

Pinellas County

*315 Court Street, 5th Floor Assembly Room
Clearwater, Florida 33756*



Minutes - Final

Tuesday, March 28, 2017

9:30 AM

BCC Assembly Room

Board of County Commissioners - Work Session

*Janet C. Long, Chairman
Kenneth T. Welch, Vice-Chairman
Dave Eggers
Pat Gerard
Charlie Justice
John Morroni
Karen Williams Seel*

ROLL CALL - 9:33 A.M.

Members Present: Chairman Janet C. Long; Dave Eggers; Pat Gerard; Charlie Justice; John Morroni; and Karen Williams Seel.

Members Absent: Vice-Chairman Kenneth T. Welch.

Also Present: Jewel White, Chief Assistant County Attorney; Mark S. Woodard, County Administrator; other interested individuals; and Christopher Bartlett, Deputy Clerk, Board Reporter.

Copies of all PowerPoint presentations referred to in the minutes have been made a part of the record.

1. Ferry Pilot Follow-Up - Mayor Rick Kriseman, St. Petersburg

City of St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman conducted a PowerPoint presentation titled *Cross-Bay Ferry: St. Petersburg to Tampa and Back* and discussed the purpose of the pilot program; various statistics concerning ridership, operating costs, and the impact on local business through February 2017; and what has been learned to date about the program.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Seel, Mayor Kriseman indicated that the ferry operating expenses per mile included the capital investment from the four participating governments; and that the completed surveys and data collection will help address any future questions from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) should there be a formal request of FDOT for funding.

In response to queries by Commissioner Justice, Mayor Kriseman related that the ferry boat will return home to Boston in May for the season which runs through October; that the ferry did not run on Saturday on the weekend of the College Football Playoff National Championship in January; and that if the ferry program is renewed for another season, staff will work to ensure there is no down time during major events. He noted that beginning in April, the ferry schedule will shift to accommodate more evening trips specifically aimed at providing service to Tampa Bay Rays games.

Commissioner Morroni stated that the whole Tampa Bay area working together is a positive thing; and that he is disappointed to see the boat leave for the summer months and hopes it will return in the fall. In response, Mayor Kriseman indicated that receiving a strong public response for the ferry over the upcoming summer months will help increase the chance of getting FDOT and/or Federal funding to continue the program.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Eggers, Mayor Kriseman indicated that updated information will be sent to the members which will include ridership information by zip code; and that the vendor of the ferry boat is interested in continuing ferry service in the Tampa Bay market.

Commissioner Gerard noted that nearly half of all riders were designated as commuters; and that only around 3 percent of all riders indicated they were traveling for work or employment, and in response, Mayor Kriseman stated that anyone who rode the ferry during the day was deemed a commuter; and that a rider during the day may not necessarily be going to work, and discussion ensued.

In response to query by Commissioner Morroni, Mayor Kriseman indicated that shuttle service from the St. Petersburg ferry terminal to Tropicana Field will be part of the Tampa Bay Rays program; and that total numbers for March and April are projected to be better than February.

2. One-Stop Service Center Update - Andrew Pupke, Director, Real Estate Management

Mr. Woodard related that as part of a 2013 effort to create synergies in space utilization throughout the county, the Commission desired to create and enhance one-stop service centers in south and north county in order to provide better access to County services for citizens. He indicated that a 2015 request from the Tax Collector resulted in an adjustment to the original plan; that staff now presents the proposed adjustment to the Board for consideration; and that Tax Collector Charles Thomas is in attendance to discuss the importance of the needed change; whereupon, he invited Real Estate Management Director Andrew Pupke to begin the presentation.

Mr. Pupke conducted a PowerPoint presentation titled *South County One-Stop Service Center* and provided background information concerning the proposed new location of the County's Tax Collector and Property Appraiser offices at 2500 34th Street North in St. Petersburg. He related that in 2015 the Tax Collector requested a move from the existing 66th Street office in St. Petersburg to a new location; and that the new location has sufficient size for an on-site driving course and additional public parking, and is more conducive to customer service; whereupon, he invited Mr. Thomas to discuss why the new location is preferred.

Mr. Thomas noted that the current south county location often exceeds occupancy capacity, has inadequate parking, lacks an on-site driving course for testing, and is not authorized to conduct off-site tests as an alternative; that the Fire Marshal has advised several times that the number of people in the office exceeds capacity; and that some employees are parking off-site to provide more room for customers but would prefer to remain on-site; whereupon, he discussed the search for a new and suitable location to address those concerns.

Responding to queries by the members, Mr. Thomas stated that the new location would be located at 2500 34th Street North; that no on-site driving course currently exists in the county; and that a new on-site course will be operational in north county by the end of the year. He indicated that a driving course in Pinellas Park was shut down in 2013; that the south- and mid-county offices experience an ongoing increase in demand for services; and that customer wait times have increased significantly as a result.

In response to query by Chairman Long, Mr. Thomas noted that off-site testing is conducted at several locations but is inefficient; that as many as three tests could be completed on-site for every one test completed off-site; and that considerable cost savings are among the benefits of an on-site course.

Mr. Pupke related that the Clerk of the Circuit Court does not intend to relocate to the proposed location and will instead establish a mid-county office where the Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, and Supervisor of Elections currently have operations; whereupon, referring to aerial photographs, he discussed the subject property and proposed site plan indicating the location of parking, buildings, and the on-site driving course.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Justice, Mr. Pupke noted that the County would own the southern portion of the subject property; that the northern portion is proposed for retail development; and that both portions would utilize a common driveway for access to 34th Street.

Mr. Pupke related that there are several elements to the proposed transaction; that the first element is a land swap exchanging the property at 1800 66th Street for the proposed property at 2500 34th Street North; that the properties are comparatively valued at \$3.1 million each; and that this would save approximately \$3 million and give the County control of the land both now and in the future. He noted that the developer would retain the right to a ground lease for the property on which the new building would be constructed; that the County would have the opportunity to lease the building for a term of ten years with an option to purchase the building after year three; and that the building would be built to meet the needs of the Tax Collector and the Property Appraiser; whereupon, discussion ensued.

Mr. Pupke stated that should the Board wish to proceed, staff would bring actions to the Board no later than early May; that the developer would complete the design of the facility by October; and that construction could begin in November. He noted that the building would be completed by September 2018, at which time the Tax Collector and Property Appraiser would relocate to the new building; and that the Clerk of the Circuit Court would remain in the old building until approximately March 2020; whereupon, he indicated that the developer would lease back the existing service center to allow all three agencies to continue operating at the current location until the new locations are ready for occupancy.

Responding to queries by the members, Mr. Pupke indicated that the future option to purchase is related to having the funds available from the next proposed Penny for Pinellas sales tax; that if the Penny is not renewed, the County could continue to lease the building, renegotiate additional terms of the lease, or look for other potential funds to complete the purchase; and that the developer is responsible for all costs associated with the building's construction.

Discussion ensued, and in response to queries by Commissioner Seel, Mr. Thomas stated that the Skyway office is the only location that allows road tests in south county; that the tests are conducted off-site; and that the office is not a viable location for the long term. He noted that on-site driving courses would nearly replace on-road testing; that they are more efficient and safer to conduct; and that the current six-week waiting period for testing would greatly be reduced and same-day appointments would likely be accepted. He indicated that some real-road testing would still be conducted for certain medical requirements.

Mr. Thomas related that the Tax Collector handles all county driving-related activities on behalf of the State; that State funding does not fully cover the associated costs; and that the Tax Collectors Association continues to seek a greater share of revenues from the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles; whereupon, discussion ensued concerning vacating the Tyrone area, the benefits of on-road testing versus a driving course, and the requirement and availability of driving classes for young drivers.

Following discussion, Mr. Woodard summarized the proposal as it pertains to the budget and indicated that as an independently-elected Constitutional Officer, the Tax Collector has the authority to enter into leases without the need for Board approval; that the Tax Collector in cooperation with Real Estate Management has ensured a solution that best meets the goals of the County's financial stewardship; and that the plan was brought forward to the Board in order to receive feedback and direction prior to its final consideration in the next few months.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Eggers, Chairman Long related that in addition to being good partners with the Tax Collector, the Board has a responsibility to provide space for the Property Appraiser. In response to query by Commissioner Seel, Mr. Pupke indicated that the current proposal is based on the Tax Collector's request to facilitate the efficient and safe operation of driving tests and to provide a more conducive customer service area.

Mr. Woodard stated that as the current Penny comes to the end of its program, opportunities may exist to reallocate a portion of the remaining funds towards the proposed project, allowing certain advantages to be explored.

Mr. Thomas indicated that while his office could move forward independently, he would prefer to work together with the County; that Real Estate Management staff have done a terrific job locating space and developing real estate for the needs of his office which has an obligation to the people of Pinellas County to provide a certain level of service; and that the expected level of service is not being met at this time; whereupon, Chairman Long thanked him for his comments and stated that there is a common desire to provide the best service for county citizens while remaining financially responsible.

3. Penny for Pinellas - Bill Berger, Director, Office of Management & Budget

Mr. Woodard provided an introduction and indicated that the discussion will include five main topics: preliminary feedback concerning public outreach; additional details

regarding countywide investment projections; elements of the Interlocal agreement; educational materials for the public; and the timetable going forward.

Communications Director Barbra Hernandez conducted a PowerPoint presentation and provided an update on the County's public outreach to date. She stated that the Open Houses are interactive sessions where visitors learn about Penny projects through presentations at multiple viewing stations; and that staff speaks one-on-one with the public to discuss past accomplishments and ideas for future projects. She noted that each visitor is provided pennies for them to use at each station to indicate their support for areas they feel have a greater need; whereupon, she discussed how the events are being promoted to the public.

Ms. Hernandez related that an online survey was made available on the County's website and has had over 800 responses; that participants in the Open Houses are provided fact sheets to take home and consider before completing the survey; and that the survey will be closing in mid-April.

Mr. Woodard reviewed the proposed allocation of the projected \$2 billion in Penny revenue, relating that the amount for Jail and Court Facilities has increased from \$50 million to \$60 million; and that the increase is the result of the Board's discussion at its last meeting and a separate follow-up discussion with the Sheriff. He noted that \$165 million would be allocated for Economic Development job creation and housing opportunities in the form of affordable housing, workforce housing, and possible mixed-use development.

Mr. Woodard stated that the allocations for countywide investments would be set to a percentage and not a fixed dollar amount; that using a percentage is a change from previous versions of the Penny and is designed to be more advantageous to the municipalities should actual yield fall short of projections; and that the preliminary response from the cities has been very supportive of the change.

Economic Development Director Mike Meidel related that Statute allows up to 15 percent of the proceeds to be used for economic development; that the allowable portion can be used for non-capital purposes; and that the current proposal is to allocate 8.3 percent for economic development and housing. He noted that the money is intended for infrastructure, land assembly, and improving the land for future job creation; that a program will be created to help identify, assemble, and remediate hundreds of acres of industrial property throughout the county over a ten-year period; and that opportunities to utilize matching funds, partnerships, and other sources of funds would help achieve success and maximize goals; whereupon, he discussed how the countywide program would operate and the ways it would benefit every community within Pinellas County.

Planning Director Renea Vincent indicated that the need for housing is part of the economic development equation; that having housing communities close to jobs is essential whether a person is cost-burdened or not; and that addressing the lack of housing availability in general, along with the specific need for affordable housing, remains critical.

Ms. Vincent discussed several publications and research studies that help address best practices, identify the need for housing, and share the current trends and data concerning urban environments. She noted that according to the University of Florida's Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, projected estimates for 2020 to 2030 show the largest single increase in need for affordable housing is in the area of ownership properties for the elderly; that the County currently uses most of its housing dollars on rental projects; and that combining housing needs with economic development will help re-focus the County on the proper needs of the community.

Discussion ensued; whereupon, in response to query by Commissioner Gerard, Ms. Vincent indicated that Penny funds can be used for the purchase of land for a qualified residential project but not for the construction of the related buildings; that a qualified project must have at least 30 percent of the units set aside at no more than 120 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI); and that restrictions for economic development use may be more broadly interpreted while still requiring a direct economic benefit to the area.

Mr. Woodard added that current investments of Penny funds through the Housing Finance Authority (HFA) are focused on multi-family projects; and that solving housing issues is complex and challenging. He related that in discussions with HFA Executive Director Kathryn Driver, she had indicated a need for \$2.5 million in funding per year, or \$25 million over ten years, to be used in partnership with private, state, and other funds to create multi-family affordable housing opportunities; that some independent organizations continue to call for up to \$250 million of Penny funds to be used for housing; and that given the statutory restrictions and the capacity of the community to absorb the dollars efficiently, \$250 million is not an achievable goal; whereupon, he stated that shifting Penny funds towards economic development would allow the County to address its current needs today.

Following discussion, Mr. Woodard indicated that the real key to housing is a good job and a good income which allows a person to access housing; and that economic vitality in job creation and high wages requires government investment in capital infrastructure. He noted that spending public dollars on a good transportation network, parks and trails, and the preservation of the environment will create and fuel the economic engine; and that providing Community Redevelopment Areas (CRA) the opportunity to compete for economic development dollars is important.

Commissioner Morrone indicated that the demand for Neighborly Care Network's senior services is countywide; and that very few municipalities seem to be contributing in a significant way. He related that some of the cities have had changes in leadership; and that as a result, an event to help educate new city mayors and managers is being considered; and discussion ensued.

Mr. Woodard noted that the proposed Interlocal Agreement is nearly identical to previous years; that it relies on a population-based formula; and that it includes 3

percent off the top for courts and jail facilities and 8.3 percent for economic development projects and housing as previously discussed. He indicated that based upon the Board's feedback, he would ask the cities' leaders to properly execute the agreement so that it could be brought back to the Board for action on July 18.

Responding to queries by the members, Mr. Woodard related that initial feedback from the municipalities has been overwhelmingly positive; that a meeting with the city managers will be held soon; that he will provide a copy of the agreement to the members later today; and that a full discussion regarding the public's feedback on the Penny will be shared with the Board at its workshop on May 4.

Thereupon, Ms. Hernandez demonstrated the County's new informational website regarding Penny for Pinellas and discussed the current materials used for public education and for engaging city partnerships, and provided information on past events and upcoming meetings designed to keep everyone informed with a consistent and accurate message. Mr. Woodard stated that the current focus is on what the Penny is and has done to build a better Pinellas; and that once a list of potential categories and projects is set, the message will begin to focus less on the past and more on a going-forward basis.

ADJOURNMENT - 12:08 P.M.