

Capital plan discussions begin

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Other capital expenditures include \$161,817 to repair and replace the roof of the county administration building and \$528,000 to replace the HVAC in the courthouse. Director of facilities Ernie Sadler said the new HVAC system would save money in the long run. "It's so much cheaper to operate and work on" newer units, he said.

Projections for future years total \$5,714,485 in 2023, \$8,678,383 in 2024, \$39,236,278 in 2025 and \$4,587,415 in 2026, for a grand total of \$59,860,554.

The next step will be for the commission to rank the projects in importance before voting to send a plan to the board of supervisors for approval.

Other items

The commission held a public hearing on revisions to Chapter 5 of the comprehensive plan, "Access to State Waters." After hearing public comment, the commission voted 5-0-1 to send the chapter to the board of supervisors for approval.

Jimmie Carter of Weems said "the decision made years ago" to have a minimum two-acre subdivision site "really changed the environmental impacts on the water" and suggested the addition of similar wording. He also suggested a mention "of how important the residential tax base is to the future of this county in terms of being able to afford the types of infrastructure issues facing the county."

Charlotte Silverman, who lives by Belle Isle State Park, wanted to see further development of the area, citing the need for a beach and swimming area. "It's not managed as well as it could be." Silverman added that she would like to see the property off of Goodluck Road further developed. "I'm glad that the county is taking this initiative."

Commission member David Chupp agreed "the country should encourage the development of (Belle Isle) as a swimming opportunity."

County supervisor Bill Lee addressed the waterfront

property issue. "We missed a lot of opportunities when it comes to access to the water. There's a whole segment of the population that's not going to build million dollar homes on the water, yet they want access to the water," he said.

Lee also questioned how much the county could become involved in the development of the park. "That's a state park. It's not run by the county, so there's some lines there that I don't know if we can cross or not."

Smart, Chupp, Tom Richardson, Ty Brent and Tara Booth voted in favor of sending the chapter to the board. Member Steven Sorenson attended the meeting electronically and was unable to vote due to technical difficulties. Glendon Pinn was absent.

Carter presented a progress report on the TriWay Trail, a 9.5mile bike and pedestrian trail to link the towns and attractions of Kilmarnock, Irvington and White Stone. In addition to walking and biking, Carter envisioned fitness equipment and art installations along the way.

Carter said the project is another way to attract visitors. "If we can get people here" through tourism, "people will want to live here," he said. The trail would complement other developments.

A planning grant of \$135,000 was awarded to the project last week from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation which Carter said would be used to pay for consultant services.

The project, according to Carter, falls under the Rails to Trails Conservancy. If awarded, the grant would pay for 80% of the project, with a 20% match required. "My hope is that the value of the right of ways will substantially close the gap of the 20% match," Carter said.

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