



2017 SPLOST Committee Meeting Minutes May 11, 2017 6:00 PM Floyd County Historic Courthouse

PRESENT:

Committee Members:

Chair David Newby
J.C. Boehm
Mike Burnes
Jeff Chandler
Jim Howell, Alternate
Alvin Jackson, Sr.
Doc Kibler
Julie Smith
Jimmy Smith, Alternate
Tannika Wester
Ghee Wilson

Others:

Gary Burkhalter, Assistant County Manager
Jamie Doss, City of Rome Mayor
Patrick Eidson, Assistant City Manager
Erin Elrod, County Clerk
Susie Gass, County Finance Director
Scotty Hancock, County Vice Chair
Sue Lee, City Commissioner
Jamie McCord, County Manager
Craig McDaniel, City Commissioner
Sammy Rich, City Manager
Dennis Shoaf, Mayor of Cave Spring
Sundai Stevenson, City Commissioner
Rhonda Wallace, County Chair
Diane Wagner, Rome News-Tribune

**CALL TO
ORDER:**

Chairman Newby called the meeting to order.

I. Introductions of Members & Staff

Chairman David Newby opened the meeting and described the responsibilities of the SPLOST committee to those serving. He recognized the governmental staff and elected officials in attendance. Chairman Newby asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves and to answer the following questions: Your Name; Where do you work; How long have you lived in Rome; Have you ever served on SPLOST Committee before; and What made you want to serve on the SPLOST Committee. Everyone went around the table introducing themselves and answering those questions.

Chairman Newby thanked everyone for their participation and pointed out how eclectic the group is. There are many different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds represented in the group; however, we all come together because we care about the community. This committee represents the diverseness of our community.

II. Meeting Days & Times

Chairman Newby stated meetings would be held on Thursdays at 5:30pm with a meal provided at 5:00pm. The next meeting will be a joint SPLOST Committee meeting with the 2013 SPLOST committee to see the updates from the past SPLOST. This meeting will be held on Thursday May 25th.

III. Discuss Notebooks (SPLOST Law & Timeline for SPLOST Submission to Justice Department & Elections Board)

Chairman Newby gave time to Assistant County Manager Gary Burkhalter to discuss the notebooks that had been presented to everyone. Mr. Burkhalter explained the notebooks are for the SPLOST Committee to take home. The notebooks have general SPLOST information and will be used for the information they receive while vetting projects. There are specific laws that govern SPLOST. SPLOST cannot be used for operating of any kind. The committee needs to keep in mind while vetting projects that operating must be planned for independently by the County or Cities.

Timeline—November 7, 2017 will be the election date for this SPLOST. Working backwards from the State and Federal guidelines, prior to the election, the County must call a meeting with Rome and Cave Spring about the projects that will be represented on the ballot. The County must give 10 days' notice prior to the meeting. The law states that you must come up with projections, but with an intergovernmental agreement, it allows you to keep any overage that is collected during the SPLOST time period. County Manager Jamie McCord mentioned at this time that it also works in reverse. If the SPLOST under collects, the County and Cities represented must still complete the projects that were budgeted for SPLOST. Mr. Burkhalter stated that once the County has adopted a Resolution calling for SPLOST to be put on the ballot this information is forwarded on to the Elections Board and the U.S. Department of Justice.

SPLOST Committee member Doc Kibler asked if the timeline was available in the notebook. Mr. Burkhalter stated he would be working with the County Attorney during the time before the next meeting to put it together for their notebooks. Chairman Newby reported that the deadline for the last SPLOST Committee to present to the Commissions their selections was August 1.

IV. Estimate of Funds Available

County Finance Director Susie Gass reported on projections for a 2017 SPLOST. She explained that her estimates are based on the lowest reported collection for each month over a 10 year period with a 5% discount. Her current projections show that a 3 year SPLOST would collect \$37,027,707.00 and a 5 year SPLOST would collect \$61,712,845.00. Chairman Newby informed the group that the current 2013 SPLOST was a five year collection and the last SPLOST in 2009 was approximately a 3 year collection. Mrs. Gass reported that the 2013 SPLOST was currently \$937,000.00 above the projections. County Manager Jamie McCord interjected that we still need to be conservative with our projections and budgeting to be prepared for an adjustment similar to the one in 2015.

SPLOST Committee member Ghee Wilson asked if any SPLOST besides the 2006 has fallen short of its projected collections and how short were they with the 2006 SPLOST. Mr. McCord responded that 2006 was the only SPLOST that did not meet their projections and it was roughly \$2,000,000.00 short. Assistant County Manager Gary Burkhalter reminded the committee that even under those circumstances that the laws states all projects that were budgeted under SPLOST must be completed.

SPLOST Committee member Mike Burnes asked what happens with any overage that is collected. Mr. McCord responded that overage collected can be used to enhance projects on the current SPLOST. It can also be used to retire debt or to reduce taxes.

SPLOST Committee member Doc Kibler asked if any kind of debt could be retired with SPLOST overage. Mr. Burkhalter responded no, there were restrictions.

V. History of SPLOST

County Manager Jamie McCord presented to the committee a brief history of former SPLOST projects. This list included the widening of Shorter Avenue from two to four lanes; the Armuchee Connector which was projected to have 5,000 cars a day but is seeing 9,000; the Rome Tennis Center at Berry College; the new recycling center; and energy efficiency improvements around the county among others. The energy efficiency improvements at the Library caused a \$24,000.00 reduction in utility costs in one year. The Everett Springs water project which was a citizen driven project is on schedule to begin in 2017 which is two years ahead of schedule with the help of a GEFA loan. He reminded the committee that 40% of SPLOST funding comes from out of county travelers.

VI. Process & Deadline for SPLOST Application Submittals

Chairman Newby informed the committee on the application process. He stated that project applications are submitted by the County, Cities, and citizens. The County and Cities' staff assists local citizens on their projects. County Manager Jamie McCord stated anyone can submit a project application. He gave the example of a citizen project at the intersection of Barron Road and Calhoun Highway. This project only cost \$130,000.00 but it made an immediate improvement to the citizens that travel that road daily. Chairman Newby explained that presenters are given 15 minutes to present their projects and the committee has 10 minutes to ask questions. They will average 6-8 project presentations at each meeting. June 8th will be the deadline for project submissions. The project presentations will be held on June 15th.

SPLOST Committee member Julie Smith asked about the absentee policy. Chairman Newby asked that committee members contact him if they will be unable to attend a meeting. He understands that everyone has lives outside of this committee; however, attendance is important. If a member is going to miss multiple meetings in a row, there might need to be a change. He asked that all members keep in mind these committee responsibilities: attend, listen, keep an open mind, ask questions, analyze the data, discuss with your committee members, ask more questions, decide, and come to a consensus.

SPLOST Committee member Jeff Chandler asked if the meetings could be attended virtually for any members who were unable to attend. City Manager Sammy Rich said that staff would look into it.

VII. ADJOURN

With no other business to discuss, Chairman Newby adjourned the meeting.