

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Dunagan, Hamrick, Figueras, Wangemann, Couvillon  
OFFICIALS ABSENT: Bruner  
STAFF PRESENT: Padgett, Sheppard, Jordan

Representatives from the Hall County Board of Commissioners as well as from the municipalities of Buford, Flowery Branch, Gillsville, Lula and Oakwood were also in attendance.

Hall County Administrator Randy Knighton welcomed everyone to the meeting. He discussed all topics except the municipality projects which were addressed by City Manager Padgett. The topics of discussion were noted as follows:

- What is Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST)
- SPLOST History
- Status of Current SPLOST (SPLOST VI)
- What's Next (SPLOST VII)
- General Discussion
- Next Steps

### **What is SPLOST**

SPLOST was defined as a tax of 1% on items subject to the state sales tax for funding local capital projects. Collections can only be used for specific capital outlays. Projects funded by SPLOST are intended to benefit the county and its municipalities either individually or collectively.

### **SPLOST History**

Six SPLOST projects have been approved since 1985 with the last, SPLOST VI, being approved in 2009. The total funding, the approved projects and the number of months allowed to complete the projects were displayed. It was noted that SPLOST V had a total budget of \$139.8 million and 98% of the funds had expended as of December 31, 2013.

### **SPLOST VI Goals**

SPLOST VI goals were placed into the following categories: public works (roads); water and sewer; government buildings; parks and leisure; courthouse and administration building; fire/EMS; and municipalities. SPLOST VI was originally projected to provide \$240 million. The economy required revisions in 2011 and 2013. The current revised projection was \$152 million with County projects totaling \$123.9 million and municipal projects totaling \$28.1 million. The total expenditure as of December 31, 2013 was \$99.9 million.

Mr. Knighton presented the status of county projects and Gainesville City Manager Kip Padgett presented the status of the municipal projects. It was noted that monthly SPLOST VI updates were posted on the Hall County website. An intergovernmental agreement was signed in December 2008 by each municipality to authorize this SPLOST VI and will end in June 2015.

### **What's Next (SPLOST VII)**

The next steps were presented as follows:

- (1) Plan for SPLOST VII with citizen input sessions.
- (2) Compile a list of projects from both the county and the municipalities.
- (3) Finalize the project list via Intergovernmental Agreement.

It was noted that the county and cities must agree on the project list and hold community input meetings at least 30 days prior to the call for the referendum. The call for the referendum must

occur at least 60 days prior to the referendum date. It was possible to present the referendum question to the citizens in the fall of 2014. Current SPLOST law does not allow the county and municipalities to use public funds to promote SPLOST nor publicly advocate for or against a SPLOST. Governments are limited to providing factual historical information on the benefits that SPLOST projects provided in the past.

If approved, SPLOST VII collections would begin July 1, 2015. A citizen oversight committee should be established to ensure accountability and transparency.

**Next Steps**

Elected officials must provide direction as to whether staff should begin working to develop a plan for SPLOST VII.

Mr. Knighton addressed questions on the following subjects: (1) the timeline for the public meetings, (2) what happens if one government chooses not to participate and (3) the process for developing the list.

Oakwood Mayor Lamar Scroggs suggested that the City Managers work with the County Administrator to develop a plan and report back to the respective bodies.

Commission Chairman Dick Mecum felt there was a need to get the county prepared for the future.

Gainesville Mayor Danny Dunagan agreed with Chairman Mecum.

Mr. Knighton summarized the comments of the elected officials indicating it was his understanding that the County Administrator was directed to work with the City Managers to develop the framework for moving forward with a SPLOST VII and to report back to the group in the next 30 days.

**Adjournment:** 6:39 PM

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C. Danny Dunagan, Jr., Mayor

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Denise O. Jordan, City Clerk