

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Do your comments refer to an item on today's agenda? NO YES

Item #: _____ CONSENT: NO YES

The Board of County Commissioners welcomes your comments. Your presentation will be limited to two (2) minutes. If appropriate, the matter(s) you present will be placed on a future commission agenda.

It is requested that you complete this form and return it to the receptionist prior to the beginning of the Citizens' Comments portion of the agenda.

Name: _____

RT Conard

Address: _____

615 Purvis Downs Way Palmdale Ho

Phone: (Home) _____

941-209-2083

(Work) _____

Brief description of problem or concern:

1) Sales Tax referendum

Sales tax

2) Sheriff's Budget

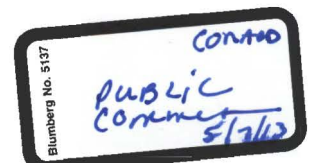
Sheriff Budget

HALF CENT SALES TAX REFERENDUM

This very controversial initiative by the County has the below listed problems:

1. Perceived lack of accountability and transparency
2. Incomplete planning for success and endurance
3. Represents double taxation
4. Poor timing
5. Inadequate communication and lack of consensus within the community
6. Misleading information concerning real estate tax reductions
7. Inadequate diagnosis of the accurate health care spending challenge our County faces

For these reasons, I am very concerned that the referendum will fail, only to result in the expenditure of between \$300k-\$500k of our hard earned taxpayer dollars. Therefore I request there be a relaxation of the policy of discussion so that it may be dealt once again by the Commission and that the Commission immediately rescind this referendum until the above issues have been adequately resolved.



The half-cent sales tax referendum
Are we being innocently misled or deceptively lied to?

As the referendum is getting heated up and battle lines drawn, it is very interesting to watch the Manatee County web site change the story line. For example:

March 8, 2013 “if approved by voters, new revenues (an estimated \$23 million a year) will **only** be available for health care costs. The new tax would also trigger a new set of options for significant property tax relief for all Manatee property owners. **The new sales tax would allow County Commissioners to consider lowering property taxes by \$10 million”**

April 9, 2013 “Part 1 involves a proposed half-cent sales tax to fund community health care costs. Manatee County now pays for community health care using both property taxes and a health care fund that’s set to run out in 2015. The new half-cent sales tax will generate enough to cover the expiring fund and much of the property tax-funded portion. **In turn, property taxes could be reduced by about \$10million.”**

May 2, 2013 “If approved by voters, new revenues (an estimated \$23million a year) will be available **only** for health care costs. The new sales tax alone would allow County Commissioners to consider lowering property taxes.”

We’re being lead to believe that real estate taxes will decrease 13% in the unincorporated areas of the County and 26% in the incorporated areas. Yet, according to the Florida Department of Revenue, in fiscal years 2011-12, we collected \$160,142,629 in real estate taxes. **The \$10million referred to on the website only equates to a 6.2% reduction.**

Additionally, in a document distributed by Mary Ruiz, the president/CEO of Manatee Glens and the chair of the funding committee for the health care alliance: “In 2015, the Health Care Trust fund runs out, leaving us with a \$9 million budget shortfall. Because visitors to the county pay approximately 1/3 of the sales tax we collect, \$7million of the \$9million we need to close the shortfall will come from visitors. **The \$14million balance will reduce property taxes.”**

Are we being sold a shell game or is this a scam? This is only one of the very hard questions that must be answered and clarified. We’re not getting enough accountability or transparency. **The numbers just don’t add up.**

Additionally, in a document distributed by Mary Ruiz, the president/CEO of Manatee Glens and the chair of the funding committee for the health care alliance: "In 2015, the Health Care Trust fund runs out, leaving us with a \$9 million budget shortfall. Because visitors to the county pay approximately 1/3 of the sales tax we collect, \$7million of the \$9million we need to close the shortfall will come from visitors. **The \$14million balance will reduce property taxes.**"

From the Bradenton Herald:

resort tax collections in Manatee County for fiscal year 2010-11 set a record. The tax office reports that \$7.104 million was collected for 2010-11, representing a seven percent increase from the previous record of \$6.64 million set a year earlier.

And that is from 5% tax -- not 0.5%!

From the Bradenton Herald:

Manatee County recorded a tourism economic impact of \$161,898,259 last year, an economist said Monday.

The number represents a considerable increase over the previous year, said Walter J. Klages, president/chief executive officer for Research Data Services Inc., of Tampa.

Apply 1/2 cent sales tax on this tourism economic impact would yield \$800,000 in sales tax.

The \$7 million from tourism stated by Ruiz is just made up.

809,491 -
not \$7M

A HEALTHY MANATEE



For More Information

VOTING INFORMATION

In order for Manatee County residents to vote in this election, you must be registered to vote by Monday, May 20. Manatee Glens and the League of Women Voters are hosting two voter registration events.

Thurs., May 9, 10 am - Noon

at Manatee Glens Hospital & Addiction Center lobby (2020 26th Avenue East, 34208)

Thurs., May 16, 1-3 pm

at Manatee Glens West lobby (379 6th Ave. West, 34205)

Absentee Ballot

Your Polling Place

Join Our Mailing List!

Have you heard about Property Tax Relief & A Healthy Manatee?

Registered voters in Manatee go to the polls on June 18 to vote on property tax relief and a half-penny sales tax increase. The funds help pay medical costs for the uninsured and underinsured.

Since this is important to our community, I wanted to share some information with you.

Mary Ruiz

Manatee Glens President/CEO

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



In 2015, the Health Care Trust Fund runs out, leaving us with \$9 million budget shortfall.

Because visitors to the county pay approximately 1/3 of the sales tax we collect, \$7 million of the \$9 million we need to close the shortfall will come from visitors.

The \$14 million balance will reduce property taxes.

The half-penny spreads the tax burden to people who do not pay property tax, including those who receive services.

Question: Will mental health and addiction services be included?

Answer: Yes. Mental health and substance abuse treatment are covered by the Health Care Trust Fund. Behavioral health is just as important to our community as physical health.