
Citizens' Taskforce Minutes

Monday, March 28, 2016 6:00PM

Sealing Cove Business Center

Citizens' Taskforce Members: Rob Allen, Maxwell Rule, Lawrence SpottedBird,
Dyan Bessette, Cynthia Gibson, Hugh Bevan, Alene Henning
Tristan Guevin (Assembly Liaison)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Allen called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Rob Allen, Maxwell Rule, Dyan Bessette, Cynthia Gibson, Hugh Bevan, Lawrence SpottedBird

Absent: Alene Henning (excused)

Assembly Liaison: Tristan Guevin (absent)

Staff: Municipal Administrator Mark Gorman, Deputy Clerk Melissa Henshaw, Chief Finance and Administrative Officer Jay Sweeney, Assessor Wendy Lawrence, Fire Chief David Miller, Public Works Director Michael Harmon

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M - Rule/S - Bevan moved to approve the March 17, 2016 minutes with a clerical error of the day of the week. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. REPORTS

Chair - None.

Members - None.

City Staff - Administrator Gorman told of the draft budget that would be out to the Assembly with a little over of a \$700,000 reduction in the General Fund which included the \$200,000 reduction to the Sitka School District. He stated the electric fund subsidy was included and told of the state revenue sharing pass off and the PERS/TRS contribution change.

Assembly Liaison - None.

Other(s) - None.

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD/CORRESPONDENCE

Doug Osborne thanked the Citizens' Taskforce for their civic duty and Administrator Gorman's forward thinking and echoed comment from Harvey Brandt from the Town Hall Meeting.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Grand Bargain

CFAO Sweeney gave an update of the PERS/TRS contribution change. Gibson questioned if the numbers of the spreadsheet should be clarified. Bevan reminded the Taskforce who the audience was. Rule mentioned how important communication to the Assembly was and

thought to clarify through a narrative/discussion. Bessette was disappointed that departments had not been gone through and reduced. Chair Allen mentioned that staff brought forward reductions and thought that what the Taskforce had was a good base and recommended using a narrative, the spreadsheet, motions, minutes, and other materials. Gibson suggested the Taskforce look at comments made by the public from the Town Hall meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax presentation/discussion

Health Needs and Human Services Commission (HNSHC) member Lauren Hughey gave a presentation titled Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax Excise Tax proposal. She highlighted the following: Impacts specifically regarding obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and tooth decay; the statewide movement; consumption trends; healthcare costs associated with; successful examples; and proposed taxed items. Doug Osborne, Chair of HNSHC from the audience told of other communities that have passed this and are trying to get it passed. Assessor Lawrence mentioned that it was possible to have an excise tax or sales tax on sugar sweetened beverages.

Discussion occurred around recommending to the Assembly and other excise taxes. Mayor McConnell told of history when she and previous Assembly member Phyllis Hackett worked on a similar proposal in 2009. Staff brought up if tax would be required of an out of state distributor and told of staff time and cost of collecting such tax.

B. Details of Final Report

The Taskforce looked at comments from the Town Hall meeting. Discussion occurred around ballot language. Staff brought up how to reach the citizens and wondered if market research could help. Discussion occurred around the property tax mill rate increase with regards to specificity.

M - Bevan/S - Rule moved to recommend the City continue to pursue funding for the Blue Lake Project through our congressional delegation. Motion carried unanimously.

Administrator Gorman told of his and the Mayor's congressional visit with regards to the motion.

Bevan thought to sell electricity in blocks and discussion surrounded encouraging consumption, rate structure, and subsidization.

M - Bevan/S - Gibson moved to encourage the City to develop an electric rate structure that encourages consumption especially with regards to residential. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion occurred around the School District funding with regards to decreases, secure rural funding, a floor amount, the cap amount, a penalty associated with the cap, the percentage of the cap, line items in the budget, technology, replacement of buildings, recommendation to the Assembly, sources of funding, and increases from negotiations.

M - Bevan/S - Gibson moved to recommend leaving the \$200,000 decrease to the Sitka School District and to not go below 92% (according the City's accounting) of

the cap. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion occurred around a seasonal sales tax, fuel tax/surcharge, and property tax adjustments on boats. Bessette would like to vote line by line of the Grand Bargain. Chair Allen told of his idea of recommending to the Assembly they do a “marketing plan” for the Grand Bargain.

Member of the audience, Scott Saline suggested tying property tax to boats with regards to the permit that it holds to be more equitable.

C. Discussion of Community Meeting

Discussed with the previous item.

VIII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A. Agenda items for the next regular meeting of Monday, April 4, 2016

None discussed.

Seeing no objection from Chair Allen, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:06PM.

Attest:
Melissa Henshaw, Deputy Clerk