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Henrico County Board of Supervisors Joint Special Meeting with Richmond City Council, Monday, June 30, 2025

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- Official agenda (Henrico County): <https://henrico.gov/pdfs/manager/meetings2025/0630252ag.pdf>
- Official minutes (Henrico County, special meeting): <https://henrico.gov/pdfs/manager/meetings2025/063025spmns.PDF>
- Agend-O-Gram, Aug 12, 2025 (records the Board's approval of these minutes): <https://henrico.gov/pdfs/manager/meetings2025/8-12-25Agend-O-Gram.pdf>

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[00:00:00] - Good afternoon. - Good afternoon. - The special meeting of the Richmond City Council in conjunction with the Henrico County Board of Superviders will now come to order.

[00:00:21] - Thank you, Mayor. Well, the Henrico County Board of Superviders will now come to order.

[00:00:38] - Okay, well, why don't I kick us off with some table setting here. I'm really grateful that you all have come together as the elected bodies of the City of Richmond and Henrico County. This is an incredibly significant meeting for, You know, obviously for the work that we have to do at hand to ensure the provision of safe, clean water to the hundreds of thousands of residents across the region.

[00:01:00] But also because I'm not aware that these two elected bodies have actually ever come together, at least in the two decades that I've been paying attention and perhaps longer than that. So a pretty historic moment for us. January's water outage created a situation that obviously none of us ever want to revisit.

[00:01:20] And as the city's chief executive, you know, I made sure that we did a thorough assessment of what led to that crisis, brought on a new director of public utilities, Dr. Scott Morris, whose job in the urgent response was to address the short-term restoration of reliable service, but then to map out the long-term plan to address both the infrastructure and the operating issues at our water treatment plant.

[00:01:44] And as you all will hear from him a little later this afternoon, we've made some really significant progress in the right direction, and there's much more to come. And the city will continue to do our part to shepherd and to protect this crucial asset on which so much of the region depends. But we recognize that we need to do even more to rebuild a sense of security and confidence for all of our residents in the city and in our neighboring counties.

[00:02:09] And that, ultimately, is why I have called for this meeting today, so that we can begin having some of the conversations that need to take place. My hope is that today we, as elected officials of the two neighboring localities that support each other in so many ways, and that we can reach agreement on the need to have further detailed conversations that are aimed at strengthening the resilience and redundancy of our regional water system.

[00:02:34] Those detailed conversations, in my view, are best led by subject matter experts that have detailed knowledge of the operations of our facilities and of the related financial and legal questions. And the proposal for the Water Advisory Group that I've shared kind of maps out a little bit of a process where the experts can take the lead in defining those feasible options.

[00:02:56] But ultimately, the top administrators and the elected officials can be the ones making the final recommendations. So know that, you know, this was what I've sent out is just a draft to help get the conversation started, but the real conversation is really among you all as the elected bodies of our two localities.

[00:03:16] I should also acknowledge, you know, that Richmond City Council ultimately is the city's governing body and under our city charter must approve any recommendation that involves a significant alteration to the structure of our utilities. And so today's conversation is really just the first step intended to set the table for future discussions about ways in which we will collaborate to build a more resilient water system.

[00:03:39] While the conversations will take some time and a lot of work, they also need to move with some urgency. We have a unique opportunity not just to address this issue for our residents, but also to move forward with sensible, cooperative strategies, and the faster that we can move to at least define some of the major options, the better opportunity that we have to get some state support in this upcoming budget.

[00:04:04] So there is a sense of urgency to the conversation for multiple reasons. I, over the course of my career, have seen the mutual benefit of regional collaboration, and I'm really excited that this crisis has brought us to a place where we can begin the conversation of better supporting our residents and our businesses across the region. Thank you again for being here, and I will turn it over to our City Council President, Dr. Cynthia Newbill.

[00:04:39] Thank you so much, Mayor Vula, for hosting and welcoming the Henrico County Board of Supervisors. Thank you, President Newbill and Vice President Jordan, and also our esteemed colleagues, the members of City Council. Before we begin with the agenda, we have a request from the chair, Mr. Dan

Smith to participate in the meeting electronically because he's traveling with family. Our board's policy allows Mr. Smith to participate electronically if approved by a majority of the quorum physically present. Do I have a motion to approve electronic participation by Mr. Smith? Second. Been moved by Mrs. Roundtree, seconded by Mr. Rogish. All in favor say aye.

[00:05:17] Aye. The ayes have it. Welcome Mr. Smith. Thank you all very much. I apologize for my absence but I'm thankful for the ability to be here with you, albeit virtually, in an effort to ensure efficiency i've asked our vice chair reverend cooper to handle the chair responsibilities again thank you all again for allowing me to join without objection i would share the meeting from mr smith president newbo we're ready to proceed thank you i want to thank the mayor for the invitation to each of us richmond and henrico to come together

[00:05:50] to engage in a discussion about increased collaboration and collaborative opportunities that would allow us to develop a stronger and more sustainable water system. Thank you. Pursuant to today's meeting, the Richmond City Council will meet actually again on Monday, July 7th, and it will undertake a more in-depth conversation, review, discussion, decisioning, conversation about,

[00:06:26] For example, the regional water advisory concept paper and other kinds of components that will be shared today in this meeting and that we will come back with pursuant to that meeting and those reviews to share our joint opportunity and positioning.

[00:06:49] Yes, ma'am. so thank you. I'd like to thank the members of Richmond City Council again and Mayor Avula and city staff for graciously serving as hosts of this joint meeting. It's not easy to align the business summertime schedules of so many people so we truly and sincerely want to thank everyone for making this a priority. Joint meetings of this nature are extraordinarily rare however this is Enrico's second in just a matter of weeks. We met with our friends on the Hanover County Board of Supervisors on June the 11th. Our presence then and here again today says a whole lot. It shows that we

[00:07:24] are committed just as you are to addressing the important and imperative complex issues before us. By working together as partners, we can create a more resilient, redundant, and modern public water system that will serve our residents' business community for decades to come. I am incredibly optimistic along with my colleagues because our region already has a strong foundation for regional cooperation. Our efforts have been successful for decades, and they're going to continue. Consider our vibrant and ever-expanding Richmond International Airport, Richmond Region Tourism, and our downtown convention center led by the Greater Richmond

[00:08:00] Convention Authority, GRTC promoting mobility and accessibility to jobs and services, the Greater Richmond Partnership promoting economic development and public safety efforts, which include mutual aid support and 9-1-1 redundancy. Among more recent initiatives, we've partnered together with the nonprofit community to enhance support for those who are experiencing homelessness and are transitioning from homelessness.

[00:08:26] These efforts have included the Cool Lane Commons Project and expanded capacity at emergency shelters serving adults as well as families. Also, the Central Virginia Transportation Authority is delivering a modernized and enhanced transportation system for the entire region. It's worth noting that the CVTA was created with the support of the General Assembly. It's improving our communities and our quality of life for today. With projects like the Fall Line Trail, it's also helping to quite literally pave the

way for a brighter future for everyone. The list goes on and on. In terms of today's topic, our public water system. All of

[00:09:05] this is to say we can do this. We can do this by working together, by listening to experts and engaging with our residents and communities. Thank you again, and please know that our board and our staff are ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work. President Newcomb. Thank you, Reverend Cooper, Vice Chair Cooper, Reverend. We will proceed with the agenda, and so on the agenda, the next section includes staff presentations, and so Mr. Scott Morris, our City Department of Utilities

[00:09:40] director will get presentation. Thanks both the board representatives and city council members. I've outlined on this agenda to go over overview for City Richmond, the water treatment plant. I'm going to go over the background and history of the plant. I'm going to go over the plant enhancements. I'm going to go on on the existing ongoing improvements. Then also I'm going to hit on the regional cooperation or coordination. This image here is just an

[00:10:15] overview, an aerial of our water treatment plant. First of all, I want to speak to the time frames of our water treatment plant. Our water treatment plant was built, the first portion of the plant back in 1924. The second portion of the plant was built in the 1950s. That plant is collectively the water treatment plant for the city of Richmond. Before then, there's about 300 years ago, all the water came from numerous springs and an open stream flowing from the capital across Main Street and today's the water treatment plant actually has a treatment capacity of about 132

[00:10:53] million gallons per day and we provide water to Henrico, Chesterfield, Hanover and then also we provide indirectly flows to Gooshlin and Powhatan counties as well as the town of Ashland. As you look on the slides it kind of gives you a generic overview of how the treatment plant works. We have some pumps that pumps into the sedimentation basins, ultimately to the filters, ultimately in the clear well and then from the clear well it's pumped into the finished basin and then ultimately into the distribution system. Talking about the wholesale contracts, we have three wholesale contracts, Henrico, Chesterfield, and Hanover. They each have a different capacity associated with it.

[00:11:30] So Henrico's max capacity is 35 million gallons per day. Chesterfield's max capacity is 32 million gallons per day. And Hanover's max capacity is 20 million gallons per day. And then we look at average demand of each of these contracts and the data that they pull from. I pulled the last six years. Henrico averagely pulls about 12.43. Chesterfield on average pulls 9.14. And Hanover pulls about 6 million gallons per day. And then you look at the max hour demands that's authorized in the contracts. Henrico is allowed to pull at a max hour demand of 40 MGD. And then Chesterfield

[00:12:08] and Hanover's contracts are structured slightly different. They're just based off max day. They're allowed up to 105% of the capacities in the first max capacity duration I had in both of the top bullet points. So Chesterfield can go up to 33.6 and Hanover can go up to 21 million gallons per day.

[00:12:26] And each of these contracts was entered at different dates and then also at different intervals. So the expiration on Herakos is about 2040. Expiration on Chesterfield is 2045 and Hanover is 2035. Each of these has different aspects regarding notification prior to expiration.

[00:12:43] They can range from five to 10 years notification. Talking about plant enhancements that we've already put in place, we have the raw water pumps. Existing raw water pumps and screens are at the end

of their usual life. We're in the process right now of replacing two variable frequency drives, VFDs, on the number one and number two raw water pumps.

[00:13:04] These new installed, mechanically cleaned raw water pump screens are gonna be for one, two, and three on intakes, and they will be replacing some of our temporary screenings. We're about 75% construction complete. We anticipate that we're gonna be done with this in the fall of '26.

[00:13:20] And right now we're working on getting those two additional VFTs started immediately or imminently. This is an item that actually came to discussion after the January 6th event. This is our substation one replacement. Again, this existing structure was near the end of its useful life.

[00:13:37] We need to integrate the substation with switch gear controls and automation of our emergency generator. We've replaced the main substation one and associated electrical and structural components. We're installing an automatic transfer switch for control of the standby generator.

[00:13:54] And right now status is about 75%. The new substation controls are on site. And we've also did some demand for the emergency generators. We should have substantial completion for the use of the emergency generators sometime in November of 2025.

[00:14:09] Plan enhancements related to filters. Again, these filters at the end of its useful life when I'm talking about media, and then there's a little bit of flow restrictions associated with that. We're gonna be replacing the four-way valve and drain valve actuators in plants one and two. Plant one, we've actually replaced the majority of those actuators, and plant two, we've gone through and did a lot of repairs.

[00:14:30] We're gonna be going through and replacing the media. And then once we replace the media deck and walkways and other piping in the filter area to bring those back up to current standards, that design is currently about 90%. The January 6th event calls us to reevaluate and try to pool some of our actuator costs ahead of schedule so we could do some of those replacements and get the plant back up more quickly.

[00:14:49] Those costs were about \$800,000, but that's what's been moved forward in the project. One of the items that was identified most January 6th is the imminent need for electrical repairs and moving some of our electrical equipment outside of the basement into upper levels. And that's both in the basements for plant one and two.

[00:15:08] Right now we're moving a lot of those motor control centers, switch gears, everything up into the upper deck. And so we've done phase one already. We're starting with phase two. And then right now we're in design phase about 90% for the project.

[00:15:25] Plant enhancement, Bird Park Reservoir. This is a discussion on capacity of the Bird Park Reservoir and the need for this. The actual roofing or membrane and support structures are at the end of their usual life. And what that means is we have to go through periodically and replace these to make sure that they're structurally sound, which causes us to do this in two phases.

[00:15:46] that reservoir has about a capacity of 55 million gallons. So whenever you take one of them out, you lose about half that capacity. And so right now we're near the end of the west roof replacement, that's nearly completed. And then we'll be starting the east roof replacement as well with an anticipated completion in August of 2028.

[00:16:06] I've highlighted this as part of this discussion, but also in future 10 year plan discussions. And we are going through the process right now of looking at our water distributions data and controls and updating them bringing them the current standards. A lot of the systems are aged or some of the equipment is obsolete and you can't find parts readily available for them.

[00:16:24] We've broken this into multiple phases. As you can see on here, phase one, phase two, phase three A. Those all have been completed. Phase three B, which consists of replacing DPS and PLCs at the pump station. The next phase is a complete redesign of the infrastructure and of the distribution and water treatment plant SCADA's.

[00:16:41] And what this means is we're gonna look at holistically how these need to be integrated and looking towards the future. Construction of phase 3B, we're about 50%, and completion is anticipated in summer of 2026. Plant enhancements, we've gone through a lot of additional assessments, H&TB reports, VDH inspections, and also SEH reports as well.

[00:17:06] And a lot of things have been identified as needing to be done from a planning perspective. We've already gone through and created 52 standing operating procedures. Originally this number was 58. We've condensed six of those and rolled those into the 52. We've gone through and did an organizational restructuring, separating some of the divisional responsibilities.

[00:17:26] Collectively we brought on about 140 years of experience into the DPU, which is amazing. About five PEs have been added to the roster as well. We've also gone through and added additional operational staff. So when we went through and addressed some of the concerns brought up to us by BDH, a restructure of the existing staff to accommodate the additional workload that needed to be done, but also added four additional positions onto the plant operations staff.

[00:17:52] So each shift, in essence, has one additional person to help out in emergency conditions, but also when somebody calls out, just to make sure that we're fully manned. We've gone through, and in conjunction with the SOPs, we are doing training on an annual basis.

[00:18:07] These annual trainings result in additional exposure and experience for the plant staff, make sure they have the adequate training they need, but also documentation of that. And we're also going through right now and doing the drills. This is predicated on getting our SOPs back from BDH.

[00:18:23] Once we get those SOPs back and they give a general consensus that everything's been addressed, we're gonna start rolling out these annual training exercises and the drill exercises as well. We've also gone through and did a filter optimization plan. This has been submitted also to BDH.

[00:18:39] And what this did is it went through and looked at the filters overall, segmentation basin, the flocculation process, the coagulation process, and seeing where there's opportunities for improvement, both from runtimes of filters, backwash cycles, monitoring, anything associated with chemical dosing, and then basically had a couple of recommendations that we're gonna be looking at and incorporating in the near future.

[00:19:01] And then looking at our preventative maintenance, we've gone through and looked at all of our work orders, and we actually have an active study right now to evaluate those preventative maintenance items to see if any of the corrective items to be readdressed and put into a preventative maintenance item and as i mentioned before we've had multiple condition assessments we're also going through and updating our water treatment plant master plan that's going to be updated in 2026 early in the year right

now they're going through and incorporating all the condition assessments into that master plan and as we in accordance with wea we're doing the risk and resiliency assessment and then we're also revising our emergency response plan and that emergency response plan is going to be incorporating

[00:19:39] lot of scenario based items such that you know drills associated with plant failures or any type of routine operations or casualty operations. Plant enhancements to water distribution. City Richmond has about thousand miles of transmission mains. Our current replacement protocol is about 10 miles per year. We're looking at in the five to ten year CIP of bringing that up to about 10 to 20 miles per year and we also mentioned here our storage it's 69 million gallons. Actually it's a little bit more than that it's about 4 million gallons more than that when you incorporate all the finished water basins as well and so that's the minimum standard you have to have from the waterworks reg is about half

[00:20:18] of peak capacity as you can see here if we're at 96 million gallons peak day which is our normal peak day we have we only have a need of 48 million gallons and we vastly exceed that based on our storage and then looking at our tank rehabilitation program we're trying to target a one to two year replacement program on an annual basis i've highlighted this to city council and also in presentations but this is the tentative water plant ten-year modernization plan it breaks it up into four different phases the foundation building core system modernization resiliency and optimization and long-term sustainability the first phase being year one second phase being

[00:20:56] year two third year three and four and then long-term sustainability from years five to ten the first year which we're on right now we're looking at core infrastructure upgrades so we're reevaluating our CIPs looking at our comprehensive system assessments that we've already performed, and then looking at those high priority VDH items that need to be compliance.

[00:21:16] Look at holistically from the 2022 EPA report, the Sanitary Survey report, and all the other various reports to date. We've already done a lot of these improvements, about 82% of them have been fully completed, but we're looking to finalize those over this next year.

[00:21:31] And then again, we're looking at our comprehensive, robust, preventive maintenance plan to make sure that we're hitting all the targets we need to. And then in phase two, we're going to look at, like I mentioned before, looking at our SCADA system, looking at how we can phase that in and modernize it, looking at additional primary treatment options we need, building in a redundancy and power system.

[00:21:49] So we went through this with a water treatment plant, but we're also looking at our pump stations to make sure that we have emergency generators there as well to handle those scenarios where we lose both primary and secondary power. And then we're looking at replacing critical aging distribution mains. I mentioned that before.

[00:22:04] ramp up our distribution main program and try to get additional mains replaced over the next five to ten years. Then we start looking at, in phase three, resiliency and optimization. We want to look at complete automation of backup systems, full redundancy of critical components, and basically advanced water quality monitoring, and then looking at, again, looking at long-term viability of major distribution system improvements.

[00:22:27] Our distribution system is over 100 years old, and we have a lot of ways that we can improve and optimize so this is going to be a long-term effort not just a one to three-year effort more than like a 10 to 15 year modernization and optimization of those infrastructure and then after that you're looking at

phase four which is long-term stability look at remaining infrastructure needs those ones that are imminent or urgent needs but they need to be done and then you're looking at smart water technology that's looking at you know how we utilize technology of the century make sure that we're operating efficiently and effectively. And then we're looking at industry-leading reliability metrics, making sure that we're hitting those benchmarks. And if we do all those things, the last item is we have a fully

[00:23:06] modernized system. We did most recently reestablish our regional coordination. We do quarterly DPU meetings. I meet with Bentley on a quarterly basis. And then we also most recently did our, since I think 2019, a capital improvement project meeting. This is something that we held on May 30th, 2025. And this is where all the DPU directors and their staff meet and discuss ongoing capital improvements that are going done at both the water treatment plant, but also the distribution system. And this is required by our contracts as well to make sure that we're all on board and agree with the CIP as proposed. In this meeting, we're

[00:23:44] actually proposing to have a second one. I've teed it up early, probably in the next couple months to just go over some of the additions or changes into the CIP. We've also planned to have a regional tabletop exercise that's scheduled in August 25th, 2025, and the intent behind that regional tabletop exercise is to go over emergency response to different types of scenarios, various being loss of primary source water, staffing constraints, cybersecurity issues, or loss of regional supply, it could be Comps Creek, it could be the Richmond Water Treatment Plant.

[00:24:20] We also not mentioned here, we do a couple of additional items. We also have the Public Utility Service Commission, that's our regional kind of discussion on how we're managing the water treatment plant, both from the water system, and that could be anywhere between water, wastewater, stormwater, or our gas utility as well, and that gives an opportunity for our citizens to give input on how we're operating our system.

[00:24:41] And then we also have a regional exercise in drought coordination, that's hosted by the City of Richmond as well. We usually engage that when drought conditions start becoming imminent. Right now, we don't have a need for that because we're flush with water, at least from a groundwater and surface water. But if it comes down to in August, in October, when there could be a drought condition again, City of Richmond will coordinate that on behalf of the region and invite all of our regional partners as well.

[00:25:07] With that, I'm done with my presentation. - Thank you, Mr. Morris. The next presentation will be Mr. Bentley Chan with Henrico County DPU.

[00:25:31] - Thank you members of City Council for your warm welcome and hosting us today. Thank you, Director Morris and your staff for the continued partnership. I am Bentley Chan, Director of Public Utilities for Henrico County, and I will go over, similarly, Henrico's system.

[00:25:57] So we will be talking about the background and history of Henrico's system, the current Richmond contract, lessons learned from the water crisis. Then we will move into talking about Henrico's current water system to include our water treatment facility, Cobbs Creek Reservoir, our capital improvement program, our 10-year capital improvement program, where we allocate our rate increases, future water system, our future water system and demands, as well as our current facilities planning study that

[00:26:34] takes us to 2055. So some background and history on Henrico's public utility system. Prior to 2004, Henrico purchased all of its drinking water from the city of Richmond and utilized high-capacity drinking water wells in the eastern part of the county. Following 2004, Henrico opened its 80 MGD, so a million gallons per day. It was 55 MGD initially, a water treatment facility

[00:27:06] at the intersection of Three Chop and Gaskins Road that produces and distributes drinking water to the western and portions of central Henrico. Portions of central and eastern Henrico remained on Richmond Water. Henrico Water and Richmond Water are distributed through 1,600 miles of water distribution mains and utilize 26 facilities across the county.

[00:27:36] Some information on the Richmond Henrico contract. Henrico entered into a water agreement with Richmond in September of 1994 with the agreement to contract in exchange for an 80 MGD, James River allocation, and mutual support for the construction of our own water treatment facility. In the contract, we have a 35 MGD capacity in the city's water treatment

[00:28:11] plant, as Director Morris had spoken about previously. And then from 2007 to the end of contract, the county has a minimum purchase of approximately 12 MGD. No additional capacity costs are no capacity additional capacity costs are allocated to Henrico unless agreed to by both the city and the county and so this is the the quarterly meetings that Director Morris had spoken about. The county may resell to other customers located outside the county with

[00:28:50] written approval from the city. A yearly cost allocation of study is required to determine the actual cost of service, so both capacity and commodity. Real and personal property taxes are also applicable. Projected water requirements are due to the city each May 1st, and so we send that over for discussion in those meetings. The agreement, like was said before, is in effect until July 1st, 2040, or the agreement shall continue in force thereafter unless terminated by

[00:29:29] the manager of the city or the manager of the county with five years notice. So some lessons learned from the the unfortunate January incident we we noticed that there needed to be advanced notification and enhanced communication and coordination between both localities on issues I will say that was that was done to great effect in this last incident so we are appreciative there is an additional need

[00:30:03] for mutual response and aid in emergency situations and so we've discussed the ability to have strike teams ready to to help each other out in the event in the event of of an emergency additional need for emergency response exercises and preparation which director Morris spoke about operational adjustments and to ensure service reliability and so Henrico has has done that with our tank levels as well as knowing where to go and what to do to isolate the the county

[00:30:43] from isolate the the water systems and the need for redundancy and resiliency in all of our systems this is actually a picture of a water main break that that occurred in January at Monument and Bremono.

[00:30:59] And so a lot of work went into repairing that. And it was also in the area of St. Mary's Hospital. Henrico's current water system, again, 1,600 miles of water distribution mains, 26 facilities, which is four pressure regulating valves, 12 tanks, and 10 water pumping stations across eight pressure zones.

[00:31:29] The current water system in Henrico as served by the city of Richmond, we are served across 37 water meters, 30 regular meters, seven emergency. We take water primarily at three locations, Three Chop, Laburnum Avenue, and Sherm Avenue.

[00:31:51] And the combined total of those three facilities takes 20 of the 35 million gallons per day. And as we found from January, it's 14 locations for us to go and turn valves to do a good isolation between the systems.

[00:32:14] So the county's water treatment facility, again at 3CHOP and Gaskins Roads, it is our ADMGD facility. We do have plans to expand that to 130 MGD with a new treatment train, as well as new equipment.

[00:32:37] And just for context, the county produces on average about 25 MGD, so we do have some capacity in that plant to utilize.

[00:32:53] County's Cobbs Creek Reservoir, which I am happy to report is close to being finally complete. It should be later this year. It is kind of fully full right now.

[00:33:09] So 15 billion gallons, approximately 15 billion gallons across 1,100 acres in Cumberland County. And because of this project, The county was given additional allotment of raw water out of the James River.

[00:33:27] So moving on to Henrico's 10-year capital improvement program. So our 10-year capital improvement program, that's a map kind of highlighting all the projects that we have across the county. We are going to do about 50 projects with an estimate of \$1.2 billion of reinvestment in the water and sanitary sewer systems of the county.

[00:33:54] And now our 5% rate increase that pays for all of this, as you can imagine, a lot of it goes towards capital improvement, but a fair amount goes to annual contractor repairs, chemicals, maintenance, and the engineering, planning, design, and construction administration that is needed to realize all of these projects.

[00:34:21] Water production and demands for Henrico County. As you can see, 2021 is the data that we've been using to build off of. It's the start of our facilities plan, and so we're looking at average and max day demands, and currently production satisfies that.

[00:34:47] We are looking at future demands in 2055. As part of our facilities planning study, we are coordinating with our Department of Planning's 2045 Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

[00:35:07] We are estimating future and average maximum day demands and water facility capacities needed for that population growth. We are identifying and planning for capital improvement projects, including the aforementioned water treatment facility expansion to meet demands for both redundancy and resiliency.

[00:35:30] And then we are evaluating the needed and required water supply, storage, and treatment requirements and cost estimates as a part of this study. And that wraps up my presentation.

[00:35:45] Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chan. I believe there would like to be opportunity for a few questions. Any questions for our Director Morris and or Mr. Chan at this point?

[00:36:07] Colleagues, are there any questions for Mr. Morris or for Ms. Chan? Regarding the Richmond presentation, the work that is slotted to be done, I see that there are a few that have some actual dates, but most of it doesn't, and some of the dates just refer to, I guess, the design phase as opposed to the completion phase.

[00:36:36] So I think it's just kind of a foundational question from a lot of folks who very simplistically, I'll say, have viewed the water treatment facility in the city as needing a lot of repairs. And I don't know that this presentation lays it out simply enough as to what is the current status, what is the risk of other failure happening, and what is the timeline to get it to a kind of a reasonable degree of certainty that what happened previously won't be happening again.

[00:37:07] So to answer your question, we've gone through and done a very rigorous review of all the conditions in the water treatment plant.

[00:37:23] We've addressed all the primary concerns associated with the January 6th event. Most of that was predicated off the use of winter mode versus summer mode in the switch cure operations. That has been discontinued as a mode of operations. We've also gone through and upsized all the UPSs. That's unerrited power sources.

[00:37:40] Those are what actually closes the valves associated with the effluent and potential flooding. So all the imminent concerns associated with the January 6th event have been addressed. These are more included in making resiliency improvements that further enhance the system to prevent any type of reoccurrence or potential issue for all things at the water treatment plant.

[00:37:59] So we've outlined a lot of things that we're working on, and those are to optimize the plant, but also build in further resiliency beyond that what was minimally required for the correction action for the water treatment plant for the January 6th event. So as it stands right now, what we're getting from you guys is that you guys don't feel that there's a risk of failure at the water treatment plant at this time.

[00:38:23] So I'm going to have to address your question with if you're telling me that all risk is eliminated, you can never eliminate all risks. So what we're doing right now is looking at our conditions and seeing where we can further enhance that resiliency and then build in that additional resiliency. You can probably ask Director Chan over there about his water treatment plant.

[00:38:39] I can vehemently attest to, he'll say that there is not 100% protection against this facility for no interruption of service. He probably would, actually. No, I don't get it. So as far as these projects that are listed, is there a priority to, so based on what you're saying there, these enhancements that are being listed here are not considered to be critical to be completed immediately?

[00:39:07] So we've prioritized those based off of adding an additional resiliency to the water treatment plan. One of the filter upgrade projects is also in response to the consent order. We entered in a consent order of VDH. So that's an aspect of that consent order that we're reporting onto to enhance it further.

[00:39:24] So when you say priority or critical, you've got to be careful in that terminology, but I do believe those enhancements are critical, otherwise we would not be doing them. And I get it, and I'm just - I mean, we're talking in a lot of big words here. I think folks just want to know, is it going to break again? And so just looking through here at what is in the design phase versus what is actually being done, I think it's promising, but it doesn't necessarily, in my mind, answer the question of when is the treatment plant going to

[00:39:59] be in a state where it's not just kind of getting by, but is more optimally ready? And I don't know that the information presented really answers that question. Yeah, so based off, you know, standard engineering practices, the design can take anywhere between six and 12 months.

[00:40:19] And the construction, depending on how you phase it in, can take you from one to two years. So you have to be predicated off that understanding to understand, you know, the timing associated with all these. And you also have to understand that you can't do all CIP projects at the exact same time. So this is a phasing component of this.

[00:40:35] So we've structured this up to stand over, just like I presented on the 10-year plan, addressing the most critical needs first and then building up resiliency and robustness as time progresses. So you see year one, year two, year three, which will be 2025, 2026, 2027, and hopefully in 2028, building up that additional layer of resiliency, which kind of outlines all those projects in that presentation.

[00:40:56] So would it be fair that this is also partly a funding issue as far as the timing of it? There's always a funding constraint you have to consider in figuring out how you can address both the affordability rates but also getting your CIP projects done in a timely manner. One of the things we've initiated now is not only looking at the five-year CIP but a ten-year CIP to make a more robust training exercise and evaluation to make sure that we can increase the rates as slowly as possible to meet the funding needs that we have.

[00:41:23] Is there anything that is currently in existence or being proposed, for that matter, that guarantees that funds that are received pursuant to these contracts go directly into the improvement and maintenance of the water facility what do you mean by that ma'am meaning the the funds that are coming in from the contracts are helping to maintain the facility yeah so all the contracts that award are associated with the cip program to make sure those are done we have also gone through and had a discussion with our procurement team to make sure they have the additional resources to provide the support to execute these contracts in a timely manner we've just gone through and added two additional funding

[00:42:00] positions to procurement, and that aids in the capacity of them to make sure that these projects get through actual award contracts, but then also get to execution. So, to take away that, as far as what's been listed on this presentation, I'm sorry.

[00:42:16] Yeah. If you would finish that question, and then I want to make sure that if there are others, we get to them as well. And then I'll come back to you. No, please finish the last. That what's been presented as far as work to be done, that the city is comfortable, that there is funding for it the budget gets afforded or approved on an annual basis and so it's predicated off of every year going through a rate model evaluation to see what additional funds may or may not be needed based off priorities of projects that get added to it or repriorization of the time frame associated with that but that has to happen on an annual basis and has to go through City Council and so I've gotten general support from City Council to make

[00:42:54] sure that we can fund these critical projects but again we're going to have to go through the rate model analysis and see what that actually ends and I I can't tell you right now based off of re-changing or re-prioritization of projects what that rate would be until we do that rate model input. That's similar to how Director Chan does his operations as well.

[00:43:11] I'll yield to a colleague. Mr. Vice Chair, just a couple of questions just kind of on the rates, but your 10-year plan, first of all, you've done an amazing job, I think, of getting at least a plan up to presenting to us.

[00:43:26] I thought it was excellent. The 10-year plan, that cost is roughly. So we haven't gone through and expanded out the 10-year plan. We've gone through the five-year plan that was recently presented to the City Council. And that plan had a lot of costs associated with roughly \$250 million in that five-year on the existing plan.

[00:43:46] When you go through and add these additional enhancements, you can go through and look at all the additional condition assessments, all the reports have been generated, varying degree of what those actual costs associated would be. But you can look at each report, and they looked at potentially, I think, just shy or just over \$60 million in some additional investments they thought would be needed.

[00:44:07] But again, some of those were already incorporated into the CIP program, and so not all of that cost would be associated with that. And again, that's only based off of critical needs, not added resiliency or redundancy associated with the system. So until we go through that rate model input and then adjustment in our master plan, which is scheduled for January 2026, then I give you that holistic viewpoint of all the costs associated with that.

[00:44:30] And just one follow-up question, Mr. Vice Chair, the rate increase, we learned, again, some of us are pretty new on the board, so we're learning a lot about the water and the rates, et cetera, but we learned last year, this year, in Henrico, we've increased them about 5% a year for the past 20 years. A couple years have been a little lower, but basically almost 5% a year.

[00:44:53] And I guess my question, is that similar? And, Rich, I'm not asking you to go back too far, but is that a similar to the expectation? - Yeah, it's relatively similar. Last year, and then we run four different utilities, some enterprise funds, and so there's a degree of variability in each one of those enterprise funds, but last year, it was anywhere between like five and 6% rate increase across all the utilities, except for Stormwater, which had a little bit more of a jump, but consistently, you're looking at historically anywhere between three and about 6%, so on average, probably on par.

[00:45:23] - Similar, thank you. - Reverend Nelson. I'm going to ask Mr. Chan, Mr. Vice Chair, I want to know more about the DPU directors' meetings. I don't want to make it seem like we're grilling you, but that's why we're here.

[00:45:41] So I can ask him if you don't want to answer the question. I just want to know more about the DPU director quarterly meetings. I've not heard of those before this year. So is that something that we've been doing? I just haven't heard of them before. Yeah, Billy Moral could join me, but that was something that was established a long time ago, And that intention behind that was to have routine meetings with both the Chesterfield, Hanover, and Henrico City of Richmond to address any type of concerns that may be imminent and make sure we have that ongoing discussion, mostly to resolve any kind of issues before they become present.

[00:46:15] My predecessor had those routine meetings with Director Chan, and prior to her, I met the Utility Director as well. But you're more than welcome to join in that discussion. Is that you comfortable with that answer? It is. Come to the mic, Bentley. Yes, sir, it is.

[00:46:33] And with Director Morris in his seat, those meetings have been more frequent, and there has been more frequent communication both by kind of on all channels, phone, email, whatnot. I think I call them every week at least one time or twice.

[00:46:53] So what do you guys talk about? I'm just curious. Some of it I probably can't do in a public forum because it does talk about critical infrastructure. But, yes, we talk about the needs of the utilities. Some of those, we've had recent conversations on staffing constraints. Solve a major issue with us, basically making sure that we have staff available to man our plant operations.

[00:47:13] The failure rate right now for plant operators is very high when they've got to go through the licensure process. So that's not only a regional concern, but also a national concern as well and statewide concern. So just talking about how we can satiate that in the event that one of us needs an operator, those type of discussions.

[00:47:29] So you guys talk about shared personnel? We talk about anything and everything. Shared personnel, operational issues, budget constraints. I've even talked to him about ongoing projects to get their input on just concepts. And then he tells me about things that are working in his AMR system.

[00:47:46] I tell him how things are working in my AMR. And then we just collectively talk and discuss and see if we can make improvements in both systems. Okay. All right. Respectfully, I think, well, I'll hold my comments. I don't want to, I'm trying to get used to how we do things.

[00:48:01] And him, Michael, we just talk until we're done. But if we have a time, I'll just wait until I can talk again. Well, I'm wanting to be vigilant because we have a time constraint in terms of the meeting. You had a hard stop, and I want to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to ask questions and then come back around to next steps, which I'm going to punt to our mayor in a bit.

[00:48:23] But Council Member Gibson? Before you all, can I ask a question? Because I'm going to ask a question, too. Can I just ask a question? This might be for you, Madam Chair or the Mayor. I know that you all had a modernization meeting, I believe it was, on May 30th, I believe, and I know there were some CIP issues on it.

[00:48:42] Are those CIP issues funded? Is there a funding source already allocated? Because you broke it down into two things. You broke it down into critical and resiliency resistance. I'm just trying to go back. Yeah, when we go through that assessment, we go through and look at both the ones that were approved by the budget but also potential upcoming future projects.

[00:49:00] When we go through our rate model, we do that roughly like August, September. That gets us our new output and when we start incorporating our budget in place. And so some of that's a viewport into the future needs. And so not all of them are currently funded, but some of them are, and it goes over the process, both the status but also any changes.

[00:49:20] When you look at capital improvements and joint costs, there's an aspect on there you have to make sure that everybody's familiar with and understands the portion of the cost that's going to be incurred when they do their rate model input. And so the real intention behind that meeting is twofold. One, to go over the CIP to make sure everybody's cognizant of all the capital projects that could come into play, but then also allow each of the members to see what that impact would be to their rates so they can incorporate that into their own model.

[00:49:45] Thank you. Council Member Gibson. Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to meet with everyone. Many new faces for me. I'm also new on the body and to talk about how we can best serve the needs of residents in the greater Richmond region. Without question, the incidents that brought us here I think are a result of systemic problems that are decades in the making. And I think that coming together

to discuss them is a critical step forward because these are issues that we cannot allow to repeat, especially now. You all may not

[00:50:22] know me, but I'm not one to avoid the elephant in the room. So I'm going to talk about data centers. One stat I've read more than once is that a simple AI prompt, which generates a 100-word response, consumes a whole bottle of water.

[00:50:41] The impact of these data centers on our water usage is mind-blowing. And as public bodies, I think we have a responsibility to ensure that our residents are not shouldering the burden of the cost, both financial and environmental. I promise you I'm not being a tree hugger here.

[00:50:59] environmental issues are near and dear to me, but the reality is that right now there are headlines in Texas about a looming water shortage in just five years. And there are a number of reasons for that, but the number of data centers there is one of them. And the surge in data centers that's happening in Texas, it's happening in Virginia too. I just read an article published by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute, this came out last week, that highlighted that

[00:51:30] in 2023, data centers in Loudoun County used 900 million gallons of water. In Northern Virginia, it was 2 billion gallons. This is a 63% increase from 2019. So given the reality of this, I personally think we'd be sitting here together talking about this regardless of the water shortage that we had or the water outage that we've had this year. So I really appreciate as you know the words of Council President Newbill who spoke that yes as a body we were going to come

[00:52:10] back we're going to talk more about this because there's a lot to talk about and so I just want to highlight some things that I think as a body and hopefully as a region we'll be talking about together. One, it's important, given that reality, that we have a breakdown that Richmonders can see about where our water projections, what our broader projections are, and what's driving them.

[00:52:34] We aren't building data centers in Richmond like we're seeing in surrounding counties, including Henrico, but I want to make sure that Richmonders and residents in the greater region aren't shouldering the costs of that through rate increases. Similarly, in Richmond, we need to identify infrastructure investments that are going to be required as a result of all the changes we're making in density. This is key as we're looking at our zoning maps on a broad scale.

[00:53:00] I think there needs to be a third-party assessment on our collective infrastructures. You know, we have a 100-year-old water treatment plant in Richmond that will need investment. But look, when I watch the news, it's clear that there are decade-old pipes and water mains that breaking in Henrico too. Another third-party analysis I think we need is an assessment of equity in the system that we have to ensure that everyone, every neighborhood has access to clean water, but also that there is an assessment of our shared responsibilities. One thing that has,

[00:53:36] and I'm a bit disappointed, it didn't come up in the discussion today. I read the Virginia Department of Health memo regarding the May boil water advisory, which impacted every resident in my district. And the report noted that after the city's request was made to our county partners to cut and reduce water usage, the water intake increased at a RICO water pressure control station on the morning of the May boil advisory incident. And look, no one is perfect. We're

[00:54:11] human. But as we look to improve collectively, we need an honest documentation of what brought us here. We need to also consider the impact of workers at the plants. These workers are all of our

residents, and we've been doing important work in Richmond to ensure that our workers are earning a living wage, and I don't think we can, in good conscience, shift our workers to localities that pay less. Tomorrow, as it turns out, is the first day of our laborer's contract under collective bargaining. Also, if there are changes that happen as a result of this that requires a potential

[00:54:49] reduction in force, perhaps we find some redundancies. This is critical for us to understand sooner rather than later as we're making these decisions. Also, I would love to see our discussion of a regional partnership extend to the combined sewage overflow. I believe our sewage system also serves parts of Enrico, and there's a history of issues on both sides, so I think there's a shared responsibility to address it. And finally, I want to emphasize a need for transparency. This means key decisions like adopting the resolutions for creating this advisory commission that we're talking about and down to that final MOU come to each of our bodies

[00:55:29] for a vote. Each of our respective bodies must have, I believe, more public discussions on how the advisory and the MOU is structured and defined. And this allows our residents to have a voice in a decision that impacts them in a very direct way.

[00:55:47] So thank you for allowing me to share that. And then ultimately, I really just have one question, which is to get to hear a little bit more about the water usage on the morning of the May incident to understand what are the findings that Henrico's had to date in exploring that.

[00:56:13] Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Director Morris and I have spoken about the events that occurred that Monday morning and the subsequent events that occurred during the day. And what we can find is, yes, there was an increase of water pulled into Hemrico.

[00:56:31] And as best as we can tell, it looks to be a miscommunication between our respective staffs on what exactly needed to be done in both systems. Thank you.

[00:56:48] other questions i i did want to ask um to councilmember gibson's point um director chan and your um water production demands the current demands versus future demands do those future demands um just account for population growth or do they also account for the um onboarding of data centers in Henrico County? So not specifically data centers but our our facilities plan as as

[00:57:24] you may recall we talked about close coordination with the department of planning's land use and so if if a piece of land is designated residential there is a kind of gallons per day allotment that is needed to serve that property and so the two things population growth as well as land use that is projected in in 2055 not necessarily a specific industry. So am I to understand that this is sort

[00:57:59] of a moving target then based on future land use and rezoning? Yes ma'am so it is the it's the best information that we have today and knowing that this is going to be a living document just like facilities planning in Richmond as things change as things come about like a like the model is rerun and we figure out what is necessary to meet those needs as as they come about but that

[00:58:33] that could require additional demand on the Richmond system based on your maximum allotment MGDs per day from Richmond, correct? So currently our contract with the City of Richmond runs through 2040, and beyond that there needs to be discussion on what happens, but the contract limits us to 35 million gallons per day and so far that is uh that is the allotment that we're taking from the city of richmond thank you thank you madam check i just interject real quick um so for us on our side you know

[00:59:10] it wasn't an issue of not having access to source demand but it's access so can you speak to real quick the usage of the semiconductor plant that was there compared to data centers there now Oh, yes, sir. So White Oak Semiconductor that was slated to open in the 90s had a, I believe it was around 20 to 30 mgd allotment of water, and today it's like a third of that.

[00:59:40] And so there is additional supply allocated for that area. Where Henrico has a challenge, and we found that out during the January event, is moving additional water from the western part of the county to the eastern part of the county.

[01:00:02] Just for clarity, there is an obligation in the contract for them to give us updated 10-year projections on the average use and peak date. so every year I'm here I go County submits to city Richmond updated revised projection for the next 10-year interval their contract doesn't have any additional capacity adders to it so if we were to go through and modify their existing contract that would have to go forward both boards and City Council to get that approved thank you at this point we seem to have addressed at least for the moment questions we know that they'll be deep dive as the work

[01:00:42] continues in whatever the forms it takes in terms of further collaboration, all of these kinds of items will be addressed. And so what I'd like to do now is point to you, I'd like to say thank you, Director Morris, thank you, Director Chan, and I'd like to point and point to the mayor for next discussion and next steps.

[01:01:07] This doesn't work. Thank you, President Newbill. We have about 30 minutes, and so I'd love to just turn it back to you all for comments because I think, as I stated in my opening statement, you know, one of the things I'd love to come out of this meeting is a sentiment around, you know, how do we pursue the next steps?

[01:01:31] And, you know, the idea that I put forward is for us to have a regional water advisory group where we have representation from all four counties and expertise from utility experts, elected representation, and administrative leadership representation.

[01:01:49] But that's a starting point. So open to whatever direction you all can give. I do think, yeah, we need to have some group of people who is putting pen to paper and looking at the financial complexities and then looking longer term at the engineering fees in terms of creating a more redundant system.

[01:02:12] But I think my hope for today is that this discussion is happening and that there's a sense of, yes, let's take a step forward in pursuing a regional cooperation, understanding that the devil's in the details, and we've got to work out those details and present them to city council.

[01:02:31] Thank you, Mayor. I'd just like to, again, express what I also shared in opening remarks, that the body is opening, is certainly open to looking at what's been attached in terms of documentation, the concept paper for an authority there was a draft MOU and other documentation in the context of a meeting that will be held on the 7th so that the body can have opportunity to certainly hear the comments here but do a deeper dive both

[01:03:08] in terms of that as well as other components that they're like to be consideration in terms of a forward collaboration so I think sentiment for but there must be opportunity for the body to go back to the table.

[01:03:24] And we will do that starting on the 7th. And like I said, the concept paper that's included here is certainly a place we will start. The comments that have been shared, feedback that everybody's been receiving will be taken into consideration, and then forthcoming in terms of, you know, what that looks like from Council's perspective.

[01:03:49] But, you know, I think that as Vice Chair Cooper shared, there are any number of examples of successful collaborative opportunities that we've been a part of, whether it's CVTA or GRTC or any of them, and so that we have actively engaged in and been a part of.

[01:04:18] So we're not shy on collaborative partnerships at all, but do want to do a deeper dive and more extensive conversation. Is there any more direction you all can give me and our team as we're thinking about how to, yeah, what next steps to take with the Water Advisory Group?

[01:04:40] Okay, so once the body has the meeting, it will come back with next steps and recommendations regarding a water advisory group, regarding what it sees as a path forward, et cetera, et cetera.

[01:05:07] Okay. I don't want to overlook Council Member Robertson. Thank you. I have a question, Councilman. She has a question, I have a question. Okay, Councilwoman Jones.

[01:05:23] Thank you. I was just wanting to know a little bit more about, you mentioned the advisory group. So is this group already established? No. So what I recommend as a next step is, because you all ultimately are going to need to make a decision on are we taking a step forward in regional cooperation or not.

[01:05:44] If I were in your seats, it would be hard to take that step without, like, an actual proposal that is looking at, you know, what are we talking about in terms of financial investment? What are we talking about in terms of shared decision making? What are we talking about in terms of, you know, what opportunity do regional partners have to help prioritize capital investments, as one example?

[01:06:06] And so my recommendation is that we have a group of regional experts that comes together as an advisory group. And actually does some of that work, actually puts together a proposal where we say, okay, this is how much investment we need in the water treatment plant moving forward and the whole water distribution system moving forward.

[01:06:26] And this is how that investment would come about, you know, some regional investment, some state investment. And as I've shared with most of you, you know, my interest is making sure that we have a safe, resilient, redundant water source for the whole region and that we're protecting the rate payers in the process.

[01:06:44] And the more collective investment goes into that, the more state investment goes into that, I think that's our best shot of being able to do both of those things effectively. And so is that any different than what Director Morris and Director Chang, is that how you say it? I'm sorry.

[01:07:00] Chan. Chan. They're already doing? Is there a reason why we need to put another body together when they specifically said that that's kind of what they're doing now? So I'm just trying to get an understanding on if that is already happening and we can then pull from that information and that feedback.

[01:07:17] What is the need for an additional body? Because that's what it sounds like we are adding. Yeah. If Scott and Bentley want to answer it. but my answer to that question is that they currently meet to talk about operational issues and then to talk about, you know, things in the context of our existing contractual agreements, right?

[01:07:37] And, you know, Henrico will continue on that track till 2040. Chesterfield and Hanover are the same. At some point, like at this point, I think there is the opportunity to rethink both that contractual arrangement, right?

[01:07:55] Like, if Henrico is going to continue to invest in their system as their population grows, as they build that system, does it make more sense to co-invest in a water treatment plant? And does that serve the region better? We have an opportunity, you know, to go to the state for money and see if the state will help support investment in this water treatment plant.

[01:08:19] And ultimately, again, that protects the ratepayers and accelerates our path to modernization. So I think this is a great opportunity for us to come together and to say, are we building a better system by investing together in that system, or do we continue with things the way they are?

[01:08:40] Thank you. Councilwoman Robertson. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. And greetings, our dear friends, and there I go. One thing I do want to make sure that we resolve, I want to make sure that we answer the question as it relates to the capacity of Richmond to continue to provide our contract obligation.

[01:09:17] Our plant, and from my understanding, and we can have folks to address that, there is no reason for you to be concerned that our plant is not capable of providing a contract obligation that we have, and even above the capacity that we are committed to.

[01:09:42] And we do not feel that there is reason for us to be concerned that we cannot. And we are not hopping along, you know, scared we're going to break down every day. That's not the condition that this plan is in.

[01:09:58] We wouldn't want that for our own citizens in the city of Richmond. And we certainly would not have partnership contracts with others with a system that we felt was subject to that kind of breakdown. So I want to relieve any concern that we have an immediate situation that we need to be fearful day by day that that's the condition of this plant.

[01:10:26] That's not the case. Those emergency situations that caused the problem that we dealt with has been corrected, and we do not feel that that's an issue. What we have presented to you is an ongoing, regular, routine plan of maintaining the same quality of service delivery that we have currently have provided you.

[01:10:56] This has not been something that, you know, this is, you know, January was horrible. It's horrible for all of us. We've learned as everyone else has learned. We've taken actions to correct that so that that is not something that I have to go to bed at night, not being able to sleep about.

[01:11:16] And we will not allow any contract that we have with you that were pending upon us to fulfill our obligation to not be addressed. So I want to put that at rest. I also want to say that, you know, I'm very impressed with the partnership that we have.

[01:11:38] I'm very impressed with the years of partnership that we've had. I'm very impressed that we still have a contract that is 15 years out. I'm also very impressed that we do enough projected planning, and we are required to do that on a regular basis as to what is the future needs that we need.

[01:12:00] You all have put out your future growth, but what I'm understanding from our professional staff is that they're looking at this on an annual basis, and they're making preparations to be responsive to that. I was very glad to see Henrico recognizing the necessity of the abundance of water that you have in the western part of your county.

[01:12:28] That is a capacity there that with the right type of infrastructure, we can take care of the eastern part as well, if we need it, if we need it. So there is no shortage of water. I mean, this conversation about not having water or shortage of water, we're fortunate in this state and in this metropolitan area that that is not an issue.

[01:12:51] We're going to run out of water or we'll have a shortage of water. We also have a system that's been in place for years that have proven that we can deliver greater than our use and greater than our capacity and that we have sufficient reservoir and storage tanks to help us in cases that if such a need is necessary.

[01:13:15] I think the collaboration that we're speaking about in this room has been an excellent collaboration. And it's been a long-term collaboration. It's been in place for quite some time. And I think that we are looking at ways to strengthen that collaboration.

[01:13:34] We have our experts. You know, we are really happy to have Mr. Marsh on our team. And we are very pleased with the work that he's doing and the forward planning and the master plan. And I'm very pleased with hearing the collaborative spirit that they have, that they're working together.

[01:13:54] I think there is an outline, a laid out outline of projects and strategies to move forward. And at this present time, as our chair has said, this council is ready and willing to look at other collaborative strengthening methods.

[01:14:15] And we should personally, I want to invite all of our folk that purchase waters from us when we talk regional that I want it to be Henrico, Chesterfield and Hanover that we're talking to so that we're not leaving something out that should be critically taken in consideration.

[01:14:32] And I'm hoping that directors of our departments are having those conversations with Chesterfield and Hanover directors as we are here in this room today. And they're nodding their heads. Yes. I'd like to give ourselves an opportunity to continue the collaboration, be obligated to our contract, meet our contract goals, have quarterly reviews, meetings, whatever, to make sure that nothing is not happening that should be happening.

[01:15:05] and give more time for us to really consider an advisory board for what reason, why, and how it will add more value. At the present time, I think there's a lot more dialogue that needs to be done from that perspective.

[01:15:23] And we have not done that, but I welcome the opportunity to do that. And I also think, like we've done in other cases where we've done extended regional agreements, that each elected body should do a memorandum of agreement or legislation so that we spell out all of the terms as a part of that process.

[01:15:47] But we're not there today. And so we're looking forward to the opportunity of having a lot more detailed discussion so that we're taking everything into advisement as we do that. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mrs. Chair. Thank you. out at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to yield to my colleagues if you have some closing remarks. Starting with you, Mr. Rogerson, come on down. Well, I'll, I'll, I'll, I'll get, you want to start, ma'am? You're saying this. So, so I guess the only thing, um, for a closing

[01:16:26] remark, I'll say this, that I'm not so sure, again, newly elected myself, I, I will be the first to admit I did not understand the complexity of the Richmond slash Henrico water system when I ran for office. And I learned a lot over the past year and a half. I'm not so sure we would be at this table if it weren't for the four issues in the last six months, but maybe we would be. But that's why we ran for office, or at least that's why I did, in terms of responding to constituents.

[01:16:56] You know, we're here, I'm here, because we have, our constituents are nervous, right? And I appreciate what was just said but there were a few failures in the last six months and we want to respond to them and say what can we do for them and one of the things I would ask is and whether it's mr. Morris or mr. mayor what can we do as Henrico County can we help in what way and if we're not there yet on the on the advisory group that's that's fine but I just know that if there's something else we can do from Henrico side to help I want to I want to be

[01:17:32] responding to my constituents to say, and just like you do, we all want to make sure that everybody has clean, safe water. It's probably one of the most important things that we do in government, at least local government. So if that's where we are, that's fine. I think that long-term planning, we care, we have to do what the long-term planning is. And, you know, it seems like we have plenty of water. We know how much we can pull from the James River. We know how much you can pull from the James River, we have enough water to service our customers near and far. So if we're not there on the advisory group, then that's fine. But that's my statement. Thank you, Mr. Rogers.

[01:18:09] Reverend Nelson. Good evening again. I got some comments. And I'll start off by, you know, I wrote myself a note and said, what's happening here? I don't really know why I'm here now. So So let me start back with Councilwoman Robertson and then Councilwoman Gibson.

[01:18:37] Councilwoman Robertson and I work on a whole lot of regional bodies and working together. The first time that I've heard that the water treatment plant was good was today. Listening to Mr. Morris pretty much tell us that most of the project moving along, 75%, 100% complete.

[01:19:02] Um, and then you say it, you know, flat footed that we shouldn't worry about the water treatment plant anymore. Um, that's good. We don't want to worry about the water treatment plant. That's why we're here. So we're here because we want to make sure, um, that we don't have to go without water again. So, um, you know, respectfully, councilwoman Gibson, I don't know you first time we have been the same room talking like this that i know of you you were talking about data centers respectfully

[01:19:39] that's the future water usage data centers that had nothing to do with january 6 and the preceding five or six days that our people across the region didn't have water in my district 65 000 plus people unless you had well water you didn't have water just like many in the city. So I know there's some in the city who didn't lose water. From that event that all of us were involved in, just like you guys were involved in, from me personally, not having

[01:20:14] water, calling the manager, and getting phone calls, just the same way you guys, getting text messages all day, running around, dropping off water, setting up events. We went through that. I did. He did with our constituents, just like you guys did. We don't want to go through that again.

[01:20:32] So we watch the news and we're not at the table like you guys are. You, you know, you guys know stuff that we don't know about your water treatment plant. All we know is we pay \$20 million, \$14 million, how much we pay?

[01:20:50] \$13, \$14 million a month, a year. We're customers. And if this was our water treatment plant and you were getting water from us, you would have questions just like we would. And so we have questions.

[01:21:06] We don't have access to Mr. Morris. We don't have access to the mayor or the staff. And we've been hearing a whole lot. We just thought that it'd be best that we have a public conversation. And really what we're saying is we don't want authority.

[01:21:23] None of us up here really want authority. Really what we're saying is, and Michael is saying, what can we do to be of assistance? Now, I'm hearing Councilwoman Robinson saying, we really don't need your assistance. I get it, respectfully. I know you didn't say that, but that's the way it felt. Like, like, you know, and that's fine. If you're good, great. We're not trying to impose anything. We really are coming as neighbors saying if we got staff people, we don't want your staff people. We will send people. What we're saying is we have people with expertise that will come to the water treatment plant and help out that may save some dollars.

[01:22:01] If there is a commission to study, you know, we're different localities, so we do things differently. We don't really do a whole lot of studying that takes a long time. But if it's going to take a year and we work on stuff, we'll send people to the table.

[01:22:19] But I don't want you guys, and hopefully I speak for my colleagues. I might not be. I might be speaking for myself. I don't want you guys to think that we're trying to force anything on you. We're not trying to in any way say that Richmond can't take care of its own water treatment plant.

[01:22:35] What we are saying is we buy water from you. And our people, respectfully, respectfully, y'all don't represent them. We do. And we're on the outside. And so the only thing, the word that I have to go on now is, Councilwoman Ellen Robertson said, we were, no, y'all laughing, but I'm serious.

[01:22:58] That's what I'm going to say. Councilwoman Robertson said, it's all good. The water treatment plant is fine. Morris stood up, gave us this great presentation about all the projects. So, okay, I can sleep at night because you guys are saying that we're good. All we, me personally, I just want to tell you, we wanted to work to try to help whatever, whatever we can do, whether it's brain, hands, et cetera.

[01:23:26] That's why we were here. But I don't want you to think that we're trying to force anything on you. So that's my two cents. Thank you, Reverend. Nelson, Ms. Roundtree. Yeah, and I think we're on the same page with that. I mean, to be candid, I said to whoever asked that my expectations going into this meeting weren't really to walk out with something decided.

[01:23:52] It was partly to me a vibe check, and I apologize for my colloquialism, because this is the first time I've met some of y'all, certainly the first time we've had a discussion. So, you know, we met with

Hanover earlier this month, and that was great, But I think the vast majority of people are like, well, what is Richmond talking about?

[01:24:09] What are we doing as the largest water consumer? And Richmond, as Reverend Nelson said at the last meeting, you all have the asset. And, you know, after everything went haywire in January, and I say this, I realize I have the luxury of sitting in Three Chopped, right? So I have the water treatment plant facility is in the West End.

[01:24:28] But we are one Henrico. And so we continued to hear from folks, one, how did y'all, us, not know that this was the state of things there? How could y'all let this happen? How have y'all been in this contract for decades and y'all didn't know that something like this was likely to happen?

[01:24:46] How did it happen? And then the second follow-up question was, and what are y'all doing to make sure this doesn't happen again? And candidly, I don't think our residents really care whether it's this collaborative effort or whether, you know, they, I mean, lay people, me included, before all of this crash course, you know, have very little understanding of how all of this works.

[01:25:07] All people want to know is when I turn on my spigot, is water going to come out, right? So we are confronted with, realistically, what path, and we want to lean into this collaborative effort. We really want to. I'll be quiet. I don't dodge elephants in the room either, Councilwoman Gibson. I was a little disheartened because as we try to have this discussion, and I say all the time it feels like Wonder Woman dodging attacks all of the time, even in our discussion about infrastructure improvements with water, we get accused of, well, this is only for data centers. Y'all aren't trying to build infrastructure because you care about people. It's all for the data centers, and nothing

[01:25:45] could be further from the truth about that so i we all participate you know we we are tuned in and dialed in and that's why we changed the ordinance here recently because we wanted to restrict data centers on our locality but we have to be so careful and so cautious not to conflate the two discussions because they really are separate where i sit right now as we take some time because this is going to take some time and i respect the thoughtfulness that that went into these plans being put forward together by richmond staff and the mayor's office and what have you but for some immediacy and and there's something i don't know if it's 100 accurate i didn't hear

[01:26:22] this directly from the source but one thing that i was told was that at some point our boots on the ground in the treatment plant were were asked to leave right and i know when the when the the situation was unfolding that was one thing i kept coming back to with my constituents was we have eyes on it we have boots on the ground nothing is going to happen in that plant that should be concerning to you without us knowing about it contemporaneously and my understanding is that that is no longer the case and when i look at the water contract from 94 you all wrote that into to this contract not you all i didn't mean to be accusatory there but it says the city shall

[01:26:59] have the right to inspect all work done in connection with the with the construction maintenance repair and operation of the water facilities constructed by the county so it was written into this contract even to this day because candidly maintenance repair and operation is ongoing to this day it is written into this contract that y'all can have folks boots on the ground in our facilities to see what we're doing we would welcome that we have a beautiful water facility in the three plant but we don't have that same and so as a gesture of good faith i would think that that would be a great starting point which is to

say i know we would all like to be able to say that we have county folks in that treatment facility knowing and seeing what's

[01:27:38] going on on a day-to-day basis and that's i think partly alludes to what reverend nelson was saying is we have the expertise we have staff we have people that are eager and happy to go in there to truly embrace the spirit of collaboration so i am all for having ongoing discussions the timeline worries me a little bit just because i know that talking takes a long time and our folks want to see definitive action sooner rather than later and that's why I harped so much on the deadlines or the non deadlines that were in the presentation because that those are the questions we're gonna get when is something going to be happening when is something going to be changing so in the

[01:28:14] meantime that would be something that I would love to see as a just as even as a starting point but other than that thank you for the for the collaborative effort I look forward to seeing what comes so I just want to say I echo my colleagues so Reverend Nelson myself are the eastern part of the county and for us it was not a water shortage it was not a capacity issue our average consumption is 12.43 gallons a day max is 35 doesn't matter if it's 35 we can't get water so my job is ensure that my residents going forward this doesn't

[01:28:52] happen again because quite frankly a lot of our residents didn't know that we are under contract agreement to purchase water from Richmond and we are we got to that in 1994 doesn't expire to 2040 the manager will tell you and i brought it up publicly uh two weeks ago we won best tasting water in the country henrico and i sent him a message saying uh please don't put that out yet because i've got some residents who might just say well my water doesn't come from henrico so the goal for all of us should be making sure that regardless of where you live in this region that everybody's getting the same quality water whether it be residents our businesses and I believe we can work toward that.

[01:29:29] None of us can change the past. The infrastructure issues, the deficiencies of the plant, the lack of money that is affordable, available to put it, we can't change any of that. But what we can do is make sure that the path forward is what we concern ourselves with and focus on. And so I promise my residents, almost 70,000 of them, that I will make sure that this will never happen again.

[01:29:50] And I'm going to work diligently with my colleagues to make sure it doesn't happen. Madam President, thank you for Madam Chairman. Thank you. I want to say thank you to certainly our Enrico Board of Supervisors, members, staff, and certainly my colleagues.

[01:30:05] I want to say unequivocally, the City Council is committed to the same level of service that everyone should expect. Extraordinary, strong, sustainable service, period in the paragraph, without a doubt.

[01:30:22] And we are committed to making sure that that happens for Richmonders as well as our partners in this effort, bar none. We have staff who've been brought on who are extraordinary.

[01:30:39] He didn't have the 46-slide presentation that talks about all that we've been looking at in date and time. But this is not a minor matter for us. This is a serious matter. Health, safety, well-being, Richmond, Henrico, Hanover, Chesterfield, and others around.

[01:30:59] We are committed to this and committed to working collaboratively, as has been demonstrated in other scenarios. We are also committed to making sure we do due diligence in terms of ascertaining what that will look like, whether that's staffing, whether that's advisory, whatever.

[01:31:17] It can take any number of forms. But we are committed to making sure that that quality is provided across the region, period. And we are getting to the table to further vet, certainly, some of what we've heard today, information we've received, information we've received in the intervening period, to begin to articulate back, so what does that look like, short-term, intermediate, long-term, and to have a sense of urgency in that commitment and articulation.

[01:31:56] So, again, I want to be clear, we are in every single member here, and we look at you as partners, as you have been for the years. I mean, this isn't, we're partners in this, and how we move forward becomes even more critical in making sure we don't have repeat circumstances is that none of us want to have our citizenry have any concerns about.

[01:32:26] So we will get back to you, Mr. Mayor. I'm not sure if there's – I can't see. I'm sorry. Okay. So I will take – excuse me, the mayor will take – I will punt to the mayor will take and be responsible for communication back.

[01:32:47] But we will come to the table and come to the table with urgency, with you, our partners, as well as the others. But we are, as I said, unequivocally committed to ensuring the best quality water service for all, not just for some, for all.

[01:33:07] So thank you. All right. Thanks, everyone. Thanks for coming, and have a good evening. Okay. With that, the meeting, special meeting of the Richmond City Council is now adjourned. Thank you Mayor Vula and President Newbill and the honorable members of City Council for hosting Enrico this afternoon and our meeting is over as well.



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