



**Round Table of Volusia County Elected Officials
MEETING MINUTES
January 8, 2018**

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; Daytona Beach Shores Mayor Harry Jennings; 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 Council Member Lois Paritsky; Port Orange Mayor Don Burnette; South Daytona Mayor Bill Hall; Volusia County Council Chair Ed Kelley; Volusia County School Board Chair Linda Cuthbert.

Others attending included guest speaker Steve Vancore, VancoreJones Communication; Bob Garcia, Mayor, City of DeBary; Ron McLemore, DeBary City Manager; Michael Pleus, DeLand City Manager; Jane Shang, Deltona City Manager; Heidi Herzberg, Deltona City Commissioner; Tracey Barlow, Edgewater City Manager; Joe Forte, Holly Hill City Manager; Jason Yarborough, Lake Helen City Administrator; Pam Brangaccio, New Smyrna Beach City Manager; Kohn Evans, Oak Hill City Administrator; Bill Lindlau, Oak Hill City Commissioner; Dale Arrington, City Manager, Orange City; Joyce Shanahan; Ormond Beach City Manager; Jeaneen Witt, Ponce Inlet City Manager; Jake Johansson, Port Orange City Manager; Joe Yarbrough, South Daytona City Manager; James Dinneen, County Manager, Volusia County; George Recktenwald, Deputy County Manager, Volusia County; Rob Ehrhardt, Economic Development Director, Volusia County; Larry Bartlett, Property Appraiser, Volusia County; Deb Denys, Volusia County Council Vice Chair; Billie Wheeler, Volusia County Council Member, District 2; Heather Post, Volusia County Council Member, District 4; Tom Russell, Superintendent, Volusia County School Board; Jim Cameron, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce; Abby Johnson, Intergovernmental Coordinator, St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD); Betty Holness, County Council Liaison; and Jeff Crumbley, Volusia County Community Information. Taking minutes was Debbie Kelley with the County Manager's Office.

WELCOME

Roundtable Chairman Bob Apgar welcomed those attending. After standing for the Pledge of Allegiance, Mayor Apgar introduced Billie Wheeler, Volusia County Council District 2 Member; Deb Denys, Volusia County Council Vice Chair; Heather Post, Volusia County Council District 4 Member; Bill Lindlau, Oak Hill City Commissioner; Larry Bartlett, Volusia County Property Appraiser. He welcomed two new members to the Roundtable of Volusia County Elected Officials: Linda Cuthbert, Chair, Volusia County School Board; and Daisy Raisler, Mayor, City of Lake Helen. Everyone introduced themselves.

STATUS REPORT by CEO BUSINESS ALLIANCE and DISCUSSION

Report from Managers Association – Joe Yarbrough, City Manager, South Daytona

Last year the Roundtable members and city managers approached the CEO Business Alliance to consider conducting a survey to determine whether or not there was support for a countywide sales tax. They asked that it be paid for out of private funds, and not public monies. There were several unknowns as to whether the public would support a one-cent or a half-cent sales tax, what election date the referendum needed to be placed on the ballot, if there was support for the tax, and whether or not there was an equitable distribution formula that could be reached by the county and cities. Mr. Sharples was unable to attend today's meeting due to an unavoidable family issue. He wanted to assure everyone that his absence did not diminish the Alliance's interest in pursuing whatever the group decides. The Alliance lends its support to the group's decision and will continue working with this group for the purpose of creating jobs.

Survey Results re: Sales Tax – Steve Vancore, VancoreJones Communication (ClearView Research)

The CEO Business Alliance retained Steven Vancore to conduct the sales tax survey. Mr. Vancore completed the survey in 2017, and this was the first opportunity for him to present the information obtained from the survey.

Mr. Vancore provided a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the survey results. The survey was done to ascertain whether Volusia County residents would support an additional sales tax to fund various improvements throughout the county. The results showed the public would support a half-cent sales tax. However, they were opposed to a one-cent sales tax. Some of the areas the surveyors felt the tax should be used for included improving the environment by reducing toxins in local waterways, building sidewalks near schools, improving local roads and bridges, reducing the homeless population, resurfacing local roads, improving local water quality, and improving stormwater control and surface flooding. Most of the survey groups answered the same way and wanted the same things. Younger voters were more supportive of this type of tax. The people surveyed liked the fact the taxes were going to stay locally, could be matched by state funds, and would not go to Washington, D.C.

A lengthy discussion followed the presentation. The following issues and concerns were discussed by Roundtable members, city managers and Mr. Vancore:

- Mayor Apgar, City of DeLand, discussed an article in the National Association of Realtors publication *On Common Ground, Winter Edition*. The article was about a national residential survey that had been done regarding smart growth features that residents felt were important factors in communities. The survey showed 86% of the people wanted sidewalks and places to walk; 80% wanted easy access to highways; 54% wanted bike lanes and nearby paths; 74% wanted maintenance and repairing of roads, highways, freeways and bridges; and 54% wanted the building of more roads and the expanding of existing roadways to help reduce traffic congestion. Mayor Apgar noted the similarities between the national survey and the survey done by ClearView Research. Both discussed sidewalks, roadway maintenance and repair, along with expanding roadways. He stated that Mr. Vancore would be available after the meeting for further discussion.
- Mayor Apgar discussed the following:
 - The ballot language used for the School Board resolution was a perfect example of the referendum language.
 - Individual municipalities must decide how they want to use their portion of the tax and should track what the voters prefer.

- The default formula language in the statute was quite broad.
- Some municipalities feel they are higher generators of sales tax revenue.
- Some cities wanted projects that would improve water quality and not damage the aquifer.
- Cities need to find out what the residents want.
- Some projects will not be identifiable, and direction may need to be provided.
- Each municipality will be able to use their own discretion on how their money will be spent.
- If necessary, the county and a municipality can enter into an *Interlocal Agreement* to maintain a road that is partly in the county and partly in that municipality. They each could use a share of their funds to take care of the entire road.
- The identification of new projects needs to track what the voters seem to want.
- The survey results showed the citizens want an oversight committee.
- The ballot language will usually have “*and related uses*” written in it.
- Elected officials need to provide direction to the managers, as to what they are going to expect.

- Bob Garcia, Mayor, City of DeBary
 - Would the oversight committee would be done at the local level or the county level.
 - What is the difference in revenue between a penny and half-penny sales tax?
 - Clarity of information is needed as it relates to funding and specificity as to how the money will be used. If not provided, people will not vote for the referendum no matter what the amount is.
 - How will the money be distributed to each of the cities and how will the sales tax idea to the residents?
 - The county will get half of the tax, and the remainder of the tax would be divided among the cities. If the county needed more than their half, would it be taken from the cities?

- James Hathaway, Mayor, City of New Smyrna Beach
 - Is better to have the sales tax option on the primary election ballot or the general election ballot.
 - The additional homeowner exemption deduction is scheduled to be on the general election ballot for the upcoming election.
 - When would the county’s percentage of the sales tax be determined? He wanted to make sure the cities get a fair shake.

- John Penny, Mayor, City of Holly Hill
 - What is the differences in statistics on undecided votes?
 - He felt voters do not pay attention to what is on the ballots until the Election day gets closer.

- Gary Blair, Mayor, City of Orange City
 - He wanted more information about the process of random sampling that was done for the survey.
 - He questioned whether 600 people was enough to evaluate for a county the size of Volusia County.

- Ron McLemore, City Manager, City of DeBary
 - It is impossible to build new roads or extend roads without dealing with sewer issues.

- He wanted to know how this issue would be handled and wondered if septic-to-sewer conversion was an issue.
- John Masiarczyk, Mayor, City of Deltona
 - He had concerns about the oversight committee.
 - He did not want a countywide oversight committee that will evaluate programs in each municipality the same, no matter the size.
 - Committee should only have oversight conditions on whether it meets the criteria of what the voters voted on, and not necessarily the project itself.
- Douglas Gibson, Mayor, City of Oak Hill
 - He wanted more information about the distribution formula. The larger municipalities will receive higher amounts of money. The smaller municipalities should receive a minimum amount of money out of the fund for the taxpayers to support.
 - Oak Hill's main project is water quality.
 - He wanted to know what the definition of water quality was and questioned whether it included septic tank removal from Mosquito Lagoon.
- Harry Jennings, Mayor, City of Daytona Beach Shores
 - He needed information as to who would be responsible for developing the educational and public relations programs for the project.
- Mr. Vancore explained that their job was to get a better understanding of what the public wanted. According to the survey, the public preferred having a Citizen Oversight Committee. The elected officials need to decide the power of the group, what the jurisdiction is, and how the committee is made up.
 - He discussed ballot language, saying there are two statutory constraints - ballot summary and only 75 words can be used within the ballot.
 - It is the obligation of the community to decide on the language used. Two reasons these referendums fail is that the wrong projects are picked or the issues are not detailed enough, which needs to be done outside the ballot language.
 - SunRail was not included in the testing mechanism. During the initial review, this was not seen as a mass transit tax. In his experience, Florida has never passed a local option sales tax and passed a mass transit tax. Anything for rail or bus service has always failed in the State of Florida.
 - After reviewing the data, he recommended putting the sales tax option on the general election ballot due to the larger participation by voters. Mr. Vancore said most people review the ballots themselves. If the subject is promoted too early it can cause voter fatigue and a drop in voting. The legislature is discussing making changes to amend the Florida Constitution.
 - He explained what normally happens with the undecided votes, stating people arrive on Election Day, are still undecided and have a tendency to vote "no." Since this started out with a higher ratio, if the election was held today, the sales tax would pass by 57-58%.
 - Random sampling of 600 people was sufficient for a county the size of Volusia County. Usually for statewide polls, 600-700 people are surveyed.
 - When roads are built there will be sewer, flooding, and water management aspects involved. A good point is whether or not money is being earmarked for sewer-to-septic conversion. There are many reasons the public does not support this idea.

- Mr. Yarbrough said if the managers could come to a decision to pursue a sales tax referendum in November, they would need to come to a consensus on how the money would be distributed.
 - The managers felt comfortable recommending to their elected officials that the default formula provided for in the Florida Statutes be used. The default formula works by half of the money going to the county and the other half being dispersed on a per capita basis.
 - A uniform resolution needs to be drafted. If the managers decide to go ahead, the resolution needs to be in the final form no later than April, with the ballot language identified and to the County Council no later than May. There are seventeen public entities - sixteen municipalities and the county.
 - Dr. D. Kent Sharples, President, CEO Business Alliance, asked Mr. Yarbrough to convey that they are supportive of the issue. The Alliance intends to continue its support with private sector funds for any decision to move forward.
 - Each city needs to use the same language in their adopted resolutions.
 - The County Council deserves clear information from the cities.
 - The county and the cities need to provide education to the public about the proposed sales tax.
 - The CEO Business Alliance might be responsible for developing the educational and public relations programs for the project.
 - There are a number of roadways within the municipalities that are county roads, and some need enhancement.
 - There must be trust between the county and the cities for this to work.
- Ed Kelley, Chair, Volusia County Council, stated each city would benefit from the sales tax and felt a uniform resolution from each city would be best.
 - Discussion related to the sales tax referendum started 1½ years ago. A decision needs to be made so the process can move forward.
 - The county is waiting to receive resolutions from all the municipalities. This will show the County Council there is support, and it can be put on the ballot.
 - Everyone will understand what the ballot language will be going forward. The ballot language will not deviate from what the resolution would say.
 - The referendum needs to be put on the ballot for the upcoming election. It would be easier if people stayed within the five districts, but many roadways are used by people outside their districts, such as Highway 44.
 - Some municipalities have only county roads within their jurisdiction.
 - A majority of the roads in the cities are county roads.
 - He discussed the possibility of using the River to Sea TPO (Transportation Planning Organization) to assist in funding the proposed projects.

Mayor Apgar felt the Roundtable of Elected Officials needs to meet again in February to discuss the matter further and hopefully come to a decision.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Homelessness – Bill Hall, Mayor, City of South Daytona, spoke about the First Step Shelter groundbreaking ceremony.

Michael Pleus, City Manager, City of DeLand, provided an update on the Neighborhood Center Homeless Shelter. Thanks to fundraising efforts, over \$300,000 has been raised for annual operating costs and five-year commitments. The DeLand City Commission gave permission to move forward with the project. They are in the process of hiring an architect, and CPH Engineering Firm is doing the site engineering. The project is moving forward. All volunteer

groups and subcommittees have been formed, and there has been a lot of volunteer efforts from across West Volusia.

Mr. Kelley discussed the First Step Shelter, Hope Place, and the Neighborhood Center homeless shelter in DeLand.

Transportation – Mayor Masiarczyk said there was no report. He had been asked repeatedly about the SunRail funding that was coming due. People are wanting to know how the County is going to pay for it. Mr. Kelley responded saying not one dime of the proposed half-cent sales tax would be going toward SunRail. He stated he has been assured by County Manager James Dinneen that there are funds to cover the costs. The County is currently in discussions with the SunRail Commission to re-evaluate Volusia County's participation, because the county is not getting what was proposed. The current Council is not going to allow the citizens of Volusia County to pay one penny for something they're not getting.

Water – No report. Mayor Apgar said Daisy Raisler, Mayor, City of Lake Helen, wanted to be on this committee.

Beach Driving – No report until further notice.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Abby Johnson, Intergovernmental Coordinator, St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), said the funding cycle for the Cost Share program was now open and will close on February 15, 2018, at 5:00 p.m. On January 16, 2018, there will be an informational workshop for cost share applicants; it will be available via webinar and at the District headquarters. There are a few projects on the way; the county and the municipalities are encouraged to participate and apply for funding.

Chuck Collins, Ormond Beach, represented Ed Connor, a proponent of fair tax, who was not present. He read a letter from Mr. Connor that stated the County Council has **not** held any public hearings on the proposal to expand the courthouse facility being proposed by the county manager. Taxpayers have a right to know why it is so expensive and how it will be paid for. Mr. Connor wanted to know if the costs were going to be passed on to county residents with an increase in property taxes. Mr. Kelley said he would contact Mr. Connor to provide the requested information.

Pastor Mike Pastore, Daytona Beach, said he was cautiously optimistic about the homeless shelters after attending First Step board meetings and Daytona Beach City Commission meetings. He delivered sleeping bags, tents and supplies to people at the Safe Zone area in Daytona Beach. Mayor Apgar commented saying conversations regarding the West Volusia homeless solution are trying to work toward moving people from the shelter to more permanent supportive housing within 30-90 days. Currently, there is a countywide shortage of available homes. Mayor Apgar and Mr. Pleus visited Orlando, which has a similar situation regarding available housing.

Warren Hauser, Ormond-by-the-Sea, wanted to know how much the CEO Business Alliance paid ClearView Research to conduct the survey. Mr. Kelley responded saying it was a private transaction. Mr. Hauser felt the additional sales tax would affect the poorest county residents negatively. He wanted to know how and where the CEO Business Alliance obtained funding for the survey.

Big John, Holly Hill, said he was generally very supportive of the procedure that was discussed. He believes trust in Volusia County government administration is at an all-time low. Some roads within the county and municipalities are state roads and not county roads.

Jeff Browe, DeLeon Springs, asked Mr. Vancore where the list of names for the survey came from. Mr. Vancore said the names were picked from the voter registration list and briefly explained the process. Mr. Browe wanted more information on how the citizen oversight committee would work. Mayor Apgar responded saying the Volusia County School Board model was very successful. They had a citizens committee approve projects, and they also had an oversight committee. It means each city will have to decide how they want their project list to be implemented. The cities will decide if they want citizen involvement or not. Since it is a countywide tax, the county will take charge to make sure that every city is spending the money in accordance with the will of the voters. There has been no discussion by the County Council regarding the makeup of the Oversight Committee. As the process moves forward, the concept will be explored and discussed when the County Council adopts the resolution. Everyone recognizes that oversight is essential. Mr. Browe wanted more information regarding the cost of educating the public about the sales tax and where that money would come from to pay for it. Mayor Jennings said he understood Joe Yarbrough to say the CEO Business Alliance was going to take that under consideration. Mayor Apgar responded saying at some point local elected officials and their staff may need to hold open forums for citizens to come and ask questions. Until there is a commitment that the County is going to move forward with this idea, there will be a lot of overview and ideas shared. Mr. Kelley said this question is the exact reason the CEO Business Alliance was approached: to hopefully use private funding as opposed to taxes from the public. As for educating the public, it may have to be done through various business groups, Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations. Each city may take it upon themselves and each Mayor may want to provide educational information. Mr. Kelley is hoping taxpayer money will not have to be used. Mr. Browe wanted to know if the money that is spent will be public record. Mayor Apgar responded saying any money municipalities spend is considered public record. But as for the money spent by the CEO Business Alliance being public record, the answer is “no.”

MEMBER COMMENTS

Mayor Garcia said the meeting was very informative.

Mayor Masiarczyk invited everyone to come see the new *Center at Deltona* Community Center. The *Bonkerz Comedy Club* will be there on Friday, January 12 from 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm.

Jane Shang, City Manager, City of Deltona, said the *Center at Deltona* Grand Opening was spectacular. There was a rumor that between 1000-2000 people attended the open house.

Linda Cuthbert, Volusia County School Board Chair, thanked Mayor Apgar for the compliment on the school board half-cent sales tax. The tax has been very successful. She said anyone can contact the School Board for any assistance or questions.

Mr. Kelley reminded everyone of the upcoming *State of the County* event at the Ocean Center on January 22, 2018. There is no cost to attend the event and no taxpayer funds are being spent.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.