

October 23, 2018
Infrastructure Surtax
Advisory Committee
Meeting

The regular meeting of the Okaloosa County Infrastructure Surtax Advisory Committee was called to order at 10:01 a.m. in the Okaloosa County Administration Building, 2nd Floor Training Room. Present were John Hofstad, County Administrator; Kay Godwin, Deputy County Administrator; Greg Kisela, Deputy County Administrator; Mr. Henry Berry, District 1 member; Brig. Gen. (Ret) Robert Buhrow, District 2 member; Ms. Kathleen Sharon, District 3 member; Mr. Matthew Turpin, District 4 member; Mr. Jim Foreman, District 5 member.

Opening Remarks and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The meeting was opened by Mr. Hofstad. Mr. Foreman made a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes, with a second by Mr. Buhrow. The minutes were approved, 5 yays.

Needed Projects List Discussion

Mr. Hofstad stated that the projects list was available on the County website with an interactive map. Dollars can be leveraged for other funding sources. Anticipate \$20-\$25M towards the SW Bypass. Requested \$64M from Triumph. Project management staffing will be a large need, if the referendum passes on November 6th.

Public Comments

Mr. Fain Yearty requested to address the committee. He stated that he had received the FAQ flyer in the mail. His concern was the County was always taxing for infrastructure. A 5-cent gas tax was passed and the County took 1.7 cents for infrastructure. Years later, the Mid Bay Bridge was completed and the Authority no longer needed the money, but the gas tax was never repealed. Mr. Yearty believes the sales tax should remain at 6%, and if it is approved to 6.5%, it opens the door to 8%. He also stated he looked at the mailer as a threat. If the Surtax increase is not approved, then the County will have to raise Ad Valorem taxes. Mr. Hofstad explained that the FWB Chamber of Commerce prepared the mailer in coordination with the Department of Revenue, University of West Florida and other agencies for the statistics. The last surtax that was passed was in 1989 to fund the County's jail, which is currently over capacity by approximately 250 inmates.

Election of Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman

Mr. Buhrow declined to be nominated for either position. He is already the

Chairman of the Airport Advisory Committee. Mr. Forman made a motion to nominate Ms. Sharon for the Chairman position. Second by Mr. Berry. Approved 5-0. Mr. Berry made a motion to nominate Mr. Foreman for Vice Chairman. Second by Mr. Turpin. Approved 5-0. Ms. Sharon stated she would be out of the Country November 6th through the 16th.

Committee Discussion

Mr. Foreman asked if it was in the plan to the hire a management consultant to coordinate projects. Mr. Hofstad stated that it has not been decided whether it would be either staff or a consulting group. Mr. Kisela stated that the County could use interest earnings to pay for program costs. Mr. Hofstad explained that the committee needs to be in a position to bring feedback to the Board of County Commissioners at the November 20th meeting. Mr. Turpin was concerned about criticism for using money for staffing to handle the overhead. Mr. Hofstad stated that the County couldn't use this surtax to fund support staff. Ms. Sharon said that using a firm would provide more flexibility and cover for the BCC. She also asked if we have the funding to complete the projects on the list. Mr. Kisela stated that 90-95% of the list is fundable with a breakdown of \$10-\$12M/District. Mr. Turpin asked if the cities have to come up with "skin in the game". Mr. Hofstad explained that the smaller cities would most likely take the money immediately and fund projects, while the larger cities may use the money to leverage for larger projects. The cities will be encouraged to set up a committee like this one. Mr. Kisela stated that all entities need to spend the money in accordance with the referendum language. Ms. Godwin stated that the County has worked with the cities in the beginning to develop projects lists, and may work with them on some of the projects. Mr. Hofstad stated that the gas tax does not generate enough revenue to keep the roads in repair.

Ms. Sharon said she read an article that Bay County is having problems with their communications systems for police officers, fire/rescue, etc. Mr. Kisela said that is one of the top priorities for our Public Safety Department and Sheriff and at the last BCC meeting, an interlocal agreement was approved between the Sheriff and the County for a joint communication system.

Mr. Berry asked if the Hwy 2 bridge was to be totally replaced. Mr. Hofstad explained that the Department of Transportation is required to inspect every bridge every two years. This bridge has considerable scour and is in need of total replacement.

Mr. Turpin asked if the projects on the list would need studies done. Mr. Hofstad replied that most have been done already, and Mr. Kisela stated that the Crestview NW Bypass would require a PD&E study. Mr. Hofstad noted that over the 10-years of this surtax, the project priorities would change.

The next meeting time was discussed and agreed to be on November 19th at 10:00 AM, location to be determined.

Mr. Foreman asked how does he receive email through the County server. Ms. Godwin stated that we would get some information to the users from our I.T. department on how to use.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:09 a.m.

(These minutes were transcribed by Grant Dugre)