

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 5

David W. Baird

*Islamorada Village Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

DAVID W. BAIRD

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April 7, 2021

Mr. Colin Baenziger
Mr. Steve Sorrell
Colin Baenziger & Associates
2055 South Atlantic Avenue, Suite 504
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118

RE: Village Manager—Islamorada, Village of Islands, FL

Dear Mr. Baenziger and Mr. Sorrell:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to submit the accompanying resume in reference to the Department's current recruitment for the position of Village Manager, Islamorada, Village of Islands, FL.

As a native and life-long resident of the Delmarva Peninsula, I am very familiar with both the opportunities and challenges facing coastal communities that strive to preserve their unique rural heritage while meeting the modern day demands of its numerous residents and visitors. As District Coordinator for the Sussex Conservation District, City Manager of Milford, Delaware and Town Manager of Georgetown, Delaware, I have worked on a daily basis with public and private stakeholders to address the impacts residential and commercial development, rigid federal and state regulations, a growing population, and the increased public demand for the conservation of land and water resources, to name a few, has on a coastal community.

My background has provided me with many opportunities to utilize my strong interpersonal skills and my working knowledge of the policies and practices of government at the local, state, and federal levels. Throughout my work experience, I have successfully performed in both an individual and group capacity that has resulted in positive outcomes. Additionally, I possess strong supervisory skills both in and out of the office environment and I take great pride in my strategic planning, analytical, organizational and problem solving abilities. My leadership and professional abilities have been instrumental components in restoring respect and bringing new levels professionalism to the organizations I have served.

My career in local government management has afforded me the ability to develop a strong knowledge base by working intimately with all levels of government and organizations that represent diverse populations and interests. My strategic thinking and collaborative leadership skills have been influential in bringing both short and long-term success to organizations through a thorough understanding of Successful Management, Staff, Intergovernmental and Community Relationships; Strategic and Comprehensive Planning; Emergency Management; Public Utilities (Water, Sewer, Electric and Stormwater); Public Relations; Large and Small Scale Project Management; Infrastructure Planning (streets, drainage, utilities, stormwater, parks, facilities, etc.); Effective Use and Management of Personnel Resources; Efficient and Less Bureaucratic

Section 5

Colin Baenziger & Associates

April 7, 2021

RE: Village Manager—Islamorada, Village of Islands, FL

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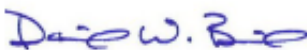
Operations of all Local Government Operations; and Strong Financial Management. This experience, along with my personal and professional relationships, allows me to be confident I can create a collaborative environment with the Management, Staff and the Community that will foster further success for Islamorada, Village of Islands in serving its mission.

Many of my successful efforts are the result of my strong emphasis on developing a vision and a long range plan for the organization through board, management, employee and stakeholder involvement. I have successfully implemented both inherited and newly created plans through regular communication and collaborative efforts with all levels of government, private business, the agriculture community and community organizations. Additionally, the partnerships I have created with both public and private stakeholders to identify and offer solutions on issues of local and regional significance have produced overwhelming results for the organization and community in the areas of economic development, agriculture and agri-business, downtown revitalization, comprehensive land use and transportation planning, improved citizen services and community relations.

I am also extremely proud of my work with the Delaware's Congressional Delegation, General Assembly, State Agencies, and State/Regional Associations on legislation and regulations impacting the environment, economic development, government service delivery and overall quality of life issues throughout the State. I was recognized as Delaware City Manager of the Year by the Delaware League of Local Governments and my involvement with the City Management Association of Delaware (CMAD), International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation (DEMEC), Delaware Center for the Inland Bays (a National Estuary Program), Delaware Rural Water Association (DRWA), National Rural Water Association (NRWA), as a member of the SB64 Floodplain and Drainage Standards Committee, and as a member of the U.S. EPA's Federal Advisory Committee on the Total Coliform Rule have proven to be excellent resources for each of the organizations and communities in which I have served.

I sincerely appreciate any time and consideration you give my qualifications and look forward to the possibility of meeting with you to further discuss the position. Should you have any additional questions, comments or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at anytime.

Sincerely,



David W. Baird

Enclosure

DAVID W. BAIRD

908 West Lane, Milford, Delaware 19963

Phone: (302) 542-3225

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

SUSSEX CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Georgetown, Delaware

2012-Present DISTRICT COORDINATOR

- Responsible for the overall policy development and operations management of the District that is charged with providing technical guidance and financial assistance to enhance, maintain, protect and improve land and water resources throughout Sussex County, Delaware.
- Assist and Advise the Board of Supervisors on policy development and implementation in the areas of Agricultural Conservation, Stormwater Management and Equipment Operations.
- Improved the Organizational Climate of SCD by opening up lines of communication, working with the Board to develop and promote a vision, establishing measurable goals and proper utilization of the professional abilities of staff.
- Restored respect and confidence in the District from landowners, private business, developers, elected officials, Federal, State and County agencies and private partners.
- Successfully lead a quasi-governmental agency that does not receive any direct appropriation to support operations from the County, State or Federal Government.
- Balance development pressures for first and second homes in coastal Sussex County with the desire to preserve a rural lifestyle.
- Advocate on behalf of Sussex County landowners for practical and affordable approaches to regulatory development at the State and Federal level.
- Develop and Direct the District's legislative efforts.
- Work closely with Delaware Association of Conservation Districts (DACD) and National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) on legislative, regulatory and policy initiatives.
- Prepare and Administer Annual Operating and Capital Budget.
- Increased the District's capacity to take on additional contracts and work by developing an atmosphere of success among staff.
- Restored financial stability to an organization that was consistently losing over \$100,000 in 2012 to one that is projected to have a surplus of \$250,000 in 2016.
- Increased operating revenues by 30% in less than three years.
- Administer \$2.0 million in annual cost share programs to implement voluntary conservation practices on private lands throughout the County.
- Awarded and administer over \$2.5 million annually in Federal, State, Non-Profit and Private Contracts.
- Worked with the Board and Staff to develop an investment policy for the District's financial reserves.
- Manage design and construction contracts for multiple public works projects that are subject to public procurement rules, prevailing wages, and reporting to funding agencies.
- Monitor Legislative and Regulatory activity at the State and Federal level and represented the interests of the District before the Delaware Congressional Delegation, Delaware General Assembly, State Agencies, Sussex County Council, public and private organizations, and the general public.
- Developed Partnerships that led SCD to be one of nine conservation districts nationwide to be awarded funding for the implementation of water quality improvement projects through the USDA-NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program. Over \$3.8 million awarded since FY2015.
- Awarded over \$1,250,000 to assist communities develop and implement urban/suburban water quality projects with economic development benefits.

NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
Duncan, Oklahoma

2005-Present PRESIDENT & BOARD MEMBER

- NRWA, through its state affiliates, is the largest water and wastewater utility membership organization in the nation representing over 30,000 public water and wastewater utilities that serve small, rural and agricultural communities throughout the Nation.
- Currently serve as President of the Association, elected by the 49 member Board and have served as a member of various committees including, Executive, Finance, Legislative, Regulatory, Marketing and Public Relations, Long Range Planning and Membership Dues.
- Served as Chairman of the Legislative Committee where I lead the Association's grass roots legislative agenda of over \$50 million annually.
- Served on the Association's Regulatory Committee where I developed the Association's regulatory agenda that included monitoring existing and proposed regulatory activity, developing a regulatory strategy and establishing strong relationships with EPA and USDA.
- Served in Board leadership positions involved with Public Relations and Marketing, and Long Range/Strategic Planning.
- Delaware Rural Water Association Board Member
- EPA Water Sentinel Executive Committee
- EPA Total Coliform Rule/Distribution System Federal Advisory Committee Member. The FACA was responsible for developing the framework and guiding principles of the Revised Total Coliform Rule that has been issued by EPA.
- Water Sector Coordinating Council-Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council (WSSC/CIPAC) Water Sector Risk Assessment Methodology/Standard Examination Workgroup.
- EPA Water Utility Sustainability Workgroup Member. The workgroup is charged with the identification of emerging trends and opportunities for utilities to accelerate progress toward sustainability.
- Through my involvement in NRWA, I have utilized my strong knowledge of government affairs, regulatory affairs and public policy to establish strong relationships with Congress, State Legislatures, USDA, EPA and State natural resources, water and wastewater agencies to enhance the quality of life in throughout America.

T-SQUARED SOLUTION
Washington, DC

2011-2013 ADVISOR

- Provide Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Services to Utilities, Major Associations and Manufacturers in the Water and Wastewater Industry.
- Provide Business Development Services for owners of innovative and energy savings technologies into the Water and Wastewater Industry.
- Develop partnerships between the Water and Wastewater, Energy, Environmental, Transportation, Security and Emergency Response Industries to create Utility and Community Sustainability.

CITY OF MILFORD
Milford, Delaware

2008-2011 CITY MANAGER

- Assist and Advise City Council in the formulation of policy
- Assist in the development and am responsible for the implementation of City's strategic plan.
- Responsible for the daily management and operations of a full service city with 115 employees in the areas of finance, public works, public safety, economic development, water, wastewater and electric utilities, planning and zoning, transportation, parks and recreation, building code, engineering, streets and grounds, finance, solid waste and recycling.
- Monitored Legislative and Regulatory activity at the State and Federal level and represented the interests of the City Council before the Delaware Congressional Delegation, Delaware General Assembly, State Agencies, Sussex County Council, Kent County Levy Court, public and private organizations, and the general public.
- Prepare and administer annual operating and capital budgets totaling over \$40 million.
- Maintained annual revenues and expenses within budget levels with little or no tax, fee or utility rate increases.
- Managed a successful public referendum campaign that resulted in a 96% favorable vote for the rehabilitation of the City's water treatment facilities.
- Managed a \$27 million water, wastewater and electric capital project to provide increased capacity and reliability to citizens and to improve land and water quality.
- Developed financing for capital projects through USDA-RD Programs and the State Drinking Water (DWSRF) and Clean Water (CWSRF) State Revolving Loan Funds and private sector funding sources
- Represent the City on the Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation (DEMEC) Board of Directors and served on DEMEC Executive Board.
- Managed the development and implementation of the City's first Economic Development Strategy.
- Managed discussions between City and private companies that resulted in new business expansion/relocation to Milford and over 125 new jobs.
- Led the update of the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and subsequent amendments to the City's Zoning and Subdivision Codes.
- Led the development and initial implementation of the S.E. Milford Master Plan with the Office of State Planning Coordination, DNREC, DeIDOT, Del. Dept of Agriculture, Delaware Economic Development Office and Sussex County.
- Led the discussions and negotiations between DEMEC, the private sector and the City on the development of public/private partnership Solar Farm in the City.
- Led the development of the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.
- Successfully managed the continuation of Milford's award winning Riverwalk (bicycle, pedestrian and eco-tourism trail) along the Mispillion River.
- Managed the development of a new City website that was more interactive and informed the Citizens of key information and considerably improved the City's e-commerce capabilities.
- Coordinating downtown streetscaping, revitalization and renovation efforts with local partners including Downtown Milford, Inc., a National Mainstreet Program.
- Successfully conducted two Collective Bargaining negotiations with police labor union.

2007-2008 ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

- Assist the City Manager and City Council in the formulation of policy.
- Prepare and administer annual operating and capital budgets.
- Responsible for the management and operation of land use and public works departments as well as public water, sewer and electric utilities.
- Developing City's initial source water protection plan and supporting regulations.

- Developing public information campaign to support bond issuance for capital improvements.
- Preparing a comprehensive job classification and compensation study.
- Planning and Marketing of changes to City's Solid Waste Program to promote increased recycling.

TOWN OF GEORGETOWN
Georgetown, Delaware

1997-2007 TOWN MANAGER

- Assist and Advise the Town Council in the formulation of policy.
- Implement policies and direction of the Town Council through the successful management and operation of the Town's 45 employees in the area of administration, finance, police, streets and grounds, planning and zoning, code enforcement, and water and wastewater utilities.
- Prepare and submit to the Town Council any reports and/or information that may be requested.
- Prepare and administer annual operating and capital budget.
- Represent the interests of the Town Council before the Delaware Congressional Delegation, Delaware General Assembly, Sussex County Council, public and private organizations, and the general public.
- Prepare and manage correspondence with outside agencies, to include but not limited to, neighboring municipalities, Federal, State, and County agencies, businesses and citizens.
- Managed a \$9.5 million water and wastewater infrastructure expansion, which included \$2.4 million bond referendum and the negotiation of an intergovernmental agreement for the Town to provide service to a Sussex County Sanitary Sewer District, and the State of Delaware.
- Managed an \$11.0 million dollar street, water and wastewater project that includes project planning and development, securing adequate financing, preparing and presenting public hearing information for referendum, contract administration, Town and private development coordination, and construction.
- Prepare and implement short and long-term planning for utility and transportation infrastructure.
- Performed an evaluation of organizational structure that resulted in successful departmental reorganization that improved town-wide effectiveness and efficiency.
- Develop and implement new and existing Town policies and ordinances. Managed the codification of existing ordinances.
- Facilitate community advisory committees on Historic Preservation, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, and Housing.
- Instituted a Strategic Planning Program to assist Town Council in developing community goals and developing short and long term action plans to achieve desired results.
- Drafted and currently managing the implementation of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
- Implemented Comprehensive Street Rehabilitation and Maintenance Plan
- Successfully conducted Collective Bargaining negotiations with police labor union.
- Coordinate municipal activities with Sussex County Emergency Operations Center (911) during emergency situations.
- Solicit and manage federal, state and non-profit loan and grant programs.
- Coordinating downtown streetscaping, revitalization and renovation efforts with community organizations.
- Planning and coordinating the development of Town's web page.
- Developed and instituted personnel system.
- Member--Delaware Transportation Enhancement Technical Advisory Committee (TETAC), U.S. 113 North South Project Feasibility Study Member and Working Group Member, and Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Technical Advisory Committee (SCORP)

TOWN OF CECILTON
Cecilton, Maryland

1996-1997 TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

- Served as the Town's first full-time administrator.
- Assisted Town Council in the formulation of policy.
- Prepared and submitted to the Town Council any reports and/or information that may be requested.
- Initiated planning that led to expansion of water and wastewater systems.
- Initiated discussions with the Cecil County Commissioners and the Cecil County Department of Aging to revitalize an old school for utilization as a senior center.
- Served as the Town's liaison to the Maryland Municipal League.
- Drafted, developed and implemented Comprehensive Plan.
- Coordinated with Cecil County Sheriff to utilize Town facilities as a sub-station for sheriff's deputies.
- Directed and facilitated a citizen committee to raise funds for the purchase of seasonal decorations.
- Coordinated grant funding and facility planning to expand Town's recreation park.
- Lobbied the Maryland State Highway Administration and coordinated the installation of new sidewalks and streetscaping improvements along the Town's main street.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE WAYNE T. GILCHREST
Washington, D.C.

1992-1993 INTERN/STAFF ASSISTANT

- Attended hearings and assisted staff in the development of positions on legislation.
- Briefed the Congressman, orally and in writing, on items of interest to the Congressman.
- Assisted in the preparation of correspondence to the public.
- Responsible for facilitating requests and comments from constituents and briefing staff on the nature of the comments.
- Communicated with federal agencies regarding issues impacting Maryland's First Congressional District.
- Worked in the Washington office and in the district offices.

EDUCATION

1996 Master of Public Administration
University of Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland

1992 Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
East Carolina University
Greenville, North Carolina

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS & OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Delaware Center for the Inland Bays (A National Estuary Program)—Board Member and Treasurer (2013-Present)
- City Management Association of Delaware (President 2002-05, Vice President 2001-02)
- Delaware League of Local Governments (DLLG)/Sussex County Association of Towns (SCAT)
- DLLG City Manager of the Year—2003
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA)—Past Credentialed Manager
- Delaware Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Delaware SB64 Floodplain and Drainage Standards Committee
- EPA Local Government Advisory Board Nominee
- Town of Centreville/Queen Anne's County (MD) Comprehensive Land Use Advisory Council (1995)
- Georgetown/Millsboro Rotary Club (Past Member)
- Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce (Past Director)/Greater Milford Chamber of Commerce
- Historic Georgetown Association
- Lacrosse Coach
- Milford Little League
- Delmarva Swim Association Official
- Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity
- East Carolina University Alumni Association

Section 5

Candidate Introduction

DAVID W BAIRD

EDUCATION

- Master of Public Administration, University of Baltimore
- Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, East Carolina University
- Certificate in Local Government Leadership, Delaware League of Local Governments/University of Delaware
- ICMA Credentialed Manager (Past)

EXPERIENCE

- District Coordinator, Sussex Conservation District 2012-Present
- Board Member & Current President, National Rural Water Association 2005-Present
- Advisor, T-Squared Solutions 2011-2013
- City Manager, City of Milford, DE 2008-2011
- Assistant City Manager, City of Milford, DE 2007-2008
- Town Manager, Town of Georgetown, DE 1997-2007
- Town Administrator, Town of Cecilton, MD 1996-1997

BACKGROUND

The Delmarva Peninsula is a place like no other and is comprised of Downstate Delaware, the Eastern Shore of Maryland and the Eastern Shore of Virginia laying between the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean. It is on this unique piece of geography that I have been fortunate enough to make a career in local government serving my neighbors and my community.

Located along the Mid-Atlantic coastline, Sussex County, Delaware (pop. 234,000) is in the midst of a change that creates both opportunities and challenges for coastal communities striving to preserve their unique rural heritage while meeting the modern day demands of its rapidly increasing residents and visitors. In my current role as District Coordinator for the Sussex Conservation District, as in my role as City Manager of Milford, Delaware (pop. 11,000) and as Town Manager of Georgetown, Delaware (pop. 6,300), I have worked on a daily basis with public and private stakeholders to address the impacts of residential and commercial development, a growing magnitude of federal and state regulations, a growing population, an increased demand for services, and a growing interest in the conservation of land and water resources, to name a few has on a coastal community.

As a political subdivision of the State of Delaware, the Sussex Conservation District is charged with establishing the priorities for the protection and preservation of land and water resources throughout the County. This is accomplished with a \$5.6 million budget and 38 employees working in three programmatic areas of Agricultural Conservation, Sediment and Stormwater

Management, and Equipment/Public Works. While this budget is significantly smaller than the \$42 million annual budget and 115 employees I worked with as City Manager of Milford, the current Sussex Conservation District budget is not supported by any tax rate or direct appropriation for operations from the Federal, State or County government.

A few of the most important issues facing Sussex County and the Sussex Conservation District are:

1. **Water Quality**—This is part of the foundation of everything we do since Sussex County is located within three major watersheds: Chesapeake Bay, Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean/Coastal Inland Bays. Each watershed is subject to Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and/or Pollution Control Strategies. Our Sediment and Stormwater Program administers the State’s regulations for all projects within the County and its Municipalities. Our Agricultural Conservation Program provides funding and technical assistance on nutrient management and agricultural best management practices while the Equipment/Public Works Program will implement and construct best management practices to improve drainage and water quality in agricultural and suburban settings. Additionally, the Sussex Conservation District partners with our local municipalities on MS4 administration and the Center for the Inland Bays on improving water quality in the canals off our Coastal Inland Bays.
2. **Infrastructure Planning**—Planning for necessary infrastructure is critical for any growing community, but even more predominant when the infrastructure needs are already lagging behind. Planning for new/widened roadways to meet vehicular, pedestrian and emergency management needs only increases the demand for the construction of new stormwater infrastructure as well as the retrofitting/upgrade to what already exists. This same scenario holds true on any infrastructure need whether it be park facilities, beaches or public works facilities. The planning for and implementation of infrastructure is also essential for our communities to be resilient while addressing the impacts of climate change.
3. **Public Communication**—It is vital for the local government to engage and inform the public of what is taking place. While we no longer need to rely on traditional forms of media to get the word out it is still important to make them part of any public information campaign. A public outreach/education campaign that engages people in person, through traditional media outlets and direct community information (social, websites, email, mailings, etc.) has a good chance of being successful.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

My interest in the Village Manager position in Islamorada, Village of Islands stems from my desire to combine my successful career in local government, along with my belief that service to

DAVID W BAIRD

the local community and being a good steward of the natural resources around us are things we should all practice. Additionally, there seem to be many parallels between Islamorada and the issues I have worked on throughout my career in Sussex County.

Leading people in any organization is one of the most complex issues we will ever be faced with during our careers. Due to this, I tend to simplify my leadership style to one that is based on clear expectations, open lines of communication, professionalism and accountability. If these four actions are followed consistently, I am able to fulfill my role as a local government manager and work with the staff in developing a highly successful organization that meets the needs of the community and the elected officials. Having this approach to management requires me to treat all levels of staff as professionals who are able to perform the responsibilities associated with their position. I am not a micro-manager and do not expect to be micro-managed myself. There is a quote that hangs on my wall that is attributed to the former New York Mets Manager Gil Hodges that led the Mets to their first World Series title in 1969 “Be firm but be fair, and be it to the no. 25 man on your team, just as much to the no. 1 man.” I like to think that this quote describes my leadership style.

I believe this management approach resonates with my employees. My goal for my employees is not to just be successful in their position, but to be the best in your position. I view my role as a manager to put people in a position to be successful and then challenge them to take it to the next level. This can be done through staff training and development, providing opportunities to work on new projects, or taking an interest in the work they are doing. While not always easy, this approach has been appreciated by many who have served with me over the years. Additionally, I value input coming from my staff because they are in the trenches each and every day. Based on the relationships I have with current and past employees, I believe most of them would describe me as a leader who is firm, fair, approachable, supportive and respectful.

Most of the elected officials I have served would describe me as personable, knowledgeable, visionary, innovative, trustworthy, committed and is someone who always puts the organization in front of myself. I have been fortunate to have good working relationships with most of my elected officials over the years and that could be seen in a few of my accomplishments such as restoring trust, respect and bringing new levels of professionalism to the organization, successful referendums on borrowing for public infrastructure, completing comprehensive Charter reviews in Georgetown and Milford, participation with DelDOT on identifying new roadway corridors, and the renovation/expansion of offices and public works shop for the Sussex Conservation District.

My strengths are well established in the fact my background has provided me with many opportunities to utilize my strong interpersonal skills and my working knowledge of the policies and practices of government at the local, state, and federal levels. Throughout my work experience, I have successfully performed in both an individual and group capacity that has resulted in positive outcomes. Additionally, I possess strong supervisory skills both in and out of the office environment and I take great pride in my strategic planning, analytical, organizational

DAVID W BAIRD

and problem solving abilities. My leadership and professional abilities have been instrumental components in restoring respect and bringing new levels professionalism to the organizations I have served.

I find it difficult to refer to this as a weakness, but I tend to take people at their word. I am trustworthy by nature of others, but I have noticed I have become more of a “realist” as my career has progressed. While there are also downsides to being a “realist” it has allowed me to better represent the communities I serve.

Measuring success is necessary for any organization, especially a public body, to know if it is meeting its desired outcomes. Not only is this beneficial to the internal operations of the Town, but it is a key component of reporting and communicating to the public. Over the years, I have found the best mechanism for measuring success to be a three to five-year strategic plan that is developed with input from public stakeholders, elected officials and staff and reported on quarterly. The quarterly reporting keeps the planning document relevant and it becomes part of the organizations culture. My experience has further found that frequent and consistent reporting on the strategic plan results in greater accomplishments and it makes the process of updating the plan easier for everyone involved.

A few of my biggest achievements in local government service have come from using the process described above. The first was the renovation of public space known as the Georgetown Circle, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Much of the town owned space had been in disrepair for years and was the subject of debate throughout the community. The Town Council made the project a priority and sent me, its young Town Manager, out to develop a consensus and identify funding for the project. Once a consensus was reached an advisory group of community members was established to prepare a design. Although the project still had it naysayers, we were able to complete the project on time and under budget while most importantly restoring a sense of pride in the community. Over two decades later, this site is still the focal point of the Town. A second achievement was using this process to convince the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) that the Sussex Conservation District should be taking the lead on delivering services under the State’s Resource & Conservation Development (RC&D) Program. The Sussex Conservation District Board made this a priority by including a pilot program in its planning process. That \$100,000 pilot program has led to over \$1.75 million in contracts for the District over the past three years.

While I consider my career to be successful, I have also had a few setbacks. The largest was my tenure with the City of Milford. I left a good position as Town Manager in Georgetown for what I thought would be a better career opportunity. I was hired by a colleague to serve as Assistant City Manager in advance of his pending retirement, with the understanding I would be the lead candidate for the vacant City Manager position. I was named City Manager upon the recommendation of my colleague with no other solicitation offered for the position. When I took the position there were no expectations established with the City Council and there was

only limited communication outside of the formal City Council meetings. Once a public referendum I was working on in passed in late 2011, City Council proposed revisions to my contract reducing its value. I objected and City Council exercised an option in the contract to release me for no-fault. Within two weeks, they hired the previous manager to return. A number of lessons were learned from this experience but two stand out. First, always be sure the lines of communication are open; and, second it is important for the Manager to be the City Council's hire so that both parties have a vested interest in the relationship.

As discussed earlier, managing staff can be one of the most challenging jobs for any manager. This is even more challenging when you have to dismiss a staff member from employment with the organization. Over the past twenty plus years in local government, I have had to dismiss staff for poor performance, ethical issues, theft, reduction in force, not showing up to work, etc. You never feel good about it, nor is it something you take lightly. This is a very personal decision from the employee's perspective and in my circumstances each one was conducted in person, and privately with only one or two other officials in attendance.

I see a number of challenges facing the next Village Manager including:

1. **New Village Council & Terms**—Any new manager taking the position in Islamorada will have to be cognizant that all of the current Village Council Members are up for re-election in November 2022. Although there are ongoing discussions about a charter amendment and/or public referendum to change the length of the term or stagger the terms, this is something that will most likely continue as a new village manager is hired. It will be important for the Village Manager to facilitate the process and not get caught in the middle of the debate.
2. **Water Quality & Stormwater**—The natural resources found in Islamorada and throughout the Keys are like no other. Experts and outside partners will need to join the Village to find permanent solutions for the water quality issues in the canals and surrounding waterways. A reasonable amount of preliminary work should be completed throughout the Village so it is out in front of any Federal or State mandates.
3. **Maintaining Staff & Facilities**—The Village Council must continue to invest and prioritize in the Village Staff. The high cost of living in the Village will continue to be an issue in retaining and recruiting staff, but real solutions will be needed to maintain and improve upon the current needs of the Village, its operations and its staff.
4. **Emergency Preparedness**—The continued coordination with State and Regional partners related to emergency preparedness is essential given Islamorada's unique geographic location. Included in this are emergency facilities and the building permit allocation system currently in place.
5. **Indian Key Fill**—Be it traffic, overcrowding, littering, parking, etc., Indian Key Fill has been an issue for a number of years. Efforts to place additional restrictions in place have seen some success, but the overall issues continue. This is an issue that will need to be in front of the Village Council until it is resolved once and for all.

My first six months as Village Manager would involve the following:

1. Prior to my arrival in Islamorada, I would continue my research on key issues, the Village's ordinances, budget and current strategic plan.
2. Meeting with elected officials, staff, residents, business owners and other stakeholders to begin building relationships to gain the history and various perspectives in order to develop a thorough understanding of the issues. Most of this effort would be done throughout the Village and not in the office.
3. Dedicating time to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Village's financial statements along with a detailed review of the Village's major sources of revenue and expenses.
4. Developing initial expectations, communication protocols and accountability components for all Village Departments.

I have always maintained a good working relationship with members of the media. This has been accomplished by building a relationship with members of the media built on open and honest communication. The same would hold true of my use of social media. Any official information would be released through the appropriate Village channels. Over the past few years, I have successfully used social media outlets to keep information from the Sussex Conservation District in front of people. Similar to advertising, social media is a good way to get quick information out to the public and keep your name in front of them. Although things are rapidly changing, I have found that more detailed information is still best released through more traditional forms of media. There is nothing in my background that would embarrass the Village if it were to become public knowledge and I am not aware of any community activists that would contact the Village with "the dirt" on me.

In my leisure time, I enjoy spending time outdoors and on or around the water. I also enjoy spending time traveling with my wife and two college aged daughters.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES

1. Personable
2. Knowledgeable
3. Friendly
4. Genuine
5. Committed
6. Humble

DAVID W BAIRD

REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT POSITION

The Village Manager position in Islamorada, Village of Islands is one of a very few positions that would give me reason to consider leaving my current position. My wife and I have said for years the Florida Keys would be a place we would consider re-locating now that both of our daughters are in college. I am extremely fortunate to enjoy my work at the Sussex Conservation District along with my Board, Staff and District Cooperators I serve.

CURRENT/MOST RECENT OR RELENT SALARY

Current Salary—Sussex Conservation District (vehicle provided)	\$109,781
Past Salary—City of Milford (2011) (vehicle provided)	\$120,320

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
DAVID W. BAIRD**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Sussex County, DE	No Records Found
Washington, DC	No Records Found
Kent County, DE	No Records Found
State	
Delaware	No Records Found
District of Columbia	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Sussex County, DE	No Records Found
Washington, DC	No Records Found
Kent County, DE	No Records Found
Federal	
Delaware	No Records Found
District of Columbia	Results Pending

Motor Vehicle

Delaware	No Records Found
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Credit

Excellent

Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed except for
T-Square Solution (2011 – 2013)

Social Media

Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for
DAVID W. BAIRD**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
DAVID W. BAIRD
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: David W. Baird

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
Facebook: David Baird (david.baird.5439); Instagram: dwbaird908 ;
LinkedIn: David Baird (linkedin.com/in/david-baird-1876968); Twitter: @dwbpirate
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.
See Attached Sheet

Attested to: David W. Baird
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (561) 621-5965 **no later than 5:00 PM PST 04/19/2021.**
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

CB&A Reference Notes

**Reference Notes
David Baird**

**Brad Dennehy – Parks and Recreation Department Director, City of Milford, DE
302-242-2816**

Mr. Dennehy has known Mr. Baird since approximately 2006. At the time, they worked in neighboring communities. Later, Mr. Baird became Milford City Manager, and Mr. Dennehy worked under Mr. Baird as the Public Works Director. Mr. Baird left the City to pursue other avenues and job opportunities.

Mr. Baird is one of the best people Mr. Dennehy has worked for. Even one of Mr. Dennehy's colleagues has remarked on how good a man Mr. Baird is. Mr. Baird is adaptable and likeable. He navigates between difficult groups, such as when working with state senators over briefings. He performs well regardless of the situation.

When Mr. Baird and Mr. Dennehy worked together, Mr. Baird proved numerous times how much he cared about his staff. For example, he came to check on teams when the community experienced a water main break or an electrical outage in a storm. Sometimes he offered simple thanks to those working after hours, and other times he brought food for personnel.

Mr. Baird used various means of communication with Mr. Dennehy. At one point in Mr. Baird's tenure, they worked in the same building. During this time, Mr. Baird generally came to Mr. Dennehy's office at the beginning of the day to talk. If an issue required more urgent attention, Mr. Baird set up a more formal meeting. He also preferred using the latest and most effective means of communication available, such as using Blackberries when those devices came out.

Mr. Baird had good experience with the public, whether dealing with large crowds, small groups, or individuals. For example, he was an outsider when he first came to Delaware as a young Town Manager for Georgetown. Despite dealing with large cropping families and an old-boy network, he adapted quickly as he immediately dealt well with the public. He worked effectively in various settings and was self-motivated. He likewise motivated his employees. He refrained from controlling groups, instead choosing to contribute and listen to people. Later in the City of Milford, he became an invested member of the community as his wife began working in the area, and his children attended local schools. He participated in community groups. Although he was not required to do so at the time, he chose to live in the community and bought a local house.

In general, Mr. Baird made good decisions, such as with personnel. The City had little staff turnover under his leadership because he talked to employees and made sure they were happy. In fact, staff did not have a union workforce during his tenure because they felt he listened to their issues and concerns. He talked with people and worked to make compromises to help everyone be happy. Unfortunately, once Mr. Baird left, the City experienced high turnover, and union workforces developed under its next Manager.

As a customer service oriented individual, Mr. Baird knew who his customers were. He recognized what they needed, and he taught his staff to give their best service because they worked for the taxpayer. Such actions had huge impacts in a small community.

**Reference Notes
David Baird**

With a \$40 million per year operation to manage, Mr. Baird proved he had good financial skills. He ensured the City maintained a financially stable position and was quite aware of being financially responsible. Although he focused more on needs than wants, he still listened to others' wants. Rather than ignore departments' requests, he evaluated their proposals and helped department heads understand the repercussions of spending the amount proposed.

Mr. Baird accomplished his tasks in a timely manner. He sometimes was the first person in the office and the last to leave in order to accomplish his tasks. Working with the Mayor and Council, he kept to the City's strategic plan. He planned ahead, often six months to a year into the future. With the City's capital improvement program, he worked with department heads to navigate issues when a project cost over a specific amount of money.

Mr. Dennehy is unaware of anything in Mr. Baird's personal or professional background that might concern a future employer. If an opportunity arose, Mr. Dennehy would hire Mr. Baird in a heartbeat. Mr. Dennehy thinks highly of Mr. Baird and would follow Mr. Baird practically anywhere to continue working under him. They have enjoyed working together. Mr. Baird is good, honest, and sincere. He is adaptable and levelheaded. He is a good candidate and a good individual. He has made and will continue to make a good Municipal Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe David Baird:

- Good leader,
- Nice guy,
- Quite smart,
- Quite likeable,
- Team player, and
- Adaptable.

Strengths: Adaptability, easygoing nature, diplomacy skills, interpersonal skills, cares about employee well-being.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Chris Bason – Executive Director, Center for the Inland Bays, DE 302-228-3788

Mr. Bason has known Mr. Baird since approximately 2013. Mr. Bason works for the Center for the Inland Bays (hereafter, the Center), which is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to environmental protection. Mr. Baird is treasurer for the Board of Directors over the Center due to the nature of his position working for the Sussex Conservation District (hereafter, the District). Because of his work with the District, Mr. Baird has solid experience and knows the challenges of working in a coastal community with a water-based economy. Both men regularly discuss

Reference Notes
David Baird

management issues they experience and projects they work together on. They view each other as peers because they have comparable executive positions for similar organizations.

Mr. Baird understands finances satisfactorily. He performs well as he discerns and oversees the organization's finances. Because he understands profitability in nonprofit sectors, he applies a business approach for the Center and in managing his own organization.

As a great listener, Mr. Baird provides sound advice when solicited. When encountering difficult situations, he evaluates all available perspectives to provide guidance for those seeking his help. Rather than irritating people or viewing himself too highly, he simply assesses a situation to find the best possible outcome. He imagines himself in others' circumstances, allowing him to get along well with others. Because of these interpersonal skills, he excels on a national level.

Mr. Baird has successfully brought outreach programs to the general public. He has looked at how other organizations have set up and staffed these programs. Additionally, he gets along with diverse groups of people, whether working with those in Mr. Bason's organization or his own. Mr. Baird allows others to do their jobs without micromanaging. He recognizes what he does not know and confidently trusts others to handle their responsibilities.

Furthermore, Mr. Baird maintains great relationships with several different organizational partners. He recognizes when to push agenda items forward. He knows when to advocate for more authority or resources as necessary. With proven success, he has worked with his organization to push for achievement in multiple partnerships, particularly government relations. He is responsive, typically calling back someone the same day.

Mr. Baird maintains an organization at a high performance level, as seen with his success in the District. Certainly, he has innovatively brought in new technology to improve the organization, such as air-seeding for crops. However, he uses a measured and steady approach to improving the organization. He helps the District grow in areas needing development, and he capably maintains its positive qualities.

When hiring and working with personnel, Mr. Baird makes good decisions. He has qualified and competent staff. For example, around when he first became the District Treasurer, he brought on a great program manager who has since stayed and thrived in her position. As another example, the District's previous Executive Director stepped down to a lower position before Mr. Baird came. Though her new position was still important and held some authority, such a change might potentially leave an employee in a difficult situation with the newcomer. Instead, the staff member developed a good relationship with Mr. Baird and has stayed, which is evidence of Mr. Baird's good management.

Moreover, Mr. Bason has never heard anything negative regarding Mr. Baird. Based on how Mr. Baird has managed Mr. Bason in certain situations, Mr. Baird must be great boss. Once, Mr. Baird helped Mr. Bason's organization with a difficult management conflict between Mr. Bason

Reference Notes
David Baird

and a board chairperson. Mr. Baird resolved the situation quite carefully, for which Mr. Bason was grateful. Mr. Bason learned much from how Mr. Baird listened and advised.

Mr. Baird is a measured problem solver who assesses the scale of the problem before providing the best solution. Because he refrains from overreacting, he has helped create a good working environment for problem solving. He provides everyone the space necessary to comfortably address issues, even during stressful moments. He works with partners to discuss solutions and understands how to present his case at the proper time. For example, he expertly navigated an issue regarding an agency that had been delegated a drainage program. This agency maintained partial control over the program and thus had some control over the solution. Unfortunately, the agency was slow and communicated poorly. When an issue came up over staffing, Mr. Baird carefully took the issue and suggested improvements to the program. He gained more flexibility to better complete the job, consequently improving the agency.

Mr. Bason is unaware of anything in Mr. Baird's personal or professional conduct that might concern a future employer. Mr. Bason would hire Mr. Baird if given the chance. Mr. Baird is a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe David Baird:

- Pragmatic,
- Reasonable,
- Even-keeled,
- Encouraging,
- Successful,
- Well-respected, and
- Easy to get along with.

Strengths: Great treasurer, financial understanding, business approach to the organization, providing good advice when solicited, problem-solving approach, organization partner relationships, outreach, responsiveness.

Weaknesses: Mr. Baird can improve his understanding or approach to certain scientific studies or information. This trait is not a weakness but more so a suggestion for development. He can work on being more open-minded on the quality and utility of certain studies to help him in his job.

**Holly Swafford-Givens – Administrative Coordinator, Sussex Conservation District, DE
443-614-7207**

Ms. Swafford-Givens has known Mr. Baird since approximately 2016 when he hired her to be his Administrative Coordinator at the Sussex Conservation District (hereafter, the District). All

Reference Notes David Baird

of their interactions have been professional, positive, and upbeat. Mr. Baird also encourages Ms. Swafford-Givens' professional growth. She has never heard a negative statement about him.

Though a manager, Mr. Baird is a great leader. As a coordinator for the organization, he oversees all District functions. He has good experience working with the public, whether with groups or individuals. He has done a phenomenal job, even with the COVID-19 pandemic. He is highly involved in the community.

Mr. Baird usually makes the correct decision. He takes time to think over an issue and looks at the big picture before making a concrete decision. He similarly makes good decisions when hiring personnel. Furthermore, he is customer service oriented. The District often deals with complaints about communities' drainage solutions, such as the water table being two to three feet above what it should be. Despite handling several issues at once, he juggles his responsibilities well. When complaints escalate to him, he firmly addresses the concern and works with the customer to come up with the best possible solution.

Additionally, Mr. Baird has good financial skills. Prior to Ms. Swafford-Givens' employment, the District was underperforming. Mr. Baird helped turn the District around by using his own skills and by hiring a qualified Certified Public Accountant.

Being innovative, Mr. Baird has helped the District through tremendous growth. For example, the District's equipment program was floundering until he found ways to market the program to nearby communities. As such, these communities have been able to call the District to provide for their needs. In another instance, he found funding opportunities that either the District has not used before or previous leaders have ignored. He has searched deeply to get these funds approved for the District.

As a good problem solver, Mr. Baird thinks through to good solutions. He looks at the big picture on how a situation might impact the District in the long run. For example, the District recently handled an issue with residents being unable to live in their homes due to poor water pump construction at a stormwater pond. The pump developer had struggled to determine a solution for the pond, so Mr. Baird helped. At the District's own cost, District engineers came out to assess the situation so people might start living in their homes again.

Mr. Baird handles pressure quite well. He addresses issues directly and is generally calm under stress. However, because he handles many responsibilities and projects, he sometimes is slower to accomplish tasks than Ms. Swafford-Givens likes. He generally relies on her to remind him of deadlines. Occasionally, he has not met a deadline for an item of business Ms. Swafford-Givens has little involvement with.

Ms. Swafford-Givens is unaware of anything in Mr. Baird's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. Though Mr. Baird has been involved in some controversy, such situations are due to the nature of his position with the District. He handles these circumstances admirably well. Ms. Swafford-Givens would hire him if possible and wants him to stay with the

**Reference Notes
David Baird**

District. Mr. Baird is a great family man who is an all-around good individual. He goes out into the community, and people know him. He will do an excellent job as Municipal Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe David Baird:

- Great leader,
- Happy guy,
- Easygoing,
- Dedicated,
- Positive,
- Friendly,
- People-person,
- Outgoing, and
- Quite approachable.

Strengths: Excellent oral and written communication skills, thoughtful approach to issues, public speaking, customer service skills.

Weaknesses: Because Mr. Baird is highly involved with many projects, he sometimes lags on follow-up. However, his slow follow-up may be due to his reliance on Ms. Swafford-Givens to help him handle this administrative task.

**Terry Tieman – Town Manager, Town of Fenwick Island, DE 302-539-3011 ext. 203
302-515-4002**

Ms. Tieman has professionally known Mr. Baird since the 2000s. Initially, Ms. Tieman was a department head in the City of Dover when Mr. Baird worked as Manager first for the Town of Georgetown and later the City of Milford. As her career has advanced, she has had more opportunities to know him better. They have had more interactions since Mr. Baird's current position with the Sussex Conservation District (hereafter, the District) and Ms. Tieman's position as Fenwick Island Town Manager.

Most of Ms. Tieman's interactions with Mr. Baird deal with discussing projects they work on together or brainstorming solutions when she solicits his help with a problem. They share professional, helpful interactions that create much good will. She otherwise is unaware of his day-to-day operations.

Ms. Tieman has never seen Mr. Baird stressed. When he left the City of Milford, he may have dealt with some political pressures due to the Mayor wanting to move away from the changes Mr. Baird brought. Throughout this potentially stressful situation, he handled the issue well.

Reference Notes
David Baird

Mr. Baird is highly dedicated to his work. As a manager, he encourages staff development and works to ensure he followed proper procedures. He brings projects to fruition and takes an active role during project implementation. Additionally, Mr. Baird is an innovative change agent. He brings a high level of professionalism to the room and improves whatever works on. He is a sensible leader who manages his employees well. In the District, he has a cohesive group where they recognize an employee of the month. He is highly thought of.

Mr. Baird has good experience with the public. Much of his District work involves handling issues from unhappy people, and he has great conflict-resolutions skills. For example, someone near the Town of Fenwick Island had a sinkhole appear in his property. Because the sinkhole was not actually in the jurisdiction of the Town, Ms. Tieman was somewhat uncertain how to approach the issue. She contacted Mr. Baird, and he directed the resident to the proper State help.

In general, Mr. Baird has made great decisions. His District staff are as professional as he is, enabling him to make good personnel-related decisions. Ms. Tieman is unfamiliar with any specifics regarding Mr. Baird's budgeting process, but he had maintained balanced budgets for the Town of Georgetown and City of Milford. In fact, the City of Milford had several utilities and a decent budget with several different funds that Mr. Baird handled.

Mr. Baird is absolutely customer service oriented. Because the State of Delaware is fairly small, a government person's reputation easily spreads through municipal networks. Mr. Baird has an outstanding reputation, and Ms. Tieman has never had a poor experience with him. For example, the Town of Fenwick Island experienced an issue between a resident and a hotel being built right behind the man's property. At one point, a heavy downpour caused issues between the resident and the hotel in construction. Mr. Baird worked with the two groups to resolve the issue.

Ms. Tieman is unaware of anything in Mr. Baird's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. She would hire him if given the opportunity and will be sad to see him leave the District. When Ms. Tieman first became Fenwick Island Town Manager, Mr. Baird was one of the first to reach out to her to offer help and advice. She has grown to rely on him, but she wishes him all the best. His experience with the District will help him continue to be a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe David Baird:

- Dedicated,
- Professional,
- Quite helpful,
- Reliable,
- Good to his word,
- Timely, and
- Great guy.

**Reference Notes
David Baird**

Strengths: Staff development, dedication, project-oriented, communication skills, conflict resolution.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Charles Anderson – City Manager, City of Seaford, DE 302-629-9173 302-381-2576

Having worked with the City of Seaford since approximately 1990, Mr. Anderson has known Mr. Baird since approximately the 2000s. They have had various occasions to work together as colleagues due to the close proximity of their communities, from Mr. Baird’s time with the Town of Georgetown, the City of Milford, and the Sussex Conservation District (hereafter, the District). Because the City of Seaford has used the services of the District for some time, Mr. Anderson has worked frequently with Mr. Baird.

Mr. Anderson has greatly enjoyed working with Mr. Baird for the past several years. Mr. Baird is even-tempered, well prepared, and empathetic. His presentations are well thought out. He meets deadlines and consistently calls Mr. Anderson back within a reasonable amount of time. When working together, Mr. Baird routinely emails Mr. Anderson. Indeed, Mr. Baird has kept Mr. Anderson well informed when working together, even meeting every other month during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recently, they worked on a memorandum of understanding between their respective organizations. Throughout this project, Mr. Baird was professional and used all appropriate forms of communication.

Mr. Baird has good experience working with the public, both in groups and with individuals. He understands organizational customers are both internal and external, sometimes treating his internal customers even better. He is quite customer service oriented. Because Mr. Anderson has limited interactions with Mr. Baird due to working in sister communities, he is somewhat unfamiliar with how well Mr. Baird participates with his respective community. Outside of collaborative projects, Mr. Baird and Mr. Anderson mostly see each other at city manager associations with routine dinners.

In general, Mr. Baird’s decisions revolve around moving an issue forward. He rarely becomes rattled in stressful situations. He allows people to provide input, but he ensures everyone stays on track. In nearly all meetings Mr. Anderson has had with Mr. Baird, those involved have come up with a good product by the end. During a particular instance, Mr. Baird presented good financial skills when with the Town of Georgetown. Typically, if one municipality passed new regulations, taxes or initiatives, the municipality shared its notes with neighboring communities. Mr. Baird collaborated with other local communities on some financial initiatives he had done in his community. Mr. Anderson found all the documents and project reviews Mr. Baird had provided to be impressively thorough.

**Reference Notes
David Baird**

Mr. Baird is an innovative change agent who capably maintains the organization at a high performance level. When with the City of Milford and later with the District, he implemented changes in new policies and procedures, as tasked. He drove many of those changes forward.

As an analytical problem solver, he methodically thinks through a project from start to finish. In the District, he is working on state permits between communities. For the past two years, he has led efforts in making a proposal to address the permit requirements. Though some municipalities have been difficult, Mr. Baird has helped these groups recognize their commonalities with the other communities. The proposal has been quite successful thus far.

Mr. Anderson is unaware of anything in Mr. Baird's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. Mr. Baird had been involved in some controversy regarding difficult expansion for the Town of Georgetown, but he navigated this issue with great transparency. Mr. Anderson would strongly consider hiring Mr. Baird if given the opportunity. Mr. Baird is a trusted mentor whom Mr. Anderson can confide in for professional matters. Mr. Baird has much energy and experience to contribute to an organization. He excels wherever he goes, he digs into the organization, and he listens before he speaks. He has made and will continue to make a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe David Baird:

- Highly competent,
- Family man,
- Good guy,
- Friendly,
- Mentor, and
- A professional confidant.

Strengths: Experience, intelligence, practicality, proactive involvement in moving projects along, taking on projects himself.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Bob Ricker – Former Town Mayor, Town of Georgetown, DE 302-228-2020

Mr. Ricker has known Mr. Baird since approximately 1997. At the time, Mr. Ricker was the Georgetown Mayor, and he hired Mr. Baird to be Town Manager. They worked together until Mr. Baird left in 2007. Later, they worked together several times when Mr. Baird joined the Sussex Conservation District.

Mr. Baird has performed excellently. He has great interpersonal skills, whether dealing with difficult people, employees in challenging situations, or different advocacy groups. He

Reference Notes

David Baird

communicates magnificently with all levels of society For example, he easily communicates with others, from staff members who dump trash to attorneys and elected officials. He is flexibly professional or congenial, as a situation requires. Though he capably maintains an organization at a high performance level, he knows how to look into the future. When offered an idea, he enacts the vision as appropriate.

Mr. Baird is professional and well respected by his peers. As Georgetown Manager, he was often out in the community. He regularly attended meetings and represented the organization well. He was also one of the leaders of an association for Town Managers. Furthermore, Mr. Baird had good financial skills. When the Town's department proposals were approximately \$150,000 over budget, Mr. Ricker felt confident in Mr. Baird's exceptional abilities. Mr. Baird skillfully moved money around and ejected some proposals to make the budget work. He constantly worked with state and federal grant funds.

In general, Mr. Baird made great decisions. He thought creatively and looked at all available information to make a judgment on what was best for those involved. For example, he handled a situation in which councilmembers turned in a well-respected and longtime Town employee who had committed a major infraction. Mr. Baird looked at the infraction itself to understand the situation entirely. He also recognized how the person involved was a highly dedicated employee, whose potential firing might lead to more harm than good. Mr. Baird instead determined a different disciplinary regimen for this incident. He shared his ideas with councilmembers and the employee, explaining the repercussions of simply firing the individual. The employee was disciplined appropriately, and no councilmembers were upset about not firing the person.

Mr. Baird likewise made good decisions when hiring personnel. For example, he led the hiring of a Police Chief outside of the Police Department, whose two previous Chiefs had stayed for about 40 years each. Often, hiring outside the Department led to turmoil; however, Mr. Baird came up with and smoothly led the entire hiring process. He worked with a group to go to well-respected law enforcers throughout the State of Delaware and weed through nearly 100 applications to find 10 suitable applicants. This process led to a successful hiring. In an additional example, Mr. Baird also firmly refused to hire someone. The Town had received much pressure from outside elected officials to hire a specific person who was not a good fit based on both experience and level of education. Consequently, the Town chose to hire someone else, who performed well.

Though Mr. Baird capably managed processes behind a desk, he also successfully rallied his employees around the organization's vision. For example, some people were upset about hiring the outside police chief. However, many recognized how the original person next in line for the position was a poor fit for the community. Mr. Baird took the newly hired Chief to the office and used his interpersonal skills to introduce the men to their new leader. Though the men were initially strongly divided in their feelings, the Chief laid a plan on getting the Department back on track and motivate greater production from the Department. Within about an hour, Mr. Baird helped the group smoothly transition to the Chief, and an absolutely magnificent Police Department was born. Even though the Chief retired later, the processes and procedures in place kept the Police Department as one of the best in the State of Delaware.

Reference Notes
David Baird

Mr. Baird was not been involved in any personal controversy. However, he was indirectly involved in some controversial issues due to the nature of his position. For example, Mr. Ricker dealt with bad press during a tense situation. The Town relied on many illegal immigrants to work in its poultry plant and with other town jobs. Because many of these immigrants had been accustomed to squalid living conditions, few were familiar with proper house maintenance. Furthermore, because several immigrants mistrusted the bank, they carried much cash in their pockets and frequently became robbery victims. At some point, a local paper interviewed Mr. Ricker about this situation. Unfortunately, despite Mr. Ricker's full explanation, the paper published only negative bits of his overall comments to create conflict. The Town became deeply divided and contentious. Eventually, Mr. Ricker had an opportunity to explain what he actually said. Throughout the entire situation, Mr. Baird worked alongside Mr. Ricker to keep the Town afloat. For approximately a year-and-a-half, the two men worked hard with groups to teach proper house care and to hire Spanish-speaking bank tellers.

Mr. Ricker is unaware of anything in Mr. Baird's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. If given the opportunity, Mr. Ricker would hire Mr. Baird in a heartbeat. Indeed, Mr. Ricker has often encouraged Mr. Baird to apply for other government management positions in the past. Mr. Baird will be a great Municipal Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe David Baird:

- Professional,
- Wise,
- Down to earth,
- Politically astute,
- Tireless worker, and
- Approaches tasks with common sense.

Strengths: Creativity, communication skills, interpersonal skills.

Weaknesses: Mr. Baird was fiscally conservative, though this trait is more a difference from Mr. Ricker than an actual weakness. As Mayor, Mr. Ricker continually tried to have Mr. Baird spend money. However, Mr. Baird consistently provided reasons to not do so and was typically correct.

Mike Wyatt – Former Mayor, Town of Georgetown, DE 302-542-6116

Mr. Wyatt has known Mr. Baird since Mr. Baird became Georgetown Town Manager in 1997. Mr. Wyatt was on Town Council and later became Mayor. Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Baird talked almost daily. Communication was key to their relationship, whether over telephone calls or seeing each other. Mr. Baird left after about 10 years to seek greater challenges with a larger

Reference Notes David Baird

municipality. Mr. Wyatt never heard anything negative about Mr. Baird, despite the Town's little population of 6,000 residents and small workforce of about 50 Town employees.

Mr. Baird performed excellently. He understood finances. He ran daily operations and implemented policies set by Council. If councilmembers proposed an idea he felt they should avoid, he explained his thoughts and provided alternatives. He knew what to say and do in order to acquire something, like grants. For example, the Town wanted to renovate an area called the Circle. Although the Town originally planned to pay for these renovations, Mr. Baird wanted to have the legislature pay for the project. He found a way for the State Senator and State Representatives to put money toward the project, without any cost to the Town.

Even though he was young at the time, Mr. Baird quickly determined employees' strengths and weaknesses. He made excellent decisions when hiring personnel and dove into looking at applications. When talking with references, he had the ability to find if applicants had anything negative in their qualifications.

Mr. Baird dealt well with the public, both in groups and one-on-one. He was often out in the community, representing the organization well as he regularly attended community meetings. For example, he attended practically all meetings for the Sussex County Association of Towns (SCAT). Participation in SCAT was voluntary. When Mr. Wyatt was president of SCAT for two terms, Mr. Baird was quite supportive. As president, some of Mr. Wyatt's responsibilities included putting together meetings to discuss wish lists the towns wanted from the state. Though mayors generally were in charge of presenting these wish lists, Mr. Baird helpfully coached Mr. Wyatt through these.

In general, Mr. Baird made good decisions. When upset with someone, he typed an email, read what he wrote, and deleted the email before typing a new one. He might fight someone on an issue if necessary, but he usually worked around the conflict to make all sides happy.

If an organization ran well, Mr. Baird capably maintained and improved performance. Before he first arrived at the Town, the Town's finances and infrastructure were unsound. He almost turned down the job because he was unsure if he might improve these areas. However, he worked hard and brought the Town into excellent shape. When he left the Town, the new Manager who had majored in finance was greatly impressed with how stable the Town's position had become under Mr. Baird's management.

Despite stressful situations, Mr. Baird moved projects along. He performed well under pressure and refrained from stressing over situations. For example, when he came in July for his first interview to be Manager, he interviewed in a building with broken air conditioning. Everyone was quite hot, with some people practically sticking to their chairs. Although Mr. Baird had a long-sleeved shirt on, he remained calm and collected.

Mr. Baird has been involved in controversy, though only due to the nature of his position. For example, a policeman who had not been promoted to Chief decided to sue the Town. Mr. Baird

**Reference Notes
David Baird**

handled the issue quite well. He went with the Council's wishes and kept his superiors informed. When the Council had to give depositions, he coached councilmembers and Mr. Wyatt if they needed such help. Eventually, the lawsuit went away.

Mr. Wyatt is unaware of anything in Mr. Baird's personal or professional conduct that might concern a future employer. If Mr. Wyatt were again Mayor and the current Town Manager were to leave, Mr. Wyatt would hire Mr. Baird. Some people might have some negative feelings toward Mr. Baird, but many of these individuals might disagree with anything. Mr. Baird has been and will continue to be a good Municipal Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe David Baird:

- Motivator,
- Proactive,
- Persistent,
- People-person,
- Pleasant, and
- All-around nice person.

Strengths: Handling politicians, providing alternative solutions to Council ideas, identifying others' strengths and weaknesses, public interaction.

Weaknesses: He might not have been stern enough with some people. He consistently wanted to give others an opportunity to fix their mistakes, though he might have needed to let those individuals go.

Angela Townsend – Councilperson, Town of Georgetown, DE 302-542-5128

Ms. Townsend has known Mr. Baird since approximately 2002 when she was on the Georgetown Town Council. At one point, she was a Town Clerk who reported to Mr. Baird. Later, when she recently ran for Town Council in 2020, she asked Mr. Baird to support her. She trusted him to support and guide her, even if such help required her go out of her comfort zone. She cannot say enough about how wonderful Mr. Baird is. He is a sincere and honest person.

When Mr. Baird managed the Town, he kept a balanced budget and was highly organized. The 40 employees he supervised greatly respected him. He kept his word and followed through as promised. He was personable, friendly, and highly customer service oriented. He also responded well to stress. Though he might shake his head in disbelief, he still chuckled at the situation.

At the time, the Town had about 6,400 residents. Mr. Baird worked on several large projects to extend the budget, infrastructure, water, and sewage. He continuously found money for the Town, whether locally, through legislature, or through grants. On numerous occasions, he acquired interest-forgiven USDA funds and clean water drinking funds. His eventual departure for other employment was a sad day for the Town.

Reference Notes David Baird

Mr. Baird had good experience working with the public, who respected and liked him. After first becoming Manager, he decided to live in the Town and have his kids go to local schools. As such, he was easily reachable because he was part of the neighborhood and the Town. He consistently made time for people. As Manager, he led and commanded. He gave presentations to various groups, such as the Kiwanis Club, Chamber of Commerce, and his constituents. When working with the press, he was honest and forthright. If the press had issues, they contacted him, and he made time for them. They shared a good working relationship.

Additionally, Mr. Baird guided the Town in the best direction. He was quite diplomatic when making decisions regarding personnel. For example, he diplomatically handled an issue involving an employee who had inappropriately used a Town vehicle for questionable personal use. This staff member was released to find other employment. Because of how Mr. Baird handled the situation, the individual recognized his mistake and simply regretted making a poor decision. Indeed, Mr. Baird had a good working relationship with all employees and councilmembers. Though he was a supervisor, he recognized he served the Council. Ms. Townsend consistently felt comfortable seeking his advice.

Mr. Baird was innovative. He continuously found funding and balanced the budget. He also found ways to implement Council ideas. Once when Ms. Townsend wanted to turn a part of the Town into an amphitheater, Mr. Baird found an architect to design the structure. The project was put on hold once the Council changed, but Mr. Baird gave Ms. Townsend the proper contacts to finish her goal.

Mr. Baird worked with the councilmembers to solve the problems brought before the Council. Usually, different groups came before council asking for money for traveling expense, uniforms, or library functions. Mr. Baird consistently provided these donations, though the Town had to search for these resources. Eventually, Mr. Baird set aside a portion of building permits, allowing for easier fund access for recreation, education, arts, and entertainment.

Ms. Townsend is unaware of anything in Mr. Baird's background that might embarrass or concern a future employer. She would hire him in a heartbeat if given the opportunity, and she highly recommends him. The organization that hires him will benefit greatly from his wisdom and direction. Any municipality will be fortunate to have him. He has been a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe David Baird:

- Quite honest,
- Genuine,
- Sincere,
- Likeable,
- Supportive, and
- Likeable.

**Reference Notes
David Baird**

Strengths: Organizational skills, management skills, budget balancing, follow-through, well respected by employees.

Weaknesses: A possible weakness is how nice Mr. Baird is. Sometimes nice people are easily taken advantage of.

Debbie Pfeil – Senior Project Manager, KCI Technologies, DE 302-270-3515 302-242-4468

Ms. Pfeil worked with Mr. Baird for about seven years between the 1990s and early 2000s. At the time, she was the Director of Planning & Zoning for the Town of Georgetown when he was Town Manager. After working several years, Mr. Baird left the Town to pursue greater challenges in a large municipality and greater advancement in his career. He and Ms. Pfeil still keep in contact.

Mr. Baird was highly professional and treated Ms. Pfeil as an equal. When she worked under him and was growing in her career, he taught her. They frequently discussed their ideas as colleagues instead of from a hierarchy. They learned from each other, and Mr. Baird was a supportive supervisor. He also held weekly department manager meetings where he effectively communicated information, instead of over-sharing.

Mr. Baird had good, positive experience working with the public. When community members had an issue, he either went to the correct authority or sent residents to the proper people to find resolution. He also was often out in the community and was highly interactive. As he grew into his position, he attended other organizational and political meetings to make sure people had opportunities to meet with him. He was customer service oriented and treated everyone seeking his help as a customer.

Generally, Mr. Baird made good decisions. He first researched and analyzed a situation before going to someone who had expertise in that area of concern. His department heads provided suggestions and justification for their proposals. Afterward, he made recommendations. Moreover, Mr. Baird made good decisions when hiring personnel. Prior to his arrival, the Town had been in disarray. Mr. Baird brought a level of professionalism and expectation that many of his inherited employees had not known before he came. He hired qualified people with the proper skillsets.

Mr. Baird had strong financial skills. He was heavily involved in a capital improvement planning budget, finding grants, improving utilities on the department side, and looking into various financial opportunities. Through his efforts, he brought back the Town's transparency in financial accountability.

Though innovative, Mr. Baird kept realistic constraints. He recognized how good ideas sometimes required more money or reasons than available. He maintained the organization at a high level while looking to improve various avenues in efficiency and customer service.

**Reference Notes
David Baird**

As he grew in his career, Mr. Baird shared his experiences to teach others knowledge and skillsets. He remained professional when under pressure, even during lawsuits. For example, he dealt with a lawsuit involving a predominantly Hispanic population and landlords. The Town at the time had been enforcing codes, which prompted a landlord association to take Mr. Baird, Ms. Pfeil, and the Council to court. The Town settled and thus modified its codes while keeping up enforcement initiatives. These efforts helped clean up the Town, and both parties were satisfied. In another instance when Ms. Pfeil first started her job, she and Mr. Baird went through a lawsuit involving local politicians. Mr. Baird protected her during this time and kept her well informed, which she greatly appreciated.

As Town Manager, Mr. Baird dealt with many controversies. For example, he worked on the risky task of expanding utilities using new technology, which became a success. At other times, he worked through personnel issues. In each controversy, he handled the situation in a professional and documented manner. He strove to educate people first before proactively working with others to find a solution.

Ms. Pfeil is unaware of anything in Mr. Baird's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. She would hire him if given the chance and would work for him anywhere. In all their connections and overlapping professional circles, Ms. Pfeil has never heard any negative comments regarding Mr. Baird. He is the first person in Delaware to serve on the National Water Board, and he continues to serve the State well. He is quite personable and constantly professional. He loves challenges. He willingly helps others, even though such assistance is not for his own well-being. He has made and will continue to make a good Municipal Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe David Baird:

- Initiative,
- Teamwork,
- Collaborative effort,
- Well-rounded,
- Incredibly knowledgeable, and
- Incredible.

Strengths: His drive to keep learning, public speaking articulation, collaboration.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Danielle Dayton
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Cape Gazette (Lewes, DE)

May 6, 2021

Officials highlight Clean Water Bill in Milford - Bipartisan bill helps ensure clean drinking water for all Americans

U.S. Sen. Tom Carper, chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, joined Rick Duncan, executive director of the Delaware Rural Water Association, and **David Baird**, National Rural Water Association president, along with representatives from water suppliers throughout Delaware April 23 to highlight the support for the bipartisan Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021. This legislation, the first infrastructure bill advanced by a senate committee this Congress, will strengthen drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, foster economic growth, enhance the health and well-being of families across the nation, and address environmental justice.

"From Blades to the City of Wilmington, every Delawarean - and every American - regardless of ZIP code, deserves clean drinking water," said Carper. "This forward-thinking legislation will make investments into our nation's much-needed water infrastructure projects so that our communities have reliable, clean water and the means to pay for it. The bill makes significant investments in Environmental Protection Agency grant programs and revolving loan funds that support our nation's water infrastructure. This bill will authorize the investment of more than \$35 billion in water infrastructure projects across the country that focus on upgrading our aging infrastructure, addressing the threat of climate change, investing in new technologies, and providing assistance for marginalized communities."

"Funding for water and wastewater system infrastructure is extremely important, especially for the small systems that have limited revenues and resources," said Rick Duncan, executive director of the Delaware Rural Water Association. "This bill also continues funding for the National Rural Water programs which are so vital here in Delaware. Water facilities depend on our field technicians' expertise each and every day, providing the on-site, hands-on technical assistance so that water systems can continue to maintain compliance. We cannot thank Congress - especially Senator Carper - enough for coming to Delaware Rural Water Association and hearing our message."

"The National Rural Water Association appreciates the efforts of Senator Carper and all of the members of the Environment and Public Works committee in advancing this bipartisan legislation that is essential to the continued success of Rural America," said **David Baird**, president of the National Rural Water Association. "This investment in our nation's water and wastewater utilities will enhance public health benefits, promote environmental stewardship and serve as a catalyst for economic development opportunities in communities across the United States." The bill includes nearly \$30 billion in funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund and an additional \$6 billion in grant funding.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Delaware State News (Dover, DE)

April 29, 2021

Faulty Milford retention ponds affect homeowners

Author: Noah Zucker

In November, Caitlin and Brian Depelteau sold their house in Colorado to move to a home under construction in Milford’s West Shores subdivision, on the southeast side of town. But six months later, the military family with four kids will be bouncing between nightly rentals and relatives in Maryland, as they can’t move into their new home and the lease on their short-term rental is up. “We’re kind of just waiting right now, with no end date in sight,” Ms. Depelteau said of the situation last week. By Tuesday, the family had all but given up on moving in. “We sent in a letter canceling our contract, and due to the situation, (the homebuilder) refunded our earnest money,” Ms. Depelteau said of D.R. Horton, West Shores’ building contractor. “We have decided to move on to a preexisting home.”

The reason the Depelteaus and at least nine other households haven’t been able to move into their homes has to do with the subdivision’s faulty retention ponds, which are built to handle floodwaters. “They’re dry ponds, meaning they should be dry within a 48-hour period. Right now, you can go fishing in them,” Mr. Depelteau said. “The neighborhood is continuing to flood, and it’s also flooding nearby neighborhoods,” Ms. Depelteau added.

A statement from Sussex Conservation District program manager Jessica Watson sent to West Shores residents confirmed this last week. “We have heard from many of your neighbors this winter concerned with flooded streets and water in their backyards,” the statement said.

The issue was on Milford City Council’s radar Monday night, as well. “I’ve gotten inquiries from two people in West Shores concerning the situation with the ponds and the inability to move in or to correct the problem over there,” said Councilman Mike Boyle of the 1st Ward, where the subdivision is located.

“There is an item in executive session, and I would prefer that we discuss anything there,” said City Solicitor David Rutt. But when the executive session concluded Monday, there were no new public developments.

Builders and developers

David Baird, SCD’s district coordinator, said the flooding impacts between and 10 and 15 homes in the subdivision and the roadways, which were constructed properly to his knowledge. He said it’s still not clear exactly what the issue is, but he does have some theories. “It could be a whole host of things,” Mr. **Baird** said. “It could be the way it’s constructed. It could be that the groundwater levels are extremely high right now.”

He said the ponds are designed to absorb stormwater into the ground, but that they aren’t doing that at the rate they were expected to. “That’s something for the developer to determine, why it

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

isn't functioning per its design," Mr. **Baird** said. "It would be very premature to say, 'This is what the problem is,' but the developer needs to investigate that." In the case of West Shores, the developer subdivided the land and prepared it for construction, while D.R. Horton, a nationwide homebuilding company, purchased individual lots on which to build. Ms. Watson's statement identifies William Luther and his company, RB Holdings, as the developer. Mr. Luther could not be reached for comment on this story. SCD has had a hard time getting in touch with him, as well. "We reached out to the developer. We reached out to the city and tried to get all on the same page and have a coordinated effort," Mr. **Baird** said. "I believe there has been some correspondence, but it has been limited," he said. "We really haven't gotten much of a response."

Ms. Watson's statement said Mr. Luther had tried to fix the problem but was unsuccessful. "The developer, under the guidance of a geotechnical engineer, has attempted to revitalize the infiltration; however, they have been unsuccessful to date," the letter said.

D.R. Horton agreed that the developer, not the builder, is responsible for dealing with this issue. "These issues are the sole responsibility of the developer, as we have no authority to work on land, such as the open spaces and ponds, that we do not own," said Brian McManus, an operations manager with D.R. Horton.

Certificates of occupancy and bonds

The developer's noncompliance has left residents, the conversation district and the city with few options when it comes to forcing him to fix his work. Therefore, SCD is coordinating with the city of Milford to hold certificates of occupancy for the final handful of homes completed in the subdivision. It's a move meant to bring Mr. Luther to the table, but it's also one that comes at the expense of the Depelteaus and other new homeowners in West Shores. "The only way to really force (the developer's) hand was to hold the certificates of occupancy for nine houses," Ms. Depelteau said. "They are the final nine houses that are supposed to be closing right now. All nine families are unable to close on their homes." Therefore, she said, "until the retention ponds are working properly, we don't get to live there." As it turns out, they will never get to live there, since the family canceled its contract.

Mr. **Baird** said there are two ways SCD and the city can go about funding a fix for the retention ponds. "Option one might be using the city's bond on top of the district's bond," he said. "Option two would be adding some additional financial guarantee in the form of a bond on top of what was already issued to the district."

The city and SCD both received performance bonds from the developer, which would be returned to him if the project was completed correctly. "We've talked to the city about his being able to use the city's performance bond on top of the bond that the district received," Mr. **Baird** said. "It wouldn't cost the developer any more money, per se, in posting this guarantee."

The two bonds, he said, would likely cover the cost of fixing the retention ponds. "Using the city's bond would be the preference because everything's already in place, and it wouldn't cost

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**David Baird***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

anyone any more money,” Mr. **Baird** said. “That way, if there are additional improvements or corrections that need to be made, the developer would actually be able to use those dollars on making the repair versus having to spend money posting a cash bond as a guarantee the work is going to be done.”

But the second option is the one outlined in Ms. Watson’s statement. “The District is currently holding a financial guarantee — (a) bond — for the development to ensure implementation of the approved sediment and stormwater plan,” it said. “That bond will not cover additional costs beyond the original plan, therefore, we felt that an increase would guarantee implementation if needed.” The statement said that “once the District receives the increased bond amount, we will request that the City of Milford release the certificates of occupancy.”

Mr. **Baird** said this strategy was the one SCD was going with at the time of the statement but that, since then, they’ve switched to the other approach. He said SCD will “continue to look at any option that’s out there. If somebody has another alternative, we’re willing to sit down and listen to it.” He said situations like this are not common. “The conservation district has been requiring bonds on projects for the last seven or eight years, and we have not had to collect on one that entire time, and we don’t want to on this one,” Mr. **Baird** said.

Homeowners association

Earlier this month, there was some confusion about what would happen if the developer continued to not step up and the residents move forward with taking over the homeowners association. D.R. Horton is holding a meeting Wednesday to discuss turning over the HOA. “Should this issue not be addressed now, it could fall on the responsibility of the homeowners to make the repairs as stormwater facilities become the responsibility of the community once a project is fully constructed,” Ms. Watson said in her statement.

But earlier this month, a user on NextDoor who said she was both an employee of D.R. Horton and a West Shores resident made a post claiming that her neighbors should not fear forming an HOA and that doing so would not let the developer off the hook. Mr. McManus said he could not confirm if this user was actually an employee of the company.

But Mr. **Baird** was able to confirm that this poster was, in fact, correct. Merely forming the HOA would not be a step toward letting Mr. Luther or RB Holdings off the hook for the stormwater retention ponds. “Usually what happens, and I’m speaking very generically here, is that when a property is developed, there are certain covenants with that. One of those establishes the HOA,” Mr. **Baird** said. “There’s usually a clause in the contract somewhere that says once the improvements reach a certain level of completion, ... those improvements are turned over to the HOA and it becomes their formal responsibility.”

But an HOA wouldn’t just blindly agree to this transfer. “What you find is a lot of those HOAs want to have some sort of assurance that, when that is transferred to them, it’s actually working the way it’s supposed to be,” Mr. **Baird** said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

If the infrastructure isn't up to the HOA's standards, they don't have to take responsibility for it. In addition to getting approval from the conservation district for their stormwater plans, developers need to get a notice of intent permit through the federal Environmental Protection Agency's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. "That's a federal permit that's administered by the state that basically says, 'OK, Mr. Developer, you're responsible for these environmental conditions during construction,'" Mr. **Baird** said. "As long as construction is going on, that NOI permit has to be in place."

The HOA doesn't have to agree to take responsibility for that. "Unless you agree to put your name on the NOI permit and the stormwater permit that was issued by the conservation district, the developer is going to still be responsible," Mr. **Baird** said. "The HOA is going to have to agree to accept all the responsibilities associated with it before the transfer."

Moving forward

The whole situation was too much for the Depelteaus, so they gave up on West Shores and pursued moving into an existing home in the area. When the family sold their house in Colorado back in the fall, they assumed they would be able to move into their new home in Milford on May 6. "We just found out we have no expected close date whatsoever," Ms. Depelteau said last week. "Instead of an expected close date, (a D.R. Horton representative) messaged me, saying 'I'll help you find a Realtor for another rental.' "If they're trying to get me into a rental home, they don't expect this to be finished anytime soon," she said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bay to Bay News (DE)

April 23, 2021

Carper Outlines Safe-Water Legislation in Visit to Milford

Author: Noah Zucker

U.S. Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., was in Milford on Friday to support a bill focused on improving access to safe water sources nationwide. “We’re going to authorize \$15 billion in the drinking-water fund and another \$15 billion in the water-sanitation fund,” he said of the Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021. “There’s going to be another \$5 billion we’re going to put into grants.”

Sen. Carper is joined by a bipartisan slate of congresspeople in supporting this element of the infrastructure plan, which was introduced into the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee last month. “From Blades to the city of Wilmington, every Delawarean — and every American — regardless of ZIP code, deserves clean drinking water,” the senator said. “This forward-thinking legislation will make investments into our nation’s much-needed water-infrastructure projects, so that our communities have reliable, clean water and the means to pay for it.”

The senator gave his speech at the Delaware Rural Water Association facility in Milford because nonprofits like it, which are focused on rural water infrastructure, will be carrying out much of the plan if the bill passes. “There are tens of thousands of rural water associations. I think about half of them have one employee,” Sen. Carper said. “A lot of folks need more training. We have a lot of technology that could be used and improved around the country. We’re going to be able to do that.”

Both Sen. Carper and **David Baird**, a longtime member of the DRWA who now sits on the national group’s executive board, agreed that the bill will have the greatest impact on rural communities, where people are struggling the most. “The one big takeaway that everyone should remember is that the grant dollars outlined in this legislation are meant to go to the communities most in need,” **Mr. Baird** said. He said the funding will help DRWA and its counterparts nationwide “(provide) that support, which is so often needed, to small, disadvantaged rural communities.”

This support for rural water organizations often comes in the form of technical assistance, training and other education. “There are still a lot of needs out here in rural America,” **Mr. Baird** said. “Those dollars are going to go to help advance those (rural water) systems in the form of their operations, their managerial capacity, as well as their technical capacity and keeping up with a lot of the modern technologies.” He added that the bill is flexible when it comes to local implementation. “It does provide a great bit of flexibility to each of the states in administering the dollars, so states can get creative in working with your systems on what your needs are and making sure those needs can be met,” **Mr. Baird** said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

But the bill will also do a lot for ballooning communities, whose water infrastructure needs to grow with their populations. Middletown’s Mayor Kenneth Branner, a longtime friend of Sen. Carper’s, was at the event Friday to testify to that. “Middletown (would) get \$11.7 million,” he said. “We’ve already earmarked it for wastewater infrastructure, in addition to water infrastructure.” In Middletown, he said those systems are over 70 years old. “That will support economic development and growth when we’re targeting future companies coming to Delaware,” Mayor Branner said.

He said that all 57 municipalities in Delaware’s League of Local Governments, for which he’s on the executive committee, are slated to receive some amount of funding through the bill. “Every single one of them will get part of the pie, from \$100,000 all the way up to \$55 million for the city of Wilmington,” Mayor Branner said. “It’s a godsend for the municipalities,” which he said struggled greatly through 2020. “It’s free.” Mayor Branner is not the only local official focused on water.

Delaware Rep. Bryan Shupe, R-Milford, was also at the event and got a shout-out from Sen. Carper. He’s currently promoting Delaware House Bill 69, which recently moved out of committee and would also promote access to clean water on a local level. The legislation sets out to help two categories of people. “One is (people who are) on the lower end of the economic scale, and two is (the residents) that have unsafe drinking water in the state of Delaware,” Rep. Shupe said. “It helps them get a water-filtration system in their home.”

There’s another bill being considered, HB 200, which would make changes to the Delaware code to raise water standards in the long term. “HB 200 is a great step forward toward getting allocation of money for larger infrastructure,” Rep. Shupe said. “It’s also going to take years to get those pipes to people’s houses,” he said, but “HB 69 allows those individuals to start getting water-filtration systems in their homes within months and access a stopgap, a short-term solution, while they have to wait for that long-term solution that may take five to 10 years.”

He thinks the problem is bigger than it seems, both locally and nationally. “There’s a lot more need out there than we see at the ground level right now,” Rep. Shupe said. “I would look to any communities that have major health problems, and you could probably draw most of it back to not having clean water,” he said. “Clean water, clean air and clean soil are three things that we need for life. If that foundation is not set, then people start to develop health problems as small children, and it just continues on.”

Mr. Baird agreed. “We’re leaders in public health by providing safe, affordable, clean drinking water,” he said of rural water organizations. “It’s just a basic provision that we should all have.” Rep. Shupe greatly appreciated Sen. Carper’s bipartisan sentiment. “Sen. Carper said that this is not a challenge for one political party or another. It really is a challenge we as Americans need to meet,” Rep. Shupe said. “It won’t be just a Democratic victory or a Republican victory,” Sen. Carper said. “It’ll be good for everyone.”

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Morning Ag Clips (DE)

March 22, 2021

Local Work Group Meeting to be Held April 21

Author: Siobhan Kelley

The Sussex Conservation District (SCD) will hold a virtual local work group (LWG) meeting on Wednesday, April 21, 2021, at 9 a.m. This event is free and open to the public, preregistration is required.

The LWG allows stakeholders an opportunity to discuss current USDA Farm Bill programs, administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), conservation needs and resource concerns in Sussex County. The outcomes of the LWG will be included in the July 2021 State Technical Committee (STC) meeting. The STC serves in an advisory capacity to the NRCS on the implementation of the natural resource conservation provisions of the Farm Bill legislation.

According to **David Baird**, district coordinator at SCD, the LWG should be diverse and focused on agricultural interests and natural resource issues existing in the community. Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate should contact SCD one week prior to the event date. For more information or to register contact Bobbi Heck, 302-856-3990 ext. 3, bobbi.heck@de.nacdnet.net or visit www.sussexconservation.org/events.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Coastal Point (DE)

February 18, 2021

County Council Considers Increasing Funds for Conservation District

Author: Susan Canfora

The Sussex County Council this week agreed to consider increasing funding for the Sussex Conservation District as they discuss the 2022-fiscal-year budget, following a presentation by **David Baird**, district coordinator. **Baird** reviewed the functions of the district at the council's Tuesday, Feb. 16, meeting and said the council funds \$50,000 each year for the Cost Share Program. He asked that it be increased to \$100,000 in the 2022 fiscal year and that funding to maintain tax ditches be increased, or at least maintained.

During the past year, the County funded \$125,000 for the district's tax ditch program. Tax ditches are organizations formed on a watershed basis to construct and maintain a drainage system. The organizations are managed by officers, according to the website at www.dnrec.state.de.us. The website also states the tax ditch law stipulates "drainage and the prevention of flooding of lands and the management of water for resource conservation shall be considered a public benefit and conducive to the public health, safety and welfare." Sussex County has 142 tax ditch organizations. "This is a program that is a tremendous success. It's a lot of those nuisance drainage issues across the county," **Baird** said. The mission of the district is to "serve the residents of Sussex County in a variety of subjects but the focus is on land and water resources throughout the county," he said.

The district has 35 employees in departments including stormwater and heavy equipment operators. There is also a governing board whose members include County Councilman John Rieley. There are also four elected members and members appointed by the Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control and the University of Delaware's Extension Program. The district focuses on sediment and stormwater and has a heavy-equipment program. There is a Conservation Cost Share program that focuses on erosion control, soil health, soil quality and water quality.

In 2020, the district, a \$4 million program, planted thousands of acres of cover crops, offering an incentive program that pays farmers \$40 to \$50 per acre. In 2020, despite the coronavirus pandemic, "Things are just steadily moving forward in the District," **Baird** said, adding that there have not been long delays. The district didn't slow down its work and wasn't closed for any period of time. "We just kept on as business as usual, taking safeguards to protect our staff and people we are serving," he said.

Changes made due to the pandemic included a stormwater workshop series for developers, homeowners' associations and residents concerned about managing stormwater, various workshops and online panels for farmers replacing Field Day. "We have gone virtual, and it's been well-represented and well-received by the ag community here in Sussex County," **Baird** said. "Thank you for all you guys and girls do. Drainage is a big issue. The more it rains, the

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

bigger an issue it is. I'm sure we can work with you," Council President Michael Vincent told **Baird**. When Tuesday's meeting began, Council Vice President John Rieley had joked, "Can I make a motion to get the rain to stop?" "Sure," Vincent replied, smiling.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

WGMD.com (DE)

February 16, 2021

Sussex County Council Discusses the Sussex Conservation District & Master Planning

Author: Mari Lou

The Sussex County Council met Tuesday morning in Georgetown. They started the morning with a presentation from **David Baird**, the District Coordinator for the Sussex Conservation District. They provide technical guidance and financial assistance to enhance, maintain, protect, and improve land and water resources. Their programs include agriculture conservation, sediment and stormwater and heavy equipment.

County Administrator Todd Lawson reminded the Council that there is no meeting next week and the meeting on March 2 will be their first public hearing only meeting which will be held at Delaware Tech in Georgetown, in room 504 in the Carter Partnership Building beginning at 1:30pm. This meeting will only deal with land use public hearings. You'll find the agenda at the county's website by March 1st.

Sussex County Librarian, Kathy Graybeal, was given a proclamation for the Sussex County Libraries Random Acts of Kindness Week. And County Human Resources Director Karen Brewington announced the first quarter Shining Star Employee Recognition Awards. There were 14 submissions and the three people named are Pat Allegro-Smith – Sheriff's Office, Amanda Hollis – IT and Tyler Short – IT (but formerly of the Milton Public Library).

Planning & Zoning Director, Jamie Whitehouse and Assistant County Attorney Vince Robertson discussed Master Planning. This is supported by the County's Comprehensive Plan, but has not yet been used. While Master Planning was discussed last August, there are two new council members who are not familiar with it and the discussion was a refresher for all involved. The M-P-Z is similar to a RPC (regional planned community), but with more diverse development types and design flexibility. It's intended to incorporate residential areas, neighborhood commercial areas, professional, medical and financial office areas and civic areas as part of a single unified development plan. County Administrator Todd Lawson told the council during this discussion that there is some interest in the M-P-Z along the Route 24 corridor. There were no afternoon public hearings and again, there is no meeting on Tuesday, February 23.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Delaware Public Media (DE)

November 28, 2020

Over \$1 Million Available for Farmers to Plant Cover Crops in Sussex County

Author: Kelli Steele

Sussex County farmers can apply for over \$1.1 millions in funding from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to plant cover crops. Cover crops are traditionally planted in the fall following corn or beans or other cash crops that farmers normally plant. The purpose of cover crops is to keep the soil in place and help prevent wind and water erosion; cover crops also serve as nutrient uptakes - collecting additional nitrogen and phosphorus that's left in the ground from harvested crops so the nutrients don't get absorbed into the groundwater.

Sussex Conservation District (SCD) district coordinator **David Baird** says this Natural Resources Conservation Service funding covers the next three years. "This will add to funding that the Conservation District already receives from both NRCS and the State of Delaware. And what it does is bring additional resources into Sussex County," said **Baird**. **Baird** notes the additional funding assists farmers in meeting both their operational goals for their farm and the entire Ag community in helping to meet all the water quality goals here in Delaware and with the watersheds in our region. The deadline to apply for the funding is February 5, 2021. All applications received by that deadline will be ranked and considered for funding next spring.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

National Rural Water Association (USA)

October 8, 2020

Kent Watson Passes the Presidential Gavel to Incoming NRWA President, David Baird

Author: NRWA Cheyenne

Kent Watson passed the Presidential Gavel to incoming President, **David Baird** on October 1, 2020 in Nashville, Tennessee. Since the 2020 in-person WaterPro Conference was cancelled, NRWA was not able to hold a traditional gavel-passing ceremony. After the Hybrid Board Meeting concluded, Kent, **David** and a small group of their peers gathered to discuss the past, present and future of the National Rural Water Association. Watch the video below to hear both speeches and witness them pass the gavel in true NRWA tradition.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Delmarva Farmer (DE)
January 17, 2020

DDA, EPA Gather to Sign Five-Year Memorandum of Understanding

Author: Sean Clougherty

Officials from the Delaware Department of Agriculture and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency signed a five-year memorandum of understanding Jan. 15 during Delaware Agriculture Week, formalizing an improved relationship and communication toward better water quality and farm viability. Michael Scuse, Delaware agriculture secretary, said working with the EPA Mid-Atlantic Region office on farming and environmental issues has improved greatly with Administrator Cosmo Servidio and the MOU helps to solidify that work after they both leave their respective posts. “This is a document that stands for the future,” Scuse said. “The document speaks for all of you to make sure we have that continuity.”

The first-of-its kind MOU expands activities to prioritize funding, coordinate on regulatory issues, recognize farmers for environmental stewardship, and provide educational opportunities for producers. It lists the agencies intention to hold annual meetings with state and federal leaders on priorities and activities, as well as joint trainings to ensure effective implementation of federal and state regulatory programs and continue agriculture roundtables and farm tours to foster a dialogue between EPA and the agricultural community on successes, challenges and opportunities to work together. Under the agreement, the two agencies also will collaborate on an annual report to highlight achievements.

The MOU signing came after a roundtable discussion with farmers and agriculture service representatives to communicate issues and concerns directly to Servidio and Kelly Shenk, EPA Mid-Atlantic Region agriculture advisor. Servidio said monthly phone calls with Scuse have been key in providing clarity and predictability to farmers regarding EPA action and the calls will continue. Much of the roundtable discussion centered around funding for implementing more conservation practices and continuing research to improve farm sustainability. Servidio said the EPA’s commitment to restoring the Chesapeake Bay has “not waived one bit” but he added he is cognizant of what pressures farmers are under to stay viable.

Servidio and Shenk commented on signs of improved bay health like more grasses in the Susquehanna flats and falling nitrogen levels in many Delaware rivers. “What you’ve done is having an impact and we need to continue it and for farmers that means more resources,” Shenk said. Shen noted EPA’s Mid-Atlantic region received a \$12 million budget increase which will be split between funding a grant program through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and helping states implement conservation programs in high priority areas. Scuse said in Delaware, \$2.9 million was added to incentivize cover crop planting and the farmer response showed there was more demand for participation.

David Baird, Sussex Conservation District coordinator, said with the added funding, there was twice as much cover crop planting statewide as in previous years. “This first year shows that we

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

can do it,” **Baird** said. “It shows we have a huge appetite.” Shenk said the EPA’s Clean Water State Revolving Fund could be one option for helping to put in more best management practices. “There’s tremendous potential for using it for ag practices,” she said, adding they would look at streamlining the application process. Kenny Bounds, DDA deputy secretary, asked the EPA duo about increasing funding for agronomic research. Shenk said every state in the region has that need and their office meets with Land Grant universities in each state to understand what the top priorities are and how to collaborate better to meet those needs. “Every state we talk to has that need to fund agronomic research,” Shenk said.

John Shepard, Caroline County Soil Conservation District manager, urged the officials to look at funding improvements to tax ditches which often have a low tax base for maintenance but help filter nutrients and trap sediment. “They’re sediment collectors,” Shepard said. “That’s something that I think would be a huge help for agriculture, to fund improvements to Public Drainage Associations.” Shenk said efforts are often focused on installing practices on land that drains into the ditches, but the ditches need attention too. “We need to look into that,” she said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Delaware Business News (DE)

December 12, 2018

Land & Litter Challenge Seeks Solutions to Poultry Waste Issues

Author: Delaware Business Now

The Delmarva Land & Litter Challenge (DLLC) – a partnership effort between members of the poultry industry, environmental advocates and regulators – is inviting stakeholders to discuss beneficial uses of poultry litter. This group seeks to develop “consensus-driven solutions that support sustainable and profitable agriculture and healthy local waterways.” DLLC invited a wide range of representatives to meet with them at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science’s Wachapreague Lab on November 19. The main discussion topic centered around new ideas for the transportation of poultry litter and moving litter from poultry houses to farms that want it. Poultry manure (also known as “litter”) is a organic fertilizer that includes phosphorus, nitrogen, calcium and other micronutrients and elements that promote plant growth and soil health.

Commercial fertilizer is becoming increasingly expensive and does not offer the same long-term benefit to crop production. Although poultry litter is abundantly available in some areas, many crop farmers around the Chesapeake Bay region have a difficult time getting this commodity. The cost of transporting the litter between farms and existing state regulations around litter storage present challenges to a streamlined and economically feasible transportation program across Delmarva states. Poultry houses often remove litter from chicken houses in the late fall/early winter but farmers typically cannot spread it until the spring. Overwinter storage can sometimes be difficult, due to state regulations which were enacted to prevent litter from entering local waterways.

The DLLC is looking for solutions to transport poultry litter that make effective use of this resource while also protecting local and bay water quality. The group is discussing the potential for new incentives for litter transport and new methods for litter disposal as efficient ways to reach local nutrient management targets. Farmers have made progress toward achieving nutrient reduction goals for the Bay; for instance, agriculture has reduced its annual nitrogen contribution by 17 million pounds since 1985. This work will take on added importance as states in the region design and implement revised practices in 2019.

During their November 19 meeting, DLLC’s Steering Committee elected Jeff Horstman as their new chair. Mr. Horstman is the Executive Director of ShoreRivers, an Easton-based nonprofit working toward clean water for Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Delaware has been involved in DLLC. Current and past members include Delaware Secretaries of Ed Kee and Kenny Bounds; **David Baird** Sussex Conservation District Coordinator; Georgie Cartanza of University of Delaware. Amy Jacobs with The Nature Conservancy on Maryland’s Eastern Shore works with farmers in Delaware. The same is true of Lisa Wool with the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance. Following the elections, Horstman said: “I am excited and hopeful as we move into 2019 that we can develop consensus solutions to nutrient pollution. I am also glad that ShoreRivers can help lead this process.” Horstman replaces former DLLC chair Andrew McLean, owner of Relief

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Farms, an organic chicken farm in Queen Anne’s County. Mr. McLean will remain a member of the group’s Steering Committee and stated: “It has been a rewarding experience being the chair of such a diverse group of leaders. I look forward to continuing the work we have started.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

WBOC.com (DE)

August 14, 2018

Sussex Conservation District Hosts Soil Health Field Day

Author: Unknown

For months, farmers have been burying tighty whities in the ground to test soil health. Now, farmers have dug up the underwear to see what's left of it. The underwear reveal was held at the Sussex Conservation District's Fourth Annual Soil Health Field Day. According to the Sussex Conservation District, "the 'Soil Your Undies' Challenge is a fun visual demonstration to show how crop practices that improve soil health increase biological activity in the soil."

According to the Sussex Conservation District, the underwear was buried in different fields across Delmarva where farmers "employed a variety of management practices." Based on those practices, as well as the health of the soil, this would impact the decomposition of the underwear. The underwear on display Tuesday varied. Some underwear was hardly there, while other pairs remained intact.

Local farmer Jay Baxter says he was shocked to find out the results of his underwear at Soil Health Field Day. "We anticipated a few holes here and there. Never did we imagine that the entire underwear would be gone," Baxter said. Baxter says he hasn't touched the underwear since it was planted--only tending to it minimally and providing irrigation as needed. On Tuesday, all that remained of his underwear was the band--with barely any remnants of cotton left.

This is an indicator that Baxter's soil had microbes and other healthy organisms that broke down the underwear. Soil Health Field Day also included a soil pit demonstration, as well as talks on humic acid and soil health, as well as pest management. **David Baird**, the district coordinator with the Sussex Conservation District said, "It's really just sharing ideas. There's not a one size fits all solution for them, but it's information they can take back to their operation and incorporate portions or all of it." The Sussex Conservation District says it hosted nearly 100 people for Tuesday's event.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Cape Gazette (DE)

July 27, 2015

Sussex Officials Take Aim at Drainage Issues – Many Homeowners Left Holding the Bag When Systems Fail

Author: Ron MacArthur

Mention the word drainage, and most Sussex County officials cringe. That's because homeowners are quick to vent frustrations when their properties flood due to real or perceived circumstances beyond their control. With no regulations to guide grading of new home lots, it's left up to builders and developers. Developers may change over time, and several builders may be working in the same community so continuity becomes an issue. In some cases, unsuspecting homeowners – most who move or retire to the area – are left with drainage issues that are hard to solve. "For Sussex County homeowners, it's an issue more often than it needs to be," says County Administrator Todd Lawson. Currently, the county does not address drainage or lot-grading in its code. To remedy that, a group of stakeholders has been meeting to develop county drainage standards. The working group is made up of county staff, homeowners, developers and builders.

David Baird, Sussex Conservation District coordinator, said the group's goal is to develop a set of minimum standards to protect quality-of-life issues. Sussex County Council members attended a June 9 workshop with the committee. Eventually, a draft set of standards will be presented for council consideration. **Baird** said a presentation to council could be made as early as sometime in August.

A two-pronged approach

Jessica Watson, conservation district sediment and stormwater program manager, said the effort will be twofold including education and design standards. Under the proposed regulations, lot-grading of single-family homes would be certified by a land surveyor or professional engineer before a certificate of occupancy could be issued. "It would be verified that the lot has positive drainage," she said, meaning stormwater can get off a lot without impacting surrounding lots. Under the proposal, single-family lots of one acre or greater would be exempt.

Watson said the proposed grading plan for a community would show first-floor elevations, the minimum grade away from other houses or lots and conveyance channels including more a more defined plan of the slopes of swales. Committee members agreed that submitting a set of as-built plans to verify a house conforms to grading specifications would cost an additional \$300 to \$400 for each lot. There are no regulations in place to keep lots from being built up with additional soil; this ensures water runs off but often onto other lots. Because neighboring lots are sometime built with higher elevations, Watson said, "Many times, the first ones in a community end up with the water."

Baird said district, county and state officials get phone calls from frustrated residents with drainage problems after the fact. The district provides technical assistance to builders and

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**David Baird***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

developers and meets with homeowners who have problems. In rare cases – such as in Heron Bay near Lewes – the district along with the county, has held up building permits until drainage issues have been rectified. Watson said some builders in newer communities are already doing proper grading of lots to ensure the community's stormwater management system works. Committee member Mark Fitzgerald of Schell Brothers said it pays to do it right the first time.

Unfortunately, he said, many approved stormwater systems are designed to fail. He said Schell recently paid \$500,000 to fix one community's system after the company took it over. "It cost three times as much to fix something," he said. The slope and depth of roadside swales is a matter of concern for local builders. Many times, swales do not have enough slope to provide proper water flow.

Builder Scott Dailey of Capstone Homes said area builders need minimal specifications designed for the real world with at least a change in the minimum slope required by the county for roadside swales. "That spec needs to change," he said. Bob Horsey of David G. Horsey & Sons said roadside swales are the culprit. "Swales are the beginning of everything," he said. "The slope needs to be increased, and we also need to deal with the side and back swales."

All about Sussex County swales

If builders do not use curbs and gutters with underground pipes to channel water runoff into stormwater ponds or other retention areas, they either swales or bioswales. Because of environmental benefits, swales are promoted by the district as part of a stormwater management system. The committee agreed that more education is needed so homeowners understand how swales function and how they should be maintained. Watson said the district has published a series of information guides on swales and their management to be distributed to residents throughout Sussex County. "Many people have not seen swales and do not know how they are supposed to function," Watson said.

Swales are open grass channels that convey water runoff to a point of discharge including catch basins, culvert pipes and stormwater facilities. Roadside swales run parallel to the road, located in the right-of-way and are intended to handle road water runoff. Many residential subdivisions in Sussex County have privately maintained roads with these types of swales that are reviewed and inspected by Sussex County public works. Once the road and swales have been approved by Sussex County, the roads and swales become the responsibility of the developer until the roads and swales are turned over to the community's homeowners association. Roadside swales are not owned by an individual property owners, but backyard and sideyard swales are owned by property owners.

According to the conservation district, vegetated swales are the preferred method of conveying stormwater runoff because they filter pollutants; slow down runoff; encourage infiltration; recharge groundwater; help alleviate downstream flooding; and are low maintenance and cost effective. Watson said the conventional system of storm drains with curbs and gutters is an effective method to move stormwater, but it does not provide the environmental benefit of filtering and slowing down the water.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

In Sussex County, Watson said, roadside swales are designed to convey a 10-year-storm event, which is 5.3 inches of rain in 24 hours. She said it is expected that water in the swales will flow during heavy rain storms and recede in a reasonable amount of time. However, she said, it's not unusual for swales to remain soggy or wet following storms. Bioswales are typically larger areas of green technology that are engineered to meet certain stormwater criteria. They are typically located in a community's open space or in drainage/stormwater easement areas.

County engineer Mike Izzo said the proposed regulations would apply to future developments but would not address issues faced in existing communities. Watson agreed. She said drainage complaints will continue to surface in existing developments even if new lot-grading regulations are enacted. Enforcement of the proposed regulations has not yet been determined, but will be worked out by the committee. The county and conservation district could share enforcement responsibility.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Cape Gazette (DE)

December 2, 2013

Flooding Problems Called Black Eye for Sussex – Residents Demand Accountability from Council, Conservation District

Author: Ron MacArthur

A question of responsibility surfaced during a Sussex County Council public hearing about bonding authority for stormwater projects. During public testimony at the Nov. 19 meeting, William Carroll of Bethany Beach said he attended a recent meeting about flooding issues in Long Neck. "All state officials said flooding was because of inactivity by Sussex County Council and Sussex County had no representative there," he said. "The greater issue is that when their plans don't work, they blame Sussex County. There has to be better communication between Sussex County and the state. "The responsibility is being laid at your feet. You have a black eye from the people who live in Long Neck," Carroll said. He said if a town such as Dagsboro floods, town officials take responsibility. "When it floods in Sussex County, no one takes responsibility," he said. He asked what the conservation district's role was.

District Coordinator **David Baird** said a clarification was needed as he explained the role of the organization to council. "We have no formal authority when it comes to drainage. We provide technical assistance to DNREC, and even that is becoming more and more a chore to complete. We fit it in when we can," he said. **Baird** said conservation district staff reviews stormwater and drainage plans submitted by developers and builders to assure they comply with state regulations. The district does not develop the plans. "It falls back on the responsibility of developers to meet the standards," **Baird** said. "I see more and more problems with drainage and flooding; the system is not working," Deaver said.

District will administer its own bonds

After the hearing, county council voted unanimously to divorce itself from stormwater bonding authority and turn it over to the Sussex Conservation District, the agency that approves, administers and inspects stormwater systems. In the past, the county administered one bond for all infrastructure – including sediment control and stormwater management systems. Under the new system, the conservation district will take over administration of bonds for sediment and stormwater management improvements. Instead of one bond, developers will be required to purchase two bonds – one for the county and one for the conservation district. "The county has been assuming liability for holding the bonds but did not have control over the work being done," said assistant county attorney David Rutt during county council's Nov. 19 meeting. Now the conservation district has instituted a program to administer its own bonds, Rutt said.

Baird said some projects would be exempt: farm structures, commercial projects where the property owner maintains the stormwater features, projects on sites of less than one acre and projects with a value of less than \$10,000. The new program is set to begin in January, 2014. **Baird** said the district would follow the county's new policy and allow a one-time reduction of up to 50 percent of the total bond as work progresses.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Cape Gazette (DE)

October 21, 2013

Sussex Officials Want to Tighten Bonding Process – Conservation District Could Administer Own Program

Author: Ron MacArthur

In the near future, developers may have to post two bonds to ensure work is completed. Sussex County officials are making strides to upgrade the bonding process for residential development. Under current regulations, the county requires developers to post a single bond of no less than 125 percent of the cost of required improvements. In addition to infrastructure, the bond covers sediment control and stormwater management projects under the jurisdiction of Sussex Conservation District. A bond or letter of credit is required to ensure projects are finished when a developer fails to complete infrastructure projects such as roads. The county uses the funds to hire contractors to complete the work.

Sussex County officials now want to switch some bonding authority to the conservation district. Under the current system, the county administers one bond for all infrastructure – including sediment control and stormwater management systems. But reviewing plans, inspecting and approvals of those systems is the responsibility of the conservation district, not the county. "Sussex County has no control," said county attorney David Rutt during county council's Oct. 8 meeting. "This places the county in the middle and sets the county up for potential exposure without any control." Under a new plan – possibly starting in early January 2014 – the conservation district would take over administration of bonds for sediment and stormwater management improvements. Instead of one bond, developers would be required to purchase two bonds – one for the county and one for the conservation district.

David Baird, conservation district coordinator, said the district would require a 150-percent bond to cover the cost of improvements because the projects typically cost less than other infrastructure. **Baird** said the district would follow the county's new policy and allow a one-time reduction of up to 50 percent of the total bond as work progresses. **Baird** said some projects would be exempt: farm structures, commercial projects where the property owner maintains the stormwater features, projects on sites of less than one acre and projects with a value of less than \$10,000. **Baird** said the district's board has not taken formal action on the switch but has agreed to it. "We will have to address the additional administration costs," he said, adding the new procedure does not help streamline the construction process. "It breaks it apart, but if that's the way the county wants to go, we will support it." A new ordinance will be required to make the change. County council and the planning and zoning commission will have public hearings before voting on the bonding change.

County adopts new bonding protocols

Also at the Oct. 8 meeting, council adopted a new set of protocols to improve the bonding process. Under current regulations, developers are allowed to request reductions in bond amounts as phases of projects are completed. Under the new protocol, developers can request a one-time

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

reduction of not less than 50 percent of the original bond amount. At least one layer of hot-mix must be placed on all roads within a development before a bond reduction can be requested. Also, the county has developed a more specific costing process that will be posted on its website. "We need to know how much it will cost the county to complete work," said county engineer Mike Izzo. He said in the past there have been projects for which bond money was insufficient to complete work. He said administration, inspection and engineering fees have to be added to obtain a more realistic cost of doing business.

Doing projects with no bonds

In January 2012, because of a slowdown in the housing market, county council enacted a two-year no-bond process allowing developers to begin projects and construct infrastructure without a bond. However, no property transfers or lot sales can take place without a 125-percent bond in place. "This takes a lot of coordination with county staff to keep records updated. It's been somewhat of a challenge to close out the loopholes in the computer systems," Izzo said. Izzo said the four phases of the ongoing Senators housing project off Gills Neck Road in Lewes has two phases that are bonded while two phases are also being constructed under the no-bond process. Izzo said by mistake 10 to 15 building permits have been issued by county staff to no-bond projects. Since the no-bond ordinance expires in January 2014, council will have to vote to approve its continuation. An ordinance extending the deadline for one year was introduced at council's Oct. 15 meeting.

Sussex council questions leverage

As ordinances were introduced at the Oct. 15 meeting, Sussex County council members raised questions concerning a possible loss of leverage in the stormwater/sediment control process. Councilman Vance Phillips, R-Laurel, said council might be losing leverage by de-coupling the bonds, while Council President Mike Vincent, R-Seaford, asked exactly what leverage council had when the Sussex Conservation District not only reviews plans but also approves and inspects projects. Phillips suggested council would lose control by giving up bonding authority to the conservation district. He said the bond is the only leverage the county has over the conservation district.

Councilman Sam Wilson, R-Georgetown, agreed saying the change could take away some of council's authority over the land-use process. County Administrator Todd Lawson said county officials try to coordinate projects under review by the conservation district assuring projects are built to specifications and on time. He said, in his opinion, the change does not take much leverage away from council. Assistant county attorney David Rutt reminded council that the conservation district's authority comes from the state. He also said the discussion would be better as part of a public hearing. The ordinance was introduced and will be placed on future planning and zoning commission and county council agendas.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Cape Gazette (DE)

October 2, 2012

Sussex Conservation District Selects New District Coordinator

Author: Unknown

The Sussex Conservation District has named **David Baird** of Milford as the new district coordinator, responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the district. “The Board of Supervisors is excited to have Dave on board,” said SCD Chairman Bill Vanderwende, “and we are looking forward to the direction in which he will be leading the district.” **Baird** is a graduate of East Carolina University and earned his master of public administration degree from the University of Baltimore.

As former city manager of Georgetown and Milford, **Baird** has become very familiar with SCD operations. In addition to his local government experience, **Baird** also is well versed in the areas of public policy, regulatory affairs, legislative affairs, land use and zoning, financial management and budgeting, conservation efforts, public works, economic development, strategic planning and community relations.

Baird has also been very active serving with several organizations including the Delaware Rural Water Association and the National Rural Water Association, where he serves as a member of the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and as chairman of the Legislative Committee. “I thank the board of supervisors for their confidence in my abilities,” said **Baird**. “I look forward to working with the district’s cooperators and partners and the district staff in the stewardship of Sussex County’s soil and water resources.”

Baird officially assumed his new duties effective Oct. 1. For more information on the Sussex Conservation District and its programs, go to www.sussexconservation.org or call 302-856-3990, Ext. 3.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

December 1, 2011

City Manager, David Baird, Leaves Post Abruptly

Author: Christine Miller

As of Nov. 29, following an executive session of the City Council, **David Baird** is no longer the city manager of Milford. The city council announced Baird's departure through a press release put out late Wednesday evening. "The City of Milford announces that City Manager **David W. Baird** has left office effective November 29, 2011 following the inability of the city and **Mr. Baird** to reach an agreement on the terms of a new employment contract. Mayor Joseph R. Rogers thanks **Mr. Baird** for his service to the City on behalf of the City Council, wishes him well in his future endeavors. City Council will meet in an executive session next week to discuss and possibly appoint an interim city manager."

Calls to the mayor were not returned. **Baird** also could not be reached for comment. However, Councilman Owen Brooks said that he voted for **Baird** to stay on as city manager. "We've got a lot of projects that need to be done and we need some direction to do that," Brooks said. "I have always liked and respected **David Baird**. When I called the man, he always called me back. I never had any problems getting in touch with him at any time. And, he helped me help people so I liked him a lot.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

November 10, 2011

Milford Public Officials Late, Delinquent on Property Taxes

Author: Jennifer Hayes

With a public referendum next week on financing for a new Washington Street water treatment facility, a hot topic on many Milford residents' minds is the city's finances. And based on public records, some city leaders have not been keeping up with their own tax bills. As of Tuesday, Councilman Steve Johnson (Ward One) and Vice Mayor Katrina Wilson (Ward Four) had not yet paid their city property taxes, which were due Sept. 30. Milford City Manager **David Baird** said as of Tuesday, Johnson's account did have an outstanding balance, but according to Milford tax records, a payment for the full amount owed was then paid Wednesday.

Until Wednesday, Johnson, whose term lasts from 2011 to 2013, was delinquent on \$620.08 with an additional \$12.40 in penalty fees on his home, located in the Hearthstone Manor subdivision, according to city records. When asked about the delinquency earlier this week, Johnson denied the claim, stating that his property taxes were up to date. "The property taxes you are referring to are taxes for fiscal year 2012," he wrote in an email. "Both my 2011 and 2012 taxes are paid."

Baird said the city's property tax web portal, which is available for public use, is updated on a daily basis and the city processes payments the day those payments are received. "That information is drawing right from the city's data and I'll stand by it," he said. **Baird** said the most recent property taxes, which were billed Aug. 9, 2011, are for the 2011 tax year but represent the 2011/2012 fiscal year.

Wilson, who owes the city \$453.10 with an additional \$9.06 in penalties for her residential property on the 600 block of North Street, cited financial hardship as the reason her taxes are not paid. "I've been out of work for two and half months," she said. "For you to put that I'm having a hardship in the newspaper is very disrespectful." According to Kent County records, Wilson has also yet to pay \$824.91 in county property taxes, which were also due Sept. 30. That tax bill was mailed out June 1.

Councilman Skip Pikus (Ward Two), chairman of the city's finance committee, is delinquent on his 2010 and 2011 Kent County property taxes, according to Kent County records. The taxes are associated with his business, Lou's Bootery, on North Walnut Street. He is more than five years delinquent on his Sussex County property taxes associated with his home on the unit block of West Clarke Avenue, according to Sussex County records. Sussex County records show Pikus owes \$6,592.60 in taxes dating from 2006 to this year. The last payment was made in April 2009, which went toward his 2006 balance. According to Kent County records, he owes a total of \$1,377.33 and his property is eligible for a tax sale. Pikus said he was unaware he was delinquent on his county taxes. "I'll have to look into it," Pikus said. "They come out of the mortgage [escrow] accounts."

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Ruby Farmer, a staff member in the Kent County Department of Finance's tax office, said after two years of delinquencies, the county begins mailing out tax sale notices. While Milford records listed Pikus as delinquent on his city taxes for both of the above properties for 2010 and 2011 earlier this month, those delinquencies have since been cleared. Also listed as delinquent on his Milford property taxes is Councilman James Starling Sr. (Ward Four).

According to city records, Starling owes Milford \$303.84 associated with his home on the 700 block of Truitt Avenue, after making a \$113.03 payment on his tax bill on Oct. 17. Starling has a history of making monthly payments on both his Kent County and Milford property taxes, according to tax records. He currently has a \$422 balance in Kent County after making two \$100 payments toward his \$612, 2011 tax bill. Starling did not return the Milford Beacon's phone messages by Wednesday's deadline.

Same rules

While the city will work with residents to get their taxes paid, Finance Director Jeff Portmann said all residents are held to the same standard. "Everyone is expected to pay their taxes and to pay them on time," he said. John Darsney, a former tax assessor for the city and Milford resident, said the city's elected officials need to be held accountable for setting an example for other residents. "We all need to be aware and go to meetings and ask questions," he said. "We put these people in charge. If they're asking us to incur more debt, they need to be paying their share."

Project will require debt payments

Baird said funding the project through a loan from the EPA's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, which offers a 1 percent interest rate over a 20-year payment plan, is the best economical choice for the city. "The reason we're going to be borrowing is that with the terms of the loan, the grant is the only way we could get the 1 percent interest rate." **Baird** said he hopes the financial issues of individual council members do not affect the outcome of the upcoming referendum. "The borrowing issue being proposed is a very sound and solid proposal on its merits," he said. "If there's an issue over tax payments, that's between the elected official and the voter. Administratively, we don't differentiate an elected official from any other resident or someone who does business in the city."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Milford Chronicle (DE)

November 9, 2011

City Moves Forward with Electric Improvements

Author: Milford Chronicle and The Journal

The City of Milford is moving forward with an \$8 million project to add a second interconnection point and second substation to its electric system with the goal of improving operational efficiencies and improving its already strong level of reliability, according to City Manager **David Baird**. The new interconnection, a joint project between Delmarva Power and the city, and will be located just to the south of the DSWA Transfer Station on U.S. 113 while the new substation will be located just off Del. 14 and constructed by the city. Along with preliminary design and engineering, the work completed to date has been the acquisition of land at both locations and the siting of one of the transformers for the substation.

Work on the substation will continue over the next couple of months, and work on the new interconnection is scheduled to begin in March. Both the substation and the interconnection are scheduled to be online by October 2012. In addition to the new substation and interconnection, residents will also see other electric system improvements throughout the city. A new transmission line will be constructed along U.S. 113, connecting the interconnection to the new substation on Del. 14. Also, the addition of the new substation necessitates that additional equipment be added throughout the existing system so city electric crews can operate the system more efficiently.

Funding for the project was made available through \$5.5 million in voter approved borrowing and \$2.5 million from the city's electric reserve fund, and is not projected to increase user rates. The bonds sold for this project have an average interest rate of 3.72 percent over a 25.5 year term. The city has always been very proactive when it comes to the maintenance and expansion of its utility infrastructure, and this project is no different. One of city council's top priorities is economic development, and a key element to its success is having a reliable, sufficiently sized and competitively priced electric service, **Mr. Baird** said. The on-going improvements to the city's electric system will not only support the current businesses and residents of the city, but also position the city to be more attractive to our existing businesses looking to expand and in supporting new business opportunities in throughout Milford.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)
September 29, 2011

Milford Streetscape Project on Hold, Minor Improvement to be Made

Author: Unknown

Area

Northeast Front Street, from Washington Street to the Milford Police Department

Cost

Nearly \$2 million

The Details

Plans for a proposed streetscape project have been in the works for the past two years. The project was to include adding new sidewalks, relocating utilities underground and cleaning up the overall visual appearance of the landscape on Northeast Front Street, from Washington Street to the Milford Police Department headquarters. City Manager **David Baird** said original improvements were made to that portion of the city 17 years ago, therefore an upgrade is needed.

The Progress

Baird said the city has not been able to proceed with the project due to lack of funding. "We're roughly \$800,000 to \$1 million short of where we need to be," he said. In the interim, **Baird** said the city will move forward with a tree and grate project along Walnut Street and Northwest Front Street, which will include leveling out sidewalks and replacing overgrown or dead trees in the area. **Baird** said some funds allocated to the streetscape project will be used to fund the tree and grate project. "Because we're so far off from completing the streetscape, we can utilize some of those city dollars to get something done now," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)
September 22, 2011

New Service Offers Property Record Report Cards

Author: Patricia Dove

Residents and business owners need to look no further to find out all they need to know on commercial and residential properties in the City of Milford. The city recently launched a new service on its website that allows people the opportunity to retrieve property record cards. "We started this new service a month ago," said **David Baird**, city manager of Milford. "We were always receiving a number of calls from residents to get information on properties. Since the database was already there we figured, why not."

So how does this service work?

"Anyone can use this service, you don't have to be a resident of Milford," said **Baird**. "All you need is the parcel ID or a street address." The property record card gives more information than just the price and square footage. It includes zoning, taxes and sales history. "This isn't just a valuable resource for the residents of Milford, but for new homeowners as well," said Jamie Masten, owner of Masten Realty. "With the service it allows potential buyers to get all the facts without having to dig around for them." This site isn't just for the residents but can be much help to business owners as well. "Business owners, especially new business owners, get the history of the property," said **Baird**. "They can find out what improvements have been made and when they were made. They can also find out the value of the property."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Milford Chronicle (DE)
September 7, 2011

Court Rules on Building

Author: Gwen Guerke

A Kent County Superior Court judge ruled Aug. 22 in favor of a property owner in an on-going dispute that involves partially demolished properties on one of the city's main streets in the historic district. Judge Robert Young decided in favor of Sypros Maroulas Inc. who appealed the city's Board of Appeals condemnation and order to demolish 205 and 207 N. W. Front St. properties. According to court documents, Judge Young's decision was based not on the appearance of the buildings but on the manner in which the city's Board of Appeals rendered its decision.

Problems started in 2006 when demolition began on 201 N.W. Front St., now owned by Downtown Properties LLC. The rear wall collapsed, but an engineer determined that 201 portion could be demolished and 203, attached to 201, could be repaired, court documents state. When the work started, Starr Fioca owned the property.

The city also had an engineer evaluate the structures. That engineer arrived at the same decision, and the properties were sold to Downtown Properties LLC. When the new owner started demolition of 201, the rear wall of 203 was damaged and partially collapsed, and by the end of 2007, the new owner, Dan Bond, said both buildings needed to be demolished. Mr. Bond was unavailable for comment.

Because the city's inspector was concerned about a wall shared by 203 and 205, owned by Mr. Maroulas, another engineering survey was conducted. The shared wall, engineers determined, was not structurally sound.

Meanwhile, residents complained to the city about the appearance of the properties, and city officials were concerned about safety. In October, 2008, the city notified Mr. Bond about code violations, Court documents show that Mr. Bond initially intended to rebuild the damaged wall, but never picked up a building permit.

In the spring of 2009, Mr. Bond met with city officials asking the city to condemn the 205 property. Another engineer's report recommended demolition of 203 and replacing the shared wall or "both 205 and 207 should be demolished, based upon the financial considerations of the situation."

In 2010, another engineer's report determined both 205 and 207 were structurally unsound, so the city issued the first condemnation notice to Mr. Maroulas, who appealed the ruling to the Board of Appeals. The Board of Appeals consists of three people: an appointed contractor, an appointed architect and City Manager **David Baird**, who recused himself because he had upheld the inspector's ruling in April 2010. Judge Young wrote" it does not appear that the Board proceeded

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

illegally or contrary to law The Board was within its jurisdiction." Judge Young also ruled that the city's code specifies three members sitting on the Board of Appeals, and a replacement should have been designated. "In this case, because the conflicted Board member, the City Manager, was not replaced, I'm constrained to find that the Board proceeded irregularly," he wrote.

Mr. **Baird** said he will meet with the city's attorneys to discuss options and bring them to city council on Sept. 12.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**David Baird***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Milford Chronicle (DE)

August 31, 2011

‘Dodged the Bullet’ – Hard-Work Minimizes Damage

Author: Gwen Guerke

Early Sunday morning, Milford Parks and Recreation Director Gary Emory rode through the city's deserted streets checking for damage from Hurricane Irene. A misty rain fell and the winds were brisk. Tidal waters flooded portions of the Mispillion Riverwalk and flowed across South West Front Street. "We dodged the bullet," said Mr. Emory, noting that the river flowing over South West Front was as deep as he had ever seen.

City officials in Milford and Harrington agree that the damage could have been much worse. "We're pretty lucky," said Brad Dennehy, Milford's Public Works director. "This week we'll clean up yard debris," he said. Mr. Dennehy credits preparation by the city and its residents plus routine maintenance on Milford utility systems for minimizing potential damage. Crews started sandbagging on Saturday morning, and workers from the electric, streets, meter and water departments were called in on Saturday evening. First they had to deal with downed branches and trees fallen on an electric wires. "During the brunt of the storm, the worst were on North Walnut," he said.

David Baird, Milford city manager, reports some minor power outages during the height of the storm in the Old Shawnee Road area. Power was restored as soon as crews could safely return to work. Mr. Dennehy said high winds created additional problems. "We had a real concern about tornado winds so strong that we couldn't have anyone in a bucket truck," he said. **Mr. Baird** explained the amount of rainfall caused other problems as well. "The sewer system was taxed heavily, but the water guys kept on it," he said. "There were no surprises, and the damage was much less than we anticipated." Meanwhile, Carlisle Fire Co. Chief Bill Carpenter reports that firefighters were busy. "We did have several incidents during the storm," he said.

Twenty-five firefighters and ambulance personnel were the assigned standby crews for both fire and ambulance during the duration of the storm, and a Humvee and Deuce and a half were assigned to Station 42. In addition, the members of the Ladies Auxiliary had food prepared for the firefighters and National Guard contingent as well as had food available for the city workers and police officers who worked during the storm.

Chief Carpenter said coverage started around 3 p.m. Saturday and lasted throughout the storm until 11 a.m. Sunday. "We responded to 21 alarms during the storm, such as wires down, wires on fire, and trees that toppled into wires. We did have a couple of reported house fires that were weather-related and were electrical in nature. We also had several faulty building fire alarm activations caused by the weather," he said. "The fire company would also like to offer our thanks to the City of Milford Electric Crews who worked throughout the storm and made our job easier with their quick response to each of the incidents in town when they were requested," Chief Carpenter said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Harrington Fire fighters were busy as well. "We had some storm related responses. They mostly consisted of wires down, trees down, some flooding and we did evacuate some people and they were taken to Lake Forest High School. We also had some stranded motorists whose vehicles got stuck in the water. No serious injuries were reported. We also had crews in the firehouse from Saturday evening at 6 p.m. till Sunday around 1 p.m.," said Capt. Kenny Brode.

Both Milford and Harrington Police departments report that there were no major incidents. "Other than a few tree limbs/trees down, and electric outages, the police fared pretty well. We had extra officers stationed at Milford Police Department Saturday evening through Sunday afternoon. Officers responded to an above average number accident complaints Saturday during the day as tourists and residents evacuated the coastal communities. Traffic was unusually heavy on both U.S. 113 and Del. 1 through the city. The evacuation was orderly, and there were no major accidents within the city," said Lt. Steven Rust.

Harrington Police Chief Norman Barlow is doing double duty as city manager until Sept. 6. Harrington residents are served by Delmarva Power as its electric source. "I'm not aware of any power loss. There was some minor damage, and flooding was minimal," he said. On Sunday afternoon, Chief Barlow and Mayor Gene Price rode through the entire town, street by street, to check for hurricane damage. "The storm kind of missed us," Chief Barlow said. "Everything was in tact. People prepared themselves. Damage was minimal." From the police point of view, Chief Barlow said more officers were called in to respond to additional calls.

"People didn't know what to expect. I am glad it worked out. We really didn't have anything major." At the height of the storm, about 400 people were housed in temporary Red Cross shelters set up in Milford and Lake Forest High Schools, according to Rosanne Pack, DEMA spokesperson. **Mr. Baird**, Milford's city manager, echoed the sentiments of other officials. "Overall, the city fared well, and I'd say that was because of the preparation by the city and the residents," he said. "Today (Monday) is pretty much normal.

We are fortunate we're not talking about infrastructure damage. The folks out in the brunt of the storm sacrificed, and we greatly appreciate it. Those same folks are back at it again today." Mr. Dennehy agreed. "That is one of the benefits of living in a small town. You are not just a number on an account. These guys know the residents, and I guess that's the feel-good aspect of a storm."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Milford Chronicle (DE)

August 24, 2011

Milford is Now Conducting Property Revaluation

Author: Gwen Guerke

Homeowners can expect a knock on the door from someone asking about their home. The person is acting in an official capacity because the city is doing a revaluation project. What does that mean? Data collectors from an agency, Tyler Technologies CLT Appraisal Services, hired by the City of Milford will gather reevaluation information from all 5,200 properties within the city limits within the next month or so. "The city is required by law to reassess every 10 years," said **David Baird**, city manager. The last time city property was reassessed was in 2002, and **Mr. Baird** explained that every property is valued by that data.

Homes built after 2002 are also valued according to 2002 standards. The average single family home in Mil-ford is valued at \$126,361; the tax bill on that amount is \$562.86. Since real estate prices have roller coastered since 2002, some residents might be concerned about a tax rate hike. "The rule of thumb is that one-third increases, one-third decreases and one-third remains the same. And that is just a rule of thumb," he said. He also noted that assessment values are not valid for real estate transactions. "Local building costs and market conditions are factored in to determine the value," **Mr. Baird** said.

As for the local tax rate, the new assessment will be used to determine a constant yield rate. The current rate is 46 cents per \$100 of assessed value, yielding \$3 million in income for the city. Using new data, council will determine a rate that will provide the city with that same amount. "It is not used to increase taxes," the city manager said. In addition, the process will correct mistakes made 10 years ago and find people who did not get proper building permits. "We do this for equity in the property tax burden. The tax burden is spread equally among all property owners in the city," **Mr. Baird** said. The data collectors will check carry identification, and will ask to do a quick interior assessment as well as one from the exterior. Photographers will gather a digital image of each property. The picture will be taken from the street.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

August 11, 2011

Milford Comes in Under Budget; Water Tank Needs Repair

Author: David LaRoss

The numbers are in for the 2010-11 fiscal year, and the city of Milford came out ahead. According to the city's final budget report for the year, which ran from July 2010 to June 2011, Milford's government spent \$7,978,454 of an \$8,172,647 budget, a savings of just more than 2.5 percent. "Our budget's done very, very well," council member and finance committee chairman Skip Pikus said. Construction was up far above what the city expected - City Hall signed off on twice as many building permits as the council budgeted for, and 25 percent more engineering and inspection projects.

Meanwhile, many expenses - from code enforcement to the department of streets and grounds - came in under budget. The only department that went through more money than it had in the budget was City Manager **David Baird's** office, which spent \$1,535 more than expected - a 0.33 percent overdraft. "If you look at our departments, 98 percent of them are under budget," Pikus said. The city did have to dip into its reserves once, taking \$1.87 million out of the electric reserve fund to buy land from the former Ford mill property along Route 14 that will be the site of a new electric substation. As a long-term capital project, the substation is being paid for from reserve money and bond sales, not the tax-funded general budget.

Problems at Washington Street water plant

There's a leak at the city's Washington Street water treatment plant, **Baird** announced on Monday. "It's just aging infrastructure that we're dealing with," he said. "Water is seeping out through some of the masonry work in that structure. We have contractors coming in to repair it and evaluate it and everything - we're confident that it can be remedied in all honesty, it just emphasizes the need to move forward with the Washington Street project."

That project is part of the \$15 million utility referendum the city passed three years ago, and involves a rehabilitation of the water plant on Washington street and cleaning, repair and repainting at the nearby water tower, among others. **Baird** said the contractors will have to drain the tank and take it offline to finish the repairs, but that shouldn't hurt the city's water levels. "It's not going to impact our serving of customers," **Baird** said. "If it was something we were worried about people needing to conserve in order to help, we would ask them do so."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**David Baird***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Milford Beacon (DE)

July 21, 2011

Milford Plans to Redraw Voting Wards

Author: David LaRoss

If you live inside Milford's city limits, do you know what ward you're in? Who represents you on city council? Don't answer too quickly. By next year's elections, your answers might be completely different. The 2010 census numbers are finally in, and the city government is getting ready to rebalance its four voting wards to keep the population of each one at least close, if not equal. "The city's population has grown and it hasn't grown by the same amount everywhere," City Manager **David Baird** said. "So the charter says there has to be a balance." Milford's charter says that the ward with the lowest population has to have at least nine-tenths as many people living there as in the largest district - so if the first ward had exactly 3,000 people, then no other ward could have less than 2,700.

According to the 2010 census, they're nowhere near that standard today. The first ward, home of the Hearthstone development, is the biggest by far with 3,700 people. The second ward is less than half that size - it has just 1,458 residents. A proposal to redraw the borders between the wards would have all four with populations between 2,300 and 2,450 people. "There are not major changes," **Baird** said. The biggest change would be in the first ward, which takes up the southeast quarter of the city and would give up much of downtown to the second, in the southwest, and third, in the northeast. "The first ward is by far the most populated," **Baird** said. "That's where the biggest changes were going to have to be."

The border between the first and second wards would move from Walnut Street to Washington Street, sending a swatch of the downtown business district into the second ward. Meanwhile, the third ward boundary would move south to South 3rd Street from South 2nd. The third ward would also grow to the west, taking a triangular slice of land away from the fourth. The boundaries between wards 3 and 4 would stay exactly the same as it is now, following Route 14. If your home is going to change wards, you don't have to change your voting registration, according to city officials. "Nobody will have to re-register," **Baird** said. "It will take effect on this end." None of the sitting council members live in any of the areas proposed to switch wards. If they did, **Baird** said, they'd be allowed to serve out their terms, and would then have to run for a seat in their new ward - possibly against another incumbent - if they wanted to remain on the council.

Their old seat would be open to new candidates. Whether the council approves this proposal or asks for a different one, they'll have to take action within a few months. City law says any new map has to be on the books for at least six months before it's official for an election, so this change will have to be written up, properly debated and passed no later than October in order for it to affect the April 2012 election.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

May 12, 2011

City to Sell Off Wawa Land

Author: David LaRoss

Since Wawa opened in Milford four years ago, the city of Milford has been its landlord. The store is built on city-owned land, and pays a \$100,000 rent check to the town every year. This month, that arrangement ends. The city will sell off the two-acre parcel at an open auction on Thursday, May 19, leaving a private party, or even Wawa itself, to take over the lease. Bidding will start at \$1.2 million, and if nobody else wants to spend that much, Wawa itself will have to.

"By our contract with Wawa, they're required to make a \$1.2 million minimum offer on the property when it does come up for sale," City Manager **David Baird** said. "This was anticipated from the beginning; from what I've gotten speaking to people who were on city council, there was always a feeling that the city didn't want to be their landlord forever." No matter who ends up as the highest bidder on May 19, that still won't settle the purchase. The published terms of the auction give Milford resident and businessman David G. Burton the right of first refusal on the auction, meaning he can choose to match whatever the top bid is.

That arrangement has its roots in a deal the city made to create what's now the main entrance to Milford High School, on Buccaneer Boulevard. "At some point, what's now Buccaneer Boulevard was property owned by David Burton," **Baird** said. "As part of the terms of the sales agreement, it was negotiated in that Mr. Burton would get a right of first refusal should the city ever decide to sell the lot where Wawa is today."

If Burton declines, then Wawa has the same option. The high-bidder would only take home the deed to the property if neither Burton nor the Wawa corporation wants to match his or her price. Once Milford's city council votes to accept a high bid, Burton has 30 days to match that price; if he declines or the clock runs out, Wawa has its own 30-day window to buy the land. If neither of them wants to match the high bid, the winning bidder will get the property.

Money from the sale won't go into Milford's annual budget; instead, **Baird** said, it will be set aside to spend on economic-development projects. One option is to use the fund as seed money for a new business park, he said. "I'm really anxious to see what will happen with that money," Economic Development Director Richard Carmean said. Wawa's rent has paid \$500,000 to the city since construction started in 2006, but there's an incentive for the government to sell off the land rather than keep acting as landlord. "There is no escalator in the lease - it's a flat \$100,000 annually, for as long as it lasts," **Baird** said. "Eventually, that's not going to be worth as much as it is now."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**David Baird***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Milford Beacon (DE)

March 31, 2011

Contractor's pay docked for 10th street problems

Author: David Laross

When C & J Paving agreed to repave Northeast 10th Street for the city of Milford, they contracted to do the job for \$52,771.12. But that was before the job was done, and complaints started coming in from residents about the up-and-down, "rollercoaster" experience of driving along the refinished street. Then the city changed the deal and paid the company \$12,335 less than they first agreed - even though city officials signed off on the work after it was done.

Milford's city council approved the new deal with a 4-4 tie vote on March 14 that had to be broken by Mayor Ronnie Rogers. "I'm sorry that things got confused I apologize for the misunderstanding," Rogers said. "But I've been down 10th Street quite a few times, and it just wasn't satisfactory." "Mr. (Milford City Manager **David**) **Baird** came up with this, and basically told me, this is what the deal is," C & J owner Jim Reed said. "And I don't feel that I've been treated fairly." The \$40,335 Reed got will cover the cost of materials, but not the wages paid to the workers who actually milled and resurfaced the roadway. "The city will spend that money on repairs for the road," **Baird** said. "It allows Mr. Reed to move forward and it allows the city to move forward on this."

Council member Owen Brooks, who lives near one of the biggest problem areas, said he can "feel it inside my house" when a truck goes down the street. Nobody tried to say that the road is actually smooth and flawless. But Reed said, and no city official disputed, that Milford employees and officials inspected and approved the work he did. Mr. (Public Works Director Brad) Dennehy was there with me, and he thanked me at the end of the night," Reed said. "We did everything we were expected to do."

Four city council members - Steve Johnson, Jason Adkins, Jim Starling and Katrina Wilson - said that means the city should share the financial burden, and voted against the deal. "It seems like he (Reed) is taking the full brunt of the mistake, and I just see injustice in that," Adkins.

City Engineer Mark Mallamo, in an earlier interview, said the waves in the road are the natural result of the way the utilities are laid out along the street. Where a manhole is set a few inches above the rest of the road, he said, the blacktop has to slope upward to meet it, or else leave the metal disc sticking out of the roadway - which would be a clear driving hazard. When, a few feet up the road, there's a storm drain set a few inches lower than the rest of the road, the blacktop has to slope back down to it, or there'll be a sharp drop-off at the edge of the drain that might as well be a pothole. At the March 14 meeting, Reed said there was no way to properly pave the road without leaving those slopes in place. Rogers said that in that case, he should have simply declined to do the work. "He should have brought those problems forward at the time, not gone forward with the job," Rogers said. "He was the contractor; he could have done that at any time."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

March 3, 2011

Shedding New Light on the Subject

Author: David LaRoss

What It Is

The city of Milford is slowly replacing its downtown streetlights with brighter, greener LED lights thanks to a federal grant the town received in 2010. More than three-quarters of the lights have been replaced so far, according to City Manager **David Baird**. Almost 11 months ago, the city of Milford announced a \$50,000 federal grant paid for with stimulus dollars that would fund the replacement of downtown street-lights with LED bulbs. LEDs or light emitting diodes, use an array of tiny bulbs to give off more light than an equally-sized incandescent or fluorescent bulb and draw less electricity to do it. Public officials said the month would be spent "as soon as possible" after the grant was announced in March, but sorting out the funding and purchase of the new lights turned out to take nearly a year.

City Manager **David Baird** said that as of Valentine's Day, about 80 percent of the lights, ranging from North Front Street to north and south Walnut Street, had been switched out. It's taking extra time because the city isn't just swapping light bulbs. Every lamppost is being taken to a Harrington-area shop to be repaired and re-finished, bringing the entire assembly into "like-new" condition - at extra expense for the city. "That's caused the cost to run a bit over the \$50,000 we got from the stimulus, but it still covers the lion's share," **Baird** said. The new lights are supposed to save the town about \$2,300 in electricity every year. **Baird** said that although many of the lights have been in place long enough to show up on the city's latest electric bills, there hasn't been a marked drop in how much power they draw. "We haven't seen a major change yet, but we expect that it will show up over time," **Baird** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**David Baird***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Milford Chronicle (DE)

March 2, 2011

Electric Cost Burns Some Local Consumers

Author: Gwen Guerke

The "For Sale" sign in front of Bill Tribbitt's home might tell the story. He's decided it's time to downsize, and the bottom line on his utility bills from the city of Milford is certainly a factor. Mr. Tribbitt has lived in his 3,900 square foot home for nine years, and each winter his electric bill spikes to \$500-600 a month. In the summer, when the air conditioning is on the bills dip to around \$260 a month. Then there was the time the bill was so high, it really ticked him off. The Sysco salesman said he went to Puerto Rico for a week and he was out of town for another week during the same month. "I was gone for half the month and my bill was \$900," he said. Over the years, in an effort to conserve energy he's not only replaced appliances, but he also had the house rewired. "My biggest enemy is a big huge furnace. The fan is clicking in and out all day on a really cold day," he said. Mr. Tribbitt's woes are not uncommon, and cost of staying warm during the cold winter shocked some customers.

City Manager **David Baird** says he and the city's billing staff have heard complaints from residents about the cost of electricity. He said Milford residents use quite a bit of electricity. "Consumption is high here. It's people's habits. The bottom line is that when something is plugged in, it's drawing electric," he said. It's no secret that the city moves \$2.5 million into the city's general fund from the sale of electricity. Electric rates are set each year by city council based on complicated calculations from specialized consultants, but the council has not increased rates for nearly two years. "Elected officials vote on it. It is a local decision. The perception is that Milford has extremely high rates, but we have been extremely competitive," **Mr. Baird** said.

DMEC, the electric cooperative in which the city is a member, issued charts illustrating a comparison of electric rates in 11 member communities. He provided charts from DMEC, a municipal electric cooperative, indicating a comparison based on 1,000 kwh. Milford's rates are less than Newark, Seaford, Middletown, Clayton, Symrna, Dover and Delmarva Power. In fact, Milford ranks second lowest for winter rates, with only Delaware Electric Co-op charging less. And a comparison with rates in the winter of 2009, Milford's charges, \$144.53, were the same as this winter's rates.

Forty percent of Milford's electric customers reside outside the corporate limits. "If we didn't transfer that \$2.5 million, we could reduce the rates by 10 percent, but the property tax bill would go up \$400-500," he said. Meanwhile, the city is also growing a nest egg in order to build a new substation on the west side of town and a new interconnection on the southeast side of town in order to safeguard the existing system. The city manager said those upgrades are necessary to maintain quality service. "Reliability is a big component. People want to flip the switch and have lights come on. Reliability is key," **Mr. Baird** said. "We are also cognizant that people want consistency in electric rates. If people see variations in their bill, it's usage, not the rates."

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Customers can check their billing history online at the city's website, or if needed, the billing staff will assist consumers. Mr. Tribbitt said he's made trips to city hall to express his concerns, and he's talked to other folks who have similar issues. "The crazy thing, there doesn't seem to be an rhyme or reason, no common denominator. I'm also hit with a \$1,000 fuel bill four times a year. I can imagine an all-electric house. I think I'm just going to scale back."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

November 24, 2010

Milford, Harrington Handle New Yard Waste Ban

Author: David LaRoss

If you've gotten used to setting out bags of leaves or tree branches for garbage truck after doing some yard work, you have just over a month to break that habit. As of the start of 2011, the Delaware Solid Waste Authority will no longer allow trash trucks to dump leaves, tree clippings or any other yard waste along with household trash when they run garbage to the state's landfills. "It can still go to the landfills, but it has to be separated out," Harrington City Manager John Schatzschneider said. And that's going to make life trickier for residents in Harrington and Milford.

In Harrington, residents will be responsible for carrying their own yard waste to a dumpster at the city's public works building at 102 Franklin St. Collections will only be open for one day a month in the winter, before moving to a once-a-week schedule as springtime gets closer. "It'll be open for about half a day at a time," Schatzschneider said. "We can't keep it open all the time because there has to be somebody there. It's mandated through DSWA that people can only drop their yard waste there, not household trash, so someone has to monitor it."

Residents who don't want to drop their clippings at the city dumpster, or need to make a drop when it's not open, will have to go directly to the landfill. Meanwhile, the Milford city government has taken another approach entirely. Rather than find a new way to send yard waste to the landfill, they looked for another place to put it - and found one far closer to home. "We found an alternative location to take yard waste to - right in our backyard," Milford City Manager **David Baird** said. "We've contracted with Blessing's Compost Facility, just south of town."

Blessing's will take as much yard waste as the city can haul there, for \$20 a ton instead of the DSWA rate of \$80, and add it to its commercial composting operation, where tons of plant waste are transformed into fertilizer the business sells to many area farmers. "It's just good business; it makes no sense to pay \$80 a ton when we can pay \$20," **Baird** said. Milford's garbage collectors already make yard waste pickups on Wednesdays all across the city. Once January hits, those collections will be the only ones that accept yard waste.

After the change to Wednesday-only pickups, the main difference for Milford residents is that they don't have to bag their clippings anymore. "If folks have a container that they can put their leaves or yard waste in, and our collectors can just empty it instead of using bags, that would help everybody out," **Baird** said. "We don't expect everyone to make the change right away; not only is it a change for us, it's a change for the residents. It's going to take getting used to for everyone."

Both cities hope the move will help them reach an ambitious recycling goal the General

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Assembly set this year. By the end of 2015, not only are all local governments required to be running a recycling program, but they're supposed to collect as much waste for recycling as they send to landfills. "It's an ambitious goal, no question," **Baird** said. "But separating out the yard waste like this is one way we're going to reach it, because if it's not in the trash trucks, then it doesn't count against us for that goal."

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Milford Chronicle (DE)
September 22, 2010

Waivers Spur Economic Growth in Milford

Author: Gwen Guerke

Milford officials learned that by giving a little they could gain a lot, and they have numbers to prove that an experiment produced positive results. In June, city council decided to implement a new policy to eliminate impact fees for new construction and renovation that would required in increased demand for utilities, said City Manager **David Baird**. The impact fee waiver will continue until December when council reevaluates its stance. They will make a decision whether to continue the program, primarily advertised on the city's website, after looking at its success. "Obviously, all new construction means increased demand," he said. When the numbers were tallied at the end of August, officials learned they had waived \$97,356 in fees, but generated \$5.6 million in revenue.

The funds were based on the property values submitted when people applied for their building permits, **Mr. Baird** said. For large projects, the waiver did not apply to the entire project, but up to 5 equivalent dwelling units. He compared that revenue to July and August, 2008 when fees from building permits realized \$3.4 million, and to the same months in 2009 when only \$1.2 million was raised. "That's a significant increase in the value of building permits," he said. "It's incentive to invest in Milford, and it appears that it has been encouraging," said the city manager, citing the construction of new homes, the Grotto Pizza restaurant and renovations and additions to Avenue United Methodist Church. "City Council took action to spur economic activity, and the results show that it has been the case," **Mr. Baird** said. The program has a larger impact beyond putting more funds in the city coffers. "It expands utility sales, creates construction jobs and helps sell land," **Mr. Baird** said. "It helps long-term. I hope the trend continues, and council is committed to doing things to help the trend continue."

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Milford Chronicle (DE)

September 1, 2010

Milford Condemns ‘Eyesore’ Properties

Author: Gwen Guerke

The city's Board of Appeals voted on Aug. 17 to move forward with condemnation and demolition of two properties, 205 and 207 North West Front St., as well as the adjacent partially demolished buildings at 201 and 203 North West Front St. The city has been dealing with issues surrounding project, now partially surrounded by chain link fence, since 2006, said **David Baird**, city manager. The city's code official condemned all four properties, and the Board heard an appeal from the Sydell Doukas owner of the condemnation of 205 and 207 N.W. Front.

The board affirmed the Code Officials decision, and gave the property owner 90 days bring 205 and 207 into compliance. Dan Bond, owner of the 201 and 203 properties, did not appeal the condemnation of his properties. The partially demolished structures at the corner of North West Front and Church streets have been criticized by neighbors, residents and city officials for several years since they sit at the edge of the city's historic district and along a heavily travelled street.

The properties at 201 and 203 owned by Mr. Bond are structurally connected to residences owned by Mr. Doukas. Mr. Bond also owns several properties in the historic district and has successfully restored and revitalized them. "I had planned to restore the historic Sudler Building (circa 1790) at 201-203 NW Front and put it back into use. I had hoped to make it into three townhouses, while retaining the historic external appearance," he said.

But after he started the project in 2006, he ran into problems. "Unfortunately, it turned out that the brick bearing walls of the structure were too deteriorated to allow restoration. I then had no choice but to take the building down completely. This decision was made before the city condemned the building," he said. Because of the age of the structures and the construction configuration, Mr. Bond's plans also involved 205 and 207 North West Front Street.

The city hired a structural engineer to analyze the situation. The engineer determined that 205 was originally an open space or alley, and was connected to the neighboring row homes with front and back walls. The side walls were shared with the adjacent buildings. Both 205 and 207 are currently occupied, but the property owner, Mr. Doukas, did not returned phone calls. "Condemnation of the building was fully in accordance with my view as to the condition of the building," Mr. Bond said, noting that he sought alternatives to tearing down the structure. "The city requested, and I provided, a plan approved by a structural engineer for reinforcing the wall between the Sudler Building and the adjacent structures.

However, I could not see how this could be done without endangering the workers who would need to put a concrete footer under the existing brick wall that needed to be retained and reinforced. Neither I, nor the City, were prepared to take down the remaining portions of the

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

building." After the city condemned the properties, the Mr. Doukas appealed to the city's Board of Appeals which upheld the city's code enforcement officer's decision. "The improvements outweigh the cost and value of the problem," said the city manager. **Mr. Baird** said Mr. Doukas has 90 days to comply or he has the option to appeal through the state's court system. If Mr. Doukas takes no action, the city will start the demolition process Nov. 17, which opens with an invitation to bid.

Mr. Baird estimates the cost of demolition around \$50-60,000 which will be billed to the property owners. The city can recover costs by placing liens on the property. "I expect during the 90 days, city council will discuss this," **Mr. Baird** said. Board of Appeals members include architect Alvin French and Dean Johnson, as well as city attorney Timothy Willard. **Mr. Baird** and another board member, engineer Mike Wheedleton, recused themselves. "It's a tremendous eyesore, and the city would love to have the Streetscape all the way to Truitt Avenue," he added.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

August 19, 2010

Milford May Shuffle Voting Wards

Author: David LaRoss

If you live inside the Milford city limits and vote in city elections, you know which ward you're in. For decades, the town has been divided into four quarters, starting at the southeast with the first ward and going clockwise until you hit the fourth ward in the northeast. Next year, you might have to look again before you go to the voting booths. The city council is looking at redistricting the city to correct an annexation mistake made more than half a decade ago. "We found this while we were looking at the charter last year," council member Owen Brooks said. "We've had discussion after discussion - we need to fix it. Knowing what the charter says, I feel we have no choice."

When the city council annexed the Meadows at Shawnee development, east of Rehoboth Boulevard, it put the land into the third ward - even though it doesn't touch a single inch of property in the third. Milford's charter says no part of a ward can be an island - it all has to touch, somewhere. The only other parts of Milford that border on the Meadows are the Shawnee Acres and Hearthstone Manor developments, both in Ward 1. "It goes against our charter," City Manager **David Baird** said.

But simply switching the development from one ward to the other isn't going to be enough. The charter also says that "each district shall contain as nearly as possible the same number of qualified voters and Districts shall not differ in population by more than ten (10) percent of the population in the smallest district created." Just moving the Meadows into the first ward - already the biggest one - would leave the city with a ward that has almost twice as many voters as the second-biggest, while the third ward would have less than 400 people casting votes. "You've got two problems - one is getting all four wards balanced, and the other is fixing the mistake," Brooks said.

But if the current plan for realignment goes through, the wards would be balanced not by the number of possible people living in each one, but by the number of registered voters. Right now, those numbers aren't even close. "This is the least worst option," **Baird** said after the meeting. "We have to balance them, and we don't have the census data we'd need to do it by overall population."

He said specific data from the 2010 Census isn't expected until 2011 or 2012, while a ward realignment would have to be done by October in order to be official for next year's elections. Using 2000 census data would mean guessing at how much the population has changed in most of the town and coming up with numbers from scratch on developments that didn't exist in 2000, like Hearthstone. "All the talks of registered voters, registered voters - it seems odd to me," Milford resident Bob Connelly said. "You're supposed to be representing the population, not just voters."

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Under a proposed layout, all the wards would have between 561 and 679 voters. But city officials admit that they'd end up with very different population counts, if that isn't true already. "Even just going by registered voters, we could have a mass of new registrations and throw that number off," **Baird** said. Any change the council makes later this year might have to be re-done once the census numbers come through, **Baird** said. **Baird** showed the council a possible map of the new wards on Aug. 9, although it's not a final draft yet - among other problems, it still doesn't meet the 10-percent rule. Instead, it varies by just over 20 percent. "It's open to change," **Baird** said.

The biggest change would be to move the Meadows into the first ward and then move a nearly-equal chunk of land from the first into the third, stretching as far south as Elks Lodge Road and Marshall Street, and east to Walnut Street as far south as Jefferson Avenue. That would put 679 voters in the third ward, on 1,964 parcels of land. Meanwhile, the first ward would drop nearly a mile of houses east from Walnut Street and still have 566 voters on just 816 parcels. The fourth ward would also grow. It would still go east to Walnut Street, but instead of being entirely north of Front Street, it would have a "tail" made of land west of Route 113, going all the way south to the city limits - more than two miles of road. Milford's city council is scheduled to debate the issue farther at its Aug. 23 meeting. By law, the city has to hold a public hearing, which would be no earlier than Sept. 27, before taking an official vote.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

July 15, 2010

Sewer Work at Standstill Over Construction Error

Author: David LaRoss

After months of sewer repairs on Route 14 in Milford, work has stopped completely with the roadway an open ditch after a subcontractor allegedly botched the installation of a new pipe under the street. "We want to get this fixed, and to get repairs going," City Manager **David Baird** said. "But we need to be on the same page with the contractor first." Earlier this year, the city of Milford contracted with JJID General Contractors, a Bear-based firm, to overhaul the sewer lines on both Northwest and Northeast Front streets for a total of about \$790,000. Work on the western side of the road finished in June, and they moved to the eastern half later that month.

That's when things went wrong. Randy Duplechain, a principal engineer at Davis, Bowen & Friedel, who is overseeing the work for the city, said that on June 23, a subcontractor, picked by JJID, drilled a new sewer pipe under the road near where Front Street meets Rehoboth Boulevard. "That project was to start out with putting a new bore under the roadway, and slipping a new sewer pipe inside of that," Duplechain said. "Everything seemed to be going in the right direction until late this June, when they actually did the bore."

Duplechain said the new pipe was installed 14 inches away from where it should have been, putting it dangerously close to the sewer main already under the roadway, and making it nigh-impossible to get at the pipe from the road's existing manhole. "We may have to construct a new manhole, but that would be an extreme step," **Baird** said. In the meantime, the right lane on the eastbound side of Front Street is more of a ditch than a road. "We're affecting two businesses there, making it difficult for them to get to the highway" Duplechain said.

Both are automobile service stations - Wadkins Garage and Blue Hen Spring Works. Representatives of the companies did not return calls for comment. "I've spoken with Mr. Wadkins, and he's said he's worried about what might happen if they need to tow in a large truck," Duplechain said. Joseph Julian, CEO of JJID, declined to comment on the specifics of the problem. "We're working to achieve a solution, with the consulting engineer and with the town," he said.

But according to Duplechain and **Baird**, work has stopped entirely over two conflicts - who should pay the extra costs of fixing the pipe, and exactly how it's going to be done. "Everything seemed to be going on track, we had stopped the contract to give them time to work out a solution, when we got a letter saying that they were going to submit a claim for the misaligned pipe - to say that the city should pay to fix it," Duplechain said. "Basically, we're telling them that all costs associated with this are their responsibility."

Meanwhile, he said, he's still trying to find out exactly how JJID plans to fix the misalignment. "We're trying to get a response from them with their means and methods of addressing this," he

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

said. "We like the method they're proposing, but we need more detail." Whatever happens, the contract Milford signed with JJID as written, is almost certain to expire before everything can be fixed, **Baird** said. JJID had 180 days to complete the work, and even though that timer is stopped until work picks up again, there are just 21 days left. "Realistically, there's about two to three months of work left - pending what their proposal is to fix this pipe," **Baird** said. "After the 21 days are up, they enter a phase called 'liquidated damages,' where they pay a financial penalty but the city wants JJID to finish this work, even if it runs over the deadline."

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Milford Chronicle (DE)

June 30, 2010

Balancing budget =cuts, hikes - No new tax increases

Author: Gwen Guerke

Milford residents can expect utility fee hikes, the result of increased costs to the city, but no property tax increases when the 2010-11 budget goes into effect July 1. Trash collection charges will increase to \$23.50 each month per household, up from \$22 per month. The \$18 per year hike is because the city's landfill charges have gone up, according to City Manager **David Baird**.

City council unanimously passed the \$6 million budget at its June 14 session, and although city leaders didn't have to dig into reserves funds, there was still a great deal of working in order to have a balanced budget, according to 2nd Ward Councilman Skip Pikus, who also chairs the Budget Committee. Rather than raise taxes to make up for revenue shortfalls, "there had to be another way of looking at it," said Councilman Pikus.

The committee, also comprised of 3rd Ward Councilman Doug Morrow and 1st Ward Councilman Garrett Grier, hosted two public meetings and spent countless hours, along with Mr. **Baird** and Jeff Port-man, the city's finance director. "We went over it page by page. Doug, Garrett and I, we're all businessmen, and we looked at running the city like running a business. So we looked at personnel," he said.

In the end, four city hall staff members were released from their jobs. "We didn't want to affect public safety or public service. We never want to do that. It wasn't a popular thing to do. They could be reinstated if things pick up. We were set on not increasing taxes. That's the important thing to do," Councilman Pikus said.

"It will work out. We don't have a choice. We will have to make it work," said Mr. **Baird**. Mr. **Baird** said the personnel changes extend far beyond those four employees since city officials decided not to renew agreements with two contractual employees in the Parks & Recreation Department. A vacancy in the electric department will go unfilled, and two other vacant posts will not be advertised in the near future. "It's really a tremendous impact," said the city manager looking at 10 unfilled or eliminated jobs.

But he looked to the bright side of the economic situation. "By no means is the city in dire traits. We have adequate revenue and adequate reserves. We had to make decisions now for the financial situation of the city. We have to make decisions now for the financial situation of the city. We didn't feel it was appropriate to go out and ask for more money. We have to say "This was what we've done." It's not a come in and slash type of thing. The decisions we've made over the last couple of weeks were not easy," Mr. **Baird** said.

In addition, property owners will pay 5.87 percent more for sewer charges from \$4.77 to \$5.05 per 1,000 gallons for both residential and commercial users. The money will go to pay for inflow

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

and infiltration costs this year and to begin restoring the over \$500,000 of reserves used to cover the costs of I & I this year. The inflow and infiltration is water that is entering the sewer system that is not from the sewer. In most cases, this is storm water where a drain may be connected to the sewer system. or groundwater that is entering the sewer system through cracks in the pipes or through the joints in the pipe.

The city's sewer bills are based on water flow, sp inflow and infiltration is not directly billed to customers based on usage. Since July 2009, the city has spent \$932,615 in sewer charges to Kent County for water that does not need to go into the sewer system. "Obviously this year was extreme due to the fact it was so wet, but we are investing money into the sewer system as an effort to reduce this cost on an annual basis," Mr. **Baird**.

He noted that during the prosperity that Milford experienced seven or eight years ago, city officials built a nest egg of reserve funds. "They are at an adequate level and we didn't touch it," he said. In addition, city departments have cut discretionary funding over the past two years. "We were at a point where revenue was not keeping up with expenses," he said.

In addition, city officials decided not to purchase a new city vehicle, making do with an older one. "We all worked together. It was a joint effort. It is matter of running the city as a business, and we may have the same problem next year. It's the hardest thing I've had to do. I say the town is healthy, but we're not wealthy," Councilman Pikus added. Mr. **Baird** agreed. "It's not all doom and gloom. We still plan to do a lot of work. We are still making investments in the city today for the future," Mr. **Baird** said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

May 13, 2010

Council Proposes Tax, Fee Breaks for New Construction

Author: David LaRoss

The Milford city government could pass thousands of dollars in tax and fee waivers for business and home construction as soon as May 24, under a plan proposed at Monday night's city council meeting. "Back in the fall, I sat down with (City Manager) **David (Baird)** to figure out, with our current economic climate, what we can do as a city to let people know that we are open for business," second ward council representative Jason Adkins said. "A lot of businesses aren't in the best shape right now, and they may be putting things off as far as expansion, and we wanted to do something to facilitate that."

Working with **Baird** and Downtown Milford, Inc., Adkins has proposed a waiver on taxes and impact fees for new construction inside city limits, and Mayor Ronnie Rogers said it could be approved as early as the council's next meeting, on May 24. "We want to encourage individuals and businesses to make an investment in Milford," Adkins said.

It starts with a complete tax break on all new buildings within the city limits for one year. Under Adkins' proposal, "improvements" to an existing property - which includes any work that raises the property value, from adding a garage to building an entire new house - wouldn't count against the owner's tax bill for the first year after construction finishes. "If somebody had a lot worth \$50,000, and they built a house on it valued at \$150,000, they would not owe taxes on that \$150,000 for the first year after it was finished," **Baird** said.

In addition, the city would waive all impact fees on new buildings until the end of 2010. Normally, the owner of a newly built home or business has to pay the city to make up for what it costs to connect sewer, water and electric services. Combined, they add at least \$3,651 to the cost of a single building.

Baird said the breaks for a new home valued at \$250,000 would come to \$4,692. For a 4,000-square-foot office building, similar to the ones in the city's business part on Airport Road, the savings would top \$12,000. "This will encourage new development and expansion in the downtown area," DMI President Scott Angelucci said during Monday's meeting. "A strong downtown means a strong city."

The breaks have a limit, though. The biggest tax cut it would be possible to get under Adkins' program is \$1,000 on a home, or \$5,000 for commercial land. For impact fees, the waivers would run out once a single building hits the equivalent of five average homes - measured in EDUs, or "equivalent dwelling units." "If somebody comes in and they want to build a 15-EDU site, they're going to have an impact on our system," **Baird** said. "With that limit, they'd still get an incentive, but the city wouldn't be paying for the entire sum."

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The tax break would apply to anything built before June 30, 2011, while the impact fees would only be waived until the end of 2010. Anyone who applies for a building permit before the deadline would be eligible, provided they finish the project in a reasonable timeline. "We don't want to have people apply for a permit quickly, and then not do anything until years down the line," Adkins said. "That's not what we're trying to encourage."

Milford abandons public-comment sessions As their final order of business for the night, the council voted 5-2 to abandon dedicated public-comment sessions before each council meeting. Since 2008, the council has set aside a 15-minute block at the start of each meeting where members of the public can address the council on any topic they choose.

Now, that block is no more. Instead, audience members will be allowed to participate in discussion directly. Anyone who wants to offer their opinions on a law, spending move or almost any other topic the council can vote on will be allowed to stand up or raise a hand during debate, wait to be recognized and say their piece. "People will be able to have their input during a council meeting, instead of talking before we start or having to come back for the next one to talk about something that happened during the meeting," said third ward representative Owen Brooks, who proposed the change. "We're not trying to silence anyone - everybody should be able to speak I think that this way, the public will end up speaking more."

The only exception is for topics that by law must have a single public hearing, like zoning changes and annexations. "That public hearing must have a definite start and an ending, and you can't hear public comments on it outside of that time," City Solicitor Tim Willard said. Supporters of the move said people who want to talk to the council about a topic that isn't on the agenda for the night should speak in person with their ward's representatives. "People who want to talk can contact myself, **Mr. Baird** or any member of the council," Rogers said. "My door's always open; I'll be available anytime. If you have a problem, we will address it."

The strongest opposition to the move came from a member of the public, Bob Connelly. "Once a week or twice a month, you don't want to hear from the public about what their concerns are, that may not be on the agenda" Connelly asked. "That, to me, seems to be contrary to what the whole country was founded on." Adkins and Steve Johnson voted to keep the public comment sessions, while Skip Pikus, Garrett Grier, Brooks, Doug Morrow and James Starling voted to eliminate them. "I think there's a common ground where you can have both," Johnson said. "There's no reason we can't have an opportunity in a regular council meeting for people to speak and an open forum, for the first 15 minutes of a meeting. I don't want to be like Harrington - not that there's anything wrong with Harrington. But I vote 'no.'"

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

April 29, 2010

Milford Owes \$400,000 in Sewer Fees Thanks to Rainfall

Author: David LaRoss

The rainy weather of 2010 just got a whole lot more expensive. Milford City Manager **David Baird** announced during the April 24 city council meeting that the town has been billed \$281,000 for the month of March alone to process water that leaked into its underground sewage pipes, either from heavy rains or rising groundwater. The total for the year to date is more than \$400,000, and could reach \$1 million by the end of 2010. "It's a serious problem, and we already knew that and are working to fix it," **Baird** said. "But we still have to pay the bill."

Once water leaks into a sewage pipe from outside - a process officially known as inflow and infiltration, or I&I for short - there's no way to get it out again. It all flows into the sewer system, to be processed by Kent County, and since it's not coming from a private home or business, the cost of processing it doesn't show up on anyone's sewer bill. Instead, the city government has to pay for it. In this case, the money is coming from the city's sewer capital reserve fund, a \$3.16 million account built up through savings and investment over a period of years. "I think this highlights the importance of the work and the study we're already doing," council member Jason Adkins said.

The city began studying I&I problems in its sewer pipes over a year ago, as part of the sweeping, \$15 million public-works referendum passed in early 2008. That study recently reached its second phase, with specific problem area identified for in-depth analysis. Once contractors identify which pipes are broken and where, they'll be able to start repairing or replacing the ones that need it most. "It's a long process, and once you get done with one round there's usually another pipe that needs attention," **Baird** said at an earlier meeting. "But it's necessary to prevent the problems from just getting worse and worse."

Council not bullish on stormwater ponds

In an informal "workshop" session, members of the city council came down against taking over the management and care of stormwater ponds in local housing developments, a month after hearing a presentation asking them to do just that. "It's an expensive idea," Adkins said. "You're talking about a lot of money - almost \$4,000 per pond. And my thought is that you'd have to hire two or three new people to deal with everything involved. I'm against it."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

April 15, 2010

Council to Hold Hearing on Milford Charter

Author: David LaRoss

Citizens of Milford will get a chance to speak out on a proposed revision to the city's charter the evening of Monday, April 26, during that week's council meeting. The proposed charter can be found online at http://cityofmilford.com/city_clerk.htm, under the link "Charter Amendments With Mark Ups." The document, which requires a PDF reader to open, has notes where it was changed from the earlier version, last revised in the late 1990s.

The biggest change in the new charter might be a rule that allows sitting members of the city council to run in the same election for both their current seat and for the mayor's job, instead of having to resign from council to run for mayor. Candidates would also have to register 60 days before the election, at the end of February - the current cut-off is 30 days before. Voter registration would still continue into March.

It also includes a rule that the vice mayor - currently Katrina Wilson, of the fourth ward - cannot cast votes while leading a council meeting, except to break a tie. A rule that would have limited the total amount of money the city may borrow at any one time was voted down. The proposed limits would have numbered in the multi-millions of dollars. After the public hearing, the council will vote on the proposed charter, with any amendments they want to make, leaving it to the state General Assembly to give it a final "yes" or "no" sometime this year.

Workman steps down

Second Ward council member John Workman resigned from city council as of April 5, City Manager **David Baird** said during Monday's meeting. Workman declared earlier this year that he planned to move out of the city, and would step down when he officially sold his Milford residence. Mayor Dan Marabello said his seat will stay vacant until the city elections at the end of the month, when voters will choose either Skip Pikus or Mark Christensen as Workman's successor.

Parking authority asks to dissolve

The group that has overseen Milford's downtown public parking lots since 1974 is asking to be terminated. The Milford Parking Authority, a volunteer board that arranged for the city to finance and build three parking lots near the Walnut Street business district, has finished paying off the mortgage with those lots as of late 2009. The city already handles regular maintenance at each lot, so without payments to make, members of the board have found themselves with no job to do.

"The parking authority board is requesting that the city take over ownership of the parking lots and dissolve the parking authority," wrote Harvey Marvel, chairman of the board since 1976 in a letter to City Manager **David Baird**. Milford's parking authority was formed in 1974, charged

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

with building free parking lots in the city's downtown business district. "People don't realize what was going on downtown back then - nothing," said Abe Ellison, a former city council member who owned a store on Walnut Street when the authority started up, at Monday's council meeting. "There was no place to park so there weren't people driving in to shop."

Members of the parking authority, with the support of the city government, decided to buy the three public lots that exist today - one on the northern side of Northeast Front Street, one at the corner of Washington Street and Park Avenue, and one on S.W. Front Street, behind what is now the Georgia House. They paid for those purchases with a \$341,000 loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The authority taxed downtown property owners to pay back that loan - the more space a building covered on a downtown street, the more its owner would owe.

The loan was completely paid off in September 2009, leaving the authority with nothing to do. On Feb. 24, Marvel wrote a letter to City Manager **David Baird** formally requesting that the city dissolve it. Whether or not the city takes over the lots completely, **Baird** said, they will have to be resurfaced "if not very soon then in the next few years." His estimate for the cost of that project was about \$70,000. "There is an investment involved just due to the current condition of the lots," **Baird** said. Mayor Dan Marabello said the authority might continue as a group that searches for grants and other public funding options to pay for the maintenance of the lots, but the city council has made no move one way or the other.

Other business

The council approved the next stage of Milford's sewer repair, designed to fix inflow and infiltration that allows ground-water and rainwater to flow into the city's sewer pipes. The phase consists mainly of more intensive testing in problem areas, and will cost \$291,500. It is part of the \$15 million referendum voters approved for public-works improvements in 2008. The council voted unanimously to award a \$39,020 contract to replace storm drains on Marshall Street to Christian Excavating Co. Workers discovered that drains under the roadway had collapsed during state-funded repair work earlier this year.

By a unanimous vote, the council officially adopted a resolution supporting a local service function budget in Kent County, a proposal that would cut county property taxes on city residents in proportion to the number of services offered by Kent County that their city government provides instead.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

February 18, 2010

Pay Scale for Milford Sewer Work in Flux

Author: David LaRoss

If the sewer work that started last month on Front Street is causing you headaches, you're not alone. Milford's city government is feeling them, too. A sudden change in federal rules for paying contractors has the city changing its budget for the project in midstream, months after the bidding process ended. "We're getting caught in the middle," City Manager **David Baird** said. "The change came through before we started work, which means we have to abide by it, but after we'd awarded the contract, which means we have to do this through change orders instead of an open bid."

Usually, when the city gets state funding for a construction project like this year's sewer overhaul, they pay the contractors according to a scale set by the state government. But there's also a federal rate chart, established by the Davis-Bacon Act, and as of Oct. 30, 2009, any projects "carried out in whole or in part with assistance made available by a State water pollution control revolving fund" have to use the federal pay scale. The Delaware revolving fund is one of the biggest sources of cash for the work going on right now in Milford. "It's attached to the enabling legislation from the U.S. Congress," said Greg Pope, DNREC's lead engineer for the state's clean water revolving fund. "It's essentially an EPA requirement that was passed down to us, and our duty is to enforce it."

The problem? The change went into effect on Oct. 30, but the memo announcing it didn't go out from DNREC to the state's local governments until Nov. 30. By then, the Milford city council had already taken bids and awarded the contract for construction, with a budget drawn up using state wages. Changing those numbers means changing the contract.

It's unlikely that the new rules would cause a serious spike in the project's cost, **Baird** said. State and federal wage requirements are usually similar, and the Davis-Bacon numbers are sometimes lower than the ones Delaware sets. But the city will still have to sort out exactly what the changes are. "I know there are only a couple of positions where Davis-Bacon rates are substantially more than what we normally would pay," **Baird** said. "The question is if we're using any of those positions, how many and for how long. We need to know how much this contract will actually cost the city."

Even if it did get expensive, finding another funding source isn't a good option. "There's a lot of federal dollars in that fund," **Baird** said. "If you're taking money from the revolving fund, you have to abide by the rules the federal government sets for it that's going to hold true in the future as well - I would imagine that as long as there's a stimulus package out there of any sort, then federal wage rates will come into play."

Baird said the city has asked its engineers to look into a waiver for the requirement. He said that

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

since the new rule only applies to projects that hadn't yet started work when it was handed down, and Milford had finished bidding out its sewer improvements before being told about the change, there was a case to be made for the city to be held to last year's requirements. "When they were reviewing the specs for our bid, the state was not aware of this change," **Baird** said. "They weren't even notified until after we had already awarded the bid." Pope, however, said that was unlikely to make a difference. "This is required, and there's no exceptions provided," he said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

December 31, 2009

Milford City Charter Under Review

Author: David LaRoss

Next month, the Milford City Council will meet to review the fruits of a year-long project to review, update and revise the city's most fundamental laws: the Milford City Charter. "We've spent a lot of time on this, and I think everybody needs to weigh in on how we've done and what they want to see," said Councilman Mike Spillane, who chaired the council's charter review committee. "I think the most important thing is to be as current as possible." Spillane, Mayor Dan Marabello and Councilman Owen Brooks have met monthly since mid-2008 to review and update the city's fundamental laws, and presented a draft of their changes for the full council to review this week. But the work's only getting started.

The charter is the city's constitution, and changing it isn't an easy job. Even after a year of committee meetings to hammer out a list of changes, to actually approve them requires a public hearing, then a council vote and finally approval by the Delaware General Assembly. But before any of those steps, the council will meet again to decide on what, exactly, their proposed draft is going to look like. "What's in there now isn't anything that's permanent," Spillane said. "These are some ideas that the people who worked on this committee would like to see, and we need the full council to weigh in on them."

There are three areas where the committee couldn't agree on a recommendation. The first deals with borrowing money. The city has the power to sell bonds valued in the millions of dollars to pay for projects too big to fund with property taxes - like the \$15 million the government borrowed last year for utility upgrades. Changes suggested by Marabello and City Manager **David Baird** could allow the government to borrow money up to a certain dollar value without a referendum, although what that number would actually be is still up in the air.

Spillane has argued for the language to stay as it is, with any bond borrowing needing a popular vote to go through. "I think when it comes to borrowing money, that it should go back to a vote for the people of the city," Spillane said. **Baird** said a minimum figure to call a referendum "would make it easier for the city to move forward with large projects." Another power under debate deals with a little-noticed clause that allows the council to borrow up to the value of a year's worth of tax revenue without holding the usual public referendum, in certain situations. As proposed, it reads:

"City Council may authorize, by resolution, short term borrowing by the City without the necessity of a Special Election. The City of Milford may borrow money up to the amount of the annual tax billings. The borrowed money shall be for one of the following: operating deficits, emergencies declared by Council, and short term capital project anticipative funding. The money shall be paid back in no longer than five (5) years."

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

There are two debates related to that clause - the first over whether it should be in the charter at all, and the second over the word "anticipative." "I'm trying to stay consistent - I think if we're going to borrow money, the people should approve that," Spillane said. **Baird** said he thinks "anticipative funding" doesn't allow for any of the situations where the council would really need to borrow money for construction without time for a public vote. "My concern was that, with that wording, it would mean we would almost have to predict what we were going to need it for," he said. "Once you get into an emergency, by that point it's not anticipative. It's already happened."

Except for the first sentence, that paragraph is taken word-for-word from the current charter. **Baird** said he doesn't know of any time when the city has actually used that power. Finally, the list of the mayor's powers includes nothing about his or her authority to decide what business goes on the agenda for each city council meeting. Marabello exercises that power now, but there's nothing in the charter saying that he can. The committee couldn't agree on whether to change that, or how to word it. Other changes include requiring candidates in city elections to register at least 60 days in advance, instead of the current 30. There are a host of edits to the formatting and organization of the document that don't change any of the actual text, designed to make it easier to navigate. "The current charter's a little bit of a hodgepodge, and this provides some structure," **Baird** said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Milford Beacon (DE)

December 3, 2009

City, other customers to get refund

Author: David Laross

Everyone who pays an electric bill to the city of Milford will get a surprise in next month's bills: A share of a \$350, 000 re-fund. The Delaware Municipal Electric Company, the corporation that buys electricity for Milford and six other Delaware cities, overcharged Milford residents by \$350, 000 in 2009, and is sending the money back in the form of discounts on November and December's bills. "The point is that it's customers' money from overpayments that they have made so we want to return it to them as soon as possible," said Milford City Manager **David Baird**.

Customers overpaid because DMEC got better prices on power than the company expected when it set rates this year, but didn't adjust the amount it was charging customers. "They budgeted for the prices they expected to pay on the market, and used that budget to set rates," **Baird** said. "But over the course of the year, they were able to get a better deal than that."

When DMEC took stock of its finances at the end of the year, Milford customers had overpaid by a total of \$350, 000. So that money is being returned to the customers.

For two months, starting with the bills scheduled to go out next week, the next two months, city electric rates will drop by 11.68 percent, which works out to \$16.75 for every 1, 000 kilowatt-hours of power used.

Rates will go back up after that, although **Baird** said they may not bounce back as high as they were before this month. "It's expected that it will be back where we were, but I can't guarantee a figure," **Baird** said. "We've had to add a one-cent adjustment to the price, and we hope we'll be able to get rid of that completely, but that's a hope."

With the extra cent per kilowatt-hour, Milford's rates work out to \$143 for 1, 000 kWh. Without it, that figure would be \$133. "We'll see how it works out when we get to that point. It's not something we can predict right now," **Baird** said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Milford Chronicle (DE)

December 3, 2009

Court Rules Sign Case Unfounded

Author: Gwen Guerke

A Sussex County judge ruled in favor of Key Properties Group, LLC on Nov. 6 in a suit that pitted the city against the developer in the Court of Common Pleas. At issue were two billboards advertising Hearthstone Manor near the intersection of Del. 1 and Route 30. **David Baird**, city manager, said Monday evening he could not comment on the ruling because he had not seen the trial transcript. **Mr. Baird** also said he had not calculated the city's expenditure to defend its position in court. "The Court's head is spinning a bit trying to connect the dots in this case," wrote opening sentence of the six-page transcript.

The city charged that Key Properties was in violation of a 2003 annexation resolution when it failed to remove two separate V-shaped billboards. "This is a criminal prosecution," according to the transcript. "Nowhere in the annexation resolution or city code or the chart defines what a billboard is," according to Judge Beauregard. Without that definition, she said, it would be difficult to define what is prohibited. "There is no language in that section that was the basis for the charge," the transcript states. "Mr. Williams, I imagine that you must run around and try to connect the dots," she stated, addressing Don Williams, a city code enforcement officers.

The judge noted that the ordinance defines a business sign, "but there is nothing in that section that prohibits or says that type of signage is prohibited," according to the court document. The judge noted that Key Properties received a permit on at least one of the signs in question. She said the dictionary definition supports Key Properties placement of the sign. "The motion for acquittal is granted," Judge Beauregard said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**David Baird***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Milford Beacon (DE)

June 4, 2009

Milford Balances Tight Budget

Author: David LaRoss

The Milford city government is going to try to get by with less next year. Reacting to the current economic downturn, the proposed budget for 2009-2010 includes no tax or fee increases, and cuts spending by about 3 percent to make up for an expected drop in revenue. "My main goal is just to get the best budget we can for the dollars we have, and cut waste wherever we find it," council finance committee chairman Doug Morrow said during the first 2009 budget hearing, on June 2. The budget weighs in at about \$43 million, about \$1 million more than last year, but most of the increase is in the cost of electricity, which rose about 3.5 percent in the past 12 months. More than \$33 million of the city budget goes toward buying power and keeping the electric department going.

City Manager **David Baird** said he doesn't expect rates to increase again in the near future. The Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation, which buys power for Milford, voted in its most recent increase in February, and **Baird** said there are no signs of another hike on the horizon. Cuts include slashing the budget for the city's administration by \$170,000, laying off the city's construction inspector due to a drop in construction and cutting the government's annual donation to the Carlisle Fire Department by \$20,000. "Things are tight everywhere," said council member John Workman. "I want people to know that there is still money for the fire department if they need it."

Workman was referring to a city account held in the department's name that has been funded for years by a 0.5 percent surcharge on building permits within the city limits. Last year Carlisle took \$100,000 out of the fund to buy land for a new ambulance station, but still has over \$20,000 in reserve. With spending cut in most city departments, administrators are focusing on planning for the future. The largest of those plans is for a full-scale review of services. "The city's gotten involved in a lot of things, and it's time to take a step back and look at them," **Baird** said. "First, if it's what the public wants us to do, and second, if it's being done efficiently and effectively."

Parks & Recreation will work on plans for a network of walking trails to connect different parts of Milford with the Mispillion Riverwalk, including area schools, the Milford Public Library and possibly the Abbotts Mill Nature Center. "We've got a jewel with the Riverwalk, and one of the city's main priorities should be looking at how we can capitalize on that jewel," **Baird** said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

April 30, 2009

Key Properties Developer Plans to Appeal Signage Suit

Author: David LaRoss

A Justice of the Peace court has found Key Properties guilty in a lawsuit over signs on Route 1, but the judgment is less decisive than the city might have liked. According to court documents, Judge D. Ken Cox ordered the developer to pay \$164 - a \$100 fine and \$64 in court costs - for posting a sign without a permit and in violation of the city's signage regulations, namely that it's larger than city regulations allow and has flags on the top, which the code prohibits.

The lawsuit concerns three signs posted on the side of Route 1 at the southern edge of the city, near the intersection of the highway with Wilkins Road. All advertise planned Key Properties developments - one is for Hearthstone Manor II, and two are for the "lifestyle mall" in development nearby.

Although the judgment is in the city's favor, it's much less than the thousands the city council was looking for. City codes allow for fines of up to \$100 for every day that a sign stays up after it's been ordered removed, and Code Enforcement Officer Don Williams sent a notice to Key Properties asking them to take the signs down on Oct. 6, with a deadline of Oct. 21. "That's what the court ruled.

The real issue here was preserving the integrity of the city's zoning ordinance, and the actions of city council," City Manager **David Baird** said. However, the violations Williams reported aren't the same ones Cox ruled on. The letter from Williams to Key Properties reads that "billboards are not allowed in a C-1 district," but the judge's ruling is the details of how big a sign is allowed to be, and finds only one of the three signs in violation of city law.

The other issues were first brought up in public during city council meetings, after the initial letter had already been sent. The problem, company representatives David Hitchens and Cliff Crouch argue, is that the city never defined "billboard" until after it told the company to take the signs down. Williams' letter to Key Properties defines "billboard" as "a sign that directs attention to a business, commodity, service or entertainment conducted, sold or offered at a location other than the premises on which the sign is located." But the only mention of billboards in the city's general code is in a list of the kinds of signs allowed in different zoning categories. It says that "billboards" aren't allowed in any zone, but doesn't say what counts as a billboard.

At the trial, City Planner Gary Norris referred to Webster's dictionary and a privately published compendium of planning terms to define "billboard." Neither definition, Hitchens said, was mentioned before the city fined Key Properties. Crouch said the city is specifically targeting Key Properties with a law that could have been used against more than 100 signs in the city. "Enforcing that would be crippling to small businesses," he said. "By my count, there are 150 signs that would have to come down because they're billboards. But none of them have."

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The developer has already filed an appeal with the state court of common pleas. If they don't win an appeal, Hitchens said, the plan is to replace the largest sign with one small enough to meet city codes, "There will still be three signs there," Crouch said. In addition to its recent legal action, Milford's city government is preparing to conduct a complete review of Hearthstone Manor against the approved site plans. "Obviously, that (the signage suit) is just one thing we're moving forward with," **Baird** said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

April 21, 2009

Judge Finds for City in Signage Lawsuit

Author: David LaRoss

A Justice of the Peace court has ordered Key Properties to take down one of the billboards alongside Route 1 that were the subject of a months-long conflict with the city council. The developer must also pay the city a \$164 fine - far less than the thousands the government was suing for. The city council wanted to apply a new fine for each day the signs had been left up since a code enforcement officer identified the issue in mid-November. "That's what the court ruled. The real issue here was preserving the integrity of the city's zoning ordinance, and the actions of city council," City Manager **David Baird** said.

Key Properties attorney David Hitchens said the company has already filed an appeal to the state chancery court. The city had found the signs to be a violation of its codes in three different ways. First, Key Properties seemed to have gotten only one permit, and put up three signs. Second, no billboards can be put on the land where they were placed, with or without a permit, under an agreement that its original owners made with the city when it was annexed. Finally, city ordinances don't allow billboards in any case.

Key Properties argued that the signs, which advertise their nearby housing developments, should fall under the city's "free-standing signs" category, as opposed to being billboards. The company also produced receipts for two sign permits - one of which was for a neighboring property on Wilkins Road, not Route 1. Although the full text of the court's decision is not available, Judge D. Ken Cox found that one of the signs did not meet the city's regulations, being too large and fitted with decorative flags that go against the code. The city is still suing Key Properties over conditions at the Hearthstone Manor development, and the developer has threatened its own legal action over the city council's decision to deny final site approval for Hearthstone Manor II. "Obviously, that's just one thing we're moving forward with," **Baird** said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)
February 19, 2009

City Sues Developers Over Signs – Records Show March '08 Letter Ending Swale Debate

Author: Gwen Guerke

Representatives of Key Properties Group learned late Tuesday that the city filed suit against them in the Justice of the Peace Court. "That is based on the decision of city council last Monday. We have to follow through," said **David Baird**, city manager. The court action comes on the heels of a Feb. 14 letter from Key Properties Group LLC to Don Williams, the city's code enforcement officer. "We are prepared to take corrective action on the sign advertising Hearthstone," wrote Clifford Crouch, the group's project director. The letter contends the sign is not in violation of city codes, and its owners would follow the appeal process if the violation is upheld.

On Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Crouch said he would file a letter of appeal on Wednesday morning and pay a \$300 processing fee to have the matter addressed by the city's Board of Adjustment. The developer said Key Properties Group is willing to comply with the city's sign regulations, but they are more than a little miffed that some council members publicly stated that developers have failed to communicate with the city officials over issues at Hearthstone Manor. Key Properties Group LLC is the developer for the housing community situated adjacent to Shawnee Acres between Elks Lodge and Wilkins roads. In the wake of a highly contentious Feb. 9 council meeting, developers have a thick file full of papers to demonstrate the contrary: there's been ongoing dialog for several years.

Communicating, however, is not the equivalent of consensus. The city and the development company remain at odds over two issues, now referred to as the signs and the swales. Although the city officially considers the swale controversy a dead issue, 1st Ward Councilman Michael Spillane raised the matter again at Feb. 9 meeting, waving documents he referred to as site plans while he spoke. The drainage swales in question line Clearview Drive, including directly in front of the home occupied by Councilman Spillane and his mother, Vivian Ginn, who owns the home.

Councilman Spillane and Mrs. Ginn have been fighting city hall for several years over their concerns that the swales do not conform to city code specifications, and because they contend the steep grade sets up a safety hazard. In a March 2008 letter, city attorney Timothy Willard sent Mrs. Ginn stated the city's position on the matter. "I indicated that the Town considered the matter closed and perhaps your best recourse would be to consider consulting a private attorney," the letter states.

Councilman Spillane said he would not comment on the letter Monday afternoon. "I don't have your letter. For the record, I don't want to comment unless I have the facts in front of me," he said. "I have the site plan. It was clearly not followed. I feel the city is the problem. The codes of the city haven't been followed, and I don't understand why." In another letter, dated Feb. 4, Elmer Fannin, Key Properties CEO, responds to an invitation to a Feb. 6 meeting, declining that

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

invitation because his position was approved by the city, DNREC and Sussex County Soil Conservation District. Second Ward Councilman John Workman acknowledged the paper trail on Friday, although at the most recent council session, he told fellow council members that Hearthstone developers had not responded. "I might have said that, but what I meant is that they are playing games with us and I'm tired of that," Councilman Workman said Friday. "They say they want to work with us, but the next day, they don't want to work with us. It's been going on too long." But developers say his statements were unfair. "It's just not fair. Somebody has to have information, and it's not being presented," said Mr. Crouch. "It's getting personal, and it's not fair. All we want is for the facts to be known."

In the days following the meeting, Mayor Dan Marabello said he thought there might have been correspondence, but did not break into the discussion because he was unsure. "There was something in the back of my mind. I wasn't sure and I didn't want to say the wrong thing in the heat of the moment," the mayor said. First Ward Councilman Irv Ambrose said he had received copies of all those letters. "I was absolutely aware. He (the developer) responded. The way I feel about it, is it could all be settled if people were willing to compromise, including the swale thing," he said. The city isn't the only one who wants the issue to put to rest. City Manager **Baird** said the city has spent in excess of \$25,000 on the matter.

Developers also have a letter from Soil Conservation agent Jessica Watson stating that the Clearview Drive swale meets agency standards, and that to alter the system could have a negative impact on Hearthstone's drainage system. Meanwhile, **Mr. Baird** said he is leading a fact-finding mission. "Regarding the swales, City Council asked me to conduct fact finding during the two weeks between meetings. The city engineer, city planner and city solicitor are reviewing the project and I will be reporting back to city council on Feb. 23," he said.

Sign issues being resolved

The signs on a triangle of land where Del. 30 and U.S. 1 meet are another matter. On Tuesday morning, Cliff Crouch, project director for Key Properties, said he contacted city officials on Friday about a third sign that Councilman Spillane complained about. "We agreed on that, and took the sign down," Mr. Crouch said. Mr. Crouch said developers also agreed there was no permit for one of the V-signs. "We will take corrective action. The other sign is legal," he said. That remains to be seen as the city moved the process into the court system.

Council members directed **Mr. Baird**, city manager, to begin action on Feb. 10. He confirmed Monday that the code enforcement officer and city solicitor were working resolving those issues. Meanwhile, developers said they would like to see the matters resolved as well, and that they have written documentation and city ordinances to validate both the signs and the swales. "Not only do we have the permits, the city gave us the poles," Mr. Crouch said. "The city gave us the poles." He also has copies of a four-page letter sent on Dec. 12 to **Mr. Baird**, the city manager, from James D. Griffin, Key Properties' attorney. The letter, written in response to Nov. 3 correspondence from the city, addresses three issues: Clearview Drive swales, the signs and a tax assessment issue which has since been resolved. "We are looking for common ground and resolution," said David Hitchens, project manager.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)

October 23, 2008

Baird Named to Rural Water Association's National Executive Board

Author: David LaRoss

David Baird has made a name for himself as a utility guru. His work with Georgetown's public works is part of what earned him City Manager of the Year honors in 2004 and brought him to former city manager Richard Carmean's attention, first as assistant city manager and then as his successor. Now he's taken the step to the national level, as one of the newest members of the National Rural Water Association's executive board. "I'm absolutely looking forward to serving on the executive board," he said. "I have a lot of respect for what National Rural Water does, and its state associations. In my opinion, it's one of the few national programs where you see real benefit at the local level."

That includes lobbying for regulations that will benefit small-town water departments and providing training and assistance for the departments themselves. "Legislatively, they're also a huge advocate for rural water departments," **Baird** said. "And they're very effective working with individual operators, not only educating them about regulations but working with them hands-on out in the field." He said the association's legislative work is part of the reason Milford was able to get a low-interest \$5 million loan from the federal government as part of the 2008 Farm Bill. **Baird** was elected to the NRWA executive board by the 48-member national board at the association's annual conference, held Oct. 4 through 8 in Reno, Nev. "In the position where he is now, it's sort of like the NRWA's cabinet," NRWA Deputy CEO Sam Wade said. "They have to represent their utility and their state, and make decisions that will set policy for the entire organization."

Baird has served on the NRWA board of directors since 2005 and was elected to the board of the Delaware Rural Water Association in 2002. "**David** brings an extensive background in utility operations. He's very astute in our industry and well-respected nationwide," Wade said. **Baird** and his wife JoAnn were recognized during the conference for their service and continued dedication to water utilities. The NRWA's state affiliates support 26,696 water and wastewater utility members in all 50 United States and Puerto Rico, and the nine officers of the executive board provide leadership for small water utilities. State associations are responsible for training 55,000 water and wastewater professionals while providing 100,000 on-site technical assistance visits a year. "Our goal is to make sure that regulations are reasonable, practical and affordable for systems that serve areas with under 10,000 customers," Wade said.

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David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Milford Beacon (DE)
September 11, 2008

Milford Gets Federal Loan for Water Works

Author: David LaRoss

In February, the city of Milford decided to borrow \$15 million. Last month, it still didn't know exactly where that money was going to come from. Then, on Monday morning, the U.S. government gave the city some good news - including an extra \$780,000 worth that they weren't expecting. "This is much better than we anticipated when we approved the program," Mayor Dan Marabello said. The money comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which used the 2008 Farm Bill to secure Milford a \$5.6 million low-interest loan to cover improvements to the city's water system.

The loan is to be repaid over 40 years, at just more than half the interest rate the city was prepared to pay - 2.75 percent instead of 4.5 percent. "It's going to save the residents of Milford more than \$780,000 over the life of the loan," City Manager **David Baird** said. Milford residents gave their permission to borrow in a February referendum, but until this announcement the city had not locked in a loan for any of the funds. It was never in doubt that the city would borrow the money, **Baird** said, but Delaware's elected representatives had to work to get the funding into the farm bill. "This is very good news for Milford, and we owe it to our congressional delegation," **Baird** said.

When the USDA worked out the figures, there was enough money set aside for the region to fund two projects in Delaware. That turned out to be Milford's work, along with another water-construction project in Laurel. "There's a \$2 billion backlog of projects looking for funding," said Marlene Elliot-Brown, Delaware/Maryland director for USDA Rural Development. "We feel very fortunate to have gotten two of those projects." Congress only passes a farm bill every few years - the one passed in 2007 was the first since 2002, which replaced one passed in 1996.

Baird said those savings will allow the city to keep utility rates lower as the loan is repaid. "It doesn't seem like much over a 40-year loan, but it makes a difference when you're the one who would have to pay those increases," he said. With the money secured, **Baird** added, the city can begin planning improvements to its water system in earnest. That includes a new water tower, new wells and an additional water treatment facility. The deficiencies in Milford's water system have been clear for years. As many town residents found out in summer 2006, taking even a small percentage of the system offline for maintenance was enough to drop water pressure across the city. "We're looking at a timeframe of two to two and a half years to have all the work done," **Baird** said. "Once we have another facility, we'll be able to take this one (at Washington Street) offline for some improvements." The other \$10 million approved in the referendum have not yet been secured. That includes \$5 million for an expansion of the city's electric grid and \$5 million for improvements to the sewer system. At the Sept. 8 council meeting, **Baird** said he expects the city to begin selling bonds for those projects in early October.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Dover Post (DE)

August 20, 2008

EPA presents Georgetown officials with source-water protection award

Author: Adam Huber

When it comes to drinking water protection, Georgetown is tops in the region. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) representatives were in the county seat on Wednesday to recognize the town for its Source Water Protection ordinance.

The town adopted the ordinance, which exceeds state standards and addressed wellhead protection areas and ground water recharge areas, in January. "So often we find people doing what's wrong. This time we get to recognize someone who did it right," EPA Regional Administrator Don Walsh before presenting the award at council's Aug. 13 meeting. "Drinking water is a finite and precious resource, so we applaud communities like the Town of Georgetown that are taking steps to protect it.

DNREC Secretary John Hughes echoed Walsh. "These things don't come from communities that don't know where they're going," Hughes told council. "You did it because it's the right thing to do; you did it out of character, heritage and a sense of futurity."

In addition to the EPA recognition, Rep. Joe Booth (R-Georgetown) also presented mayor Eddie Lambden with a proclamation from the state House, and councilman Bob Ricker pointed out the efforts of former town manager **David Baird** and former mayor Mike Wyatt. "With Mayor Wyatt, Mayor Ricker, and carried on with Mayor Lambden, Georgetown has always had a tradition of taking care of the environment," Booth said.

EPA's source water protection awards recognize organizations and communities that take steps to protect drinking water sources. The awards are open to individuals, and public and private organizations throughout EPA's mid-Atlantic region, which includes Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, the District of Columbia and Maryland. Recipients have voluntarily gone beyond what the law requires to protect their communities.

In 1996, the federal Safe Drinking Water Act was amended to give greater protection to millions of Americans who rely on public drinking water systems. By law, all states must develop source water assessments for every public water supply, but it is up to the local authorities to develop plans and measures to protect drinking water sources from contamination.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**David Baird***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Milford Chronicle (DE)

July 31, 2008

Offices Get More Than a Facelift – Extensive City Hall Renovations Near Completion

Author: Gwen Guerke

Take a good look at Milford City Hall. Some things look quite spruced up now that the scaffolding's gone. New sod. New steps. New windows downstairs, and the front ramp is gone. The changes aren't just aesthetic. The stair railings, for example, offer a sense of safety. But when you step inside, well, it's a whole new world. The \$1.2 million renovation project started around the 2007 Christmas holidays when the staff relocated to the public works complex off Airport Road. Some residents complained because a bill-payment drop box on the drive had to be removed while work was in progress.

Now the job is nearly complete, and in about six weeks city administrators expect to be back in business downtown. While the building's shell remained the same, its interior was altered to accommodate an elevator, and the wheelchair ramp constructed at the rear of the building can be accessed from the reconfigured parking lot off South Washington Street. "You might have to stop and get your bearings," said **David Baird**, city manager, during a sneak peek behind the doors that are expected to open to the public by mid-September.

Gone is the cramped lobby, the cashier's office, double glass doors and the counter. Now the open space is still dusty while workers tend to the finishing tasks. Small construction supplies stacked on a table are within easy reach in order to get the job done. "We're working out the details of the furniture placement," he said. Attending a council meeting or public hearing at the landmark at the corner of South Walnut and South East Second streets will be a different experience. The new council chambers on the south side of the building will seat about 100 people. Council members will work behind a custom-made dais that has been wired for council members' computers.

The location of a large pull-down screen will allow the public, as well as council members, to view electronic presentations. "It's all updated for today's and anticipated technology," **Mr. Baird** said. Throughout the building, Wilmington-based architect Dennis Melton and interior designer Denise Graham chose a soft sea foam paint for the walls topped with cream crown molding. "We had a huge debate over the trim. We decided to show off the character of the building with the molding and the deep window sills. People will be surprised. It's something they will be proud of. It's a statement about the community, about doing things and doing them right," he said.

The mayor's office, situated near the chambers, offers a picturesque view of downtown Milford. Also adjacent to the chambers is a room to accommodate council during executive sessions, a room that can be used for committee meetings. The city manager's office and space for his administrative assistant as well as the city clerk's office are located at the north side of the building. "It's obviously quite a difference," **Mr. Baird** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Downstairs, space once dark, musty and spoiled by water damage has been cleaned up, sealed and opened up as a workplace. Since the area is not completely underground, installing new windows and energy-efficient lighting provide usable office room. "We are still up in the air on which services will be here. I don't think anyone would mind working here. I'm pleased with the way it turned out," he said of the lower level renovations. "I have to admit, I had my reservations." What the public won't see are vast records storage areas on both levels, updated mechanical systems and the addition of fire and security systems and monitors. "I think people will be very pleased. And the drop box will be coming back," **Mr. Baird** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
David Baird**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sussex Post (DE)
January 4, 2007

Town Seeks New City Manager – Baird Leaving Georgetown After 10 Years at Post
Author: Michael Short

After 10 years at the helm, Georgetown City Manager **David Baird** will leave by March to take a position as assistant city manager of Milford. **Mr. Baird**, 36, has guided the town through a period of impressive growth and Georgetown Mayor Mike Wyatt made it clear that his departure will leave a void. "He is going to be sorely missed," Mayor Wyatt said. "I just wish him well." **Mr. Baird** is leaving on good terms with the city, having notified the town council at its December meeting of his plans. Although the mayor jokes that he will be welcome to return at any time, it is clear that he feels **Mr. Baird** was the right person for the job at the right time. "He has a lot of respect of all of the employees and he has earned that respect — He's done a great job. He's taught us all something along the way," he said. "We have really grown together a lot and the town is in very good shape." **Mr. Baird** will be taking on the challenge of a larger town in Milford, where he will be assistant to Richard D. Carmean, the current Milford city manager.

He has been overseeing two major sewer projects totaling some \$16.5 million for Georgetown. But Mayor Wyatt believes one of his biggest accomplishments has been to bring in good people for positions with the city of Georgetown and to help ensure the continuity of those employees. He is expected to help the city choose his successor, but the town is clearly in no hurry to hire a replacement. Mayor Wyatt said that it's more important to choose the right person for the job, rather than rushing to fill the position. He noted the difficulty of dealing with the press and the public and joked that whoever is picked even "has to deal with us (the town council)." "We took our time and did it right when we hired **David** 10 years ago and that's what we will do again," Mayor Wyatt said. "We're going to make sure we get the right person." He said that the town hopes to have a Jan. 19 deadline for accepting applications. The applicants will then be weeded down to perhaps a final five potential candidates in the following days with a new city manager coming on board by the end of February, he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Delaware State News (Dover, DE)

June 10, 1999

Georgetown answers police suit

Author: Carlos Holmes

Town officials claim that former 21-year police officer John H. Davis Jr. left the department after allegations surfaced that two women claimed he offered them favors for sex. The allegations are part of an answering brief to a lawsuit filed by Mr. Davis against the town and seven of its officials. Mr. Davis filed the lawsuit on April 7. It alleges the town committed wrongful actions to force him to withdraw his application for the vacant police chief position in 1998. The lawsuit also alleges that town officials reneged on an agreement pertaining to departure from the department, which Mr. Davis claims was an early retirement.

The plaintiff has named as defendants: Georgetown Mayor Robert Ricker, council members Beatrice Hylbert, Michael R. Wyatt, Gary D. Tonge and Lee J. Turek, Town Manager **David W. Baird** and town Police Chief William S. Topping.

According to an answering brief filed by the town on May 17 in Sussex County Superior Court, the defendants refute Mr. Davis' claim that he was appointed April 3, 1998, as acting chief upon the sudden death of Chief Harvey A. Gregg Jr. But they contend Mr. Davis became the ranking officer in charge. The town admitted Mr. **Baird** suggested that Mr. Davis withdraw his application for police chief, because he was not selected as a finalist by the advisory panel which conducted the interviews. However, it denies the plaintiff's allegation that at that time the town manager told Mr. Davis he was under investigation by the Delaware State Police and the state Department of Justice.

The town admitted it received information that allegations surfaced in October 1998 that a woman had claimed that the plaintiff offered her money for sex, and that another woman claimed he had offered to dismiss charges against her in return for a sexual favor. In his lawsuit, Mr. Davis denies the sexual allegations.

The town admitted it indicated to Mr. Davis that the investigations would be resolved by his resignation. However, the town refuted Mr. Davis' contention that the town agreed it would be considered a retirement. The city and Mr. Davis reached an agreement where he voluntarily terminated his employment, and he was represented by counsel during the negotiations, said James A. Fuqua Jr., town attorney. It was a surprise that the lawsuit was filed. According to the filed response, the town and its officials argue that they are immune because of the "doctrine of qualified, good faith immunity." Mr. Davis is asking the court to award him compensatory and punitive monetary damages as well as pay for legal expenses.

[CB&A Note: The case can be found at the link below.]

<https://casetext.com/case/davis-v-town-of-georgetown-3>

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **David W. Baird** is listed below.]

Delaware State News (Dover, DE)

April 27, 1998

DOVER CITY EMPLOYEE HONORED BY ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

AGENCY: An employee

Section: Community

GEORGETOWN WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY CITED FOR EXCELLENCE:

Michael McCabe, Region III administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency Friday presented Keith Hudson, the Georgetown Wastewater Treatment Facility manager, and **David Baird**, town manager, with an Operation and Maintenance Excellence Award in a ceremony held at the Delaware Technical and Community College Environmental Training Facility.

Mr. McCabe said that the EPA program recognizes the commitment by local officials and plant personnel in maintaining and protecting the nation's environmental infrastructure.

The Georgetown Wastewater Treatment Facility will now be entered into a national competition.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David Baird

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Delaware State News (DE)

August 29, 1997

Georgetown Names New Town Manager

Author: Lauren Bordner

At a special Tuesday morning meeting, Georgetown Town Council voted 4-0 to hire **David Baird** of Centreville, Md., as its new town manager. **Mr. Baird** has worked as the town manager of Cecilton, Md., for the past year as he earned his master's degree in public administration, Mayor Steve Pepper said, also saying **Mr. Baird** will be relocating to town as soon as he finds somewhere to live. "It was his background, his history, experience and character" that earned him the job, Mr. Pepper said. "We wanted someone that would hit the ground running," Councilman Gary D. Tonge said.

Councilman Michael Wyatt said the decision to hire **Mr. Baird** was not taken lightly. "Each individual councilman examined the applications for 10-12 hours before holding two rounds of interviews," he said. "We had some very, very good candidates," Mayor Pepper said of the 43 applications received. Councilwoman Beatrice Hylbert was not present at the meeting. She later said she wasn't able to make the meeting because of a scheduling conflict. "I've met **David**, and he seems like a nice young man," she said.

Mr. Baird will be replacing former town manager Sandy Coyman, who resigned in July for personal reasons. Public Works supervisor William Bradley has been acting as town manager in the interim. Mayor Pepper said **Mr. Baird** will begin work Sept. 25 at the Town Council workshop.

Research Compiled by: Amanda Dillabough
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