

**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LEE COUNTY**

Independent Sales Surtax Oversight Committee Meeting 2855  
Colonial Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33966

Thursday, March 24, 2022 Meeting  
Minutes

Committee Members Present

Greta Campbell  
James Dozier  
Fred Elliott  
Joe Mazurkiewicz  
Harlan Parrish  
Dennis Pearlman  
Michelle Perez-Macias  
Harlan Parrish  
Steve Shimp – Chairman

Absent Committee Members

Frederick Atkins  
Randy Krise  
Brian Rist  
Dan Severson  
Cia Sherman-Secretary-Excused Absence  
Chris Simoneau-Excused Absence

School Board Member Present

Melisa Giovannelli – Substitute

Lee County School Personnel Present

Susan Malay-Executive Director Business Services  
Kelly Letcher-Director Budget

**Matt Acosta-Coordinator Budget (new staff presenting)**

Fredrick Ross-Executive Director Operations  
Dwayne Alton-Chief Technology Operations  
Barbara Cedeno-Assistant Director Maintenance  
James Spurlock, Maintenance Administrator

**Chris Steuber-Maintenance Coordinator (new staff presenting)**

**Sean Brady-Maintenance Coordinator (new staff presenting)**

- I. Welcome/ Introductions/ Roll Call
  - a. Mr. Shimp welcomed the committee members and called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. The roll call was called by Ms. Susan Malay, Executive Director.
  
- II. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes
  - a. Motion made by Mr. James Dozier.
  - b. Motion seconded by Mr. Harlan Parrish.
  - c. Motion passed unanimously.

- III. Public Comment – none
  - a. Mr. Shimp explained the process for public comment.
- IV. Board Communication – Policy
  - a. Discussion was held regarding quarterly reports from the ISSOC Committee to the School Board.
- V. Board Communication – Recommendation
  - a. Mr. Shimp proposed to adjust quarterly ISSOC reporting requirements to the Board. He suggested a change so that 3 times a year Senior Staff would present the Committee’s written report or meeting minutes, and annually the ISSOC Chair and other Committee Members who may wish to attend, present to the School Board a thorough report on the prior year and coming year facts related to sales tax collections and project expenditures.
  - b. A motion was requested by Mr. Shimp to update the Committee’s Board reporting process as described.
    - i. Motion made by Mr. Joe Mazurkiewicz, Jr.
    - ii. Motion seconded by Mr. Dennis Pearlman
    - iii. The motion passed unanimously.
  - c. Mr. Shimp will deliver an annual report to the Board in the fall (possibly October).
  - d. Mr. Shimp presented ideas on how ISSOC Committee members could increase communication with the public regarding sales tax funded projects. Discussion ensued regarding options, including developing a standard PowerPoint presentation that could be used by all Committee members to inform the community on sales tax funded projects.
  - e. Mr. Shimp recommended to form an ISSOC Communications Subcommittee to develop a draft presentation. He recommended Greta Campbell, Chris Simoneau, Fred Atkins and Harlan Parrish to join Chair Shimp to form a Subcommittee. He suggested senior staff participate and requested Communications Director Irma Lancaster, and Executive Director Susan Malay participate in the Subcommittee meetings.
  - f. The purpose of the presentation is to demonstrate that the citizen’s vote to approve the half penny sales tax referendum has resulted in positive outcomes; that the District has been properly funding projects and completing them in accordance with the terms of the referendum; and that the District be more effective in “telling our story” of our success.
  - g. Discussion ensued and there was unanimous agreement the Subcommittee should be established.
- VI. Public Communication Plan – District
  - a. The District’s Impact Report, including information on the sales tax projects, was distributed to Committee members.
  - b. Staff went home sick today and is unable to present.
  - c. It was announced that FGCU is contracted to conduct an Economic Impact Study on the impact the sales tax collections and projects have on the local economy.
  - d. The Committee requested that FGCU to present their findings in early September, for discussion at the September 22, 2022 ISSOC meeting, and staff indicated that timeline could be met.
- VII. Public Communication Plan – ISSOC
- VIII. Review of Sales Tax Funded Projects
  - a. New Construction & Major Renovations – Mr. Fredrick Ross
    - 1. New schools and major renovation projects were reviewed including
      - i. Elementary School J and an addition to Middle School MM addition -scheduled for June, 2023 substantial renovation

- ii. Riverdale High School Renovation – to be done in phases, currently in Phase 1, with all phases scheduled for completion in 2025.
  - iii. Franklin Park – portable campus will be created so education will continue during the school renovation
  - iv. Fort Myers Technical College – renovation, to include “store front” design to provide customer service.
  - v. G. Weaver Higgs – Pre-K addition in progress.
- 2. Committee Comments
  - i. Mrs. Campbell noted that the portable campus would increase transportation requirements and asked if Transportation Department was aware of and planning for the change; and if parents will be able to engage at the portable campus. Mr. Ross confirmed that the Transportation Department is evaluating and planning for changes in the bus schedule. He also stated that Principal Freeman is planning events to engage parents at the portable campus.
  - ii. Mr. Shimp asked if staff could advise the number of pre-k students enrolled with the District. Staff response: we have 2,035 pre-k students at this time.
  - iii. Mr. Shimp asked to highlight the names of the new staff presenting.
- b. Safety & Technology Projects – presented by Mr. Dwayne Alton
  - 1. 17 new projects completed this quarter with 4 more planned to be completed this quarter
  - 2. 30 new projects are planned to begin this quarter
  - 3. The impact of inflation and lead time for ordering products, due to supply chain issues, was discussed. Lead time on products from Europe has improved, and lead times has lengthened for products from China. Lag time for computer components have increased. It is now taking about 12 weeks for Security component orders.
  - 4. Staff is revising work plan models to adapt to changing schedules of product deliveries. We are ordering now for installations next year. Glass for tablet panels is currently a long lead time commodity.
  - 5. For computer refresh projects, we have encumbered funds but have not yet expensed the funds, as products are either not received or not yet installed and operational.
  - 6. Minor project delays have occurred. We anticipate being back on schedule by late August, based on advanced ordering and adjustments that have been made.

#### Committee Comments

- 1. Mr. Mazurkiewicz asked – what is the inflation rate now and in future? Mr. Alton stated we are seeing a 15-18% increase in security components. Fortunately, we placed orders for these in advance of the price increases taking effect in April. We are also seeing a 9% rate increase on technology products.
- 2. Mr. Shimp asked the percentage of expenditures that would not have occurred without the sales tax revenue. Staff responded that the investment in security technologies that were required following the Marjory Stoneman Douglass event, would have likely exhausted funds. With the sales tax we were able to deploy a 1 to 1 computer ratio for our students during COVID; and the interactive technology refresh will be completed in about half the amount of time, reducing from 8 years to 4, with funds available to purchase products rather than wait for our year funds. We have been able to implement projects sooner.
- c. Maintenance – presented by Ms. Cedeno, Mr. Brady and Mr. Steuber
  - 1. Painting and repairs projects were completed to increase safety for staff and students.
  - 2. Paving projects to eliminate trip hazards and uneven pavement, including Dunbar Middle School basketball and tennis courts.

3. Gutter upgrades – 8 projects.
4. Other projects include: window upgrades, roofing, elevator upgrades, bathroom flooring upgrades, electrical switchgear upgrades, and chiller upgrades.
5. Delays are experienced when ordering many items, for example chillers.

IX. Review of Collections and Projections

- a. Packets include a 10-year projection of revenue and expenditures.
- b. Mr. Matt Acosta, Coordinator from the Budget Department, presented projected and actual revenue projections from the inception of collections. Staff was conservative with projections as we are not sure how the economy is performing during these uncertain times.
  1. Collections are distributed to the district a few months after they are collected.
  2. We are on track to exceed projections.

X. Financial Report Review

- a. Expenses and budget forecast occur at different times, i.e. not in the same month, and that sometimes results in numbers being a little out of sync.
- b. Individual projects are highlighted in the annual report.
- c. Committee Discussion
  1. \$87M was projected in collections for the year. We are on track to collect approximately \$100M.
  2. Ms. Perez-Macias asked: With the influx of people moving to the area, will projections be updated? Staff responded that yes, our estimates were conservative when developed in June of 2021, when there was great uncertainty of spending due to the pandemic. Projections will be updated for the next meeting.

XI. Motions and Votes

- a. Mr. Shimp called for a motion to approve the projects as presented, and the financials as presented.
  1. Motion made by Mr. Mazurkeiwicz to approve both the projects as presented and the financials as presented.
  2. Motion seconded by Mr. Parrish.
  3. The motion passed unanimously.

XII. Members Comments-None