



Roundtable of Volusia County Elected Officials Meeting Minutes January 13, 2020

CALL TO ORDER - 12 p.m.

The Dennis McGee Room of Daytona Beach International Airport (DBIA), 700 Catalina Drive, Daytona Beach, Florida.

Those attending included the following Roundtable members: Roundtable Chair and DeLand Mayor Bob Apgar; Roundtable Vice Chair and Volusia County Council Chair Ed Kelley; Daytona Beach Mayor Derrick Henry; Daytona Beach Shores Mayor Nancy Miller; Deltona Mayor Heidi Herzberg; Edgewater Mayor Mike Thomas; Holly Hill Mayor Chris Via; Orange City Mayor Gary Blair; Ormond Beach Mayor Bill Partington; Ponce Inlet City Council Member Lois Paritsky; Port Orange Mayor Don Burnette; and South Daytona Mayor Bill Hall.

Others attending included Jim Chisholm, City Manager, Daytona Beach; Michael Booker, City Manager, Daytona Beach Shores; Carmen Rosamonda, City Manager, DeBary; Michael Pleus, City Manager, DeLand; Jane Shang, City Manager, Deltona; Glenn Irby, City Manager, Edgewater; Joe Forte, City Manager, Holly Hill; Becky Witte, Town Administrator, Lake Helen; Khalid Resheidat, City Manager, New Smyrna Beach; Kohn Evans, City Administrator, Oak Hill; Dale Arrington, City Manager, Orange City; Joyce Shanahan, City Manager, Ormond Beach; Jeaneen Witt, City Manager, Ponce Inlet; Jake Johansson, City Manager, Port Orange; Les Gillis, City Manager, South Daytona; George Recktenwald, County Manager, Volusia County; Suzanne Konchan, Deputy County Manager, Volusia County; Ben Johnson, Volusia County Council Member, At-Large; Billie Wheeler, Volusia County Council Member, District 2; Heather Post, Volusia County Council Member, District 4; Lisa Lewis, Supervisor of Elections, Volusia County; Laura Roth, Clerk of Circuit Court, Volusia County; Dona Butler, Director, Volusia County Community Services; Clay Ervin, Director, Volusia County Growth and Resource Management; Kevin Captain, Interim Director, Volusia County Community Information Division; Brian Rothwell, Activity Project Manager, Volusia County; Phyllis Butlien, DeBary City Council, Seat 4; Doug Quartier, South Daytona City Council, Seat 2; Abby Johnson, Intergovernmental Coordinator, St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD); Jim Cameron, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce; Holly Smith, Communications Manager, Volusia County Department of Health; Dr. Kent Sharples, President, CEO Business Alliance; Jeff Crumbley, Volusia County Photography Specialist. Taking minutes was Debbie Kelley with the County Manager's Office.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Roundtable Chairman Bob Apgar welcomed those attending. After standing for the Pledge of Allegiance, everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

ADA BUS STOPS

Dona Butler, Community Services Director, Volusia County, said she was making a plea for “*better bus stops*.” Votran has dependable service with a modern, comfortable fleet and do many things very well. It is not necessarily enough to provide good service to riders once they board a bus. For some people, utilizing public transportation is not a choice.

They are:

- Transit dependent,
- They may have financial barriers,
- They may be sick or elderly,
- They may lack the physical ability to drive.

Transit systems must provide safe, comfortable conditions for riders; not only on the bus, but also where they are waiting for the bus to arrive. This is especially important for disabled persons or ones using mobility aids; such as canes, power chairs, wheelchairs or walkers.

Most Votran riders do not have a choice and must use the closest bus stop, which can still be quite a walk for them. There are:

- Approximately 3.2 million bus boarding’s annually. Votran bus service runs seven days a week.
- 2,580 bus stops throughout Volusia County.
- 82 fixed-route buses and 75 paratransit vehicles.

Funding is provided by a variety of sources which include:

- State,
- Federal and
- Local County General Fund.

In unincorporated Volusia there are 196 bus stops. The remainder of the bus stops are located within the municipalities. Research suggests that better bus stops can improve the transit experience and encourage ridership. Unfortunately, some bus stops in Volusia County do not have the:

- Space,
- Available right-of-way, or
- ADA-compliant pads.

Many of the current bus stops were sited in their present locations prior to federal ADA guidelines being adopted. Which means those bus stops are grandfathered in with no required improvements. As a community, we are doing our best to meet the needs of our exposed, transportation disadvantaged population.

For approximately \$6000, a bus stop can be fully outfitted with a bench. These are not luxuries, they are facilities to make it a little easier on people who are dependent on the transportation system. The County is working internally to find an internal partnership, which would greatly reduce the cost to approximately one-fourth of the proposed amount.

Additional bus stop reviews are planned. There is a new system at Votran. Staff is going stop-by-stop, doing GPS and taking photographs. Much of this has been done already in unincorporated areas and will be done at bus stops within the municipalities. They are looking at the locations, existing facilities, and

ridership patterns; all of which will be considered. The municipalities are invited to discuss issues and concerns about bus stops within their areas; along with discussing making ADA improvements where needed, to help better the experiences for riders.

The County is looking for partners to join in on the initial pilot program. The TLDCB (Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board), under the leadership of Heather Post, Volusia County Council Member, District 4, have been pushing to make some of these changes occur. There was discussion at the *County Council Workshop*, on Thursday, January 9, 2020; in which, the Council endorsed having conversations about starting some pilot programs with the municipalities. The discussions will help see if there is a way to improve the system.

Mayor Apgar asked Ms. Butler, if they had reached out to local organizations such as the Rotary Club, for partnership opportunities as another way to help with funding besides local government. **Ms. Butler** said they would be happy to look into that. There are always maintenance responsibilities that will need to be discussed. They have to make sure there is a shared responsibility on the maintenance. The stops will be put in, but they have to be maintained appropriately. That may be able to be done with private partnerships.

Don Burnette, Mayor, Port Orange, said due to ADA lawsuits, many municipalities did away with bus benches to the detriment of the bus riders. He questioned the fact, if bus stops are made to be ADA compliant will it open governmental agencies up to the same lawsuits again or will they be better protected than before. He also asked if some bus stops have ADA compliant benches and others do not; does that open government agencies up to ADA lawsuits that did away with benches in the first place. **Ms. Butler** responded saying she is not an attorney, but she believed there can be ADA compliant bus stops without benches. Benches are not required. If a bench is added, greater square footage is required and has to be added. It has to be built in such a way that a person with a disability can access not only the pad, but they can access the bench also. It requires larger square footage and there are other challenges in engineering the bus stop to make sure someone can access it appropriately with one of the assisted uses. As for ADA lawsuits, **Ms. Butler** said she was not able to answer that question. She said she was more than willing to meet with cities legal staffs, county legal staff and county staff to see what can be worked out together.

Heidi Herzberg, Mayor, Deltona, said many of the roads in Deltona are county roads, such as Howland Boulevard and Providence Boulevard, with bus stops located on them. She asked Ms. Butler if the City of Deltona would partner with the County and if advertising would be incorporated or if the County had a plan for it. **Ms. Butler** responded saying advertising is not part of the discussion. The County wants to make sure the stops are specifically ADA complaint. If the municipalities decide they want the benches to have an advertising program that is their decision, as long as the benches are put on an ADA compliant pad and the benches themselves are ADA compliant. **Mayor Herzberg** also asked who will be responsible for bus benches on county roads that are within city limits. **Ms. Butler** said new bus stops on the new route #25, which is on Howland Boulevard, are the responsibility of the County, since Howland Boulevard is a county road. If the City wants to increase the capacity of stops and make them ADA compliant further discussion would be needed.

Mayor Apgar asked everyone to take the information back to city commissions and councils for discussions.

SHORT TERM RENTAL – ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL INITIATIVES

Billie Wheeler, Volusia County Council Member, District 2, is the Chairman of the *Tourist Development Council*. Recently there has been much discussion regarding how local governments regulate short term rentals and whether the taxes due to the County are being affectively collected. The collection of the taxes is being addressed separately. She is asking for help gathering simple information about the regulation of short term rentals by the cities within Volusia County. She requested all government leaders in attendance complete the *Short Term Rentals-Assessment of Local Initiatives* handouts and return them to the County. She asked the Elected Officials Roundtable to create a subcommittee to discuss Smart Growth.

Carmen Rosamonda, City Manager, DeBary asked Ms. Wheeler if her definition of short term rentals was “less than six months.” **Council Member Wheeler** responded saying “yes.”

Mayor Apgar felt the information provided in the *Short Term Rentals-Assessment of Local Initiatives* handouts could be valuable in discussions with the Legislature, as to what is really going on in the various communities. The interesting thing about Volusia County, is that most issues are thought to be coastal city issues. There are some issues in DeLand and there could be issues in other West Volusia cities as well. He asked Ms. Wheeler if the surveys should be returned to the County Manager. **Council Member Wheeler** recommended all completed surveys be sent to Mr. Recktenwald, County Manager. **Mayor Apgar** felt the *City/County Managers Association* should also receive evaluation information of the data provided. **Council Member Wheeler** said the *Roundtable of the Volusia County Elected Officials* is another asset bringing the community together. Items such as this can be discussed as a collective partnership. It is very important to continue such conversations throughout the County and to stay together to get things accomplished.

Mayor Burnette said the *Florida League of Cities* has already discussed Senate Bill SB1128, which has been filed. Those attending the *Volusia League of Cities* dinner, Thursday night, January 16, 2020, will hear more about the *Leagues* legislative initiative including opposition to SB1128 and other Senate Bills, pertaining to short term rentals. **Council Member Wheeler** said she will not be in attendance. **Deb Denys**, Volusia County Council Member, District 3, will be receiving the *Citizen of the Year Award*, at another event being held on the same night.

TORTUGAS – CITIES SUPPORT

Council Member Wheeler read an article from the *New York Post* regarding Major League Baseball’s (MLB) proposed plan to eliminate affiliation with forty-two minor league teams. The article discussed *Jackie Robinson Ballpark*, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the *Daytona Tortugas* Minor League Team. Rick French, one of the *Tortugas* three owners is not going to let MLB destroy the team and the history of this special ballpark. This is the ballpark where Jackie Robinson played his first professional game; the first racially integrated spring training game on March 17, 1946. The City of Daytona Beach and the *Tortugas* owners have upgraded the field with artificial turf and have spent millions of dollars in the past several years upgrading everything. The *Tortugas* owners have done everything right, but it does not matter to MLB Commissioner Manfred. The *Tortugas* owners see themselves as caretakers of the historic park and started a campaign #StandWithTheJack.

Council Member Wheeler asked each of the municipalities to create a resolution similar to the one Volusia County created to “Keep the Jack.” The *Jackie Robinson Ballpark* and the *Tortugas* are important to all of Volusia County, not just Daytona Beach. The ballpark is part of Volusia County history and it would be difficult to imagine Daytona Beach without it. If each municipality would create a resolution it would be a show of force. Ms. Wheeler hopes to work with the Daytona Beach Regional Chamber of Commerce to

put on a “*Fill the Field*” event showing how important Jackie Robinson and the ballpark are to Volusia County.

Ed Kelley, Roundtable Vice Chair and Volusia County Council Chair, suggested the *Roundtable of Volusia County Elected Officials Roundtable*, collectively, send a letter of support requesting the *Tortugas* Minor League Team stay in Daytona Beach. **Council Member Wheeler** thought that was a wonderful idea.

Chris Via, Mayor, Holly Hill, said the City of Holly Hill created a resolution in support of keeping the *Tortugas* Minor League Team in Daytona Beach. He applauded the County and Ms. Wheeler for the efforts that are being done.

SMART GROWTH DISCUSSION

Clay Ervin, Director, Volusia County Growth and Resource Management, provided an update on *Smart Growth*. The last time Mr. Ervin spoke at the *Elected Officials Roundtable*, it was identified that all sixteen municipalities and the County have their own individual smart growth policies and methods to implementing them. Because of the Recession and other issues that occurred, governmental agencies were not sure if they were on the right track. It was identified the next step would be through staff who would be working through *Evaluation and Appraisal Reports (EAR's)*, to identify if they were being implemented and is so, how they were being implemented. Recently there have been a series of Comprehensive Plan Amendments that include increases in density and intensities. Going through the Growth Management Commission process brought up a series of questions.

At the *County Council Workshop*, a council member asked:

- What are we doing;
- Has anything been done since there was discussion, going back and researching;
- If there is any interest from local governments to perhaps go above and beyond the minimum standards that are established in the Florida Statutes, for mandatory growth management regulations.
- If there is a potential for the cities and the County, which are entered into agreements to come up with a process to analyze and make sure that proper infrastructure is in place.

There is movement forward with comp plan amendments, where there is increased density or intensity of development. This is falling back on the way things were prior to 2010, looking at some things such as needs analysis and maybe a harder line concurrency. These items are being brought forward here to make sure all elected officials are aware there are questions and if there is anything the County can do to help facilitate those questions and future actions.

Mr. Kelley said Volusia County is reaching out to the municipalities to try to work together again to see if there is anything that can be done collectively, to work on bringing awareness to the situation of Smart Growth. Local governmental agencies need to see what different things can be done to engage the public, along with seeing where the County and municipalities are in regards to smart growth.

He discussed a report Mr. Ervin gave that showed very little growth had taken place in the past 15 years; since the *How Shall We Grow* report came out. It was less than one percent in Volusia County, which is startling. What the public sees are:

- 8,000 homes being built here,
- 10,000 homes being built there,

- Plus another 400-500 somewhere else.
- Homes being built everywhere,
- Plus the fact of having to sit in traffic for extended periods of time.

Both issues are very disturbing to many residents. Local governments need to address these issues to see what can be done collectively to make a difference.

HALF CENT SALES TAX – UPDATE

Bob Apgar, Roundtable Chair and DeLand Mayor, discussed the *Half-Cent Sales Tax* and how to proceed in the future. He originally planned to host four meetings on the basis of the 2020 Election.

- The first meeting was going to be with a small group of people actively involved in the failed sales tax referendum.
- The second meeting was going to be with a larger group to formulate questions and get names of people who were opposed to the half-cent sales tax, as it had been proposed. The first meeting was also to test the game plan with those people.
- The third meeting was going to be with the people opposed to the half-cent sales tax, in an “open mic” type setting, to listen to all their concerns. At the same time he was going to develop targeted questions of issues that were heard during the election; such as lack of trust. He wanted to know if it in every level of government or just local government. He hoped to find out what the peoples thoughts were in terms of why they were not in favor of the proposed sales tax and to see if there was any way to address those concerns.
- The fourth meeting was going to be to bring the second group of people back together to discuss the results of the meeting with the opposition and make some recommendations based on that. Due to the holidays, only the first meeting was held. It became apparent some of the advocates had been lost along the way for a referendum in the 2020 election; they are only willing to become active if there is a referendum in the 2022 election.

At the last Roundtable meeting some of the municipalities also expressed concerns about the failed sales tax and felt another referendum should wait until the 2022 election. It was a highly unusual circumstance in Volusia County that all sixteen municipalities and the County were able to come together in a uniform way.

Some of his thoughts from the one meeting he held are:

- Any referendum on infrastructure should be held off until 2022;
- If the cities are asking again it looks more like a government request;
- Local groups, local people and local organizations need to be demonstrate to the County Council that they feel there is a need and they wish the County Council will pursue this again in 2022.
- He feels the cities should not be the initiator.
- The CEO Business Alliance should not take the lead.
- The group he met with felt he should proceed with a meeting with those opposed to the sales tax.
- Even though some of the information will be dated by 2022, there could be new reasons for or against the half-cent sales tax. We would have that information to formulate any strategy on a go forward basis.

In 2022, no one can accurately predict what may be in voters’ minds, at that point in time. His thought is to go ahead and have the second meeting to develop a list of questions and then go out to those opposed to get their feedback. He also believes over the next year or so, the County Council may engage in what

he calls “community engagement activities,” which could be helpful in identifying issues and concerns that the public has. It may also provide public education, trust building, and it might help governmental agencies best understand how to structure whatever they do in 2022.

Another nuance to this whole process is that *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever* both terminate in 2020. There is discussion by the County Council regarding having referendums for both *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever* on the 2020 ballot, which equates to 4/10 of a mill on tax payers tax bills. He thinks 2020 is going to be a very, very unusual election for many reasons starting in Washington, working its way down. During the meeting and discussion he had an idea about bundling the infrastructure sales tax, *ECHO*, and *Volusia Forever* into a one-cent sales tax. If that could be done, a visitor to Volusia County that uses our roads to access an *ECHO* project is also going to help pay for that project. Thirty-five to forty percent of that sales tax could be paid by visitors to the community. The structure could be that *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever* would be held harmless. The possibility of 4/10 mill being dropped off the tax rolls and transferred to more tax payers is worth discussion.

The ordinance that underlies such a combined initiative could establish the same kind of committees:

- One for infrastructure,
- One for *ECHO*,
- One for *Volusia Forever*,

In his discussion, he learned the County has enough money in reserves to sustain both the *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever* programs for a couple of years. The County currently has money they cannot spend, in the short-term that could provide some relief to the tax payers. In his mind, it was never intended that the County would build up a so-called savings account, because the money might not be spent. By doing that it provides some immediate relief to the tax payers. If it was substituted with sales tax revenue that would be a good thing. He is throwing out a suggestion, there could be other ways to look at funding *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever*. He hopes this generates discussions at both the County Council level and at the Elected Officials Roundtable. The millage reduction is a potentially positive thing.

Mr. Kelley discussed the recent *County Council Workshop*. Some members from the Sierra Club spoke at the January 9, 2020, County Council Meeting during Public Participation. One of the big things they emphasized was that *Volusia Forever* creates a destination and *ECHO* projects creates destinations for visitors and residents alike. He too had thought about combining infrastructure, *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever*. Almost \$15 million a year from *Ad Valorem Taxes* goes to *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever*. That is about 6½% of the total tax that Volusia County collects. That would provide the tax payers a reduction in property tax, by shifting a huge percent of it to sales tax which would be paid by tourists. Committees would be created in advance for *ECHO*, *Volusia Forever*, transportation and water projects. The committees would consider, review and approve projects. It would use sales tax money to help fund things that tourists and others use. He wanted each Roundtable Member to look at their municipalities’ numbers. It would be nice to be able to go to the tax payers and tell them their property taxes are going to be reduced. Tourists or people outside Volusia County would be paying for a big part of *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever*. People who pay property taxes are funding it all. The biggest thing elected officials hear is “do not raise our property taxes.” Currently the almost \$15 million that goes to *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever* is much more than when the tax started twenty years ago, plus there is the savings account that has been put there because we do not have the uses for the *ECHO* projects. He feels it is a great idea that makes sense and would reduce property taxes.

Mayor Apgar said if bundling *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever* would not work or make sense it does not mean there cannot be a referendum in 2022 for those two issues. The reserves are sitting there and any earnings on those reserves have to stay in that fund, since it is a designated fund. A lot of tax payer dollars are sitting idle. His thoughts are to proceed with the game plan and meet with those who opposed the half-cent sales tax. The next Roundtable meeting will not be until March. That would provide more time and opportunity to put meetings together. The County Legal Department would need to provide legal input regarding bundling. He is pretty sure with *ECHO* that public projects could be funded through a sales tax. The point is to get answers and to let the city and county managers have discussions about this at their meetings. It would afford the County Council time to think about the idea and provide feedback on it.

Heather Post, Volusia County Council Member, District 4, said there has been a huge discussion recently regarding bundling of amendments at the state level and how furious the voters are about the bundling of amendments. She is not sure if bundling amendments at the County level is a good idea at the present time. At a prior Elected Officials Roundtable meeting when the consultant was present, someone broached the question of trust in the community. The consultant suggested going back to the constituents, say to them why would elected officials steer them wrong, when the officials know voters could vote them out of office. The comment was met with silence and then the discussion moved on. Those types of things are impeding discussions on the sales tax. She does not think the public is getting the right message regarding discussions on *Volusia Forever*, *ECHO*, and a proposed sales tax. When a consultant can make a statement like that to a committee, then it is just moved on and accepted, that is not the message that should be sent back to the public.

At the last Roundtable meeting, a member of the CEO Business Alliance and another councilwoman discussed the sales tax saying it was very important to push for the sales tax, that there is a time crunch. This needed to be done immediately, the sales tax is needed, but it is needed for aerospace. That is a very different message than needing the sales tax for infrastructure. Now there is discussion about combining infrastructure with *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever*. These are very, very mixed messages that are being sent to the public. **Mayor Apgar** responded saying there is no question in his mind that any such bundling proposal would require much public education. One of the strong messages that could come out of it is that property taxes would be reduced by 4/10 of a mill, with visitors and non-ad valorem tax payers contributing to all things they get a the benefit from. His purpose was to present an idea and to begin having discussions on it. Obviously, there is a long time between now and 2022, this issue can die very quickly in three months.

Council Member Post wanted to make a point on *Volusia Forever* and *ECHO* funds, about the balance that keeps being discussed. She heard from many people in the community that they would like each of them to be looked at, addressed and rebooted to suit the needs of today. It would be important to revisit the procedures and guidelines for people applying for *ECHO* grants, which has been an issue. The City of New Smyrna Beach has been one of the main grant recipients over and over. They are willing to put in the extensive, extensive background needed to get those grants. That might be a good way of revisiting the guidelines and procedures being offered, and making it a little easier for people to actually partake in it. **Mayor Apgar** said all this needs to be examined.

Ben Johnson, Volusia County Council Member, At-Large, also thinks it is a good idea to wait until the 2022 election to have a sales tax referendum on the ballot. It will not pass now, there is a need to get more citizens involved. The vast majority of people who contacted him want *Volusia Forever* and *ECHO* on the 2020 ballot. He suggested putting them on the 2020 ballot and getting them passed, with a caveat put in place that if the one-cent sales tax passed in 2022; it would come off the special taxes because the money

will be replaced. That would be a selling point for the one-cent sales tax. **Mayor Apgar** responded saying ECHO and Volusia Forever are clearly within the providence of the County Council and the motion could end very quickly, if the County Council decides to put those two issues on the ballot again.

Mr. Rosamonda said he worked in surtax and local option tourist development tax for many years. The surtax statutes are quite specific. Legal research should be done to find out if the additional half-cent sales tax can be applied to cultural arts, historic events, conservation, etc. Many counties with a local option tourist development tax, apply it historical and cultural venues. Local option tourist development taxes are paid one-hundred percent by tourists, not by residents. You will need to find out if a surtax can be legally applied to ECHO and conservation projects. Local option sales taxes can be applied to historical and cultural events, not necessarily conservation or public infrastructure. **Mayor Apgar** responded saying that is why the County Legal Department would have to review it.

Mr. Kelley said one thing that was established at the *County Council Workshop* regarding ECHO and Volusia Forever was to engage the public in looking at those two items. To look at revising, changing, and altering; going forward to get public input.

Mayor Apgar said if there is no objection, he will proceed with the other meetings relative the speaking to people who were opposed to the half-cent sales tax, just to receive information.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

William Sell, DeBary, represents “Joe Taxpayer.” He supports keeping the *Tortugas* Minor League Baseball Team in Daytona Beach, it needs to be a top priority. Mayor Apgar seems open to discussion regarding the proposed sales tax. He received a message from Karen Chasez, Mayor, City of DeBary that it is possible a naysayer could get a seat at the table to say how they feel about the half-cent sales tax. That is a good start.

He discussed Mr. Kelley’s interview on the *Marc Bernier Show* regarding taking money from ECHO projects. He feels it is a bad idea. The name calling has to stop, he is a tax payer. Governmental agencies need to get everyone involved. Elected officials work for the taxpayers, not the municipalities or the County.

Jim Cameron, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce, said the Chamber will be glad to work with everyone to support keeping the *Tortugas* in Daytona Beach. The Chamber contact person for that is Nancy Keefer.

Vacation rental units are on the Chambers *Legislative Priorities* list that will be taken to the Delegation and discussed with other legislators at Volusia Days, in Tallahassee. It is also on their *Local Priorities* list as well. The Chamber is worried about *Senate Bill SB1128* and *House Bill HB1101*, calling for state regulations; not city and county regulations on these types of units. The Chamber opposes both bills. It is important to get the people opposed to the half-cent sales tax involved, to listen to their comments and concerns. The Daytona Regional Chamber will be glad to work with everyone in any way possible.

John Nicholson, Daytona Beach, said he is one of the naysayers, regarding the half-cent sales tax. He said the half-cent sales tax would fail. He said the public does not trust politicians, because of the Lottery and ECHO. The residents vote you in, tell you this is what we want and we don’t get it back. Two to three months ago he suggested a one-cent sales tax increase, because Volusia County is at the bottom of the sixty-seven counties in terms of sales tax. The median sales tax in Florida is 7.5%, with tourist destinations

at 8.0%. Volusia County is at 6.5% that is the reason it should be increased. Elected officials need to explain to the public why they need what they say they need. He is opposed to bundling *ECHO*, *Volusia Forever*, and infrastructure. We as the public look at what elected officials promise us and then we don't get it. The sales tax needs to be increased by one cent, not a half-cent.

Council Member Wheeler said when the Elected Officials Roundtable started several years ago there were subcommittees for beaches driving, water, transportation and homelessness issues that the members researched and discussed. She suggested Roundtable members find new projects to discuss and the creation of subcommittees again. Growth management has been a big topic of discussion and would be a good subcommittee to create.

Abby Johnson, Intergovernmental Coordinator, St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), reminded everyone the application cycle is open for *Cost-Share Projects*, which is a bundled cycle. Project applications are being accepted online for both *District-Wide* and the *Ready Innovator Projects*. If you have new technologies that you want to try out in the name of water conservation, water supply planning, and flood protection, reach out to SJRWMD. For technical assistance, contact Ms. Johnson or SJRWMD staff. The application cycle deadline is February 17, at 5:00 pm. The "*Water Less*" campaign is up and running. Water conservation is a yearlong activity. It does not cost anything to conserve water.

Big John, Holly Hill, discussed Daytona Beach's Votran bus stops. He likes the idea of bundling amendments. He reminded everyone that the *Citizen's Select Committee* is still there, it is just dormant right now.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Kelley said for the record he did not try to steal money from *ECHO* or *Volusia Forever*. What he suggested was if we did not opt to do that and the tax stayed in place, not for *ECHO* and *Volusia Forever*, but it went away for them we would maintain that same tax. It would give us \$15 million which could be leveraged with federal and state funds to generate about \$60 million a year to take care of transportation needs. That is not stealing one, it is just saying if you want to do the *ECHO*, you probably have the opportunity not use the funds that were dedicated for that because that expires at the end of 2020. He said Mayor Apgar uses the term "bundling," he refers to it as "a vision of revenue sharing" for the projects. The 2019 rainfall report shows Volusia County experienced over seven inches above the normal average rainfall for the year. He likes Ms. Wheeler's suggestion about finding projects and creating Elected Officials Roundtable subcommittees again.

Lois Paritsky, City Council Member, Ponce Inlet, discussed *Senate Bill 1128*, which seeks to pre-empt local regulations on vacation and short-term rentals. The City of Ponce Inlet drafted a resolution which the City Council unanimously adopted in 2018, supporting legislation that restores local zoning authority regarding short-term rentals in single and multi-family residential zoning districts, and opposing all legislation that further erodes local choice. The resolution is available to anyone who wants to take it back to their council. Municipalities may want to consider it, adopt it and send it to the members of our legislature this term.

Mayor Via said the City of Holly Hill supports the *Daytona Tortugas* and drafted a Resolution stating such. The City has a lot of questions about the *First Step Shelter* and will be discussing it at their next Commission meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2020. He is very disappointed about the shelter. The question is "What is my city contributing towards?" He would like to discuss the shelter at a future meeting.

Mr. Rosamonda wanted to clarify that he was not advocating for a *Local Option Tourist Development* tax or surtax. He was referring to the legal vetting of those and how the money can be spent from them. **Mayor Apgar** responded saying if we wait on several issues to 2022, it may provide the best opportunity to look at a number of avenues.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Roundtable of the Volusia County Elected Officials meeting will be held March 9, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:18 pm.