

Half-Cent Sales Surtax Citizens Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 21, 2020

Opening

The regular meeting of the Half-Cent Sales Surtax Citizen Advisory Committee was called to order at 4:02p.m. on Monday, September 21, 2020 via Webex at St. Johns County School District, 40 Orange Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084 by Mr. Hardman, Chairman.

Attendance

CAC Members--Present: Edward Albanesi, Susan Connor, Damian Cook, Jack Hardman, Richa Jeetah, Amy Lasswell, John Lasswell, Jason Lewis, and Norvie Veracruz. Alternates: Javelyn Arvay, Derek Barrs, Michelle Dillon and Kim McManus. Absent: Fred Danner, Theresa Lennon, Barbara Little, Dr. William McCormick, Grant Misterly.

School District staff--Present: Nicole Cubbedge, Mike Degutis, Paul Rose, Colin Kirkland, Bruce Patrou, Dawn Posey, Greg Annucci, Vicki Davenport and Judith Harvey.

Public Attendees--Web attendees: Hope Sebastian, Anthony Coleman, Dave McKee, Ashley Cabetas, Erin Lee, Mary McCobb, Pete Clark, Dawn Graham, Sabrina Vidal, Tina Hope, and Anne Baxter. Phone calls – 10, no name specified.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the June 15, 2020 regular meeting were then approved with a motion by Mr. Barrs and seconded by Mr. Lewis. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Project Reporting

Due to Mr. Degutis having some computer issues, Project Reporting was moved to first on the agenda. Mr. Rose gave the Project Report. Mr. Rose gave an update on the single point of entry (SPOE) projects. Mr. Rose also reviewed the implementation criteria for SPOE as well as showed pictures of examples of SPOE in different schools. Mr. Rose then reviewed capital projects and showed pictures from the Liberty Pines Academy (LPA) classroom addition as well as pictures of the new K-8 School MM and the new High School HHH which were both partially funded by sales tax. Mr. Hardman asked how full LPA is at this time. Mr. Rose deferred to Mrs. Cubbedge. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that it was mostly full with about 1400 students. Mr. Barrs asked if the glass was

bullet proof. Mr. Rose stated that it is not just plain glass, but they need to be careful about listing the categories of the glass. Mr. Rose stated that K-8 School MM is on track and the walls were recently tilted. Mr. Hardman asked if they were close to budget and Mr. Rose stated in the affirmative. Ms. Connor asked about attendance numbers for the two new schools, High School HHH and K-8 School MM. Mrs. Cubbedge stated the School Board will be voting on the attendance zoning for High School HHH tomorrow. She stated that High School HHH was projected to open with 1178 for grades 9-11 and then the following year when 12th grade is added, the projection would be 1738. She further stated that it was planned to hold 2100. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that the process for determining the attendance zoning for K-8 School MM will be starting tomorrow so she would not have numbers for it. There were no further questions.

Technology Reporting

Mrs. Cubbedge introduced Mr. Patrou, the Chief Information Officer for St. Johns County School District. She stated that since technology had been a point of focus for the Committee for this year as well as the District's focus on distance learning, the staff felt it was prudent to have Mr. Patrou speak to the Committee. Mr. Patrou updated the Committee on the different areas of technology in the list of uses for sales tax receipts. He also discussed providing laptops and hotspots to students who did not have access to these items for distance learning. Mr. Patrou mentioned that there was a percentage of computers and hotspots that were not returned. Mr. Albanesi asked about the computers and hot spots that were not returned and how the District was handling that situation. Mr. Patrou stated that the IT department was using several methods to try to get these computers and hotspots returned such as disabling the hotspots, blocking the internet access on the computers, and contacting pawn shops. Ms. Connor asked about the wifi towers in Flagler Estates. Mr. Patrou said that this area is underserved and that he worked diligently to get access to students in that area. Ms. Lee said her question was also about the laptops that were not returned and that it seemed that students who went back to brick and mortar would be penalized because the laptops would be going to distance learners and there would not be laptops in the classrooms. She asked if the laptops were given out per student and not per family and would those families get more laptops if they have not returned them. Mr. Patrou stated that if families had not returned the laptops then they would not get anymore. There were no further questions.

Financial Reporting

Mr. Degutis gave the financial report and reviewed the documents that had been provided to Committee members via email. Mr. Hardman asked if the large fund balance was related to the bond payment. Mr. Degutis answered in the affirmative. Mr. Lewis asked if the \$70,000 deficit was for the year and Mr. Degutis replied that it was. Mr. Lewis stated that \$70,000 was good given the circumstances. Mr. Cook echoed this same sentiment by stating that the performance at the beginning of the year helped to offset this deficit. There were no further questions.

2020-2021 Capital Outlay Revenue Budget

Mrs. Cubbedge presented the 2020-2021 Capital Outlay Revenue Budget. She noted that it had been decided that technology would take precedence with this budget. She stated that this budget was presented to the School Board and was approved. She reviewed each item in the budget. Mr. Hardman asked about the carry forward amounts and the funds that Mr. Patrou used to fund the laptops and hotspots. Mrs. Cubbedge explained that the carry forward is from funds that were not spent in the previous budget. She also explained that Mr. Patrou needed funds quickly for these laptops and hotspots because the vendor said they would not be available long with the demand at that time. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that they shifted leftover funds so Mr. Patrou could make the necessary expenditures. Mrs. Cubbedge further explained that this budget was new funds. There were no further questions.

Public Comment

The first public comment was from Tina Hope of 63 Willow Winds Parkway, St. Johns, Florida. She asked if the State would be reimbursing districts for desk shields and PPE. Mrs. Cubbedge explained that those items were not funded from sales tax and that hopefully the District would be reimbursed for those items through the CARES Act, but she deferred to Mr. Degutis on that point. Mr. Degutis stated that initially FEMA said they would not be reimbursed. Mr. Degutis stated that they have argued the point that these items are not a normal outlay so they should be reimbursed but the final determination has not been made.

The second public comment was from Erin Lee. She stated that she was impressed with all this information. Her question was how technology improvements would be affected since funds have been spent on getting laptops and hotspots out to families. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that she would attempt to respond since Mr. Degutis had to leave the meeting. She stated that the District has had a refresh program in place and will continue to follow this program.

Next Meeting Date/Time

The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 14, 2020 at 4:00pm with the location or virtual platform to be determined.

Adjournment

Mr. Albanesi made a motion to adjourn and Ms. Lasswell seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:49pm.

Minutes submitted by Judith Harvey