

# **Half-Cent Sales Surtax Citizens Advisory Committee**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Monday, June 28, 2021

### **Opening**

The regular meeting of the Half-Cent Sales Surtax Citizen Advisory Committee was called to order at 4:02p.m. on Monday, June 28, 2021 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, Jack Hardman, Richa Jeetah, Amy Lasswell, John Lasswell, Theresa Lennon, Barbara Little, Rhonda Lovett, Dr. William McCormick, and Grant Misterly. Alternates: Michelle Dillon and Kim McManus. Absent: Damian Cook, Fred Danner, Jason Lewis, Norvie Veracruz, Javelyn Arvay and Derek Barrs.

School District staff--Present: Nicole Cubbedge, Colin Kirkland, Gretchen Saunders, Bruce Patrou, Dawn Posey, Elizabeth Moore, Greg Annucci and Judith Harvey.

Public Attendees--Web attendees: Carrie Perle.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the March 15, 2021 regular meeting were then approved with a motion by Mr. Albanesi and seconded by Ms. Lovett. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

### **Project Reporting**

The Project Reporting was presented by Mrs. Cubbedge on behalf of Mr. Rose. Mrs. Cubbedge presented renderings of Pine Island Academy (PIA), formerly called K-8 MM, which will open in August of 2021. She said the construction is moving along well. The principal is Mrs. Riedl and the mascot is the Dolphins. Mr. Hardman asked how many students the school was designed to have and how many were expected. Mrs. Cubbedge said they were not sure, but they were probably expecting about 1,000 to start but the number could grow. She said the school was designed for 1,500. She further stated that many families were close to closing but the problems with building materials have slowed closings. Ms. Lovett asked about having 8<sup>th</sup> grade at the school. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that the school would start as K-7 and in the second year, offer 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She also stated that the District does not typically open schools with the culminating grade

for consistency for students. Mr. Misterly asked if Ketterlinus also had Dolphins as a mascot. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that yes, Ketterlinus Elementary also has the Dolphins as a mascot. She stated that mascots cannot be duplicated in high school, but they can be duplicated in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade models. Mrs. Cubbedge also noted that the students voted for the mascot and they wanted to be Dolphins. Mr. Hardman asked what school was given relief by PIA. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that all the students came from Palm Valley Academy (PVA). Mr. Hardman asked where that would leave PVA as far as student numbers. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that PVA will still be over 1,500 because they have a large 8<sup>th</sup> grade class but in two years, the numbers will go down. She stated that PIA will give them relief. Mr. Hardman asked if there will still be portables at PVA and Mrs. Cubbedge answered in the affirmative but there will be less.

### **Technology Report**

The Technology Report was presented by Mr. Patrou. He stated that there are only 6 schools left to have the classroom interactive panels installed. He stated that they have ordered and installed 2,120 panels at a cost of \$2.2 million. He said they have purchased 3,193 student computers at a cost of \$1.6 million. He further stated that they have been working on two big areas: the teacher laptop refresh plan and continuing with the security cameras and access controls. He said they have spent \$735,534 across multiple schools and \$232,518 in security grants.

Next, Mr. Patrou shared a power point of the teacher refresh plan as it was presented to the School Board at a recent Workshop. The power point reviewed the models, options and matrix that was reviewed by the Refresh committee. He stated that \$3.1 million was spent from sales tax funds for the teacher refresh project. Mr. Hardman asked about the status of computers that had not yet been returned after last year. Mr. Patrou stated that they were doing better in getting these back and that Ms. Saunders and the Finance department had sent out invoices in the spring. He stated that June 10<sup>th</sup> was the last day to return the computers and at this time, there are 748 computers still out and 419 hotspots still out. Ms. Saunders stated that they were also waiting until the schools had completed their inventories in case computers had been returned to the schools. Ms. Connor asked how many student machines were purchased each year and how many were retired each year and where did those machines go. Mr. Patrou explained that they are used until they stop operating or the operating system is too old to be functional. He said it depends on funding and also on how long the machines last. He explained that the computers come with a 3-year warranty but most laptops only last about 4 years while desktops last about 5 years. He said they are then sent to Purchasing and they are put on a government surplus website. He also stated that they would not surplus a machine if it still worked.

### **Financial Report**

Ms. Saunders presented the Financial Report. She shared the 2020-2021 Sale Tax Receipts spreadsheet with the Committee. She reviewed the projected amounts and actual receipts. She said these numbers were significant given what the economy has experienced. Next, she shared

the Monthly Sales Tax Revenue since inception in 2015-2016 through the end of March 2021. Mr. Hardman noted that it was a dramatic change from last year and Ms. Saunders agreed that it was a great point. She then shared the Quarterly Sales Tax Revenue. Mr. Hardman asked her to reiterate what the quarterly revenue included. She explained that these monies were taxes collected from purchases in other counties that were sent to St. Johns County. Mr. Hardman said for example if you purchased a car in Duval County. Ms. Saunders stated in the affirmative. She then shared the Monthly/Quarterly Sales Tax Revenue. Mr. Hardman asked her for a current estimate of where she thought it would be. Ms. Saunders stated that she thought receipts would be higher and that the total would be pushing higher than \$24 million.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Hardman asked about future schools in the 10-year plan as far as cost and location. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that they would follow the Critically Needed Project List so there would be a new elementary school in the southern part of the county and an expansion at South Woods Elementary School. She further stated no sales tax money would be used for other new construction until those items were finished. She said there are other school projects listed in the remaining 5 years but there were no specific timelines. She stated that there are remaining monies to be used to maintain schools. She stated there were locker room expansions slated for Pedro Menendez High School and Bartram Trail High School and also funds for Career Academy classrooms. She stated that Mr. Patrou is currently utilizing technology funds, so the District is in a good spot for spending in that category right now. Mr. Hardman asked about any other new schools that were not funded by sales tax. Mrs. Cubbedge stated that the Educational Plant Survey was recently completed and that new school expansions were listed. This list included PIA, the 2 new high schools (Tocoi Creek High School and HS III), another new K-8, an elementary in the southern part of the county, which is sales tax funded and also, the expansion at South Woods Elementary School. She said there are more schools slated in the 10 and 20 year outlook. Mr. Hardman stated that in 3 ½ years, the District would need to go back to the citizens to renew the sales tax. Ms. Lovett thanked the District for the teacher laptop refresh program, and she hopes the sales tax will continue.

Mrs. Cubbedge then asked about the preference for the format for the next meeting that is slated for September 20, 2021, in person or virtual. Mr. Hardman asked that Mrs. Cubbedge send a poll to everyone for their feedback.

Mrs. Cubbedge then shared pictures from HS III which has not been officially named yet. She stated it is in the Twin Creeks DRI and will open in August 2022. She also shared pictures of Tocoi Creek High School which is opening in August. Mr. Hardman asked if she had a rough total cost of these projects and Mrs. Cubbedge stated that she did not have those numbers.

### **Public Comment**

None.

**Next Meeting Date/Time**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 4:00pm. The format and/or location to be determined.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:54pm with a motion by Ms. Lovett and seconded by Ms. Little.

Minutes submitted by Judith Harvey