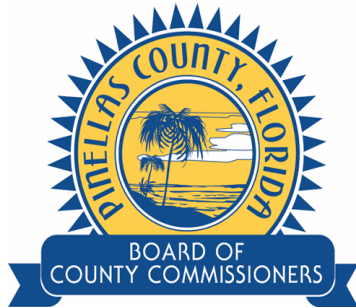


Pinellas County

*315 Court Street
Clearwater, Florida 33756*



Minutes - Final

Thursday, July 18, 2019

9:30 A.M.

Work Session/Agenda Briefing

BCC Assembly Room

Board of County Commissioners - Work Session

Karen Williams Seel, Chair

Pat Gerard, Vice-Chair

Dave Eggers

Charlie Justice

Janet C. Long

Kathleen Peters

Kenneth T. Welch

ROLL CALL – 9:30 A.M.

Present: Chair Karen Williams Seel; Vice-Chair Pat Gerard; Dave Eggers; Charlie Justice; Janet C. Long; Kathleen Peters; and Kenneth T. Welch

Others Present: Barry A. Burton, County Administrator; Jewel White, County Attorney; and Chris Bartlett, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

1. Moment of Silence:

- Arthur O'Hara, Executive Director, R'Club Child Care, Inc.

Chair Seel asked for a moment of silence to honor the memory of Arthur O'Hara, Executive Director of R'Club Child Care, Inc., and Commissioner Welch reflected on Mr. O'Hara's many years of service to the community and his work with the Juvenile Welfare Board and other organizations, noting that his focus was always on helping children and their communities.

2. Transportation/Housing

Mr. Burton conducted a PowerPoint presentation titled *Connecting Our Community: Using Transportation to Link People to Jobs, Housing and Training* and provided background information. He noted that current transportation funding revenues are less than total expenditures; and that without additional funding, a reduction in services is likely in the near future.

Mr. Burton indicated that the County is working with Forward Pinellas, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), and other agencies, which all agree that a significant change is needed to ensure a more positive impact on the community; and that with input from the Commission members, an integrated plan of action will be developed that is reasonable and balanced; whereupon, he discussed the following concerns:

- Reducing road congestion (anticipated capital costs of \$64 million)
- Making transportation corridors safer (anticipated capital costs of \$197.6 million)
- Enhancing transit services (anticipated capital costs of \$130.4 million)
- Establishing better connections to jobs, housing, and development opportunities
- Identifying and prioritizing corridors for enhancement

During the presentation, Mr. Burton responded to queries by the members, highlighting the following, and Assistant County Administrator Rahim Harji and Forward Pinellas Executive Director Whit Blanton provided input:

- Eight municipalities have initially provided input, and staff will reach out to all 24 local governments to help refine the overall plan.
- Connections for the County's senior population will be incorporated into the plan.

- Estimated costs do not include programs within the municipalities.
- The majority of expected costs include the purchase of buses to enhance services, road improvements for safety, and expanding the Advanced Traffic Management System to help alleviate congestion.
- Areas identified as in need of sidewalks and other improvements will be addressed over time through operations and maintenance work.
- Express bus services will enhance the regular local bus service, and will be used to significantly reduce travel times through certain corridors.

Mr. Burton discussed certain funding options, indicating that the County could choose to maintain its level of service without enhancements through the existing Local Option Fuel Tax, which generates approximately \$18 million a year; that another option is to establish a transportation sales surtax via voter referendum, which, if approved, could generate between \$500 million and \$1 billion over ten years; and that a third option would be to increase Ad Valorem Taxes by increasing the millage rate, providing an estimated General Fund increase of \$79.4 million per mill, and approximately \$67.8 million per mill in PSTA revenue.

In response to queries by Commissioners Gerard and Long, Mr. Burton indicated that there are nine primary corridors overall; that based on demand, enhanced levels of service could be added to other routes; and that there will be room in the plan to address the projected growth near Bryan Dairy Road and other corridors, if needed; whereupon, Commissioner Long reported on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Highways and Transit Subcommittee hearing regarding oversight of the Federal Transit Administration's implementation of the Capital Investment Grant Program.

Responding to query by Chair Seel, Mr. Harji stated that options utilizing toll roads will be discussed as part of the long-range Advantage Pinellas Plan, and Chair Seel commented on the need to rename Bryan Dairy Road and other roads with multiple names, and the completion of a north/south corridor.

Referring to the identified funding options and in response to queries by Commissioner Welch, Mr. Burton indicated that the Florida Department of Revenue must be contacted by October 1 in order to facilitate a fuel tax increase the following year; that a ballot measure for a transportation sales surtax should be submitted to the State for review and approval by February, in order to solicit a decision in 2020; and that an increase in millage could be considered as part of the annual budget process, and discussion ensued.

Responding to additional queries by Commissioner Welch and with input from Mr. Burton, PSTA Chief Executive Officer Brad Miller provided information on first-mile/last-mile programs, stating that they are used in the integrated corridors along with existing baseline services, and Commissioner Eggers provided input.

Commissioner Justice related that constituents often ask about utilizing CSX railroad tracks for transportation; and that a freight line exists between St. Petersburg and Clearwater. Mr.

Blanton noted that CSX Transportation is willing to sell the tracks, but at a high cost; that if the tracks are sold, CSX would want the buyer to pay for track upgrades while continuing to allow CSX to operate freight trains on the route; and that using the track is an option in the long-range plan but remains unfunded at this time; whereupon, Commissioner Long reported that the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) has had in-depth discussions with CSX; and that it is possible to see new and innovative proposals incorporating the use of railroad tracks in the future.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Welch regarding fast passenger train service, Mr. Blanton related that Brightline is currently expanding its service to Orlando; that the next step would be to establish service to Tampa; and that Brightline is actively searching for a suitable location for a train station. He noted that exploring ways to connect with the passenger train service is in the long-range plan, and discussed potential connections to Pinellas County through Tampa International Airport and the State Route 60 and Gandy Boulevard corridors, among other options, and provided information regarding how the State may fund transit systems as opposed to highways.

Discussion ensued, and Mr. Burton responded to queries by the members, indicating the following:

- All proposed infrastructure projects in the program are separate from projects currently allocated for in the Penny for Pinellas surtax.
- Approval of a sales tax for transportation would require a balanced approach to ensure enhancements are completed in all parts of the county.
- The source of funding for the program will significantly shape the size and magnitude of the final plan.

Attorney White indicated that a transportation surtax does not require or prohibit the sharing of tax revenue with the municipalities or transit authorities, and responded to queries by the members, highlighting the following and discussing the Hillsborough County referendum that established a similar surtax via Charter amendment.

- The Florida statute for a regional transportation system surtax has different requirements than the statute for the Penny surtax.
- An interlocal agreement, negotiated in advance of putting a transportation surtax on the ballot, is needed if funds are to be shared with other partners.
- The transportation surtax can be up to one percent and allows for smaller fractions, such as the quarter-percent tax rate suggested in the presentation.
- The surtax may be used for certain maintenance and operating costs.

In response to query by Chair Seel, Mr. Burton noted that discussions will begin immediately with municipal partners and other agencies to help refine the plan; that meetings with other councils or boards will be in the Sunshine to ensure public involvement; and that meetings with County departments and local businesses will also be conducted, and Mr. Blanton provided input.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Long, Mr. Burton indicated that all funding in the plan would be provided by the County with no potential match or grant funding from the State or Federal governments; that the plan will be refined and presented to the Commission for adoption in October; and that several funding models exist and are used to set a proper rate for each source, and discussion ensued regarding the use of express lanes in Pinellas County and possibly implementing a feasibility study.

Responding to comments by Chair Seel, Commissioner Long stated that she is very hesitant to ask the Florida Legislature to modify the Special Act that governs the PSTA; and that the Legislature wants its funding of regional projects to flow through TBARTA, and the members provided input.

Upon the Chair's call for citizens wishing to be heard, the following individuals appeared and stated their concerns:

- Darryl Henderson, Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Carol Stricklin, City of Largo Community Development Director

Chair Seel indicated that the Commission would take a short recess before starting the Agenda Briefing.

Meeting recessed: 11:09 A.M.

Meeting reconvened: 11:24 A.M.

3. Agenda Briefing

Mr. Burton provided a review of the agenda items to be addressed at the July 23, 2019, Commission meeting. Discussion ensued regarding the following items, and staff responded to queries by the members and provided input.

Item No. 30	Level of budgetary control within the County's financial system
Item No. 31	Travel expenses guidelines update
Item No. 46	Revisions to CareerSource Pinellas Bylaws
Item No. 48	Issuance of HFA Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds
Item No. 53	MSTU Funding Request - Largo for Youth, Inc.

During the briefing, Attorney White referred to Agenda Items Nos. 41 through 43, noting that each item is a request to initiate or ratify litigation; and that Item No. 44 refers to a confidential memorandum distributed to the members. She indicated that any inquiries regarding ongoing litigation should be directed to the County Attorney's Office; whereupon, she provided information on certain active litigation involving the County and responded to queries by the members.

Referring to the public hearings portion of the agenda, Mr. Burton responded to queries by the members pertaining to the following items, and staff provided input.

- Item No. 55 Pinellas County Code updates to the maximum towing rate schedule
- Item No. 57 Local Planning Agency Case No. DMP-09-06-19
- Item No. 59 Local Planning Agency Case No. Z-08-06-19
- Item No. 60 Land Development Code amendments to multimodal impact fees
- Item No. 62 Deletion of policies that limit affordable housing densities in certain uses

Chair Seel noted that Agenda Items Nos. 63 through 66 are petition to vacate property hearings and will likely conclude in a short amount of time; and that she would prefer to address the items before the other public hearings, and Commissioner Eggers concurred.

ADJOURNMENT – 12:22 P.M.