



Coweta County Board of Commissioners

Called Meeting/Regular Session

22 E Broad Street
Newnan, GA 30263
www.coweta.ga.us

Shannon Zerangue
770.254.2601

Thursday, May 11, 2023

6:00 PM

Commission Chambers

~ Minutes ~

COWETA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
John Reidelbach	District 4 - Chairman	Present	
Paul Poole	District 1 - Vice Chairman	Present	
Bill McKenzie	District 2	Present	
Bob Blackburn	District 3	Absent	
Al Smith	District 5	Present	
Michael Fouts	County Administrator	Present	
Kelly Mickle	Assistant Administrator	Present	
Eddie Whitlock	Associate Administrator	Absent	
Nathan Lee	County Attorney	Absent	
Shannon Zerangue	County Clerk	Present	

The Honorable Board of Commissioners of Coweta County, Georgia met in Called Meeting/Regular Session on Thursday, May 11, 2023.

The following were also in attendance:

- Mr. Henry Argo, Fire Chief, City of Palmetto
- Ms. Tara Miller, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Palmetto
- Mr. Harold Simmons, City Manager, City of Senoia
- Ms. Julie Stroud, Deputy Town Administrator, Town of Sharpsburg
- Mr. Floyd Jones, Town Administrator, Town of Sharpsburg
- Mr. Blue Cole, Mayor, Town of Sharpsburg
- Mr. Richard Proctor, Mayor, City of Grantville
- Mr. Rhodes Shell, Councilmember, City of Newnan
- Mr. Dustin Koritko, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Newnan
- Mr. Ray DuBose, Councilmember, City of Newnan
- Mr. George Alexander, Councilmember, City of Newnan
- Mr. Cleatus Phillips, City Manager, City of Newnan
- Mr. Paul Guillaume, Councilmember, City of Newnan

- Ms. Lisa Washington, Councilmember, Town of Moreland

Meeting Called to Order

Chairman Reidelbach called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The following Cities/Towns by virtue of a quorum present, voted to call their respective meetings to order:

- City of Newnan

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Reidelbach led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Invocation was given by Commissioner McKenzie.

REGULAR SESSION**1. 13846 SPLOST Presentation**

Administrator Fouts provided a brief presentation regarding Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). He explained that Coweta County and the municipalities have been fortunate to have SPLOST collections/revenues since 1986, and the Board of Commissioners has asked staff to begin preparing a referendum for the November 2023 election for continuation of SPLOST. As part of the process, a joint meeting with the municipalities is conducted to discuss a potential SPLOST project list, timelines, etc. Currently, the sales tax in Coweta County is 7% which is comprised of 4% Georgia sales tax, 1% Local Option Sales Tax (LOST), 1% Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (E-SPLOST), and 1% County Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). He briefly noted the number of counties in Georgia with 6%, 7%, and 8% sales tax rates based upon information from the Georgia Department of Revenue (GDOR). He also noted the sales tax rates in counties surrounding Coweta including Carroll (7%), Fayette (7%), Fulton (8%), Heard (7%), Meriwether (8%), and Troup (7%). He explained that SPLOST was enacted by the Georgia legislature in 1985, it is a 1% sales tax approved by the voters for a set period that is used to fund specific capital projects, it can be levied for a period of five (5) to six (6) years depending on an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the municipalities, and in order to receive any proceeds a city or town must be designated a "qualified municipality" as defined in State law.

Administrator Fouts explained that SPLOST proceeds can only be utilized to fund capital outlay projects as defined in State Law. Those projects are defined as long-lived and permanent in nature, including but not limited to roads, streets, bridges, police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, garbage trucks, and other major equipment. He further explained that the primary intent of SPLOST is to fund specific projects, not to balance the budget or pay for other governmental expenses. There are hundreds of projects throughout the county and the municipalities that have been made possible through SPLOST and many of them have been denoted with the placement of signage to inform the public.

Administrator Fouts highlighted the 2013 and 2019 SPLOST allocations for each qualified municipality and the proposed allocations for the 2025 SPLOST based upon the projected collection of \$250,000,000. He also explained that the schedule of allocations will have to be amended when/if the City of Chattahoochee Hills becomes a qualified municipality during the six (6) year collection period.

Administrator Fouts explained that the 2019 Level 2 countywide projects included 911 radio consoles, public safety radio system upgrade, ambulance (EMS) apparatus, and ambulance (EMS) equipment. The proposed 2025 Level 2 projects include 911

computer aided dispatch (CAD) upgrades, 911 phone system upgrades, ambulance (EMS) apparatus, ambulance (EMS) equipment, coroner vehicles/equipment, and Coweta Cares (mobile integrated health care program) vehicles/equipment. He further explained that the proposal for the Level 2 projects is to annualize the projected \$11,014,625 cost for these projects over the six (6) year collection period.

In response to a question from Mr. Phillips (Newnan), Mr. Fouts explained that the proposal for the Level 2 projects is to take the estimated cost off the top on a month-to-month basis instead of taking the full amount off the top.

Administrator Fouts explained that the 2025 SPLOST referendum will be a continuation of the current 7% sales tax, not a new or additional tax. He also briefly highlighted the proposed language for the November ballot. One item that needs to be considered is potential bonding of projects because that will need to be added to the language on the ballot.

Administrator Fouts reviewed the 2025 SPLOST timeline and explained that the next steps will be finalization of the list of projects by the municipalities and the County by early June, execution of a Resolution and Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) associated with those projects, and execution of a Resolution by the County calling for the referendum. In closing, he explained that a public input survey is available online until May 19th regarding ranking SPLOST project categories, community education sessions will be conducted in August/September, advanced voting will begin in October, the referendum will be held on November 7th, and if approved by the voters, collections will begin in January 2025.

In response to a question from Mr. Phillips (Newnan), Mr. Fouts explained that at their meeting on July 11, 2023, the Board of Commissioners will vote to request that the Board of Elections and Registration issue a referendum, and the Board of Elections and Registration plans to issue the Call for the Election at their meeting scheduled on July 12, 2023.

Administrator Fouts explained that County Communications Manager Cathy Wickey and City of Newnan Communications Manager Aimee Hadden are working together to prepare a presentation for the community education sessions in August/September. If any of the other municipalities are interested in participating or providing any input, he will be happy to provide contact information for Ms. Wickey and Ms. Hadden.

In response to a question from Chairman Reidelbach regarding the total SPLOST revenue collected from non-residents, Mr. Fouts explained that the metric from studies on sales tax throughout the years has indicated 60% (residents)/40% non-residents, but his opinion is that the data has now changed.

Mr. Phillips (Newnan) expressed his agreement that a significant percentage is collected from non-residents.

Administrator Fouts explained that in 2019, enactment of the Online Marketplace Facilitator Act by the legislature requiring those selling goods online to pay sales tax as well as the Covid-19 pandemic drastically boosted sales tax revenue.

In response to a request from Mr. Phillips (Newnan) regarding clarification of the targeted dates, Mr. Fouts explained that July 11, 2023 is the deadline for adoption of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA), and it would be ideal if the project list categories were finalized by the first part of June so those can be incorporated into the IGA. He further explained that a draft of the IGA that does not contain the project list can be circulated to the municipalities for review of the verbiage prior to adoption.

In response to a request from Mr. Phillips (Newnan), Mr. Fouts explained that County

staff will be happy to share the major categories for projects with the municipalities.

Assistant Administrator Mickle explained that County staff can circulate the 2019 major list of categories along with the draft of the 2025 IGA.

Administrator Fouts asked for any questions, concerns or comments. There were none.

RESULT: ACCOMPLISHED

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment of the Municipalities

The following Cities/Towns by virtue of a quorum present, voted to adjourn their meeting:

- City of Newnan

Motion To: **Adjourn**

The Board voted to adjourn the meeting.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: John Reidelbach, District 4 - Chairman
SECONDER: Paul Poole, District 1 - Vice Chairman
AYES: John Reidelbach, Paul Poole, Bill McKenzie, Al Smith
ABSENT: Bob Blackburn