

Local Option Sales Tax Citizen Committee
October 13, 2020
9:00am
Milton, Florida

The Local Option Sales Tax Citizen Committee met at 9:00 am on the above date with the following members present: Chairman Ed Carson, Dean Easterwood, Jonathan Hamby, Grey Burge, Frederick Barrow and Amy Cozart. Also present were the County Administrator (Dan Schebler), Budget Director (Jayne Nicholas), and Strategic Planning and Performance Manager (Sabrina White).

- 1) **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Chairman Carson in the Santa Rosa County Administrative Center, Board Room at 9:02 am.
- 2) **Approval of Minutes from June 16, 2020**- Easterwood moved approval of the minutes for the June 16, 2020, Local Option Sales Tax Citizen Committee meeting, the motion was seconded by Cozart and approved by the Committee.
- 3) **Program Discussion** – White discussed the September 2020 report. She stated we received a check for over \$700,000 in September, which puts us at 8.9% in revenue for FY20. She added the first page of the review of revenues does not include the \$700,000, which was recently received.

Public Safety: White highlighted that \$400,000 has been allocated to the Sheriff's office and hopefully by midyear, we will be able to increase that amount. Brad Baker, Public Safety Director, will be meeting with the fire departments in the next couple of months with new requests – which may override what they originally asked for. We anticipate having that list prior to our next meeting (Jan/Feb).

Capital Equipment: White stated that based on the percent allocation, there is currently about \$53,000 that can be spent in FY21. There are always capital needs, i.e., Public Works equipment. We also have this room we are meeting in, which has sound and projection issues.

Public Facilities: White stated the Navarre Beach restrooms are complete and opened in August. This project is still ongoing with the addition of tourism dollars by adding a shower and a congregate area and should be completed before the end of the year. All other facility projects are still under construction with the exception of the Pace Library meeting room, which is currently on hold.

Chairman Carson asked a question regarding the emergency communication tower in Navarre, on the Public Safety List, and the project balance of \$350,000. White explained this was partially funded with another funding source, ICP. The remaining balance is going to the Sheriff's Office, this is how we are able to allocate the \$400,000

Recreation and Natural Resources:

White stated the Fidelis Park is complete, and a groundbreaking ceremony was held after the last meeting. Additionally, a grant was received for Swenson Park and the project is now under construction. Construction is also underway for a couple boat ramps. The South End Soccer Complex is in the design phase.

Schebler added we have started the demolition phase at Navarre Park after some permit issues, re-design issues, work is not underway with a 9-month construction period. Possibly a July 4th Ribbon Cutting/Grand opening at Navarre Park.

Transportation and Drainage: White expressed many projects are under construction – including the Pea Ridge Connector. Several drainage projects are complete, and paving is underway for many roads. White asked the committee to if they favored adding a \$100,000 to each district for road paving.

Schebler stating some projects come in under budget which leaves a little excess. Since some projects have not gone out to bid, he stated the additional \$100,000 for each district for road paving/resurfacing budget without any impact. He also stated this would be a recommendation that can be made to the Board.

Hamby asked if crews were doing assessments of damage to the projects due to the recent storm. White answered yes, Public Works crews have been out since the day of the storm doing assessments, patching, and repairing them. Schebler added there was some minor road damages, couple bridge issues in the North end, nothing major. We do have a large county owned stormwater pond in Ashley Plantation that was overcome, we are looking into how we fix that and add additional mitigation.

Carson re-capped the recommendation for almost a half a million dollars and divide it 5 ways for each district. Burge asked for clarification on potentially finding federal dollars to match, but we are not at that point yet. There is a project that could use these funds, but its not enough to do the whole thing. Schebler replies yes sir.

Burge asked for clarification on the different amounts for districts 1 and 3 compared to the other 3 districts. White explained money was pulled from District 1 and 3 from the prior year's allocation for the Spencer Field project in advance, this was deducted from this year's paving budget.

Burge moved approval of the additional \$100,000 allocation to each district road paving fund, motion was seconded by Cozart and approved by the Committee.

White discussed the road paving, to date we have paved over 47 miles of road (97 streets). She provided members with a highlight sheet indicating which projects have been accomplished to date, such as drainage improvements. Over 9 million dollars of sales tax funds used for drainage, with over 270 residential structures- 195 received reoccurring flooding. HBTS over 80 million dollars of projects, basically lowering the water tables in some canals and drainage areas. Tiburon drainage project is under construction.

Public Safety: White stated we have purchased over 160 patrol cars, tasers, weapons, laptops, and mobile radios for the Sheriff's office. Radios, the apparatus they wear to go in a structure fire, thermal imaging cameras for the fire departments.

Recreation: White stated we have spent over \$1.3 million on park improvements, ADA improvements, some new playgrounds – Chumuckla, Optimist, Fidelis, and Benny Russell are all

inclusive. Benny Russell will have a splash pad. Improved sports lighting at Tiger Point and Navarre, and a restroom facility at Bagdad Mill site.

Animal Services Surgical Suite: White explained the bids came in high for this project, plan is rethinking how to manage the project.

White stated of all the projects that have been approved to date, are approximately 73% complete.

Carson asked if the surgical suite was the same as the spay/neuter facility? White answered yes, basically modifying an existing building to save money and time. We will not need to transport the animals to other facilities.

Carson asked if there was an opportunity to partner with some private organizations? Schebler answered the county is partnering with several nonprofits and rescue businesses. Carson questioned the numbers, to show what was collected, ability to leverage it, and to get other grants.

White stated there are over \$21 million of projects and only \$6 million in LOST has been used. Cozart asked if there was a percentage that shows how much locals are paying for this tax as well as visitors? Schebler stated no study has been done for that but looking at the rest of the state with various countries that have enacted the LOST, it is between 25% and 33% of the sales tax in FL. Carson requested to update the website to reflect those numbers. Schebler agreed and noted that there will be one centralized location for the information.

Other Business: Easterwood asked if \$6 million of LOST funds was leveraged into \$21 million in projects by federal funds? Schebler answered yes, those are primarily federal funds through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. That is a 3 to 1 program - \$3 federal to every local dollar – sometimes it is local agency funds, or FDOT.

Burge asked staff to ensure the information is pushed on social media since so many are misinformed.

- 4) Adjournment** – With no further business to come before the committee, Chairman Carson adjourned the meeting.



Chairman