



## **Roundtable of Volusia County Elected Officials MEETING MINUTES May 14, 2018**

### **CALL TO ORDER - Noon**

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; DeBary Vice Mayor Lita Handy-Peters; Deltona Mayor John Masiarczyk; Edgewater Mayor Michael Ignasiak; Holly Hill Mayor John Penny; Lake Helen Mayor Daisy Raisler; New Smyrna Beach Mayor James Hathaway; Oak Hill Mayor Douglas Gibson; Orange City Mayor Gary Blair; Ormond Beach Mayor Bill Partington; Ponce Inlet City Council Member Lois Paritsky; Port Orange Mayor Don Burnette; Volusia County Council Chair Ed Kelley; and Volusia County School District, Board Chair Linda Cuthbert.

Others attending included Ron McLemore, DeBary City Manager; Michael Pleus, DeLand City Manager; Jane Shang, Deltona City Manager; Tracey Barlow, Edgewater City Manager; Joe Forte, Holly Hill City Manager; Jason Yarborough, Lake Helen City Administrator; Khalid Resheidat, New Smyrna Beach Assistant City Manager; Kohn Evans, Oak Hill City Administrator; Dale Arrington, City Manager, Orange City; Joyce Shanahan; Ormond Beach City Manager; Jake Johansson, Port Orange City Manager; Joe Yarbrough, South Daytona City Manager; James Dinneen, County Manager, Volusia County; Tom Russell, Superintendent, Volusia County Schools; George Recktenwald, Deputy County Manager, Volusia County; John Booker, Volusia County Government Affairs; Billie Wheeler, Volusia County Council Member, District 2; Lisa Lewis, Volusia County Supervisor of Elections; Mike Chitwood, Volusia County Sheriff; Greg Akin, Chief Operations Officer, Volusia County School District; Abby Johnson, Intergovernmental Coordinator, St. Johns River Water Management District; Jim Cameron, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce; Joanne Magley, Volusia County Community Information Director; and Jeff Crumbley and Gary Daniels, Volusia County Community Information. Taking minutes was Debbie Kelley with the County Manager's Office.

### **WELCOME**

Roundtable Chairman Bob Apgar welcomed those attending. He introduced Billie Wheeler, Volusia County Council Member, District 2; and Lisa Lewis, Volusia County Supervisor of Elections. After standing for the Pledge of Allegiance, all members introduced themselves.

### **IMPACT OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER LEGISLATION**

Tom Russell, Superintendent, Volusia County Schools, said *Senate Bill 7026* is a massive bill with many components. There are two primary components: 1) dealing with mental health issues; and 2) the *School Guardian Program*, which will be discussed today. This is the first time the State of Florida has addressed mental health issues at the education level, and the School Board is very pleased about that. Volusia County Schools would unequivocally like to have either a deputy sheriff or municipal police officer at every school.

*Senate Bill 7026* is a partially funded mandate. The state gave Volusia County Schools approximately \$2 million in additional funding for this program. Currently, Volusia County Schools spends \$1.6 million on the *School Resource Deputies (SRDs)* and *School Resource Officers (SROs)* that are already present in the schools. With the new school safety requirements, the School Board is \$2 million short.

The Sheriff's Department and the Police Departments within the county are currently very short staffed, which makes it extremely difficult to hire officers for the schools. This is a statewide problem, not just a county problem. Volusia County Schools' goal is to eventually have a sheriff's deputy or a police officer at every school. Former Ormond Beach Police Chief Mathieson suggested hiring retired law enforcement officers or retired military veterans.

A few weeks ago, a summit was held for all Florida school superintendents. All state school superintendents are trying to deal with the same two issues: 1) how to provide raises; and 2) how to make the *School Guardian Program* work within the schools. This is very difficult when every district is short on money for both issues. A hybrid plan was created. It keeps the current 32 *School Resource Officers* in the schools and allows for 37 *School Guardians* to be hired. Volusia County Schools would like to hire ex-law enforcement or ex-military members. They would work for the school system and be paid \$30,000, plus benefits for a total of approximately \$50,000 per year. The total annual cost would be approximately \$436 million. Currently, the school district is short \$750,000, which does not include funding for additional officers that will be needed as substitutes. Last week a meeting was held with parents, principals and district staff along with Sheriff's Department captains and lieutenants to work on a solution. A plan was developed, which will be discussed at today's meeting.

Mr. Russell provided a brief background on Greg Akin, Chief Operations Officer, Volusia County Schools, who will be discussing the proposed plan. Mr. Akin's specialty is security; he is retired from the Air Force, attended Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, has a degree in security, and is trained by Homeland Security. He travels throughout the United States training other school districts. He worked with the committee that developed the plan, which needs to be put in place by July 1, 2018.

Greg Akin, Chief Operations Officer, Volusia County Schools, discussed the *School Resource Officer Legislation SB 7026* PowerPoint presentation. He said the *School Resource Officer Program* is changing the *School Resource Deputies (SRDs)* and *School Resource Officers (SROs)* to *School Safety Officers (SSOs)*. *Senate Bill 7026* is a huge bill that requires an armed person on each school campus starting the first day of school, which is August 13, 2018. The candidates will be required to go through extensive Sheriff's Department background checks, drug testing and psychological evaluations. Participants in the hybrid portion of the *School Guardian Program* are at Volusia County Schools' discretion.

Volusia County Schools prefers to have *School Resource Officers (SROs)* or *School Resource Deputies (SRDs)* on each school campus, but it is not feasible at the present time. There are currently three possible options: 1) continue working with Volusia County Sheriff's Office and municipality Police Departments on *School Resource Deputies* and *School Resource Officers*; 2) continue working with local law enforcement departments and move it forward to try to hire more officers as they become available; or 3) utilize current volunteers on staff, some of whom are ex-military or retired ex-law enforcement. Positions could be advertised specifically for the *School Guardians Program*.

*School Marshal Program* participants must be current Volusia County Schools volunteers who can volunteer for this program. Participants must have a current *concealed weapons permit*. Once hired, the employees will work specifically as security on each campus. Teachers are

not eligible to be *School Guardians*, with the exception of school ROTC instructors. School administrators, campus advisors and other district staff would be eligible for the *School Guardian Program*. The program requires each person to receive intensive training through the Sheriff's Office. Funding for the training comes from the state; \$67 million has been set aside specifically to train *School Guardians*.

Recommendations from last week's meeting were: 1) keep the current *School Resource Officers* contracts in place; 2) add four additional *School Resource Deputies* to the Volusia County Sheriff's Office contract; and 3) implement the *School Marshal Program* at each elementary school. These recommendations can help reduce costs.

A very lengthy discussion ensued between Mr. Russell, Mr. Akin, many of the Roundtable Members and City Managers regarding not only providing *School Safety Officers* at district schools, but also at charter schools, private schools and parochial schools. There were also discussions about using teachers who are retired military or retired law enforcement, what the policy is when an officer is unavailable to be present at a particular school, being able to provide security to schools when each school is designed differently, and funding sources.

Mr. Russell provided information regarding options charter schools could use to provide additional security to their school campuses. Mr. Akin said *Senate Bill 7026* does not address security for private schools and specifically excludes teachers as *School Safety Officers*. Currently, the contract with the Sheriff's Office provides for officers to fill in at schools when needed, when the regular duty officer is not available. Volusia County Schools plans to hire an additional pool of *School Guardians* as substitutes, to be utilized when someone is unavailable. The Senate Bill states a *School Resource Officer*, *School Safety Officer* or *School Guardian* must be on campus when school is in session. Volusia County Schools is in the process of evaluating each school campus, creating single-point access at each school with locking doors, buzzers systems, RFID (Radio Frequency Identification Reader) readers and keypads; and installing security cameras where needed. The state set aside \$67 million for the training section of the *School Marshall Program*. *Senate Bill 7026* is appropriating \$3.6 million for *School Resource Officers* and deputies' salaries, along with the hiring of additional staff.

Mike Chitwood, Volusia County Sheriff, said the county is blessed to have Mr. Russell, who is an outstanding school superintendent. The Sheriff's Office is sending letters to all retired law enforcement officers asking them to consider working as a *Safe School Officer* or *School Resource Deputy*. They are wanting to send letters to retired police officers. Access is needed to each municipality's human resource department to obtain retired police officers' contact information so they can be sent the same letter. *School Safety Officers* are employed by Volusia County Schools, and *School Resource Deputies* are employed by the Sheriff's Office or their respective cities.

### **HALF-CENT SALES TAX: COUNTY COUNCIL ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

Joe Yarbrough, South Daytona City Manager, said the county deferred putting the half-cent sales tax referendum on the 2018 ballot. Hopefully, there will be a special election in Spring 2019. The press asked for his assistance in gathering information from all the cities regarding impact fees. It is suggested that each city review its current impact fees to see if updates need to be made.

James Hathaway, Mayor, New Smyrna Beach, questioned the cost of a special election and who would pay for it.

Lisa Lewis, Volusia County Supervisor of Elections, said the cost of a special election could be close to half-million dollars. The cost for a presidential general election is \$791,000. A mail-in ballot election costs approximately \$588,000. She discussed the differences and costs of special elections versus mail-in ballots. Voter turnout is lower in gubernatorial election years.

Mr. Kelley asked if the cities would consider helping share some of the costs of a special election. The proposed half-cent sales tax is for the benefit of all the cities as well as the county.

Mayor Apgar said the cities need to know what the county's plan is regarding the impact fee issue, along with what is going to happen with the proposed additional \$25,000 homestead exemption. He questioned what each city uses their impact fees for. In DeLand, most of the roads are county roads, so the city's impact fees are not used for that. He discussed city roads affecting private property.

Mr. Kelley said there is going to be a presentation and discussion regarding impact fees at the June 5 County Council meeting. Unfortunately, impact fees will not fix subdivision problems. He hopes there will be a special election for the half-cent sales tax in Spring 2019, and he has considered appointing a committee of community members to review impact fee regulations. Traffic issues need to be addressed, but they are not the only concerns. Water quality, flooding issues, water control and other areas of infrastructure are also important issues that need to be addressed. Everyone needs to work together to accomplish what needs to be done. It is possible that up to 50% of the proposed half-cent sales tax will be paid for by outside individuals. He has concerns about Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA); the county contacted OPPAGA but has not received a response.

Mayor Apgar feels the County Council needs to provide the cities with a game plan at the June 5 County Council meeting. That will give the cities the opportunity to work on what they need to in regards to impact fees; it will also allow time to plan workshops to discuss infrastructure needs. The county's plan will also dictate a logical date for the proposed half-cent sales tax referendum if it moves forward.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Homelessness** – Mayor Apgar provided an update on the DeLand homeless shelter. The name of the facility is *The Bridge*, and it is at the final drawings stage with the architect. Hopefully, the project will be put out for bid by July.

John Penny, Mayor, Holly Hill, suggested suspending the Homelessness Subcommittee since *The Bridge Shelter Board* is doing work on the west side of the county and the *First Step Shelter Board* is doing work on the east side of the county. At the present time, the subcommittee no longer has influence on giving direction to the homeless effort.

**Transportation** – Nothing to report.

**Water** – Nothing to report.

**Beach Driving (No report until further notice)**

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Linda Smiley, Daytona Beach, said the public wants meaningful open dialogue and honest communication from government officials on extremely important issues, such as impact fees

and the proposed half-cent sales tax special election. Residents want to know what money is being spent on, before it is spent, and they do not want to be kept in the dark anymore.

Jeff Brower, DeLeon Springs, spoke about the varying costs for a special election that had been discussed earlier by Roundtable members and Ms. Lewis.

Big John, Holly Hill, discussed the cost of a special election, the seriousness of impact fees, the 2007 Tindale-Oliver study, the proposed half-cent sales tax, and the public not trusting local government.

Jim Cameron, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber still supports the proposed half-cent sales tax and feels infrastructure funding is vital to bring new jobs to Volusia County. There is a need to address the school district cost differential.

Shailesh Patel, Past President of Volusia County Association for Responsible Development (VCARD), said the organization's executive council has met several times regarding the half-cent sales tax and impact fee issues. They are considering creating an educational forum to provide more information on what impact fees are and how they affect various aspects of our community. If anyone is interested in the forum, please contact Kerry Karl, Executive Director, VCARD.

Abby Johnson, Intergovernmental Coordinator, St. Johns River Water Management District, said April was *Water Conservation Month*; 109 of the 119 municipalities participated this year. In April, the SJRWMD governing board approved roughly \$16 million worth of projects; of that, Volusia County and several municipalities received approximately \$4 million worth of projects this year. The district is always looking for ways to improve water quality and water conservation.

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next Elected Officials Roundtable meeting will be held on Monday, June 11, 2018.

#### **MEMBER COMMENTS**

John Penny, Mayor, Holly Hill, discussed recent beautification efforts that were made on Ridgewood Avenue in Holly Hill. The city received Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) grants that helped pay to the project.

Ed Kelley, County Chair, Volusia County, feels local governments are very open and transparent. Developers do not pay impact fees, the fees are passed on to the buyer. There is over \$1 billion in current needs, which does not include future needs. They include water, water quality and infrastructure that need to be addressed right now; that does not include future development.

John Masiarczyk, Mayor, Deltona, said everyone is starting to prepare next year's budgets and there needs to be a general idea of how much money needs to be set aside for certain costs.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

