



SPLOST Citizen Oversight Committee
Meeting Minutes, Aug. 9, 2018, 6:30 p.m.
Minutes approved Oct. 4, 2018

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SPILOST CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

August 9, 2018

6:30 p.m.

Maloof Auditorium
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

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Certified Court Reporters
Suite 140 - 13 Corporate Square
Atlanta, Georgia 30329
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1 MS. CROWELL: Welcome to our first ever SPLOST
2 oversight committee meeting. Let's give DeKalb County a
3 hand.

4 My name is Delores Crowell and I work in government
5 affairs for DeKalb County, and I've been involved with
6 SPLOST since my first day of work here, which actually
7 yesterday was a whopping 17 months. It's been a great
8 experience and it gets better and better every day.

9 I think everyone has a copy of the agenda. Anyone
10 that's in the audience that doesn't have one, we are
11 having some additional copies made. Tonight what we
12 wanted to do was do an overview and get a little bit of
13 historical information for some folks, but then also
14 start organizing so that when you come to your next
15 scheduled meeting, which the advisory group will be
16 doing on your own, you'll be deciding when you're going
17 to meet again, you can have a very productive meeting,
18 and you can be focused on the things that everybody
19 wants to talk about. But nonetheless, housekeeping and
20 organization is important. I think it prevents us from
21 getting off track later on.

22 And what we wanted to do tonight is first of all
23 open it up to the public and get some comments. Going
24 forward the oversight committee would need to decide how
25 you want to format that, but we thought it would be

1 appropriate to have the public come up and speak first.
2 If you all are in agreement, we can limit that to ten
3 minutes. Does that sound fair? And I think that will
4 give us enough time to get through the rest of our
5 agenda. Having said that, the mic is open for public
6 comment, anything that anyone would like to say relative
7 to our meeting tonight. Thanks.

8 (No comments presented.)

9 Okay. Well, that was great. What we want to do
10 now is turn it over to our CEO, Michael Thurmond, to
11 give you some welcoming remarks. Our presiding officer,
12 Commissioner Rader, is also here. Let's start off by
13 doing introductions, if each committee member would go
14 around and introduce yourself and tell us the district
15 that you're representing.

16 MS. BUSSEY: I am Alice White Bussey and I
17 represent District 3.

18 MS. TESTON: Good evening. I'm Jenna Teston
19 and I represent District 1 and unincorporated DeKalb
20 County.

21 MR. BLYTHERS: Good evening. I'm Isaac
22 Blythers and I represent District 4.

23 MS. HARDY: My name is Teresa Hardy and I
24 represent the unincorporated DeKalb, a little bit of
25 District 3 and 7.

1 MS. LOVE: I'm Nancy Love and I represent
2 District 2.

3 MR. FRIERSON: I'm Rodney Frierson. I
4 represent District 5.

5 MS. NASH: Ellen Nash, District 6.

6 MR. McCORKLE: Charles McCorkle, District 7.

7 MS. CROWELL: Okay. Former Commissioner Gale
8 Walldorff, she was unable to make it tonight but we do
9 have a conference bridge that's set up specifically for
10 the oversight committee, so we can move forward in the
11 agenda. We'll try to ring her up and make sure that she
12 can participate. Any information that we share here
13 tonight, if it's not on the website, we will be posting
14 that over the next day, or by Monday. Are there any
15 other comments that we need to make before we get
16 started?

17 All right. Seeing none, let's turn it over to our
18 CEO, Michael Thurmond.

19 MR. THURMOND: Good evening. First of all, on
20 behalf of the governing authority and citizens of DeKalb
21 County I want to express our appreciation to each and
22 every one of you for accepting the invitation to serve
23 on the SPLOST oversight committee. As I've stated on
24 multiple occasions, we are on the precipice of I think a
25 major transformation here in DeKalb County, a historic

1 one that we are very excited about. We've been on a
2 tremendous journey to reach this point where we are
3 beginning now -- well, first thing, tax bills will go
4 out tomorrow. There's two parts of this: \$110 million
5 in tax relief for residential homestead owners across
6 DeKalb County, \$110 million a year for the next six
7 years. Secondly, with our municipal partners as well as
8 unincorporated DeKalb we will be investing over \$600
9 million over the next six years to improve our
10 infrastructure, and you will play a critical oversight
11 role.

12 I want to say this: There is no secret as to why
13 we have been successful in this particular initiative.
14 The SPLOST law was passed in 1985, and it took DeKalb to
15 2018 to get a successful effort. And I say that not to
16 disparage those who may have come before but to
17 emphasize what's different. And what is different is
18 that at our state capitol we had a united front with
19 Republicans and Democrats, House and Senate, who came
20 together unanimously to support the legislation. We
21 were able to bridge historic gaps and divides under the
22 Golden Dome to do it. We had broad-based support on the
23 county commission, support in a majority that we had not
24 had, and 70 percent of the voters went to the polls and
25 supported the referendum, a historic turnout.

1 As I've stated on multiple occasions, and we are
2 here trying to talk some more about this, we moved from
3 where we were in the past, we learned from it, but we
4 didn't dwell on it. This is not the past, and I say to
5 the men and women I work with every day that there is no
6 limit to the success we are going to achieve, but the
7 most important thing was to leave all the political,
8 psychological, and emotional baggage at the train
9 station. We decided that we just didn't have enough
10 room for all that extra baggage. And I'm hoping that
11 the men and women on this oversight committee will
12 embrace that philosophy.

13 We had a vision that every project had to be done
14 in a way with understanding to benefit the entire
15 county. I don't have a list of projects. I haven't
16 had, I don't have, and I will not have a list of pet
17 projects. Anything that gets done in DeKalb County,
18 Georgia is on my list. And I would hope that we would
19 look at it that way because what helps one helps all.
20 That's our focus, that's our intent, and we appreciate
21 the fact, and I'll say this, that the one thing I know
22 and we know is this cannot fail. Up to this day and
23 this time we've dotted every I and crossed every T. We
24 hadn't cut any corners. We've been extremely
25 transparent. And this is about the future. It's not

1 about any one political agenda or desire, hope. It's
2 about the future of our county.

3 I ask you all to embrace that along with us, and I
4 have no doubt that the success that we've achieved up to
5 this point, you're getting ready to see it on the
6 streets and roads and in the buildings, parks,
7 recreation centers, in DeKalb County.

8 So thank you so much, and I think at this point we
9 have a video prepared by DCTV that gives a little
10 insight into what SPLOST is and how it operates.

11 (Video shown.)

12 MS. CROWELL: We'd like to bring up our county
13 attorney, Ms. Viviane Ernstes. She is going to give us
14 the role of the oversight committee, review some
15 information with you.

16 MS. ERNSTES: Good evening. My name is
17 Viviane Ernstes. I'm the interim county attorney. And
18 for those of you who have not been fully involved in
19 government, let me tell you a little bit about what I
20 do. I'm the lawyer for the county and its elected
21 officials in civil matters. And I'd like to introduce
22 Shaheem Williams, if you'll stand up. Shaheem is the
23 assistant county attorney, and we have been working on
24 EHOST and SPLOST since its inception. So we have been
25 around for a long time, and we have been working on

1 making sure that all of the T's are crossed and all of
2 the I's are dotted legally. And so the CEO asked that I
3 come in and sort of go through with you a little bit
4 about your roles and responsibilities and give you sort
5 of an understanding of what we're asking you to do.

6 So thank you for your service. We know that
7 everybody here has got things they want to do, jobs,
8 grandchildren, children, other things that you would
9 like to do, and so we really appreciate that you have
10 agreed to serve in this capacity. The reason that you
11 exist is that the CEO and the board of commissioners
12 adopted a resolution, and that's just a document
13 creating the oversight committee. And they adopted that
14 in January of this year. And what that resolution does
15 is it sort of is the overarching structure of how you
16 operate.

17 And so in your notebook, if you will take a look at
18 Tab 7 with me for just a moment, I'm not going to need
19 you to read that this evening, but that is your sort of
20 enabling document. And the good news is that you all
21 are an advisory group. You are here to review the
22 progress of our SPLOST program, to provide valuable
23 citizen insight, to make recommendations, to give us
24 thoughtful responses and ideas from your community and
25 from what you hear in the community.

1 Now, we all know as an advisory group we review and
2 you all make input, and your elected officials and your
3 county officials are not going to be able to implement
4 every recommendation, but you may rest assured that by
5 creating this committee, they want your input and they
6 are going to listen to your input. They may not agree
7 with it. They may not adopt it, but they do want your
8 input. So in that way you are here to simply track the
9 progress of our SPLOST projects and to provide
10 information and input as you hear it from your
11 community.

12 As you may or may not know, the SPLOST law has very
13 strict reporting requirements, so you don't have to
14 worry about that. We already have to do all kinds of
15 things as a county government that are required by the
16 law. And essentially you have two primary
17 responsibilities. Each year you have to put together an
18 annual report. Now, the resolution doesn't define how
19 that annual report looks, but it's your review of what
20 you've done that year, what you've heard, what you've
21 learned, your input, your recommendations. And the
22 second deliverable is that sometime near the end of the
23 program you are to produce a final report. And again,
24 the resolution leaves a lot of that to your discretion
25 as to what that final report looks like. The resolution

1 does not require you to meet on any sort of basis. You
2 are allowed to make that decision. Your meetings must
3 be public and open and have some notice, and that is in
4 the resolution.

5 The second thing that you do -- and this is not
6 your first organizational meeting. This is sort of a
7 pre-meeting. But at your first organizational meeting
8 you are to elect either one chairperson or two
9 co-chairpersons, and you are to do that each year. And
10 so that is the sum total of the deliverables.

11 I think that the reason -- not always do our
12 advisory groups have a public comment section, and
13 Ms. Crowell mentioned that public comment section.
14 While I can't get into the minds of my clients and I
15 wouldn't try to speak for all of them, I do think that
16 the reason they would like you to have some public
17 comment is so that you have sort of a formal way of
18 hearing from members of your community in a respectful
19 and appropriate way. And so there is some requirement
20 of some public comment. They are not huge. You don't
21 want that to overtake your entire meeting because you
22 all want to have some discussions and thoughts and want
23 to hear from staff about certain progress of SPLOST
24 projects.

25 One thing I did want to mention is that I know that

1 all of you are very involved citizens because you're
2 here at 7:00 on a Thursday night when you could be doing
3 a lot of other things, so you probably know that there
4 was a previous SPLOST committee, and that SPLOST
5 committee existed in 2016. And that is a very different
6 committee than what y'all are. That committee was
7 convened to help the county determine the projects. And
8 that committee convened, they did their work, they came
9 up with a list of projects. That is not your role.
10 Your role is to track progress and give us review and
11 recommendations on the progress of the SPLOST projects.
12 Just as a little bit of background, when you go to a
13 referendum to allow a SPLOST, and all of you all are
14 voters so you saw that really long question that
15 everybody didn't like, but the projects have to be
16 listed. The categories of projects have to be required.
17 They have to be set forth before the referendum. And
18 that is a requirement that is placed upon your elected
19 officials. So that work has been done.

20 So with that, that is an overview of your role. I
21 was asked not to get into all of the weeds, and I don't
22 think we need to know all of the weeds. You all will be
23 able to read the resolution. But that is your role. If
24 you have any questions, I'll be glad to answer them.

25 MS. CROWELL: In front of you you have what I

1 know y'all were up late last night thinking about: When
2 am I getting my binder? I hope I made somebody's dream
3 come true. You do have a binder. As a committee as you
4 progress you'll be able to decide how effective it is to
5 use that, switching information in and out. And we may
6 even want to look at doing things that are a little bit
7 more technically involved like providing you your
8 minutes and notes electronically.

9 Let's look inside. What we tried to do, especially
10 for the benefit of people that may not have been
11 following every move that was made during the 2017
12 general assembly, we tried to put together kind of a
13 story to tell you how the bill was developed, where it
14 came from, and some of the key people and events that
15 happened during the course of 2017 and up until where we
16 are today.

17 So one of the things we did early on, while we
18 didn't establish this early in 2017, I thought it was
19 important, because this vision statement that you see on
20 the first tab is actually something that was adopted by
21 the board of commissioners after a series of SPLOST
22 vision sessions that we had. We had seven sessions
23 where we brought in a facilitator, and his purpose was
24 to get agreement and cooperation among all of the
25 commissioners to talk about where we see the county and

1 how we'd be using SPLOST proceeds. So if you look at
2 the vision statement that they all adopted and came up
3 with, the vision statement for the county for SPLOST is
4 that DeKalb County's special purpose local option sales
5 tax will support countywide improvements that promote a
6 high quality of life for all residents. I know it's a
7 brief statement, but I can tell you it took several
8 meetings to get there, and that was just because it was
9 very thoughtful conversation, and I think people also
10 were trying to take advantage of lessons learned from
11 maybe 2016. There are some good things that came out of
12 that and they wanted to leverage those positive things
13 and perhaps not fall into the same roadblocks that
14 didn't allow them to have the kind of success that we
15 wanted to have.

16 So, if you move on to the second tab, it's labeled
17 Senate Bill 156. This is the enabling legislation for
18 SPLOST. And just to step back a second, if you recall
19 in 2016 there were a couple of things that were the
20 reasons for it not being that successful, or successful,
21 and one of them was language in one of the bills. And
22 what House Bill 143 did was it corrected some of that
23 language. So we had two challenges in the 2017 session.
24 First we had to correct the language in the bill, and we
25 did that with bipartisan cooperation between the house

1 and senate, Democrats and Republicans. Their leadership
2 got together and figured out what do we need to do to
3 correct this language so we can move forward. We were
4 successful in doing that, and those accolades go to the
5 leadership in both of those houses.

6 And we came up with Senate Bill 156, Senator Fran
7 Miller's bill, and this bill started out looking very
8 different than it did on November 7th. Initially the
9 bill was completely transportation without any
10 opportunity to do any capital improvements. It had no
11 special exemptions for food and drugs, and that was an
12 exemption that the CEO was very deliberate in working
13 with Senator Miller on because it cares for folks that
14 are negatively impacted by the regressive nature of the
15 food tax. This makes our SPLOST legislation very
16 unique. No other SPLOST legislation in the state has
17 this kind of exemption. So that's something we should
18 be proud of in DeKalb. So this tab is the last bill.
19 This was approved one day before the session ended. We
20 literally were there late at night to get this passed.

21 The next tab is a visual, and we think it was
22 important because we actually had a bill signing. I
23 think that's also something that's unique to DeKalb. I
24 don't know if we ever had a bill signing, but this was
25 something that was not only appropriate but it was a

1 physical demonstration of Republicans and Democrats
2 working together, and we felt like it was setting the
3 tone for everything we did after. There's a little note
4 in there afterwards, the invitation that the CEO sent
5 out inviting the commissioners, the city, any elected
6 official, and everyone to that meeting.

7 The next tab is actually the budget that was
8 approved by the board of commissioners. And there's a
9 cover page on most of these sheets where I feel it may
10 be helpful to have a little background information, and
11 this cover sheet is just explaining to you that the
12 budget was something that was developed over a long
13 period of time. It was based on factual data, carefully
14 scrutinized by our finance and budget committee. And
15 the document that you see in here is what actually was
16 voted on on November 7th.

17 So we've got the bill passed, we've developed the
18 budget, and now we are ready for the campaign. Because
19 of the laws around SPLOST there was an advocacy group
20 and an education group. We were not allowed to
21 participate in advocacy, so we did a lot of things to
22 educate people on what SPLOST was, what it was, what it
23 wasn't, the benefits of it, and we did that by going to
24 a lot of community groups. We had public meetings. We
25 participated in CID meetings. Anyplace we were invited

1 we came to talk about SPLOST. All the feedback was
2 positive. And then you'll see behind that are examples
3 of FAQs that we developed and started putting on the
4 website. We thought that was important so people could
5 ask questions and be as informed as they could before
6 November 7th.

7 And then the two last pages in that Tab 5 you'll
8 see where it says SPLOST was passed by over 71 percent
9 of the voters. I believe we had victories in every
10 precinct in the county. And to celebrate that we had an
11 appreciation lunch, and many of you were there for that.

12 Onto Tab 6, and this is a big one. This is where
13 we started working. We've got the bill passed. We've
14 got the budget passed. The voters have spoken. They
15 want the SPLOST. So now we have to decide how are we
16 going to manage it. And the decision was made to have a
17 program-management style type of management for the
18 SPLOST. And let me just say we didn't do this in a
19 vacuum. We went and talked to other people that had
20 successfully done SPLOST. We talked to Gwinnett. We
21 talked to Fulton. We talked to folks in Cobb. So we
22 got a lot of intellectual data of people who had done it
23 right and had been doing it since the '80s.

24 So we came up with the scope of work that you see
25 here, and this reflects months of meetings with

1 department heads really lining up the categories that
2 were approved on November 7th to the needs of the
3 county. And what this scope of work did was it
4 describes in detail, very detailed information about
5 what we want our program manager to do for us, the kinds
6 of experiences that we want when we select the program
7 manager, the kind of expertise that we're looking for.
8 It's all in this document, and I am quite sure you're
9 all going to be going home tonight and reading through
10 all 66 pages. It's fun reading, and it was a very
11 educational experience. So this was the group, the core
12 SPLOST team that put the scope of work together. And we
13 worked heavily with the law department as well in
14 purchasing the contracts to make sure we followed every
15 rule, and we were overly cautious I would say in just
16 making sure that we crossed every T and dotted every I
17 during this process.

18 At the end of that process we brought in all three
19 of the responders. Each of them had an opportunity for
20 a personal interview with us, and we are happy to say
21 that we ended up with the respondent that had the lowest
22 cost and highest number of points, and that was Moreland
23 Altobelli, and I think members of their team are here
24 with us tonight.

25 While that was also going on, onto Tab 7, the board

1 of commissioners, they weren't sitting on their hands
2 either. They were adopting the reason that you're
3 sitting here now, going over the resolution for the 2018
4 SPLOST oversight committee. So that was done during
5 that period, and Ms. Ernstes has already gone over the
6 details in there, and your names are all listed in the
7 back of there.

8 Onto Tab 8, while we were doing this we thought it
9 was important to do updates, so we took opportunities,
10 especially those where we had a large public meeting, to
11 educate people on SPLOST. What you have in here, on
12 March 2018, the state of the county, we held a SPLOST
13 update, and we invited not just the general public but
14 we also invited any vendors and people that really were
15 interested in what SPLOST was about and what we were
16 trying to do. We did that at Stone Mountain before the
17 CEO gave his state of the county address.

18 And then under Tab 9 we also did an update at the
19 committee of the whole giving an update to all those
20 members, and I believe every commissioner attended that
21 meeting. They liked what we said. I believe they had
22 an appreciation for the work that we put in, and it was
23 approved in the committee of the whole unanimously. The
24 next step was for it to be approved by the board of
25 commissioners. They did that. They approved our

1 program manager, and the rest is history.

2 The last tab you see here are just some media and
3 communication information, and this is just kind of a
4 story line of all the things that we did working with
5 cities and city managers to collaborate wherever we
6 could as we developed IGAs for each of the cities.

7 So I'm about talked out now, and I'll open this
8 piece to any questions. This is one of the tools that
9 you have to use. We'll keep it updated. We'll send you
10 out fresh information. And I'm going to ask TJ to come
11 up, and we are going to show you the website. This will
12 be the world premier of the website, I guess. It's
13 going live in the morning, but we wanted to show you the
14 tools that we developed here so you could be informed
15 and keep other people informed.

16 MR. SIGLER: My name is TJ Sigler, and I work
17 with Delores in the CEO's office. As Delores said, we
18 are kind of debuting the newest updates to the SPLOST
19 website for the first time tonight, so you'll be the
20 first to see them. So the easiest way to get to the
21 website is to just go to DeKalb SPLOST dot com, and this
22 is the home page that it takes you to. You'll see we
23 have the vision statement that was developed through the
24 visioning sessions at the top. This is the video we
25 were trying to show you earlier. I won't play it right

1 now, but if you want to go and look at it, that's
2 available here. This kind of just gives you an overview
3 of what SPLOST is as well as the adopted project
4 categories, the distribution by city and county and what
5 that was based off of, which was the population
6 estimates for 2016, a little bit more information here
7 at the bottom.

8 A lot of the information on the site you'll get to
9 through this menu on the left side here. The first link
10 is to the history and overview which goes through how
11 the SPLOST was passed as well as a little bit of
12 background about what SPLOST is for DeKalb. Below that
13 you see a link for transportation. This goes into a
14 little bit about what the thinking was about creating
15 that list. There's also a link to public safety and
16 courts, which again goes through sort of the rationale
17 of how the lists were put together. It shows the
18 projects down below in a table. There's a link for
19 parks and recreation projects, and then this last link
20 groups the libraries, senior centers, and health centers
21 together just because they kind of have just one project
22 a piece. We'll do just general repairs to all of those.

23 The next link here is for citizen involvement, and
24 this is where a lot of the information for the oversight
25 committee will be. So this main link gives you some

1 information about what the mission is for the group
2 based on the resolution that's in your binder. If you
3 click this little arrow right here, it will also bring
4 up these other links, the first of which is the
5 committee members, and you'll see your name as well as
6 who appointed you and when the term expires, which
7 coincides with whenever the term of the elected official
8 expires. The next link under that is the meeting
9 schedule. At this point we have the open house meeting
10 that's already occurred and then tonight's meeting, so
11 they will be moving down into the past meetings column
12 or heading, and we'll update this as we go along. All
13 of this is going to be continuously updated as we get
14 new information that should go on here.

15 The next link is to presentations and documents for
16 the citizens oversight committee. Right now we have the
17 resolution there. This is also where we'll post any of
18 the minutes, other meeting notices, agendas, and so
19 forth. So we should have that updated probably tomorrow
20 with the information from tonight.

21 There's another link for EHOST, which was the other
22 part of the referendum, so it explains what the purpose
23 of EHOST is, how it works, gives some background about
24 what the impact of that will be for homeowners for 2018,
25 how to know if you qualify for EHOST, and then it also

1 has this table at the bottom that shows basically how
2 the EHOST credit will be reflected on the tax bill.

3 This tab, the 2017 ballot information, is really
4 kind of an archive of some of the information that was
5 put together during the education campaign prior to the
6 referendum. We don't want to take that down, but it's
7 more of background information at this point. And the
8 final link here is for presentations and documents. So
9 this is another page that we'll be updating as we go
10 along whenever there's something new to add. You'll see
11 here the authorizing resolution as well as the
12 intergovernmental agreements between the county and
13 cities. We have the RFP for the program management
14 here. We have the presentation that was done back in
15 May as well as one that was done in March.

16 So that basically covers it for the website, unless
17 there are any questions. If not, I'll turn it back over
18 to Delores.

19 MS. CROWELL: I'd like to bring up our
20 presiding officer so he can address the group.

21 COMMISSIONER RADER: Thank you, Delores, and
22 thank you, Mr. CEO, for giving me a chance just to
23 briefly thank you for being here tonight. As others
24 have said, it's really a great commitment that you've
25 made. And one of the things, though, that I want to

1 encourage you is to think of yourself as representatives
2 not necessarily of any particular part of the county but
3 of the county as a whole, because this effort represents
4 an important watershed in building confidence in the
5 county's capacity to be able to improve your lives. So
6 unless we are able to accomplish this for every single
7 person in the county and every region of the county,
8 then I don't think that we're going to be able to build
9 the support that we need in order to perpetuate this
10 type of investment across the board on an ongoing basis.
11 So I'm hoping that your focus will be on the integrity
12 of the program as a whole and on our ability to
13 transform and to improve lives throughout DeKalb County,
14 and work as we do on the board of commissioners:
15 Elected locally but committed to serving all across the
16 county.

17 So I really appreciate the fact that you've been
18 willing to serve. We want to serve with you, and we are
19 certainly going to value and consider very carefully the
20 advice that you give us, not only when it comes to
21 specific issues but also how we approach this ourselves,
22 and certainly keep us on the straight and narrow, as
23 well as the staff and others. So thanks very much. I
24 really appreciate the opportunity. I won't belabor it
25 more, but thanks for kicking this off today. It really

1 is, as the CEO says, an historic day.

2 MR. THURMOND: Thank you, Mr. Presiding
3 Officer. I want to say again it's been a pleasure
4 working with Commissioner Rader and the members of the
5 board of commissioners in helping not just with SPLOST
6 but in so many other areas. We've had I think
7 tremendous improvement over the last year and a half
8 from balancing our budget and building the \$89 million
9 fund balance, to improving our credit rating by Moody's
10 and Fitch, to removing hundreds of tons of debris from
11 our streets and roadways, a new mowing and right-of-way
12 cleaning contract. We removed, the last time I checked,
13 tons of debris from our sewer system. And I can go on
14 and on and on. Eliminated a backlog of 27,000 water
15 bills that we could not independently verify. Now we
16 have a plus 99 percent accuracy rate even in that area.
17 So we're moving in the right direction, but all of that
18 pales in comparison to what we are getting ready to do
19 with SPLOST, and we're doing it as a team. We work
20 together as the governing authority. We don't always
21 agree. We're not always supposed to agree, but we do
22 agree on the fact that we're focused on improving life
23 for DeKalb County.

24 One last question -- and y'all have been very
25 quiet. So what are your greatest fears, hopes, and

1 dreams, if I can ask you that, as it relates to SPLOST
2 in DeKalb County 2018?

3 MS. BUSSEY: I have one. I'm Alice White
4 Bussey. I have a real concern for the management of
5 your governmental agreements, intergovernment agreements
6 that you put in place for the 12 cities. How will this
7 committee be responsible for its oversight with a
8 portion of the funds that you talked about, the \$388
9 million, versus the \$636 million that the law approved.
10 Can you share that process on how will we be engaged in
11 oversight responsibility?

12 MR. THURMOND: That's a great practical and
13 political question. This oversight committee has
14 oversight over funds appropriated for unincorporated
15 DeKalb. This oversight committee has no authority over
16 funds appropriated to the various municipalities.
17 That's independent and sovereign. Lithonia, their
18 appropriation will be administered by Lithonia, its
19 governing authority, and they may set up an oversight
20 committee. We have no control over that, and that may
21 be true in each and every individual city.

22 MS. BUSSEY: Thank you.

23 MR. THURMOND: Mr. Blythers.

24 MR. BLYTHERS: In my former life I had a lot
25 of experience in dealing with infrastructure and working

1 with citizens that a lot of the work that we were doing
2 impacted them. Just an observation, and this is a
3 concern that I have and I hope we will do a better job
4 when we get into this, because, when we do these mayor
5 infrastructure projects, we ask for a tremendous amount
6 of cooperation and support from the citizens. And I
7 think in doing the work we need to reciprocate. I said
8 that to say that, like Rockbridge Road, for instance,
9 where you're laying the water line that used to have a
10 rupture every two weeks. The old line would break, and
11 the county should have replaced that line ten years ago.
12 But having said that, I think when we get the
13 contractors out there doing the work, given the
14 sacrifice that the citizens are making putting up with
15 all of that, it would be wise if the county had somebody
16 sort of out there reviewing on a daily basis the work
17 that the contractor has done, making sure that, given
18 the potholes that are already there, that the
19 construction work is not creating additional potholes.
20 This affected me personally. I was going to church one
21 Sunday morning, dodged one pothole, hit another, cost me
22 \$177 to replace my tire. So I think that if we going
23 forward do that, I think the citizens will appreciate
24 the county more and be more willing to tolerate the
25 inconvenience that's cast on them, and we don't need to

1 be creating any additional hazards for the citizens.
2 That's my concern.

3 MR. THURMOND: That's fair. I want to
4 introduce a representative from Moreland Altobelli who
5 will be our program project managers who bring a
6 tremendous amount of expertise. It won't be myself,
7 thank God, but we have -- stand up Chris, Ernest. We
8 have two representatives here from Moreland, and they
9 bring a huge amount of expertise of working with SPLOST
10 projects in Gwinnett, Douglas, Clayton, Cobb, Forsyth,
11 Fulton. By the way, they were the unanimous choice.
12 They had the lowest bid and the highest score. I mean,
13 by far they were unanimously recommended by the
14 committee who reviewed the requests for proposals, and
15 they were accepted unanimously by the board of
16 commissioners.

17 And they'll be moving into Maloof. We're creating
18 space for them right down the hall from me, so they'll
19 be close by. That's literally the truth. I think they
20 didn't like that too much, but that's okay. They're
21 going to be right next to me. To Mr. Blythers' point, I
22 can't tell you how much is riding on getting this right
23 for DeKalb County, for the present and the future, and I
24 just promise to you we're open to conversation like
25 that. That's important for us to remember. I drive

1 down Rockbridge at least once every two weeks because I
2 go to my barber that way, so I've lived that stretch of
3 highway.

4 MR. FRIERSON: I'm new at this, so I'm coming
5 in with open eyes in trying to move this process
6 forward. One of the things that I would like to make
7 sure that we do is to communicate to the residents at
8 the time these projects are being done on what we're
9 doing. I think as people drive down the highways they
10 need to be able to see that these things are actually
11 being done and they are being done through the
12 appropriation of a SPLOST fund. I think that's really
13 important.

14 And I'm glad to hear that the program manager is
15 not one person but it is a team, because it will take a
16 team effort to make sure that this is done successfully.
17 I just look forward to working with them in the whole
18 process. I'm excited about this opportunity. I just
19 hope we can do it expeditiously; we can get it done in a
20 timely manner. It shouldn't take eight years for us to
21 do this. Maybe we can do it in two years, and that
22 would be nice, to move through this real quickly, and
23 I'm just hoping that I'm going to be a part of it. So I
24 appreciate being in this position, having an opportunity
25 to work with the team. And let's roll our sleeves up

1 and double our efforts and get it done.

2 MR. THURMOND: Thank you, Mr. Frierson, and
3 thank you for being an outstanding community leader. He
4 works just night and day over in Hidden Hills cleaning
5 the community, helping to buff the curb, doing all the
6 things making sure I do it, because he came out one
7 Saturday when we were there filming me. I'm like, "Who
8 is this guy?" But thank you so much for your positive
9 leadership.

10 Chris, I want you to come up and talk a little bit
11 about how you communicate, if you don't mind.

12 MR. KINGSBURY: Not at all. Thank you, Mr.
13 CEO. We've got a number of things planned that we do in
14 other counties. So the biggest thing you'll see in a
15 couple of weeks is all the counties have a website, and
16 DeKalb has their website. We bring a proprietary
17 software we developed. We use it in Clayton and Douglas
18 and some counties in South Carolina. It's called TEAMS,
19 Total Enterprise Asset Management System. What that
20 does is we work with the finance committee and all of
21 the department heads. We build a master schedule and
22 budget, and we layer the information high level for the
23 public for citizens to go on the website to see, at a
24 level for committees like yourself, at a detailed level
25 for the staff to log in with a password, so we're all

1 sharing information on the same platform.

2 As you well know, SPLOST, you pay that penny every
3 time you go to the grocery store, so unlike a bond
4 program the money trickles in every month for the next
5 six years. So one of the big things we have to look at
6 is the pent up demand for that wish list. I live in
7 Avondale Estates, been there since 1973 with Towers High
8 School. We've got a big backlog of things we've put off
9 for years, so we're going to work hard to prioritize the
10 low hanging fruit, and that's going to be things like
11 the resurfacing contracts. There's one out for bid now
12 to open in August, sidewalk repairs, repairs to parks,
13 things that are relatively inexpensive first year cash
14 flow. Big ticket items go on later years. But there
15 will be a number of ways in place on the website to get
16 the information out to you through your telephone, your
17 smart phone, your iPad, et cetera.

18 MR. THURMOND: Really top people, all
19 residents of DeKalb County.

20 MS. HARDY: I think we were talking about our
21 main points. I'm very, very excited to be a part of
22 this committee. I'm also excited about what we are
23 about to see in the future of all of DeKalb, and I'm
24 real excited about this team, looking forward to working
25 as a team. But my pain corridor, my concern is our

1 citizens have been waiting for a while for things to be
2 done. So what's going to happen to all of us, they're
3 going to be like, "When are you going to come to my
4 street? When are you going to come on my street?" So
5 I'm glad that Chris actually explained the communication
6 piece, and I think in our committee we are going to have
7 to do a good job of letting our citizens know where they
8 can get information at any time, even from us, or at
9 least utilizing the website and the other tools. But
10 that's one of the pain points that we're going to have
11 to deal with as being on the committee, and all of us
12 are pretty known in our communities, so we know that
13 we're going to get that. So that's going to be one of
14 the concerns of mine, "When are you going to come off
15 Rockbridge? I saw you on Tucker and you ain't come to
16 south DeKalb." So that's going to be one of the things
17 that we would manage as a team so we're seeing that one
18 DeKalb.

19 MR. THURMOND: Thank you, Ms. Hardy. We live
20 with it every day. People are excited and they're being
21 supportive, and I think we identified, what, 300 miles
22 of the worst roads in DeKalb. One thing we didn't
23 mention, the commissioners approved a tab that will
24 allow us about \$43 million. And Chris mentioned it. We
25 don't have to wait until we get all the money because

1 we'll be able to hit the ground running. So that money
2 is available there now. We've already purchased 50 new
3 police vehicles and ten new rescue vehicles being
4 outfitted. I saw one of the new police cruisers last
5 night, which I was so happy. It's just amazing. So
6 with the projects, and Chris alluded to it, this is
7 immediate. We're going to work now because the
8 commissioners supported the effort to have bids already
9 out, so Mr. Frierson, this is going to happen much
10 quicker than some people actually think.

11 To your point, Ms. Hardy, we can't pave all the
12 roads at the same time. It's not humanly possible. So
13 part of it is communication, letting people know what to
14 expect going forward. It is a six-year -- I don't know
15 whether we can get it all done in two years, but it's a
16 six-year SPLOST, but we're going to move as
17 expeditiously as possible

18 MS. TESTON: Good evening. My name is Jenna
19 Teston, and I'm just curious to know -- I see a lot of
20 the categories here allocating the revenues, and I guess
21 is there someone monitoring? I mean, obviously there's
22 money already in place for road resurfacing. So this is
23 in addition to. Are we making sure the money that's
24 dedicated outside of this is being spent and managed?
25 You spoke about the project managers monitoring those

1 projects. I guess my concern is there's some
2 duplication here, so have we maximized those funds
3 already? For example, with the current tax, property
4 tax revenues, there's X amount of dollars that are
5 already dedicated for road surfacing, so this is in
6 addition to that.

7 MR. THURMOND: Yes.

8 MS. TESTON: So we're talking about managing
9 the projects that are going to take place here. What
10 about the projects that are already budgeted for in the
11 current budget?

12 MR. THURMOND: Oh, absolutely.

13 MS. TESTON: So how are those being managed?
14 Are we making sure that that money is being spent
15 appropriately, in order to make sure that we've got this
16 categorized, these expected dollars coming in.

17 MR. THURMOND: I'll say yes, but I can provide
18 you with an independent assessment. Our audit, our
19 independent auditor, this year our audit came back with
20 zero weaknesses and zero findings, with an \$89 million
21 surplus. And Fitch and Moody's, as a result of what
22 they perceive to be increased competence in oversight,
23 upgraded our rating from stable to positive. So I can
24 say yes, but you can say, well, that's your job to say
25 yes. Our independent auditors, as well as our rating

1 agencies, looked at how we were managing the taxpayers'
2 dollars and all came back with an affirmative statement
3 that things have improved significantly.

4 MS. TESTON: Great. Thank you.

5 MS. BUSSEY: I have a concern about the
6 evaluation criteria that was used for the selection of
7 the projects. Those projects were selected and
8 prioritized according to the input from citizens in the
9 community. And when I see the list, I'm trying to
10 ascertain whether or not we still put in the priority
11 that the community had already given us to those areas
12 that are negatively impacted historically, not just not
13 having paved streets, but many of them did not have
14 parks and amenities in those parks that were needed.
15 Others have lack of -- in unincorporated DeKalb you have
16 the only landfill in the whole county, and that
17 community is negatively impacted with the streets and
18 with the quality of the air that came out of our
19 discussion over the past two years. So I was just
20 trying to make sure that the evaluation criteria, where
21 is it in the whole scheme of things as far as your
22 prioritizing of these projects.

23 MR. THURMOND: As it relates to parks, the law
24 that was actually passed in March, late of the session
25 in 2017, was very different from the law that was

1 contemplated in 2016. You mentioned parks. None of
2 this money can be used to buy or establish new parks.
3 It can be used to upgrade and repair existing parks. So
4 that's different, but that's the prescription that was
5 placed on the legislation. As it relates to the
6 streets, we used the Georgia Department of
7 Transportation criteria to determine the worst roads in
8 DeKalb County, 300 miles of worst roads based on GDOT
9 criteria. To be honest with you, we took the
10 subjectivity out of it, because to be honest with you,
11 that's been one of the stumbling blocks, because
12 everybody wants what they want.

13 But it's not really about that. It's what's best
14 for DeKalb County. Because the last time I checked
15 people don't just travel on the streets in their
16 neighborhood, right? You mentioned potholes. Potholes
17 don't discriminate. They don't care whether you live
18 north, south, east, west. It's just a pothole. So what
19 we did was, rather than to be subjective, we looked at
20 it based on an objective criteria. And we believe that
21 through that we now have designated the worst roads that
22 should be first on the list.

23 MS. BUSSEY: Thank you.

24 MR. BLYTHERS: I have one other comment. As I
25 look forward beyond the six years that we're talking

1 about, and I'm not picking on the police department, but
2 the question come to my mind, okay, we're buying these
3 additional police vehicles. I don't know what the
4 average life of a police vehicle is, but when this one
5 percent windfall of dollars has gone away, where does
6 the cost come from to replace those vehicles that we've
7 bought? How would we deal with that when we no longer
8 have the SPLOST?

9 MR. THURMOND: If we get this right, there
10 will be another SPLOST.

11 MR. BLYTHERS: When you look at everything it
12 took to get the SPLOST that you have, I wouldn't be so
13 optimistic about that, because, you know, in the eyes of
14 the citizens this is taxing the citizens. I think as a
15 part of this component we need to be looking at
16 sustainability, all these things we do, and how are we
17 going to sustain ourselves if we are not able to
18 continue the SPLOST. That's one of the thoughts that
19 I've had.

20 MR. THURMOND: We purchase new vehicles, but
21 we just haven't had the money to purchase them in this
22 quantity.

23 MR. BLYTHERS: That's my point. I don't know
24 how many more vehicles you're buying than you have now,
25 but if you're buying two vehicles, at some point you're

1 going to have to replace those two vehicles and you're
2 going to have to have the dollars to replace those
3 vehicles. I'm sure we'll work all that out, but that's
4 just a thought.

5 MR. THURMOND: I understand. To your point
6 though, that came up. I'm not a Pollyanna person. I'm
7 a pragmatic idealist, to be frank with you, and I tell
8 people I've got a warm heart and a cold eye. I only see
9 what I see and I feel once I see it. I'm convinced that
10 we're going to be successful. I think Gwinnett may be
11 on SPLOST ten. I'm not going to preempt the idea that
12 we're going to be so successful that 25 years from now
13 we'll be on SPLOST ten. I don't see any reason why we
14 can't be successful. I really don't. I don't see any
15 reason why we can't have -- because I think we've got
16 the most progressive SPLOST law, not just in Georgia,
17 but in the country. We have tax relief that no other
18 county in Georgia even contemplates through the EHOST.
19 We have an exemption that exempts food and drug that no
20 one else even thought about. So why should that
21 momentum stop now? I believe that at the end of this
22 cycle we will be recognized as the most innovative, the
23 most successful, and the most visionary county in this
24 state and in the nation when it comes to investing in
25 infrastructure. I know it's been a rocky road. I learn

1 but I don't dwell. We've learned some good lessons,
2 haven't we? Now we just got to embrace the
3 opportunities of the future. I'm not being overly
4 optimistic. I know every day we've got to show up and
5 get it right.

6 Ms. Love, you want to say something? I don't want
7 to keep you all. I'll be around so we can talk
8 privately after this.

9 MS. LOVE: I hear what you're saying, in that
10 shouldn't there be a plan in place so that as, I don't
11 know, maybe to buy two each year so that there is a
12 continuum of incoming new vehicles. That can't be part
13 of the department's responsibilities?

14 MR. THURMOND: We already have a fund to buy
15 new vehicles. It's not that we've not purchased new
16 vehicles. We have a fleet of some 3,000 vehicles that
17 we replace on an ongoing basis. What's new is the
18 source of the funding. When vehicles come out of their
19 life cycle, we replace them. We have the number one
20 fleet department, not in Georgia, not in America, but in
21 2018 we were designated as the number one fleet
22 department in North America. That means that we know
23 how to manage what? Vehicles. That we are not just
24 good at it but we are the best. My fleet manager taught
25 class at Princeton and Yale to other fleet managers from

1 around the country. We are just that good. So I feel
2 your concern, but as long as I've got big Ronald Gordon
3 sitting over there, I feel pretty good about managing
4 the fleet as we purchase it.

5 I thank you all. I'm having a good time, and I
6 hope y'all when it's all said and done, I hope you feel
7 like you enjoyed the process.

8 MR. BLYTHERS: My whole point was, in
9 addition to looking at the present, we need to be
10 looking at the future and planning accordingly. That's
11 all I'm saying. And I'm sure we're going to do it.

12 MR. THURMOND: It's a great point. Something
13 we hadn't done that well in the past, let me just be
14 honest with you, but I'm just telling you it's a new
15 day, and everywhere you can look it's a new day. Our IT
16 department just got ranked. Out of all the large
17 counties in America, we have the seventh best IT
18 department in America.

19 MR. BLYTHERS: There is such a thing as giving
20 high marks on low standards too, and I hope that we're
21 not doing that.

22 MR. THURMOND: I've said this before: The
23 biggest thing we have to do is stop poormouthing our own
24 success. Thank you all.

25 MS. CROWELL: Okay. Per the resolution for

1 your meetings going forward you would as a committee
2 develop a schedule. I don't know if there is an
3 appetite to do that this evening, but I would offer to
4 send a message out to all of you and poll the group and
5 you can decide what day and time. The CEO's office is
6 responsible for making space available for you. We will
7 do that. We will make sure we have a scribe to take
8 minutes and communicate those out.

9 Future meetings you will always get a report from
10 Moreland. They will be presenting to you, so some of
11 the concerns, questions people had about how you going
12 to communicate the information, when we developed the
13 scope of work, that was a requirement that the program
14 manager come in and address the advisory group every
15 meeting, so either Chris or a member of his team will be
16 here.

17 But just to expedite the process for you, I will be
18 more than happy to send that, poll the group. I'll send
19 a message out tomorrow. I'll talk to you specifically,
20 Ms. Bussey, as I always do. And especially in the
21 absence of Former Commissioner Walldorff I think it
22 would be a good idea if we polled everyone, found out
23 what is the best meeting time. You can select it, and
24 myself and TJ and the rest of the team will be more than
25 glad to accommodate you.

1 MR. FRIERSON: I would like to add that it's
2 important that we keep this momentum. So if we have to
3 do this, whether it's two weeks or every three weeks,
4 whatever we need to do to keep the momentum, I think
5 that really is what we need to try to sustain. And then
6 as a result of that we'll see the impact of what we're
7 going to be doing, and I think that's what people have
8 been waiting on for a long time. It's pent up. That's
9 definitely my comment concerning that, so I look forward
10 to us meeting again and let's make this happen.

11 MS. HARDY: Just to add to that, just one
12 thing for the Moreland group, is to make sure -- I don't
13 know when we're going to get anything from them. We're
14 talking about the time and the schedule. So if we're
15 scheduled to meet every two weeks or once a month, we
16 want to make sure that we get the information prior to
17 the meeting so that we are prepared to come in and do
18 what we need to do and we can go home. I do not want to
19 start us off by getting information a day before or the
20 day of, because I think all of us have a life outside of
21 being here. But in order to do the best work that
22 we can and be productive, I just want these meetings to
23 be productive with an agenda and preparation and
24 decisions and all of that stuff prior. So do we know
25 when, what's the expectation of the program management

1 group to get us information prior to our meetings?

2 MS. CROWELL: We are having an internal
3 meeting with Moreland tomorrow, and I'll be glad, when
4 we communicate out, when we poll the group, I'll be
5 talking to Chris and come up with some items that I know
6 he'll be comfortable and at a place in the process that
7 he can discuss with the team. And I'm sure they will be
8 more than happy to be here and discuss, address any
9 questions that you have.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- question that was
11 raised in reference to how the priorities will be
12 prioritized advertised for projects. Is there a list
13 and any detail? I'm not sure if that's a Moreland
14 question.

15 MS. CROWELL: To answer your question, one of
16 the reasons, as the CEO said, we kept things in
17 categories was because we wanted the program manager to
18 come in because that group has the expertise really to
19 help us prioritize and set those targets for the
20 projects. So we're putting a lot of responsibility on
21 them because we're paying a lot of money and we expect
22 that level of detail. So in terms of the project lists,
23 they will be developing those, they will share with the
24 committee, you'll give your input and insight, but
25 ultimately the governing authority will be voting on how

1 the projects will move forward.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Will they also be
3 responsible for sharing with us what projects are still
4 needing attention, and where will we get information?

5 MS. CROWELL: I believe the reporting --
6 Chris would have to speak to specifically how the
7 reports will be displayed, but I feel very confident
8 that just based on their experience and showing what
9 they've done in other counties that your questions will
10 be addressed in the status of projects along the way.
11 And I think the interactive application that he
12 referenced will tell you that.

13 (Unintelligible question from the audience)

14 MS. CROWELL: As the projects are
15 developed, yes.

16 (Unintelligible question from the audience)

17 MS. CROWELL: Absolutely. We have two tools
18 that we use in the county to ensure that citizens in the
19 county are considered for projects as well as vendors.
20 That's our LSVE program. For this particular project I
21 believe that the requirement was 20 percent. Some of
22 the people that bid in on the contracts exceeded that
23 amount, and I believe moreland was one of those. We are
24 very comfortable that minority and small businesses were
25 taken into consideration and had an opportunity to

1 participate in the RFP process. We had regular meetings
2 right here in this auditorium where anyone who had an
3 interest in participating, especially some of the larger
4 firms that were applying, they had an opportunity to
5 apply.

6 (Unintelligible question from the audience)

7 MS. CROWELL: Yes. Those approvals were given
8 when we completed the scores. When we completed the
9 scores for each respondent they each submitted minority
10 firms that will be working with them. It was a
11 requirement. Had they not, they would not have even
12 qualified for the RFP process. That's part of what we
13 built in.

14 (Unintelligible question from the audience)

15 MR. THURMOND: Absolutely. They are listed.
16 It does not preclude minority businesses from responding
17 to bids as the projects move forward. They are not the
18 only ones who will be involved in the process. That's
19 listed, and we'll be happy to share the list with you,
20 the ones that were on the Moreland team.

21 I'll be here. I'm not going anywhere, so if you
22 have questions, I'll be happy to answer them.

23 MS. CROWELL: Thank you for coming. Have a
24 good evening.

25

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