

September 24, 2018
Infrastructure Surtax
Advisory Committee
Meeting

The first regular meeting of the Okaloosa County Infrastructure Surtax Advisory Committee was called to order at 10:02 a.m. in the Okaloosa County Administration Building Commissioner's Conference Room. Present were Graham Fountain, District 1 County Commissioner; John Hofstad, County Administrator; Kay Godwin, Deputy County Administrator; Greg Stewart, County Attorney; Lynn Hoshihara, Assistant County Attorney; Mr. Christopher Saul, County Public Information Officer; 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 & Overview

Commissioner Fountain welcomed members and gave a brief description on the purpose of the committee. Mr. Hofstad introduced himself and County members present to the committee members. Mr. Hofstad discussed the County's millage rate, explaining to the members that it is one of the lowest in the State. Our tax burden is \$277/citizen, where Walton County's is over \$1,100/citizen. Mr. Hofstad stated that the most important issues facing the County are stormwater, transportation, law enforcement, and public safety. Mr. Hofstad stated that the sales tax, if passed, would generate \$120M over the ten years. He discussed the purpose of the committee and briefly covered the list of County projects, which is not comprehensive, will be brought before the Board at the October 2nd BCC meeting. Commissioner Fountain suggested discussing the recent audit conducted by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). Mr. Hofstad explained this audit is a mandatory precursor to any County placing a referendum on a ballot to increase sales tax. It is to ensure the County has sound financial controls in place. We will provide a copy of the audit to the members of the committee for review. Commissioner Fountain also explained that each committee member will be issued a County email address to conduct official business on. Mr. Hofstad introduced all the members of the committee to each other and staff.

Sunshine Law Briefing - Greg Stewart, County Attorney

Mr. Stewart and Ms. Hoshihara presented Sunshine Law, Public Records, and Ethics training. Mr. Stewart discussed the public

records process and explained the reason for setting up a County email account for each member. He also covered the Code of Ethics. Ms. Hoshihara went into more detail of the County email accounts explaining that any email received on their private accounts that relate to this committee needs to be forwarded to their County email account. Ms. Hoshihara also suggested not to "reply to all", as this could violate the Sunshine Law. She also explained that a quorum is needed to take any actions at the meetings.

Proposed Project List Discussion

Mr. Hofstad asked all committee members to review the items provided to them, which were County Ordinances 2017-24 and 2018-09, Resolutions 17-192 and 18-137, the Okaloosa County FAQ sheet on the half-cent surtax referendum, the Okaloosa County proposed sales tax projects list, a copy of the governing State Statute, and a power point presentation of the Sunshine Law, Public Records and Ethics training. Ms. Sharon asked the question if the committee was going to meet again prior to the proposed list going to the Board. Mr. Hofstad stated that the proposed project list was going before the Board on October 2, 2018 for discussion/possible approval. Commissioner Fountain stated that a common question from members of the public might be "What are they going to spend the money on?" Commissioner Fountain suggested that each member of the committee should carry a notepad with them to write down any comments or suggestions given to them by citizens. Ms. Sharon asked why there were not any public safety projects on the list. Mr. Hofstad stated the County has a list of Public Safety projects that will be emailed to them. The breakdown of funding is to be 1/3 - public safety/law enforcement, 1/3 transportation issues, and 1/3 stormwater/water quality. Commissioner Fountain briefly discussed the Sheriff's projects and stated that our millage rate cannot support the law enforcement requirements of this County. Our radio system is in crisis and we have a hodgepodge of systems between law enforcement, fire, and EMS. An \$18-\$20M project is being looked at. Ms. Godwin suggested October 23rd at 10:00 a.m. for the next meeting of the committee. All agreed, but Mr. Buhrow stated he would have to check his calendar and confirm. The members were asked to think about electing a Chairman and Vice Chairman and discussing the list in detail at that meeting. Mr. Foreman stated he fully supports this measure and it is time to do it. He will make his rounds to the homeowners association. Commissioner Fountain stressed to the members to let citizens know that the referendum will be the last item on the ballot, so remind them to look for it and vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

(These minutes were transcribed by Grant Dugre)