

Hydraulic Community Advisory Committee Minutes

Monday, May 16, 2022 | 5:30pm-7:00pm

VIRTUAL MEETING

This meeting was held pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 20-A (8); An Ordinance to Ensure the Continuity of Government During Covid-19.

ATTENDEES:

Committee: Julian Bivins, Vito Cetta, Ryan Davidson (Albemarle County staff), Gabe Dayley (Albemarle County), Rachel Falkenstein (Albemarle County staff), Jane Fogleman, Diantha McKeel, Rosemary Miller, Cynthia Neff, Chris Rembold, Jacquelin Salazar, Jody Saunders, Carolyn Shaffer (Albemarle County staff), Yolanda Speed, Kim Swanson

Yolanda Speed called the meeting to order and welcomed the group. Ms. Speed asked for previous meeting's minutes to be approved. Cynthia Neff moved to approve the minutes. Chris Rembold seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

AGENDA:

County Budget Overview

Ryan Davidson, Deputy Chief of Budget, Albemarle County

- Overview of Budget Process
- Total revenues and expenditures: \$586,282,008.
- General Fund is the most useful comparison point – includes property tax revenue and school expenditures, among other items.
- Capital Projects budget fluctuates, with FY23 being the largest to date (over \$90M). Fluctuations are partially due to timing of projects.
- General Fund revenues: estimated \$362.8 Million. Includes: General Property Taxes (largest portion), other taxes. The revenues continue to grow on trend with what has been expected since 2017. Revenues were down during Covid, but recovering to where we had expected to be regardless of Covid.
- General Property Tax is currently 66.8% of total revenue. (Last year 68.5%) The County is trying to achieve diversification by increasing meals tax and other revenues in order to not be completely dependent on General Property Tax. Will gain revenue from cigarette tax, plastic bag tax, transient occupancy, and food & beverage tax.
 - This is in alignment with City of Charlottesville and puts expenses on visitors, not only residents.
- Expenses: largest is Transfer to Schools (\$167.5M), Public Safety (\$53.5M), Transfers to CIP/Debt (\$35.8M), Administrative, Parks and Rec, Health and Wellness, Judicial, Revenue Sharing, Community Development, Other
- Framework for the Budget:
 - Transformative Capital Investments: Biscuit Run, three new schools over the next five years, Housing, Courts expansion (largest single project taken on by the County), Transportation, Broadband (universal broadband availability)
 - Working Differently: Community Response team (includes social worker to dispatch and move towards human services approach for crises), Yancey Community Center,

- Engagement Coordinators (temporary full-time positions for engagement during Comp Plan process), Sewer Connection Program (approximately 250 homes on septic eligible to connect to public sewer system)
 - Urban Service Delivery: Urban Right of Way Program (keep streets clean, support bike/ped paths), Economic Development & Tourism, Property Maintenance, Police Officers, Pantops Fire Station expanded service station to 24/7, Microtransit (pilot project)
 - Quality Government Operations: Core Systems Modernization, Workforce Stabilization – 4% market adjustment for staff retention, Board and Commissions Admin, Capital Project Management
- Kim asked about property taxes / transient occupancy tax. Is there a sense of the makeup of that revenue – AirBNB vs. Hotels? Mr. Davidson indicated that the large majority of revenue comes from Hotels and confirmed that both hotels and AirBNBs are subject to the 8% tax.
- Diantha added that the County has software to screen/find AirBNB's in the County and monitor whether they are paying taxes.
- Rosemary asked about the project/status of the sidewalk project connecting Greer Elementary, Jack Jouett, and the Boys and Girls Club. Mr. Davidson and Kate Acuff confirmed the project should be done this summer.

Climate Action Planning in Albemarle County

Gabe Dayley, Climate Protection Program Manager

- County adopted Climate Action Plan in 2020. Key themes: Health, Economy, Environment, Equity, and reducing our climate impact.
- Actions: Transportation/Land Use, Building Energy Use, Sustainable Materials Management, Renewable Energy Sourcing at a larger scale, Landscape and Natural Resources
- GOALS: Achieve zero net emissions by 2050 and reduce emissions by 45% from 2008 levels by 2030.
 - 52% of emissions were from transportation in 2008; 39% from stationary energy (buildings), 5% from agriculture, and 4% from waste.
- Current program activities: prioritizing community-oriented programs, local sustainable operations programs, 2020 greenhouse gasses inventory, vulnerability and risk assessment, planning process, and more
- Transportation Solutions: “complete streets,” dense mixed-use development, infill development (developing on previously unused land to create housing or other resources rather than expanding outward), less parking and more transit infrastructure
- Buildings Solutions: Electrification, solar energy solutions, adaptive reuse of buildings (all ideas being addressed in Albemarle County Comp Plan)
- The County's forests and natural areas help the atmosphere – continue to protect green spaces.
- County website now has Environmental Stewardship Hub! Learn about County Programs – biodiversity, climate action, clean water, reduce waste. Learn how you can make a difference with examples. Includes options for renters and homeowners. The website launched on Earth Day.
- Next step: Launching Climate Resilience Plan. Everyone is encouraged to visit website and complete survey online.

- Kim asked how the County is going to address longer-term plans around parks (including Charlotte Humphris Park) in order to encourage green space. Mr. Dayley commented that they are being more thoughtful about mowing and maintenance of parks (mowing less often in unused areas, for example).
- Julian wanted to clarify regarding HVAC – under “electrification” – not everyone is able to install and maintain efficient HVAC systems and this might not be an option for low-income families and neighbors. Julian also noted that our energy is still coming from plants (coal or nuclear at Lake Anna). He would like to see more encouragement of reducing the number of people using individual gas vehicles and pointed out the importance of having more infrastructure around electric vehicles. Mr. Dayley noted they work with LEAP and other local organizations about HVAC and insulation and other services for low-income people.
- Kate Acuff noted that the school board has an Advisory Committee on Climate (accurate name of committee?). Several Schools have solar and one school has a windmill. The new Crozet School addition is powered by geothermal energy. All projects have been completed through public/private partnerships. Many buildings are ready for solar (or other projects) but don’t have the solar implemented yet. Kate pointed out that DC, Baltimore, and other cities are building net-zero schools and we should aim to make this a priority.
- Chris Rembold pointed out that the measurements of carbon in the presentation only includes our county, and don’t include production of food. People decreasing beef consumption can have a bigger impact than some of the items mentioned in the County’s plan. Chris also pointed out that the County charges a \$90 (?) fee for having a hybrid/electric car. Diantha pointed out that that should be removed in order to encourage people to electrify their vehicles. Similarly, watering vegetable gardens are charged the same rate as watering a yard, but growing vegetables should somehow be encouraged. Mr. Dayley mentioned that they had considered doing a “consumption-based” assessment, but it hasn’t been done at this time.
- John Lewis noted that “we are a community of convenience and cost” so the County needs to focus on making bad habits less convenient or more expensive. Incentivize biking, make decisions based on encouraging cycling rather than helping traffic. Until we can get VDOT to encourage other transportation, we are fighting an uphill battle. Diantha noted that neighborhoods don’t encourage connectivity.
- Jane requested an update on the proposed subdivision on 250 bypass / Ivy Road (confirm location?). Diantha said she believes it’s on hold because of staff/community questions for the developer. Julian confirmed it is not currently on the calendar.

Community Updates

Diantha McKeel, Board of Supervisors

- No updates due to time constraint.

Julian Bivins, Planning Commission

- Heritage on Rio has been deferred to Planning Commission (June/July).
- Barracks Road, The Foster Forge Farm School across from Montvue near the site of the new Field School. There was a community meeting and it is going to be before the planning commission next Monday. Send thoughts ASAP or participate in the public hearing.

Diantha noted that the County is assessing in-person meetings. Summer meetings will still be on Zoom with possible fall meetings in-person.

Kim Swanson thanked participants and closed the meeting.

NEXT MEETING: June 13 (not usual meeting time! Moved due to holiday.)