

Anderson County Capital Projects Sales Tax Commission Meeting
June 24, 2025 (5:30 pm – 6:30 pm)
Anderson County Historic Courthouse
101 S Main St
Anderson, SC 29624

ATTENDEES

Commission Members in Attendance – Richard Dorn, Michael Mance, Joey Black, Matt Reeves, and Jamie Cantrell (via Webex)

Commission Members not in Attendance: Trey Thomas

Staff Members in Attendance –Jonathan Fox, Gaye Sprague, Drew Cole, Bee Baker, Matt Hogan, and Brittany McAbee

Other Attendees: Gary T. Pope, Jr (Pope Flynn Group)

OPENING BUSINESS

Call to Order – Richard Dorn (Chair)

Meeting was called to order by Richard Dorn at 5:30 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Introduction of commission members

Michael Mance made the motion for approval of the minutes from last meeting. It was seconded by Joey Black and unanimously approved.

Joey Black made the motion to approve the agenda of the meeting. Michael Mance seconded. It was unanimously approved.

Review of Status

Matt Hogan reported that staff compiled all of the projects from municipalities and the County and placed them in a prioritized order that has been presented as a draft to the Commission. The next commission meeting will have a finalized project list.

Overview of Example Resolution and Example Ballot Questions

Gary Pope reiterated that the capital project sales tax process is statutorily driven and that the commission has the specific role of drafting the ballot for county council to consider. County Council does not draft the projects for the ballot; the commission does. Projects need to be eligible under the statute, but the statute is broader than the focus of Anderson County which is transportation. No operating projects are allowed. The tax is not to exceed 8 years. Ballot must list amounts and purposes and must be written in a way that is intelligible to the voting public. The ballot cannot be overwhelming to the voting public but gives enough information to make an informed decision about the capital projects to be funded. The Commission can place conditions and restrictions on how the money is spent and how projects are prioritized. If the Commission does not prioritize, County Council must as part of

the ordinance. A request for borrowing authorization can be part of the referendum, but County Council has the authority to decide to put a borrowing question on the ballot to start the projects sooner. The referendum would be in November, but the tax is not imposed until May 1. Most counties do not receive money until September or October. The referendum was drafted to find a balance between listing hundreds of projects and having a project description with not many details. The current draft has purposes and an illustrative list. The list can also relate back to an overall projects list that functions as the outer bounds of the project but does not make the ballot twenty pages long and essentially unreadable.

Jonathan Fox presented the current drafted ballot question. He went through the items that needed the Commission's input. The tax length could be up to eight years; both Council and staff recommend eight years. Chairman Dorn asked where did the \$36 million a year revenue projection come from. Mr. Fox replied that it was approximated based on what the school system receives.

Gaye Sprague told the commission that the wording on the question regarding the estimated revenue will be changed from based on the Department of Revenue to based on County projections.

Commission Discussion Regarding Projects and Ballot Question

Mr. Fox pointed out that the highlighted sections needed the Commission's input and the rest was legal jargon that had to be included.

Commissioner Black asked about the question containing the words roads, courthouses, and other public facilities. He asked if it was an umbrella tax.

Mr. Pope said that it could be. He explained that the scope was transportation, but the Commission was to design the question.

The Commission determined to remove the reference to courthouses and other public facilities.

Commissioner Mance asked how long the previous tax attempt was for.

Mr. Fox replied seven years, but it was a transportation tax and has different bylaws.

Commissioner Mance asked if pushing it to six years would cause a shortfall in funding the projects.

Mr. Pope replied that the projects and the budget must match.

Mr. Fox said a new list would have to be considered. Projects would have to be reallocated due to municipalities' requests due to less projected revenue.

Mr. Fox introduced a section that allows the County to move forward with other projects if a project is delayed or in jeopardy. If permitting is delayed, the project will not hold up other projects in the next phase. It would allow some flexibility within reason without holding up other projects. Any other deviations would require an ordinance from County Council which requires three readings and a public hearing.

Commissioner Reeves asked if permitting is done through the State or the County and if money is being given to another agency.

Mr. Fox explained that permitting is through the State and that the permitting costs are very minimal but that they are costly in time.

Chairman Dorn asked about right of way acquisition and the need for it.

Mr. Fox answered that reconstruction projects must be brought up to code and may require additional right of way, especially in the cases of bridges.

Mr. Fox said that changes to the ballot question must be submitted to staff by Wednesday at noon.

Commissioner Mance questioned a project regarding sidewalks on Clemson Blvd that was \$5 million.

Mr. Fox said he believed that it was cut back to \$2 million and a request from the city.

Commissioner Mance said the priority was fixing roads not sidewalks.

Mr. Fox agreed that staff didn't want to see sidewalks either.

Commissioner Black led a discussion about groceries and medications being exempt from the tax and the need for education on that facet.

Mr. Pope advised that the ballot question couldn't contain that groceries and medications are exempt but the ordinance could contain the information.

Commissioner Mance asked for clarification on what would happen if they deviate from the statute.

Mr. Pope answered that the referendum could be challenged and thrown out.

Chairman Dorn led a discussion regarding the normalization of PCI and how those numbers were calculated. Mr. Fox explained that they were weighted for road classification as well as an averaging of segments to treat all segments at once to reduce contract costs.

Mr. Fox closed with informing the commission that changes to the recommended project list need to be submitted by Thursday at noon.

Mr. Pope said at the next meeting he will have his laptop to edit the question in real time.

Chairman Dorn asked how Spartanburg County arrived at a six year capital projects sales tax. Mr. Pope answered they needed a new courthouse and they only wanted to raise money for that one project. The next tax was for roads, and they did six years probably to maintain symmetry with the previous tax.

The commission discussed using simple language a fifth grader could understand. They discussed the last tax was on a national election and perhaps voters did not read the question. Commissioner Mance made a motion for the tax to be for eight years. Commissioner Black seconded. The tax was unanimously agreed to be for eight years.

Mr. Hogan said that staff was going to recommend to bond perhaps \$20 million to jumpstart construction.

Mr. Pope clarified that the question of a bond last year was required to be separate due to the type of tax.

The commission discussed projected revenue and yearly revenue. Inflation would create more revenue and was calculated at 2.5%.

Another discussion was held on what happens to excess money. Mr. Pope explained that Council would be required to use that money for a similar project that falls under the same scope as the ballot question.

A final discussion was held on adding the towns to the roads on the ballot question. The intent is for voters to see the tax being used in their areas.

Mr. Hogan closed out the meeting with a note that the next meeting will be at 1428 Pearman Dairy Rd so that a table can be used for round table drafting of the ordinance. The meeting is still a public meeting.

Chairman Dorn made the motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Commissioner Black. Unanimous vote for adjournment.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:26 pm