

JANUARY 21, 1994

The Board of County Commissioners, Manatee County, Florida, met in SPECIAL SESSION at the Convention and Civic Center, 1 Haben Boulevard, Palmetto, Florida, Friday, January 21, 1994, at 9:10 a.m.

Present were Commissioners:

Stan Stephens, Chairman
 Joe McClash, First Vice-Chairman
 Kent G. Chetlain, Second Vice-Chairman
 John R. Gause, Third Vice-Chairman
 Patricia M. Glass
 Lari Ann Harris
 Maxine M. Hooper

Also present were:

William J. Estabrook, County Administrator
 H. Hamilton Rice, Jr., County Attorney
 Judy Lamee, Director of Communications and Development,
 representing R. B. Shore, Clerk of Circuit Court

Representatives of the various news media were present.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Stephens.

All witnesses/staff giving testimony were duly sworn.

ORDINANCE 94-01: ONE-CENT SALES SURTAX FOR SCHOOLS

Public hearing (Notice in The Bradenton Herald 1/3/94) was opened to consider

ORDINANCE 94-01 AN ORDINANCE OF MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO LEVY, IMPOSE AND SET A SALES SURTAX, AS AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 212.055(2), FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY OF SUCH SALES SURTAX; PROVIDING A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED BY THE SALES SURTAX; PROVIDING FOR THE COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE SALES SURTAX; PROVIDING FOR A SPECIAL ELECTION TO BE HELD; PROVIDING FOR A NOTICE OF SUCH SPECIAL ELECTION PURSUANT TO SECTION 100.342, FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE SALES SURTAX BE USED ONLY FOR PURPOSES PERMITTED BY CHAPTER 212, FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING LEVY OF THE SALES SURTAX SHALL TAKE EFFECT IF APPROVED BY A MAJORITY OF THE ELECTORS OF THE COUNTY VOTING IN THE REFERENDUM ON THE SALES SURTAX.

H. Hamilton Rice, Jr., County Attorney, stated the Ordinance would provide for a one-cent discretionary sales surtax beginning June 1, 1994, through June 30, 1999, or earlier if revenues distributed to the School Board reach \$99.5 million.

He stated the Ordinance provides for 100 percent of the sales surtax to be distributed to the School Board by the County and the municipalities (Cities of Bradenton, Bradenton Beach, Longboat Key, and Palmetto have indicated they would retain their statutory distribution).

Speaking in favor of the surtax were: Nancy Spooner, Joan Pettigrew, Diane Thompson, Cindy Levelle, Jim Hanson, Patricia Parcels, and Chuck Loiselle.

Items discussed: School impact fees; overcrowding; school building conditions; need for updating technology; tax would be paid by all people; need for quality education system; school buses overcrowded; lowering truancy/class sizes, etc.

Max Sypolt questioned whether the tax would be voted by referendum.

George Latimer, School Finance Officer, thanked the Board for committing 100 percent of the surtax to schools; however, requested direction since municipalities plan to retain their statutory distribution.

Gene Witt, Superintendent of Schools, stated the need for the surtax.

Discussion: Expectation that a shared facilities report would be presented today; meetings with municipalities not well attended; need for information prior to second public hearing; monitoring available recreational facilities/preparing interlocal agreement; disclosure to public indicating benefits derived from surtax; using general obligation bonds for school revenues, etc.

Danny Hopkins, Parks and Recreation Director, reported there have been meetings with the School Board regarding maximum utilization of parks and facilities and that an interlocal agreement is being prepared.

Walter Miller, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, outlined existing shared facilities and the commitment of the School Board for additional joint utilization.

Mr. Rice advised that an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Bradenton (majority population) will be necessary for distribution of any part of the tax to schools. He stated in absence of an agreement the tax would be distributed by the formula contained in Florida Statute 218.62.

Mr. Witt recommended the matter be continued until 5:00 p.m. so the school representatives could bring back a specific recommendation.

RECESS/RECONVENE

The Chairman recessed the public hearing at 10:37 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 5:10 p.m. with all members present.

Mr. Witt stated if the Board provides the School Board with 100 percent of the County tax revenue for five years that the School Board would explore other sources, if necessary, for the balance of the \$99.5 million, i.e., refinancing, letter of credit.

Don Hunter, Manatee County Federation, supported the surtax for schools exclusively.

Bob Drohlich, Town of Longboat Key Commissioner, advised that Longboat Key will keep its full share of the surtax statutory distribution for fire and police protection facilities for up to ten years.

Also speaking in favor of the surtax were: Leon Trumbull, Ralph Heath, Mary Eurice, Neal Williams, and Patricia Parcels.

Items addressed: Technology equipment for new schools; importance of education; supporting School Board, schools and children; "Save Our Schools" organization getting politically involved in children's issues.

The Chairman recapped the proposed plan for the one-cent sales surtax for five years with the County distributing 100 percent of its share to the School Board and the municipalities retaining their shares. He requested the County Attorney prepare an Interlocal Agreement for February 1, 1994.

Discussion: Continue asking municipalities for their shares; referendum language; cities sharing election cost; work session with Parks and Recreation regarding shared facilities.

Robert Sweat, Supervisor of Elections, responded to questions regarding the special election date and cost.

The Chairman continued the public hearing until February 1, 1994, at 2:00 p.m. (Note: No motion was made.)

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Attest: 
Clerk

APPROVED: 
Chairman 3/15/94

Adj: 5:50 p.m.
/jr