San Leandro Unified School District Minutes

Special Board Meeting - Study Session / Community Engagement Meeting

May 02, 2017 7:00 PM

San Leandro City Council Chambers

835 E. 14th Street

San Leandro, CA 94577

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Minutes:
Meeting was called to order by President Prola at 7:00 p.m.

President Prola announced that Item E. Approval of Agenda was moved before Item B. Legal Statement.

B. LEGAL STATEMENT

C. PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Minutes:
There was no public testimony on non-agenda items.

D. OPEN SESSION

D.1. Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes:
President Prola led the audience in the pledge of allegiance.

E. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion Passed: Passed with a motion by Lance James and a second by Victor Aguilar, Jr..

Yes Victor Aguilar, Jr.
Yes Evelyn Gonzalez
Yes Lance James
Yes Peter Oshinski
Yes Diana Prola
Yes Leo Sheridan
Yes Monique Tate

F. PRESENTATION

F.1. Current Parcel Tax and District Budget Overview

Minutes:
Dr. Kevin Collins began his presentation with an overview on Measure L, the district's budget, what is needed for a resolution for a parcel tax election and discussed the difference between a parcel tax vs bond. Dr. Collins stated that bonds are primarily used for buildings and are repaid by property owners. Measure J1 parcel tax was passed by the voters in November and is used primarily for people and programs. He presented information on the District's parcel tax history and what is needed to pass the parcel tax. In 2006, Measure A received 60.8% votes and did not pass. In 2012, Measure L received 66.8% votes and passed. Measure L was originally designed to bring in 2.25 million annually over five years. It was challenged in court and we only received $725,000 in annual revenue, about one third of what was expected. Measure L was approved for six years and sunsets in June 2018. Dr. Collins summarized the district's budget; small increases in state funding, large increases in pension costs, uncertain federal funding, expiration of parcel tax, budget cuts and layoffs. He discussed the items that the trustees must consider prior to developing a resolution and asked for direction on the following six items:

* Does the Board wish to place the parcel tax on the ballot?
* When does the Board wish to hold the election?
* What amount does the Board want to ask for?
* What will be the term of the parcel tax?
* Will the parcel tax have a senior exemption?
* What will be the purpose of the parcel tax?

A list of programs was given to consider:

* TK-3 class size reduction (grade span adjustment)
* Library multi-media centers
* Athletics
* Counseling
* Elementary Music
* Secondary electives
* Technology services

Dr. Collins announced that Larry Tramutola, consultant, will review the parcel tax survey results, discuss campaign considerations and answer questions. The community will have an opportunity to ask questions and give input. He is asking the Board to provide direction to help him develop a resolution to be brought to the May 9 Board meeting.

F.2. Parcel Renewal Overview

Minutes:
Mr. Larry Tramutola presented information on the parcel tax research he conducted. Parcel tax elections are difficult and decisions made will have an outcome on the campaign. True North Research conducted an extensive research poll of a proposed parcel tax for the district. True North Research is one of the best in the state and their polling is statistically accurate and very clear. The purpose of the study was to

produce an unbiased, statistically reliable evaluation of voter's interest in supporting a parcel tax. 577 San Leandro voters were polled with a maximum margin of error +/-4% error. Mr. Tramutola stated that the initial ballot test was a challenge trying to determine what questions to ask. The initial ballot test was written in a way to summarize what you would want to put on the ballot. Such as:

* Protect the quality of education in our local schools
* Attract and retain highly qualified teachers
* Maintain smaller class sizes
* And fund core programs in math, science, technology and the arts that enhance student achievement and prepare our students for success in college and careers

The language will be determined by the district as to what will be placed on the ballot. The district will also determine the amount of parcel tax to be placed on the ballot. Mr. Tramutola went over the following polling results:

* Increase the expiring school parcel tax by $81 per year, with an exemption for seniors, no money for administrator salaries, and all money staying local to benefit our schools?
* If you heard that property owners would pay an additional amount per year, would you vote yes or no on the measure?
* A list of importance of community issues.
* A list of programs and priorities for the District.
* A list of measure structure of programs and services for the District.

Larry Tramutola discussed the following items regarding the parcel tax campaign:

* Total registered voters 35,931
* Estimated turnout for special vote-by mail 30% or 11,000 voters
* 66.7% voter support required
* Tax amount recommended in addition to $39 existing: $48
* Duration - 7 years, 12 years or no sunset
* Exemption for seniors (65+)

He also discussed in detail the three elements of success.

G. COMMUNITY INPUT ON PARCEL TAX

Minutes:
Mr. Steve Parker a resident of San Leandro stated that he was there in opposition to the parcel tax or at least some modifications of it. He was in favor of the propositions previously passed by the district and believes strongly in education in San Leandro. Mr. Parker is an architect that designs schools and stated that a lot has been asked of the tax payers. He served on the Citizen's Bond Oversight Committee for this district and was pleased with the previous bonds that were passed until he realized that the funds were being misused and

later corrected. Mr. Parker had questions regarding the polling that Mr. Tramutola conducted. He is asking the Board to consider what has already been asked of the taxpayers.

Mr. Jon Sherr, president of SLTA thanked the community for their support to our schools. He worked very hard on Measure L as well as many of his students who believed in Measure L. Mr. Sherr has been in education for over 30 years and is aware that other districts do not solely rely on state and federal dollars they also support their schools. He has seen many changes in San Leandro over the past 10 years and he now sees that there is much support for our schools. Jon Sherr stated that he and his teachers are in support of a parcel tax.

Mr. Stephen Cassidy announced that he was on the school board in 2006, when the Measure A parcel tax did not pass. He spoke about the special election in 2006, and the polling results. Mr. Cassidy supports a parcel tax but stated that the Board should look closely at the polling results and not ask for the maximum amount but to ask for the amount that the polls predict would pass.

H. BOARD DISCUSSION

Minutes:
Board members thanked Dr. Collins and Mr. Tramutola for their presentations. All members were in support of a parcel tax and expressed their thoughts on what was important to them and the dollar amount they would like to recommend based on the polling information. A resolution for a new parcel tax election will be presented at the next Board meeting on May 9, 2017.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Minutes:
The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Motion Passed: Passed with a motion by Lance James and a second by Leo Sheridan.

Yes Victor Aguilar, Jr.
Yes Evelyn Gonzalez
Yes Lance James
Yes Peter Oshinski
Yes Diana Prola
Yes Leo Sheridan
Yes Monique Tate

Respectfully submitted,

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Clerk/Secretary of the Board of Education

Board Approved: