



# Albemarle County

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 17-542, **Version:** 1

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**AGENDA DATE:** 10/4/2017

**TITLE:**

Update on Stormwater Utility and Program Costs

**SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST:** Receive update and provide feedback on progress toward establishing a stormwater utility, including the refinement of a 10-year program plan and associated costs

**ITEM TYPE:** Regular Information Item

**STAFF CONTACT(S):** Walker, Letteri, Henry, and Harper

**PRESENTER (S):** Greg Harper

**LEGAL REVIEW:** Not Required

**REVIEWED BY:** Douglas C. Walker

**BACKGROUND:** For the last several years, Albemarle County has been considering how best to support a water resources program that complies with federal and state mandates and that meets growing community expectations. Attachment A includes a brief history of Board actions related to this effort, updated from a version provided on July 5, 2017. In 2014, the Board appointed an advisory committee to develop recommendations for a funding mechanism. On September 7, 2016, the Board adopted the committee's recommendations, generally summarized as follows, and directed staff to begin taking actions to establish a stormwater utility:

- **Scope of program** - implement a water resources program that fully complies with regulatory requirements, such as those associated with the cleanup of Chesapeake Bay, and that meets other long-term needs and responsibilities, such as drainage infrastructure maintenance and watershed improvements
- **Funding mechanism** - support this program with a County-wide stormwater utility with a fee structure that relates the fee to a property's contribution to stormwater runoff, based in part on the amount of impervious area

On July 5, 2017, staff updated the Board on utility progress and an effort to characterize a stormwater infrastructure maintenance program.

**STRATEGIC PLAN: Infrastructure Investment** - Prioritize, plan, and invest in critical infrastructure that responds to past and future changes and improves the capacity to serve community needs. **Natural Resources Stewardship** - Thoughtfully protect and manage Albemarle County's ecosystems and natural resources in both the rural and development areas to safeguard the quality of life of current and future generations.

**DISCUSSION:** County staff continue to work with the consulting firm Amec Foster Wheeler (AFW) to develop a stormwater utility. On June 20, AFW facilitated a brainstorming session with staff from multiple departments to develop draft policies related to the stormwater utility rate and credit program. A stakeholder advisory panel consisting of the members of the former Water Resources Funding Advisory Committee evaluated these draft policies in meetings on July 18 and September 11. As staff finalizes the proposed rate and credit policies, it is considering the panel's feedback. Additionally, AFW has been working with staff to develop the processes and mechanisms necessary to compute fees for each County property and add the fees to the property tax bills.

Staff has been re-examining the resources - both human and capital - needed to implement the program scope over a 10-year period as articulated in the recommendations adopted in 2016. Additional staff will be required to manage the new programs, such as the infrastructure maintenance program discussed in July. In addition, staff anticipate that less than one full-time equivalent (FTE) position will be needed to administer the utility. A summary of anticipated staffing needs is included as Attachment B.

Quantifying the cost to comply with the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) mandate - for both the Chesapeake Bay and local streams - remains challenging due to the uncertainty of future permit requirements imposed by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. Staff have made minor changes to the anticipated costs of this program based on current information and understandings. Likewise, staff have incorporated additional information into the predicted costs associated with a rural-focused watershed restoration program.

A summary of updated program costs is included as Attachment C.

Community engagement will be aligned with key milestones and will include a comprehensive webpage and "what's my fee" look-up tool.

Attachment A includes a summary of the anticipated implementation schedule for remaining actions. Staff anticipates the utility to be introduced in FY 19, with the first billing occurring in May 2019 to coincide with the issuance of 2019 first-half real property tax bills.

**BUDGET IMPACT:** This update on work progress does not have an effect on the budget.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

No action is required. This work session is an opportunity for staff to update the Board on work efforts related to establishing a stormwater utility.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A - Brief History and Utility Implementation Schedule (updated from July)
- B - Summary of Expected Staffing Needs
- C - Revised 10-Year Program Plan Costs

