



Roundtable of Volusia County Elected Officials MEETING MINUTES January 7, 2019

CALL TO ORDER - Noon

The meeting was called to order in the Dennis R. 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 Chair Ed Kelley; DeBary Mayor Karen Chasez; Deltona Mayor Heidi Herzberg; Edgewater Mayor Mike Thomas; Holly Hill Mayor Chris Via; Lake Helen Mayor Daisy Raisler; New Smyrna Beach Mayor Russ Owen; 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; South Daytona Mayor Bill Hall; and Volusia County School District Board Chair Carl Persis.

Others attending included Michael Booker, Daytona Beach Shores City Manager; Erika Benfield, DeBary Vice Mayor, DeBary City Council, Seat 2; Phyllis Butlien, DeBary City Council, Seat 4; Michael Pleus, DeLand City Manager; Brenda DeWees, Edgewater Interim City Manager; Joe Forte, Holly Hill City Manager; Becky Witte, Lake Helen City Clerk; Pam Brangaccio, New Smyrna Beach 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; Les Gillis, South Daytona City Manager; Tom Russell, Superintendent, Volusia County School District; George Recktenwald, Interim County Manager, Volusia County; Ben Johnson, At-Large Volusia County Council Member Elect; Billie Wheeler, Volusia County Council Member, District 2; Dr. Fred Lowry, Volusia County Council Member, District 5; Lisa Lewis, Supervisor of Elections; Larry Bartlett, Volusia County Property Appraiser; John Booker, Volusia County Government Affairs; Joe Yarbrough, City of South Daytona; Dr. Kent Sharples, President and CEO, CEO Business Alliance; Jim Cameron, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce; Betty Holness, County Council Liaison; 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 Lisa Lewis, Supervisor of Elections; Billie Wheeler, Volusia County Council Member, District 2; Larry Bartlett, Volusia County Property Appraiser; Ben Johnson, At-Large Volusia County Council Member Elect; Dr. Fred Lowry, Volusia County Council Member, District 5; Erika Benfield, DeBary Vice Mayor, Seat 2. After standing for the Pledge of Allegiance, all members introduced themselves.

Mayor Apgar thanked the individual members of the CEO Business Alliance for their past support and continued support. He reminded everyone that every municipality in the county adopted resolutions in support of the half-cent sales tax. Those resolutions shall remain in effect until there is an affirmative action taken by any of the communities that adopted them.

Just shy of one year ago, Volusia County Chair Kelley sent a memo to the County Council. The Elected Officials Roundtable members also received a copy of the memo. It listed items and issues that were important at that point in time in regards to moving forward with the half-cent sales tax. One item was the goal for all 16 municipalities to adopt the resolution, which was done. Another was to collectively produce a list of examples, which many of the cities were in the process of doing. The default formula needed to be agreed upon, which it was. The County and cities had to endorse a third-party review panel, which was done. Public education would be needed with elected officials helping with the education process. The cities needed to make a request of the County Council to place it on the 2018 ballot, which they did. A few months later, the cities had to go back to the County Council to ask them not to put it on the ballot.

DISCUSSION ON HALF CENT SALES TAX – JOE YARBROUGH

Joe Yarbrough, City of South Daytona, explained how the Roundtable got to the proposed half-cent sales tax. About five years ago, there was an initiative from Volusia County Manager Jim Dinneen to see if the cities could come together for a half-cent sales tax. The reason is the same that we are here today. We are here for the same reason today.

At that time, it was realized how far behind the County and the municipalities were in their respective infrastructures. It was difficult to start due to several reasons. Some cities felt the per capita distribution was not fair. They thought distribution should be based on where the money was generated from. Some cities have more businesses than other cities, and some have more residences than others. The largest city in the county would have received a proportionately small share if the dollar generation formula was used. The cities were working on a tough timeframe and needed to figure a way to find out if the public would support the proposed half-cent sales tax. The cities were not allowed to spend their own money and most could not go to their councils at that time. Due to the recession, there was no disposable income for the cities to pool together to be able to bring in a consultant to find out whether or not the public would support the sales tax.

A little over a year ago, the Elected Officials Roundtable regenerated the interest in the half-cent sales tax. The Mayors Association Chair requested Mr. Yarbrough be heavily involved since he chaired and still chairs the Volusia Managers Association. It was requested that he sit down with the mayors to see if a formula could be worked out and try to figure out if all the cities could come together to decide how to raise money to have a survey done. A survey could help determine the feasibility of placing a referendum on the ballot to allow the public to vote on a half-cent sales tax increase for infrastructure. The Managers Association was able to come to a consensus for a formula that everyone could live with and discussed how to raise money for the survey. It was felt the private sector needed to participate in order for the referendum to pass. They are the ones the half-cent sales tax would be collected from.

Mr. Yarbrough approached Kent Sharples, CEO of the CEO Business Alliance. Mr. Sharples approached the businesses represented in the Alliance to see if they were interested in funding the survey. The businesses raised money and brought in a consultant the managers had vetted. In February or March 2018, the consultant did the survey, which showed the majority of the public would support a half-cent sales tax. The CEO Business Alliance said they would help if all the cities would sign off. A resolution was created that showed the public would support a half-cent sales tax. All 16 municipalities adopted the identical resolution and brought it back to the Alliance representative, Mr. Sharples, who took it to his business representatives. They supported it and paid for the survey.

The next step was for the Elected Officials Roundtable members to go before the County Council to ask that all the resolutions be adopted and placed on the County Council agenda. The County Council agreed. Unfortunately, several months later, Roundtable members had to go back before the County Council to advise them the messages were no longer there. It was

felt the proposed sales tax was being overshadowed by lack of an increase in impact fees, which had not been adopted by the County Council, coupled with the fact the 2018 ballot was huge.

Mr. Yarbrough was asked to contact the CEO Business Alliance to have the survey updated. No public money has been spent to date on this issue. All this has been done by business owners who said it is not a development issue, it is a quality of life issue. Those issues include our water quality, flooding, traffic congestion in certain cities, and infrastructure that was installed in the 1940s that is crumbling. All these issues need to be addressed, regardless of upcoming development.

The recession put the County and cities back 10 years, which is time we will never get back. The recovery is not there, but the needs definitely are. Not one city has reversed its decision. Newly elected officials have been asked to revisit their city's capital projects lists. All projects have been identified and approved by each city. If there has been a change within any newly elected official body, they need to provide an updated list to Mr. Yarbrough to make sure everybody is on the same page. Not one city manager has said their city council position has been reversed on this issue. No one feels it is necessary to go back to the County Council to adopt an additional resolution.

CEO BUSINESS ALLIANCE - KENT SHARPLES

Dr. Kent Sharples, CEO and President, CEO Business Alliance, congratulated all the newly elected officials and thanked everyone for their commitment of support. The CEO Business Alliance now has 11 members; it started out with six members a few years ago. By choice, a number of Alliance members elected to financially support a project of this nature and created a pact. A pact is required to pay for surveys and provide the promotional material that is required on a ballot initiative of this type.

In May 2018, 800 voters were surveyed. The results of the survey showed a 52 percent favorable opinion of a half-cent sales tax. Steve Vancore with Clearview Research was the survey consultant. From December 11 to 15, 2018, another survey was conducted with 400 voters to basically refresh what had been surveyed previously. Mr. Vancore balanced the survey to reflect the respondents from the county as best they can. The survey was balanced by gender, race, age, party and region with 39 percent of the calls conducted by cell phone. The general response was set and yielded a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Statistically, the survey stands pretty good.

Dr. Sharples discussed the Clearview Research Executive Summary. The survey consisted of 18 questions. Fifty percent of the Volusia County voters surveyed feel things are going in the right direction. Fifty-nine percent of them supported a half-cent sales tax. Over half of the respondents felt infrastructure improvements were needed, including improvement of local roads and bridges, resurfacing local roads, building sidewalks near schools, improving stormwater control and reducing flooding, reducing traffic congestion, and improving local water quality. Some key priorities that caused people to vote favorably were:

- All the money is to stay entirely in Volusia County.
- The independent committee would be appointed with oversight on expenditures of those funds
- Forty percent would be paid for by visitors.
- The issue of bonding provides a revenue stream over a 20-year period.
- The funds could be used to bond projects of a larger nature.

The final recommendation by Steve Vancore is for a mail-in ballot. The strategy increases voter turnout. A mail-in ballot is less expensive, saving taxpayer dollars, therefore increasing the likelihood of passage. There was a caveat to this because voters tend to dissipate past

May and the beginning of June, when school gets out. The balloting probably should be done before the end of May or sometime after the end of summer into September.

A very lengthy discussion continued among several Roundtable members and elected officials regarding the proposed half-cent sales tax, the survey, the ballot, the citizen oversight committee, project lists, and distribution of funds.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jim Cameron, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce, said the Chamber is still on board regarding the half-cent sales tax referendum. Since the beginning, the Chamber has worked with a number of the cities in the process. The Chamber will continue to work with everyone on the referendum.

Big John, Holly Hill, requested further clarification from Mr. Recktenwald regarding the OPPAGA (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability). Mr. Recktenwald discussed conversations that were had with OPPAGA, regarding the timeframe they needed to do their work. They said it would be approximately 30 days, and they would need some warning time. The ordinance does not need to be passed, but it needs to be seriously discussed.

Linda Smiley, Daytona Beach, said she has a problem with spending \$490,000 for a special election, especially if the referendum does not pass. She also has problems with the process used to pick members for a Citizen Review Committee. She discussed Barker's View web blog (www.barkersview.org) and impact fee increases. She felt graduated impact fee increases are not acceptable. Mayor Apgar responded, saying oversight committees needed to be made up of regular citizens, people who had an interest. He also discussed the fact that local governments have very little control over revenue streams available to them because of state law.

John Nicholson, Daytona Beach, said most tourist taxes are brought in by the City of Daytona Beach. He was concerned about the distribution process for the proposed half-cent sales tax. He discussed Brown & Brown Insurance Company, International Speedway Corporation, and other businesses. Events that are held in various cities, such as Bike Week and Biketoberfest, need to be considered when reviewing the sales tax distribution.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Bill Hall, Mayor, South Daytona, said nothing has changed in South Daytona. He has some questions regarding each city's costs. He had given some presentations over the holidays where he discussed the need for the proposed half-cent sales tax.

Mike Thomas, Mayor, Edgewater, said since the resolution, three city council members changed. He has not had a chance to poll them about the proposed sales tax.

Chris Via, Mayor, Holly Hill, said the proposed half-cent sales tax and extra costs involved will be discussed at the next city commission meeting.

Daisy Raisler, Mayor, Lake Helen, said the bigger picture needs to be looked at.

Ed Kelley, Roundtable Vice Chair and Volusia County Chair, said the State of the County will be held on Tuesday, January 15, at the Ocean Center. All the revenue of the proposed half-cent sales tax will stay within the County and municipalities.

Karen Chavez, Mayor, DeBary, said the city's resolution that was passed last year is still in effect. The proposed half-cent sales tax will be discussed at an upcoming city commission meeting.

Roundtable of the Volusia County Elected Officials – January 7, 2019

Russ Owen, Mayor, New Smyrna Beach, discussed having newly elected commissioners and an already adopted resolution that was passed from a previous commission. The proposed half-cent sales tax will be discussed at an upcoming city commission meeting.

Carl Persis, Board Chair, Volusia County School District, emphasized how important it is to get the public involved. We need to find out what they think is important.

Don Burnette, Mayor, Port Orange, feels there is a sense of urgency regarding the proposed half-cent sales tax. He discussed the issues regarding Taylor Road in Port Orange. Port Orange City Commissioner Bob Ford passed three days before Christmas. His memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, January 19, at Volusia Memorial Funeral Home on Clyde Morris Boulevard, Port Orange.

Mayor Apgar said if members have future topics they would like discussed, they should advise Betty Holness.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Elected Officials Roundtable meeting will be held on Monday, February 11, 2019.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:29 p.m.