover material, seeded quickly.
 - ✦ Solid Waste is an important partner.
- Creative and cost effective approaches being employed wherever possible (ie, using liners to mitigate pipe cracks).
- Towns included in service district. Good partnership.
- Regulated Area is \$660 million and estimate for total county is \$1.5 billion.
 - Suggest ¼ cent per year to stay ahead of issue and meet requirements in MS4 permit
 - To address funding needed, will be asking the Environmental Committee to consider establishment of a utility.
 - Proactive approach of the County complimented.
- Many streams considered impaired.
- ⌚ Legislative Committee should monitor stormwater grants which were not included in the Governor’s budget.
- Discussion regarding the Occoquan Monitoring Lab highlighted that the County’s support was a policy decision by the Board in 1970s and that costs are shared regionally.
- Civic efforts in litter control were discussed.
- There was discussion regarding the calculation of the contribution to Northern Virginia Conservation Trust.
- ? Supervisor Herrity-What metrics drive efficiency in stormwater?
- ⌚ Comment was made regarding variability in capital spending and desire for more variance explanation. As a result, the budget document links will be added to more easily reference information that is more strictly budget related.
- General Fund budget-serves as the County’s General Public Works operations.
 - Cut grass when residents refuse to cut and residents are billed.
 - Trail maintenance only done when called by residents.
 - ✦ ⌚ Issue of trail maintenance was discussed and importance of funding a maintenance program was highlighted.
 - Urbanization and increased pedestrian access is a challenge until it is determined who/how to maintain vegetation, clean sidewalk, weed, etc?
 - The fact that the state owns the roads, and that this is different in cities and in most other states, was discussed. Caught in the middle where residents expect the maintenance to be done by County.
 - ✦ There is variability across the county regarding current needs, so one size will not fit all.
 - ✦ Tysons is a different model.
 - ✦ ⌚ Should allow communities that want to pay to replace street signs provided certain standards are met.
 - ✦ Discussion on proffer commitments and allowing property owners to assume responsibility for street maintenance.
 - ✦ ⌚ Pointed out that older neighborhoods don’t have proffer possibilities, so must have funding source to do small projects.
 - ✦ ⌚ Transportation Committee should review/provide an update regarding negotiations with state on median issues.

DPWES - Office of Capital Facilities (James Patteson, Ron Kirkpatrick)

- <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/lob/2016/g2526-ppt.pdf>
- Implements projects for DPWES.
- Construction of publically funded projects.
- Involved with PPEAs.
- Question was asked regarding program where a neighborhood could petition for new streetlights and provide a match.
 - Not funded in many years.
 - But if community wants to pay, that is still an option.
 - ⌚ How much funding is left by district?

- There was a discussion regarding use of solar power for new streetlights to reduced utility costs and staff pointed out that maintenance of battery would be needed and there are no resources for maintenance.
- Use of LED lights was discussed.
 - Have 100-200 LED lights countywide as pilot.
 - Technology changing rapidly.
 - Photometrics is an issue (lighting large intersections/spaces).
- ☞ Have Environmental Committee weigh in on upcoming negotiations with Dominion and NOVEC (2017).
- Costs benchmark about 5% below other public facility comparators.
- Want to be provider of choice, even though there really isn't a choice.
 - Customer satisfaction important.
- Agencies not using DPWES for all develop/construction projects (Park Authority, HCD) discussed, but it was mentioned that they do collaborate on projects.
- Discussion regarding construction is costs relative to private sector took place.
- Construction contingencies range 10-15%.
- Supervisors complimented OCF.
 - Staff great to work.
 - County facilities developed in collaboration with each community to create sense of place.
- Discussion regarding process and costs to get building LEED certified took place.
 - Certification costs have declined.
 - Value in going through the process.
 - Fee paid to Green Building Council is small and has declined.
 - Cost was 3%-5% of project costs to achieve Silver LEED certification
 - ✦ Industry now more along lines of 2%.
 - ✦ Staff indicated that the County's is likely even lower.
- ? Supervisor Herrity- Does the County use a square foot per employee metric?
 - FMD has employee space standards.
 - Used when constructing new space.

DPWES – Business Planning and Support (James Patteson, Joe Bui, Cathy Lemmon, Barbara Brock)

- <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/lob/2016/g2525-ppt.pdf>
- Strategic goals
- Jobs are some of the most dangerous, Employee safety paramount.
- 20 different permits that they are monitored on.
- Accreditation really important.
- Leverage technology to reduced administrative costs and improve customer service (ie, inspections).
 - 6 of 19 positions are in IT working with DIT
- 20% turnover in DPWES-creates a workload in terms of HR, training, etc
- Metrics are improving
- Drivecam has resulted in reduction in risky/unsafe behaviors
- Loss of life a couple years ago has resulted in buddy system for confined spaces.
 - Does this create issues addressing work?
 - Staff responded no and this reflects the way work should be done.
 - Public does not fully appreciates all of the safety issues.
- It was asked if constituent use of technology could be measured and if trips to County offices were reduced. Staff answered the e-plan will result in significant changes.

Code Compliance (Jeffrey Blackford, Sandra Harrington, Elizabeth Perry)

- <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/lob/2016/g9797-ppt.pdf>
- Touch development and public safety.
- Creation of agency in FY 2010 result of community concerns/complaints.
 - Brought together multiple agencies with code enforcement interests and began working together.

- Work closely with public safety and human services.
- Transparency important-have web applications that people can monitor progress of their case etc.
- “Compliance” intentional as opposed to “enforcement.”
 - Educate the community regarding compliance issues.
- Discussion regarding staff time associated with metrics shown on slide #15 ensued.
- Discussion regarding collaboration with human services took place and prevention efforts highlighted.
- Multiple occupancy violations highlight importance of working with OPEH to avoid putting people on street.
 - Make sure people have place to go.
- Need for community mentioned (ie, concerned neighbors) as County should not be first option to come in.
- Agency desires to get more involved in code amendments and proffers.
 - Getting involved in proffers and parking discussions to make sure what being considered are workable.
 - Proffers are like zoning requirements in small areas.
 - Want to get involved with planners earlier in the process.

Public Safety Context (Dave Rohrer)

- <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/lob/2016/public-safety-overview.pdf>
- Clarified that work to prevent human trafficking not stopping as a result of reduced grant funds.
- Supervisor Cook asked that training needs be identified as go through presentations.
- Supervisors thanked everyone for the work done to keep people safe during the recent snow storm.