

**STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF HENRY**

The Henry County Board of Commissioners held a Called Joint Meeting regarding SPLOST VI at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, June 27, 2024, in the Henry County Administration Building, Community Room, at 140 Henry Parkway, McDonough, GA. Notice of this meeting was posted in the entrance foyer of the County Administration Building. The *Henry Daily Herald* was notified of this meeting. Those present were:

Henry County:

Carlotta Harrell, Chair

Johnny Wilson, District I Commissioner/Vice Chair

Neat Robinson, District II Commissioner

Michael Price, District IV Commissioner

(not present: Dee Anglyn, District III Commissioner; and Kevin Lewis, District V Commissioner)

Municipalities:

Anthony Ford, Mayor of Stockbridge

Sandra Vincent, Mayor of McDonough

Vincent Williams, Mayor Pro Tem of Locust Grove

(not present: City of Hampton)

Also attending: Cheri Hobson-Matthews, County Manager; Serenna Nowell, County Attorney; Stephanie Braun, County Clerk; and Jasmin Head, Deputy County Clerk.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Call to Order and Acceptance of the Agenda

Carlotta Harrell, Chair, called the meeting to order and announced that the breakout sessions and approval of the IGA would be removed from tonight's agenda. She mentioned that each of the four cities would have a representative come forward to present their project list(s).

Chair Harrell acknowledged the Mayors of Stockbridge, McDonough, and the Mayor Pro Tem of Locust Grove. There was no representation from the City of Hampton. The Mayors of the respective cities then called their meetings to order.

Presentation(s) regarding SPLOST VI Projects

County Manager, Cheri Hobson-Matthews, presented the SPLOST VI options. She explained that SPLOST VI could be either a five-year or six-year program. In the five-year scenario, if there's no Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA), projected collections would total \$380,000,000. The County's allocation would be 68%, totaling \$258,400,000, and the Cities' allocation would be 32%, totaling \$121,600,000. If an IGA is reached for a six-year program, projected collections would be \$470,000,000. The County's share would be 62%, amounting to \$319,600,000, and the Cities' share would be 38%, totaling \$150,400,000.

Ms. Matthews proceeded to outline the SPLOST VI joint projects within each City. She provided a PowerPoint with cost estimates for each project and what the shared amounts would be for the County and City. She also provided the different amounts for the 5-year program versus the 6-year program:

- **Stockbridge:** Major transportation projects include Patrick Henry Parkway from Jodeco Road to Eagles Landing Parkway (design only); and Resurfacing on East Atlanta Road from North Henry Boulevard to Fairview Road.
- **McDonough:** Major transportation projects encompass McDonough Parkway widening from storage units to Jonesboro Road (design only); and Jonesboro Road widening from I-75 to McDonough Parkway (design only). Intersection and signalization projects include McDonough Parkway at Bridges Road; Henry Parkway at Henry Parkway Connector; Industrial Blvd at Henry Parkway; and Racetrack Road at Travis Drive. Sidewalks/trails include Camp Creek Greenway Path from Henry Parkway to McDonough Square (design/grant match).
- **Locust Grove:** Major transportation projects include SR42 widening from Bill Gardner to SR155. Intersection and signalization projects include Peeksville Road at LeGuin Mill Road (turn lanes only).

Ms. Matthews noted that although no one from Hampton was present, they had reviewed the project list with the City Manager. A previously planned additional project from Hampton had been removed as it was covered under their LMIG project list. Updates were expected prior to the meeting, but the County had not received any new projects to consider, except for resurfacing on East Main Street/Old Highway 3 at the Spalding County Line to Amah Lee, costs to be shared with the City of Hampton.

During the discussion, Mayor Ford inquired about Flippen Road. Ms. Matthews explained that despite concerns raised by Mr. Gardner, Flippen Road did not make the final list of recommendations to the Board. She clarified that the presented project list was not yet approved by the Board but represented the initial staff list presented to the SPLOST committee, which was finalized based on their recommendations.

Roque Romero, Cluster Lead, emphasized that the SPLOST committee had not included Flippen Road in their final recommendations, but indicated it could still be considered. Mayor Ford expressed a desire for Flippen Road to be added to the list.

Ms. Matthews elaborated that the capital projects included in SPLOST VI were derived from resident feedback during SPLOST meetings, input from County Directors, and requests from commissioners based on constituent feedback. These projects were categorized into level one, level two, and general capital projects:

- **Level One Projects:** Locust Grove Tag Office.
- **Level Two Projects:**
 - (Public Safety): Fire Rescue facilities, Fire Rescue equipment, E911/EMA facility, and a new Animal Shelter.
 - (Parks and Recreation): Comprehensive Park Master Plan Recommendations including pickleball courts, new playgrounds, sport field upgrades, concession/restroom upgrades, and general park improvements.
 - (Senior Services): Design of a new Senior Center.
 - (Public Works): Airport upgrades.
- **Uncategorized Projects:** Technology upgrades such as wi-fi in parks, cyber security, and fleet replacement. Senior Services request for renovation/addition to Hidden Valley Senior Center, categorized under level two projects.

Ms. Matthews presented a modified list of level two capital projects, which had been reviewed by City Managers and Administrators in a recent meeting. She clarified that these projects were considered feasible for initial funding if an Intergovernmental Agreement could not be reached between the County and Cities.

Ms. Matthews stated that option one, presented at all of the SPLOST meetings, shows 68 percent of the County and 32 percent of the Cities' distribution. The County based the distribution on the 2020 census. The amounts are as follows: City of Stockbridge - \$57,839,090; City of McDonough - \$57,994,802; City of Locust Grove - \$17,860,986; City of Hampton - \$16,705,122; and the County - \$319,600,000; totaling \$470,000,000.

Mayor Ford asked about the new Senior Center, mentioning a discussion about having a joint Senior Center within the city limits of Stockbridge. He inquired if this was part of the discussion and if there were any updates. Ms. Matthews stated that they plan to cross-reference the Cities' lists once received to ensure the project is included within the City of Stockbridge project list. Currently, they are showing a new Senior Center with a design-only phase and expressed the County's willingness to partner with the City.

Mayor Ford also asked why they are not using the 2024 census. Ms. Matthews explained that one of the setbacks from previous SPLOST programs was the disagreement over basing distribution amounts on census estimates. She mentioned that the County's position, based on the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax guide for County officials, is to use the most recent census data officially recognized by the state, which is the 2020 census data, not population estimates. She stated that it reads the state law does not specify the basis for determining population, and the only accepted population figures officially recognized by the state are the census figures compiled by the US Census Bureau.

Mayor Sandra Vincent inquired if any parks within City limits were included in the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan recommendations. Mr. Jonathan Penn, Leisure Services Cluster Lead, responded that they are in the final stages of completing the Park's Master Plan, covering the entire County. Mayor Vincent clarified that she was referring to parks owned by individual cities, specifically the City of McDonough, which has acquired additional park space and has plans for several parks.

Mayor Vincent asked about the bonding and distribution of funds, and the recommendation for tier one versus tier two projects, and how it impacts the cities. Ms. Matthews explained that there are multiple options to consider regarding level one and level two projects. Option two shows a distribution of 67% to the County and 33% to the cities for level two (public safety only) projects. In option one, the County receives 68% and Cities receive 32%, with McDonough receiving \$57,994,802, and with funds being distributed to the Cities as soon as collections start. Under option two, the County will collect \$51 million before any disbursements to the Cities are received.

Chair Harrell asked if this meets the required 20%. Ms. Matthews stated it does not and explained that under the SPLOST language, if there are level two projects identified, the County government can collect up to 20% of the overall expected collections.

Mayor Vincent inquired if the five-year versus six-year duration impacts the amount received. The County Manager confirmed that it does, but the current presentation is based on a six-year plan.

Ms. Matthews described option three, where the County receives 66% and the cities 34%, with the County needing to collect \$85,838,800 upfront before any distributions are made to the Cities. Option four allocates 65% to the County and 35% to the Cities, with the same upfront collection requirement. Option five, with no IGA, is a five-year program with a distribution of 68% for the County and 32% for the Cities.

Mayor Pro Tem Williams asked about the Locust Grove Tag Office inclusion in tier one, which was initially funded from general funds. Ms. Matthews clarified that it was part of the Capital Improvement Plan and added to the SPLOST list due to the commissioner's confidence in the necessity of the tag office for Locust Grove.

Chair Harrell mentioned that the City of Hampton was scheduled to present but was not represented, so the next presentation would be from the City of Locust Grove.

City Manager Tim Young presented the Locust Grove project list, stating they used 2023 estimated population figures for allocations, noting significant growth from 2020 to 2023. He reported the County's population as 65.4% and the Cities' as 34.5%, compared to 68.7% and 31.3% in 2020. He based the projects on these estimates, projecting around \$468 million, and clarified that they were unaware of level one or level two projects, budgeting \$19.3 million for development. His presentation showed a change in distribution due to using 2023 estimates, and he mentioned meeting with various entities regarding their projects and highlighted SPLOST V accomplishments.

Mayor Pro Tem Williams stated that their budget was based on each City's population growth and that each City had increased in population. He suggested making an exception to use the population growth of each City for adequate distribution and expressed hope for an agreement.

Chair Harrell called forward the City of McDonough's City Administrator, Steve Morgan.

Steve Morgan stated that he has no presentation from McDonough on their SPLOST VI projects. He inquired if the joint projects with the County, specifically the Camp Creek Greenway, were in addition to the Federal Transportation Grant applied for?

Roque Romero, SPLOST Director/Cluster Lead, confirmed that SPLOST VI includes this project to avoid using general funds. He stated it is the matching for the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) project that was submitted. Mr. Morgan asked if this was the \$2 million grant with a 20% match, involving a 70/30 split (70% City and 30% County). Mr. Romero confirmed this. Mr. Morgan emphasized the importance of SPLOST VI. Mayor Vincent stated that the City is still working hard to develop their SPLOST VI project list and stressed the importance of engaging the public in the process. They aim to meet the SPLOST deadline and support a six-year SPLOST.

Chair Harrell then called City Manager Fred Gardner from the City of Stockbridge forward.

Mr. Gardner presented a PowerPoint presentation, mentioning that although they provided a list, some of their roads were not included. They are advocating for these roads, such as Flippen Road, which traverses both the City and the County and is in poor condition and asked that it be added to the project list. He emphasized the importance of a six-year SPLOST for utilizing the funds effectively.

Mr. Gardner outlined their project list, which includes road resurfacing and sidewalks, and municipal buildings totaling around \$24.6 million. The infrastructure projects total around \$14.4 million, parks improvement around \$6.2 million, and vehicles and equipment around \$2.5 million. He noted that everything Ms. Matthews presented reflects the 2020 census, but approximately 7,000 residents moved into the City of Stockbridge on January 1, 2023, and although there are de-annexations, they will likely only remove about 50 people. Mayor Ford expressed his support for SPLOST VI and the hope to use the 2023 census for distribution.

Ms. Matthews stated that if there are projects the Cities would like the County to review, they should submit that information. She emphasized that the numbers will not adjust, and the projected amount remains \$470 million. Ms. Matthews added that the County must develop a resolution for the Board of Commissioners to approve and call for the upcoming election, which must happen within a specific time frame.

The County Manager asked City Manager Gardner to clarify the joint projects he wanted added to the list. Mr. Gardner mentioned the joint roads and stated that the City of Stockbridge needs their maintenance shop, built in the 1950s, to be redone.

The County Manager clarified that the list presented tonight is the recommendation from the SPLOST committee or any District Commissioner. She asked Mr. Gardner for further clarification regarding the City of Stockbridge maintenance shop. Mr. Gardner confirmed its necessity, but the County Manager stated she does not see the Countywide benefit of a maintenance shop within the City. She noted that the City Bridge Community Center (Youth and Senior Center) is a joint project with the County, and a new Senior Center is listed on the joint project list. The County staff remains committed to working with City staff to identify property and pursue a joint partnership for the Senior Center.

Mayor Ford expressed support for the six-year agreement if they can use the 2023 estimated population growth, believing it to be fair. He then asked about the timeframe for getting this list approved by the Board of Commissioners.

The County Manager explained that the Board of Commissioners must approve a resolution to reimpose the collection of the penny tax to call for a vote. This directs the election supervisor to develop the ballot and include the information on the November ballot. The second part of the resolution will be a project list outlining the projects the County will commence if the penny is collected or if the SPLOST IV referendum passes. The project list will be similar to what is presented tonight, including public safety items, resurfacing, and specific projects that will be approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Char Harrell read the SPLOST IV schedule it reads:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>
Meeting of County and Municipalities	6/27/2024	All
County circulates draft intergovernmental agreement ("IGA") to Municipalities	7/1/2024	County
Circulate comments to IGA among parties	7/5/2024	All
Final draft of IGA circulated among parties	7/8/2024	County
Municipalities approve respective projects and authorize execution of IGA	On or before 7/26/2024	Municipalities
County adopts resolution calling for referendum, approving projects and authorizing execution of IGA	7/30/2024	County
County resolution forwarded to Election Superintendent to issue call for election to	7/30/2024	County

submit referendum question for November election		
Election Superintendent issues call for election	8/1/2024	Election Superintendent

Chair Harrell announced that if they do not get this information to the election office by July 30, 2024, it will not be on the November ballot.

The County Manager clarified that regarding level one projects, Public Safety items can be classified as level one if they involve furnishing or equipping new facilities. However, a Fire Station would not be classified as a level one project. Level one projects must be facilities that are state-mandated, and she wanted to clarify this for the public and anyone viewing.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before this Joint Meeting of the Cities and County, adjourn at 8:13 p.m. The Cities of Locust Grove, McDonough, and Stockbridge, made motions and seconds to adjourn.

Carlotta Harrell, Chair

Stephanie Braun, County Clerk