

Public Safety, Problematic Traffic Among St. Mary's BOCC Concerns

Posted by [griff](#) On 09/29/2010

The St. Mary's County Board of Commissioners started Tuesday with a tour of Leonardtown Middle School renovations Sept. 28. The County's Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael J. Martirano said he was pleased with the efficiencies of the project and later requested the advancement of funds to purchase furniture for the school.

Martirano and SMCPS Chief Operating Officer Brad Clements explained they'd like to have the new furniture in place for next school year and asked for additional funds to enhance the Elms Environmental Educational Center. Commissioner Dan Raley made the motion to deny the request, saying, "I strongly suggest incorporating it into the FY2012 CIP Budget." The board denied the request in a 5-0 vote.

The superintendent said he was respectful of the board's decision, but said in light of reverting approximately \$2.3 million back to the County in recent weeks, he had hoped the funding could be available sooner. "Everything we do is defined by efficiencies," Martirano stated.

State Highway Administration representatives presented the board with an update on the MD-4- Thomas Johnson Bridge Study, explaining it's currently in the project planning phase and not funded beyond that. A [meeting](#) on Sept. 28 will draw input from citizens about options to decrease the traffic congestion at the MD 4 and Rt. 235 Intersection and on the bridge. SHA officials indicated both are currently functioning at a grade "F".

Commissioner President Jack Russell said, "The project is very costly, but very important to St. Mary's County and the whole tri-county region."

The commissioners approved just shy of \$100,000 in funding from SHA for a local Traffic Safety program, to which Russell commented, "We need more help on our streets than ever before, as can be witnessed by just driving around."

The board heard from IT Director Bob Kelley about an unscheduled network failure on Sept. 26 which caused 911 and Sheriff's operations to convert to manual- pen and paper- operations. Kelley said this was only the second time in nine years such an event occurred and explained that recovery from the "catastrophic failure" was completed in less than six hours.

The BOCC adopted an updated Emergency Operations Plan for the County and approved a four-year grant which will establish a new County position to run a Recruitment and Retention program for fire and rescue workers. Russell said this was a valuable idea for keeping volunteers in these critical jobs and Raley suggested a larger portion of the funding would be well spent on advertising rather than just the salaried position. The grant-funded job is expected to be filled by Nov. 23.

Land Use and Growth Management Director Derick Berlage said 38 requests for time extensions had been approved for developers and told the board, "Our ordinance is already quite generous." These extensions, approved by the board in July, offer what Commissioner Tommy Mattingly called, "a comfort level

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