

Local Option Sales Tax Citizen Committee
August 3, 2021
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, Jonathon Hamby, Chris Luchsinger, Kym Jones, Neal Carter, Jonathan Page, Stephen Jernigan, and Grey Burge. Also present were the County Administrator (Dan Schebler), Budget Director (Jayne Nicholas), Public Safety Director (Brad Baker), and Administrative Chief of Staff (Sabrina White).

- 1) **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ed Carson in the Santa Rosa County Administrative Center, Board Room at 9:00 am.

- 2) **Program 1a Update and Final Project Selection** – White gave a brief rundown of Program 1a, stating collections are up substantially. She continued with Public Safety, there are only 2 items still outstanding: the Sheriff's capital equipment, and Berrydale from the fire department list. Capital Equipment is complete. Public Facilities, awaiting final invoices on the auditorium roof and animal services surgical suite.

Carson asked for clarification on the animal services surgical suite, the balance shown is spent just has not been disbursed. Baker confirmed, adding the payments are on a schedule based on phases.

Recreation and Natural Resources, there are still quite a few projects outstanding. White suggested moving the Bagdad Mill Site floating dock system and add Bagdad Recreation playground due to timing constraints. She recommended using District funds or next program to fund the dock. That will allow Program 1a to close out and be complete.

Page asked if it would be Mill Site improvements? White answered yes.

White went down the list of projects and gave a brief explanation as to where we are on each.

Jernigan expressed concerns about the backstop for the Chumuckla Park fence. Schebler stated this has been addressed and the Board has approved funding to fix this in the fencing contract the county has. White adds fence repairs are paid for from other sources.

Transportation and Drainage, White stated the rain has slowed the road paving down substantially.

Jernigan Asked about Metron Estates grant denial. White explained the previous grant was denied, the project has been resubmitted and will be awarded the grant funds for this project.

Burge asked if the road paving list was for this year. White answered yes.

- 3) **Project Selection** -White states the list provided is staff's recommendation.

Schebler informed the Board that stormwater and infrastructure are the top priority among our citizens. We have prioritized and put the funds, with grant dollars, towards transportation and drainage. We

have spent \$6.2 million in road resurfacing alone; this is in addition to the \$15 million in LOST funds that were allocated to transportation and drainage. There are projects in the design phase now that we expect to receive mitigation grant program money to be available next year. The narrative that the county is not investing in infrastructure is false, we have invested tens of millions of dollars in infrastructure.

Carson stated he visited the Benny Russell Splash Pad, and he doesn't understand how you can see all the children having a big time and not feel good about paying this half-penny sales tax.

Sheriff's Narcotic and Computer Forensics Facility

White explained the Sheriff's Narcotics Facility is currently two modular units that are over 20 years old, they are no longer able to be repaired. In communications with the Sheriff's department, they think the metal building is the best solution.

Carson asked what is the purpose of this building? White explained it will house the narcotics and computer forensics team.

Jernigan states he sees payroll tax and insurance listed as a cost. Carson explains that would be a contractor or project budget and would be a part of the costs.

Carson restates the recommendation of \$630,000 of Local Option Sales Tax be allocated to support the Sheriff's new Narcotic Facility construction.

Easterwood motioned for approval. Jernigan seconds the motion. Jones in opposes. Motion carries.

Public Safety Vehicles

Baker explains the Emergency Management staff vehicle is a 2007 Ford Expedition, a new vehicle is on the list for next year's LOST funding cycle. He is requesting to move it to this year due to the cost to maintain the current vehicle. He is also requesting a vehicle for Animal Services, due to mechanical issues with the current vehicles. They have 5 vehicles to cover the entire county.

Carter states he understands the need for the vehicles, he would like to see an adjusted budget with the true cost for them. Baker explained he can get a large SUV and the kennels built in the back for about \$45,000 each.

Easterwood asked if this is planning for next year or are we trying to allocate the unspent LOST funds. Carson stated they are trying to compartmentalize Program 1a of LOST, and these requests would come from the remaining funds. Schebler added it will be the next fiscal year, these projects will be executed. Trying to draw a line, to complete the first LOST program, but it is the middle of the budget year.

Carson states there is approximately \$135,000 left, unallocated.

White confirmed, adding it would be about \$90,000 to fulfill the request for 2 vehicles, one for Public Safety and one for Animal Services. Carter asked for clarification on the vehicle for Emergency Management. Baker explained an SUV for animal services and a full-size pick-up truck for Emergency Management.

Page motioned for approval. Carter seconds the motion. Motion carries unanimously.

Animal Services Surgical Suite

Baker requests additional allocated funds for Capital Equipment for the Animal Services Surgical Suite, as listed in the backup. These items are needed to make the facility fully functional, which assists in more efficient means to move animals out of the shelter reducing the euthanasia numbers significantly.

Jernigan asked if the surgical suite is replacing a lot of the referrals we have been giving to other agencies? Baker answered that is correct, this facility also allows a faster track to adoption.

Carson states this is something he is very interested in the surgical suite, anything that we can do to get the animals spayed and neutered is a good idea. He asked if \$54,000 is what is needed to get the equipment to provide this service? Baker replies yes, adding this is in addition to a \$50,000 grant and \$20,000 already invested out of operational funds. The additional funds allow us to get to the next level we desire to be. Carson asked how many spay and neuters do you think you will be able to complete once up and running? Baker stated the goal is 20 per day, adding the more doctor operations the more support required on the back side of the process. The doctor can only "fix" them as quickly as we can prep and recover them. In the approved tentative budget, there is a vet tech position moving to full-time to assist in this process.

Jones asked, do we have a vet? The pay is already there to fund this position. Baker answered yes, we have two part-time vets.

Carter motioned for approval. Jones seconded the motion. Motion carries unanimously.

Edgewood Drive Improvements

White discussed the need, history, and scope of this project as shown in the backup. She added the new school is scheduled to open next week, we have partnered with the School District, and they are paying a portion of the cost of the sidewalks. The request is for additional funding to complete the sidewalks to Edgewood. Edgewood has its own pedestrian path, contract for construction has just been awarded last month. Currently, this project is in the recreation plan, it can be moved to transportation if the Board prefers.

Carter asked if there is inclusion of the intersections at Edgewood/Fairmont and Edgewood/Federal to improve them as well? White answered yes, those safety features would be required. Carter asked if that is included in this funding request or the original Edgewood project? White stated she did not know specifically, but it will be included.

White added the request for \$150,000 is just an estimate, and it will be less than that because the School District is partnering with us and paying a portion of the cost.

Carson asked if the Board is prepared to make the recommendation as a recreation project, as proposed? No opposition was voiced.

Jernigan motioned for approval. Burge seconded the motion. Motion carries unanimously.

Trail Head Parking

White explained the trail on East Bay Blvd is a project we have been working on for many years. It is part of the "Great Northwest Coast Trail Corridor" which is to be complete very soon. This county-owned parcel was cleared recently for another project and it was decided this was a great place for parking for the individuals walking or riding bikes along the trail. The staff is currently working through the design and permitting process.

Burge asked about the trail, this is sidewalks on East Bay Blvd? White stated it is a multiuse path, it is a wet area and is taking much longer than we would like but it is a work in progress.

Carson confirmed this would be out of recreation funds? White answered yes.

Carson restated the recommendation is \$60,000 of recreation funds to be used for the multiuse path.

Page asked about the maintenance of these sidewalks, will it come from the district funds, or will the county roads department be maintaining it? White answered it would become part of our maintenance plan.

Page motioned for approval. Jernigan seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Pace Library

White gave a brief overview of this project. Project went out for bid for construction, we have plans and are ready to build. When it came back it was \$100,000 over budget. The recommendation is to go back out for bid and possibly purchase some of the materials to help offset some of the costs. The Pace Library is the only library without a meeting room, and one of our heavily used libraries.

Carson asked for clarity on the allocated amounts – was it \$150,000 over budget originally? White answered it was \$150,000-\$200,000 due to the price increase of materials, she has heard the prices are starting to go down.

Carson asked if the recommendation was for \$150,000 more? White stated she would be more comfortable saying \$200,000 to be safe but thinks \$150,000 will cover it.

Carter stated it was mentioned we will go back out to bid, has that been done? White answered no, depending on the will of this Board, it will then go back out for bid. Plans will need to be changed since the building code has changed, the bid is over a year old.

Carter asked about a timeframe of a signed contract. White answered she believes we would have a contract within 60-90 days.

Carson asked if there has been any value engineering since it went out for bid, this is just due to the increase in cost? White answered yes.

Carson suggested the architect for the project make substitutions where availability and cost increase is an issue.

Easterwood motioned for approval. Burge seconded the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Edgewood Drive Improvements

White gave a brief overview of the project. This project has been ongoing since 2018, it is a wet area so there are other agency permits required. It was determined the best way to complete the project was in phases, which would allow the completion of the areas that had been permitted. There is a need of an additional \$810,000 to complete the project.

Carson asked if that was the design of future phases or to close the gap? White explained it is already completely designed, we are just going through the permitting. This would be all phases. Current and future phases.

Carter asked how did we fall \$810,000 short on a \$2.5 million project? White explained it was originally estimated in 2017, construction costs have increased substantially.

Jones asked if this would cover completing the entire project? White answered yes. The original estimate was \$1.8 million, with the \$810,000 the total for the project will be about \$2.5 million.

Page motioned for approval. Jones seconded motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Metron Estates Drainage

White gave a brief overview of the project and the request. We have gone out 3 times for a grant, denied twice, we have been notified we will receive funding from FEMA this time. The drainage has been an issue in Metron Estates since 1999.

Carter asked if there is something in place for the county to ensure the floodwater plan is met or exceeded by development? Schebler explained a lot of the retrofit projects are subdivisions and neighborhoods designed before there were stormwater standards or designed to 25-year standards. The county went to the 100-year requirement in the early 90's. All plans are submitted and reviewed by several parties to ensure compliance with the higher standard. Carter asked, so there is a higher standard for future construction? Schebler answered yes.

Carter asked how many other projects do we have like this that we could potentially see in the next phase of LOST funding? White explained we have Ashmore Place – currently in design, and Ranchettes. Staff is taking the last 20 years of rainstorms/hurricanes and our work ticket system to develop a heat map; this will compile all of this information. This will help identify other projects.

Schebler added there are a couple of big projects identified in the 2016 study in Holley by the Sea, major projects and they are in design now, with funding through this program. West Williams Creek and Tom King Bayou, those are the two major outflow in HBTS. The construction of those projects is close to \$10 million, which are not eligible for grants. Ashley Plantation is another one, it was designed to a higher standard but has had some failures in certain elements of the stormwater system. This would be a potential request coming in the next phase. We also use the Local Mitigation Strategy group, they have a series of mitigation projects identified, some are just a house or a few houses – not necessarily a subdivision. They go through the projects, ranking them for potential funding. Those projects could come into this LOST program, as well.

Jones asked when studies are done, do they look at the effects of the nearby streets in the study? White explained we have begun doing basin studies, this is more than just a subdivision. So, the answer is yes, they do take in account the effects of the surrounding properties. Carson added, for clarity, whatever rain falls withing a subdivision it should within the boundaries.

Carson asked about Ashley Plantation, this was designed to current standards. Is there any effort to go back and see what the mistake, if in fact is a mistake, was and address? Schebler explained there have been discussions regarding subdivision warranty periods and when that period begins. Regarding Ashley Plantation, there is no ability to go back to the developer. Going back and looking at lessons learned, there is certainly value in that. Carson stated he was speaking about the actual design, was that proper, was the retention area large enough, pipes sized large enough? Might be an idea to investigate if we are not already.

Jernigan asked if we had a timeline for this project, that illustrates the scope of work, when it will begin? White answered design and property acquisition are complete. This is shovel ready, waiting on receipt of grant, and we will go for bid for construction.

Burge added on Ranchettes, part of the reason funding was not received was not the county – it was due to the lack of willingness to grant the easements necessary to complete the project.

Recommendation \$875,000 for Metron Estates. Jernigan motioned for approval. Page seconded the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

White concluded there is \$731,000 remaining in transportation and drainage and asked if the committee had a project that should be considered?

Page suggested Chumuckla Hwy and Pace Rd intersection, maybe a turn lane. This is where parents line up to go to SS Dixon Primary.

Carson mentioned the retention area at Five Points, it is overgrown and an eyesore. Maybe landscaping to improve the appearance of the pond.

Schebler added we will get with Public Works, Road and Bridge to do some clean up in the area. We just received responses to RFQ for Woodbine Rd improvements, which will go to the BOCC later this month for selection of a firm. He recommends caution in investing in the stormwater pond, until we know what we are doing at this intersection, this could be incorporated into this improvement.

4) Scheduling of Next Meeting to Prioritize Year 1 of Program 1b Projects

Next meeting September 8, 2021, at 8am.

5) Other Business

Page appointed Vice Chair.

Luchsinger asked where the information for LOST projects can be found. White answered on the LOST webpage, also press releases for ribbon cuttings and completed projects.

Page asked if we still do the signs indicating the project was funded by LOST. White answered yes.

Carter asked if the vehicles approved would have the sign on them. White answered yes, they would have stickers on them. Carson mentioned he has a hard time finding them on the Sheriff's vehicles. White stated they are located in the bottom of the window.

Baker mentioned this board could assist in the HMGP grant process. He continued to explain the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which is run through our Local Mitigation Strategy group. As disasters occur, they are ranked by tier. The Federal government allocates mitigation dollars based on the amount of funds for that disaster. These are divided up in Response & Recovery and Mitigation. Tier one is the counties directly impacted by the disaster, tier two is surrounding counties, and tier three is any county in the state of Florida.

Carson asked if there is an estimate of leverage dollars brought in that we would not have ordinarily been able to get? White answered excluding Metron Estates \$10.4 million in Federal and State funding with \$6 million of LOST, along with some other county funds to accomplish \$22 million of projects. Schebler added it is something to think about, paring the LOST with the ARPA dollars.

Carter asked about the Homeland grants for the Sheriff's dept. Baker stated these funds are slim, about \$11 million to cover all 67 counties in the state. Since funding has decreased significantly, it goes more for urban search and rescue teams, regional SWAT teams, hazardous material response, EM (receives about \$40,000 for Web EOC) and the Florida Fusion Center (collaborative law enforcement effort to share data). The Sheriff has received some allocations from SHSGP dollars, in the form of radios and other equipment. It basically sustains the specialty teams.

6) Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting adjourned.



Chairman
Approved 7/26/2022