

Half-Cent Sales Surtax Citizen Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 16, 2019

Opening

The regular meeting of the Half-Cent Sales Surtax Citizen Advisory Committee was called to order at 4:01p.m. on Monday, September 16, 2019 at St. Johns County School District, 40 Orange Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084 by Mrs. Nicole Cubbedge, School District staff (the Chairman and Vice Chair were unable to attend the meeting).

Present

Susan Connor, Fred Danner, Barbara Little, Melissa Nelson, and Norvie Veracruz. Alternates: Jason Lewis. Absent: Joseph Adiutori, Ed Albanesi, Derek Barrs, Thomas Cave, Christine Chapman, Damian Cook, Jack Hardman, Dr. Bill McCormick, Grant Misterly, and John Quattrochi. School District staff present: Nicole Cubbedge, Mike Degutis, Paul Rose, Elizabeth Moore, and Judith Harvey.

Approval of Minutes

Since there was not a quorum (only five committee members present), no action could be taken on the minutes from the June 17, 2019 meeting. They will be scheduled for approval at the next meeting.

Financial Reporting

Mr. Degutis gave the financial report. He stated that the 2018-2019 Sales Tax Receipts are for the entire fiscal year 2018-2019. The numbers highlighted in yellow are the totals. The budget projection for 2018-2019 was \$19.1 million with actual receipts showing an increase of \$2.5 million. Mr. Lewis asked what the receipts were for last year and Mr. Degutis stated that they were right under \$20 million. Mr. Danner asked if the original projection was about \$13 million and Mr. Degutis stated in the affirmative. Mr. Degutis also stated that they tried to always make safe projections. He also stated that there has been an increase every year. Mr. Degutis then reviewed the highlighted block in yellow regarding Interest Earned thru 6/30/19. He also recapped the averages and stated that everything was performing well. Mr. Rose asked if these averages were just for this fiscal year and Mr. Degutis stated yes.

Mr. Degutis then reviewed the graphs. He noted that there is a dip each quarter, but it still outperforms every month. He stated that April, May, June are usually flat. He stated that receipts increase every year. He then reviewed the three Sources and Uses charts. He stated that this information is from inception of the sales tax. Mrs. Little commended Mr. Degutis and said it was very well done. Mr. Degutis stated that Mrs. Moore does the numbers.

Project Reporting

Mr. Rose presented the Project Reporting. Mr. Rose stated that the LPA classroom expansion project was put out to bid in June and bids were opened in August. Then, in September, the bids were awarded to the low bidder. He said the expansion will open with the 2020-2021SY. He stated that the dining expansion is still being planned.

He then reviewed the three roofing projects: Switzerland Point Middle School (SPMS), PVPV/Rawlins Elementary and Gamble Rogers Middle School (GRMS). He stated that the SPMS roof project was complete as well as the RB Hunt Elementary covered PE project. He stated they will take final acceptance on the RB Hunt Elementary project next month. He also stated that the PVPV/Rawlins Elementary and GRMS projects were about a month out from completion.

Mrs. Connor asked about fencing projects being funded this year. Mr. Rose stated that it is in the budget but may not be all from the sales tax budget. He also stated that they were working on single point of entry, cameras, fencing and access controls. He explained the District received a \$1 million grant last year and would be getting one this year. He explained there are multiple funding sources for items. He stated that each year, they visit with each school and the maintenance manager at each school to determine projects that need to be done. He added that the sales tax is just one component of funding for projects.

Mr. Rose then discussed the wireless school bus system. He stated that the system was installed. He stated it has provided timely updates and helps with personnel resources and is easier to upload.

Mr. Lewis asked how many classrooms were included in the LPA expansion. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that there would be twenty classrooms. Mr. Lewis asked about the cost for the project and Mr. Rose stated that it would be right under \$6 million and that the price was very good. Mr. Rose stated that the cost per square foot was lower than similar expansion projects. Mr. Lewis asked if the housing market was slowing down. Mr. Rose answered that he thinks from a cost perspective that it is more indicative of costs stabilizing.

Mrs. Connor stated that Sebastian Middle School has not had a buzzer all year and she asked if they were going to get one. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that yes, they would be getting one. Mrs. Connor asked if cameras go with the buzzer. Mr. Rose stated that yes, the buzzer and camera go together. Mr. Rose stated that the District is going through a transition with the video camera system to tie into the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office. He stated that schools without cameras will get them and the technology will be integrated. He further stated that IT is working on it.

Mrs. Connor asked if there was any long-term goal to reconfigure the front office. Mr. Rose stated that they will get the buzzer and camera up and then reconfigure the lobby. Mrs. Connor asked about the timeline. Mr. Rose stated that he thought it would be within the next month. He further stated that it would not be a significant amount of work.

Mrs. Connor asked the location of the K-8 School MM. Mrs. Cubbedge said she would be getting to that in the meeting. Mrs. Connor asked to confirm that the new high school would not be funded by Sales Tax and Mrs. Cubbedge stated that it would not.

Mrs. Cubbedge then gave some information regarding the new high school. She stated that the District needs a high school. However, the high school would not be funded through the CAC. She stated that the District had waited until they could borrow funds for the high school.

Next, Mrs. Cubbedge reviewed information regarding the budget and referred to the handout entitled the Capital Outlay Revenue Budget. Mrs. Cubbedge noted that Mr. Degutis had referred to carry forward funds. She explained that on the spreadsheet she had set up the actual budget amounts for 2019-2020 and in a separate column, she listed the carry forward funds from 2018-2019. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that she and Mr. Degutis were conservative with the funds. She stated that there were \$3.7 million additional funds from carry forward so they can get some projects moving with those funds. She explained that the debt service was listed first so that it will come out right off the top of the budget. She then stated that \$13 million has been budgeted for K-8 School MM which will be in Nocatee. She said this school is critically needed since Palm Valley Academy (PVA) has exploded in growth. She explained that PVA was partially funded with sales tax and that this year they serve Kindergarten through 7th grade and already have 1,840 students. Next year, they will add 8th grade. She stated that it was built for 1500 students. Thus, she explained that a new school is needed in the Nocatee area. She stated that in the original budgets for new schools that construction cost estimates were way below the actual amounts. She further stated that Kindergarten is their largest grade with 255 students which is not a good trend. She then explained that there was a need to push the school forward faster. The funding will be a combination of sales tax, impact fees as well as funds that were borrowed along with the new high school. She stated there will be a two-year window before opening the school. She stated that the District is also working through the list with the LPA expansion and the upcoming South Woods Elementary expansion and an elementary in the southern part of the County. She further stated that if there were no sales tax, the District would not be able to push K-8 School MM forward. She also stated that the District was way past the need for a high school. Mr. Lewis asked if one high school would be enough. Mrs. Cubbedge stated no, but they could only afford one. She stated that Mr. Degutis came up with some creative financing for this high school. She stated that they wished they could build two. Mr. Lewis stated that Broward had a high school of 3,700 students. Mr. Danner stated that his wife went there. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that the high school would be built for 2,100 students and that Bartram Trail High and Nease High had been expanded to accommodate 2,100 students. Mrs. Connor asked if the Nocatee location had been designated. Mrs. Cubbedge said that would be released at the School Board Workshop tomorrow and then the Board will make the decision. Mrs. Connor asked how much of Nocatee is not yet built out and Mrs. Cubbedge estimated that it was about

one-half. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that we added relocatables to PVA. She stated we started with 8 and are adding 10 more so the total would be 18 with no 8th grade.

Ms. Little asked what the expectations will be for SilverLeaf. Mrs. Cubbedge said she is not sure since they are in the first stages of construction and putting in infrastructure. She said before school is out this year, there could be students living in there and we'll have to see how fast they build. She stated that Nocatee started in 2000 but they had years of little growth. Mrs. Connor asked about the zoning for SilverLeaf. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that it was Mill Creek Academy (MCA) and Nease High School (NHS) but was recently rezoned to Wards Creek Elementary (WCE) and Pacetti Bay Middle (PBMS). She stated that PBMS's numbers were lower now that Mill Creek has transitioned to a K-8 school. She said that SilverLeaf is slated to have two K-8 schools and a high school. Ms. Veracruz asked about RiverTown. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that they are slated to have 4,500 homes and are zoned to Bartram Trail High (BTHS). She stated that if they put in the age-restricted areas then that would help. She said they are slated to have two elementary schools and one middle school but with no specific timing. She also stated that RiverTown helped the District to acquire the BTHS site.

Ms. Little stated that engineers met with the CDD in her neighborhood about St. Johns Parkway and it will open by December 16th. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that the infrastructure is going in as well as the model homes off of CR 210 West behind St. Johns Golf and Country Club and Glen St. Johns. She stated that it is accessible through Leo Maguire Parkway. Ms. Little stated that she has never seen such growth.

Mrs. Connor asked when the new K-8 MM and high school would open. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that the plan is to open 2021-2022 school year. Mrs. Connor asked if there had been discussions about academies at the new high school. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that all that information will be discussed at the School Board Workshop tomorrow. Ms. Nelson asked for the time of the Workshop tomorrow. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that the Workshop is at 1pm tomorrow.

Mrs. Cubbedge referred to the \$3 million carryforward. Mrs. Cubbedge reviewed each of the items listed on this carryforward such as roof replacements and technology. This list also includes the hard drives for the video management system for the buses, the safety and security projects such as single point of entry and security cameras and gate access. She stated that this year was the last year for the Zonar system. She explained that the LED student light retrofit for buses is the flashing lights to alert distracted motorists. It has been proven to be necessary and newer buses come with the lights installed. She stated that this leaves a budget of \$25.6 million from new and reallocated funds. She stated that they are excited about the things they can do that they could not have done without the sales tax. She said the District is very grateful for the funds from sales tax. Mrs. Connor asked if projects had been done at every school and Mrs. Cubbedge answered in the affirmative in the tech and safety area. Mrs. Connor asked if there was a complete list of what had been done at each school that each principal could put in the school newsletter. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that there is annual report, but we try not to draw attention to some areas such as security. Ms. Nelson stated that she feels it is important to creatively share the message that all the schools receive items from sales tax since she overheard a St. Augustine High parent make the comment that all the funds went to the northern part of the

County. Mrs. Connor reiterated how valuable this message is especially when it is time to vote again on the sales tax. Ms. Little stated that the news needs to be constantly spread.

Ms. Little then asked about when deliveries are made to the schools if certain personnel monitor these deliveries. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that this depends on the delivery. She stated that it is typically a food service delivery and there is an established protocol for them. She stated there are designated people to receive deliveries. She stated that for years the gates were open but that has now changed, and all the gates are closed.

Mrs. Connor asked if the change to the morning middle school start time has alleviated the lateness of buses and Mr. Rose answered in the affirmative. Mr. Danner, Mrs. Connor and Mr. Lewis all stated that it was a very early start for middle school. Mrs. Connor stated that it would be nice to report why the decision was made. Mrs. Cubbedge explained that it had been noted that the K-8s ran on a different schedule and that the middle schools had less instructional time than the K-8s. Thus, she stated that the change would alleviate the lateness of the buses while also adding instructional minutes to the middle school, so the change allowed both things to occur. Mr. Danner asked if the start times for elementary and K-8 were 8:25am and Mrs. Cubbedge stated yes. Ms. Little stated that the bus situation is a difficult dynamic and that they were doing a good job. Mr. Rose thanked her. Mr. Lewis stated that they were still looking for bus drivers. Mr. Lewis asked about the hurricane makeup days and Mrs. Cubbedge stated that Mr. Forson was still working on that situation.

Public Comment

None

Next Meeting Date/Time

The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 16, 2019 at St. Johns County School District, 40 Orange Street, St. Augustine, FL at 4:00pm.

Adjournment

Mrs. Cubbedge adjourned the meeting since the Chair and Vice Chair were not present.

Minutes submitted by: Judith Harvey