

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

## **Citizen-led bond referendum project oversight committee releases its first monitoring report**

*NOTE: The independent Citizen-Led Oversight Committee (CLOC) monitors all building projects funded by the bond referendum approved by Beaufort County voters in November 2019. This news release submitted by the CLOC covers the committee's first quarterly report to the Beaufort County Board of Education and the public, delivered on Tuesday, April 7, 2020. All CLOC monitoring reports and meeting minutes will be archived on the [CLOC website](#).*

BEAUFORT – The independent citizen-led committee tasked with monitoring all building projects, schedules, budgets and expenditures from the Beaufort County School District's November 2019 bond referendum today made public its first report to the Board of Education and the public.

The Citizen-Led Oversight Committee (CLOC) meets monthly and plans to make quarterly reports to the Board of Education that will also be posted to the committee's website. CLOC members include CPAs, urban planners, civil engineers and project managers.

CLOC Chair Ted Barber told Board members today that the committee's independence is a key component in maintaining the trust of county parents and taxpayers.

"Our committee's role is to 'trust but verify' all aspects of the proposed referendum projects" Barber said.

The committee said its role is to:

Ensure that the school district has the processes, procedures and people in place to adequately and properly administer and oversee the school bond referendum projects.

Review the progress of all referendum projects with regard to their schedules and costs.

Communicate its findings quarterly to the Beaufort County Board of Education.

Provide written updates quarterly to the public on the CLOC website.

In today's report to the Board of Education covering the first quarter of 2020, the CLOC said it had been briefed each month since its first meeting in January on the overall scope of the referendum projects and particularly on the first two projects – the expansions at May River High School and River Ridge Academy.

The committee said it had begun an in-depth review of the processes, procedures, administration and the people-resources necessary to engender public trust in the implementation phase of the referendum. It has organized itself into three subcommittees to

leverage its members' expertise and to analyze, monitor and communicate its work. The three committees are Project, Finance and Communications.

The Project Subcommittee – Mike McNally, Ted Barber, Carlton Dallas – will:

Conduct periodic detailed reviews of selected projects to assure that the projects are on schedule and on budget.

Conduct technical/engineering reviews of projects as requested by the full CLOC.

Maintain oversight of the Contract Program and Project Management Firm in conjunction with the school district's Chief Operations Officer.

The Finance Subcommittee – Ray Warco, Richard Tritschler, Carlton Dallas, Ron Groteluschen – will:

Conduct periodic reviews of the Contract/Procurement/Pay Application processes.

Seek additional financial information as requested by the Committee.

Verify that projects are on or below budget.

The Communications Subcommittee – David Ames, Kim Fleming, Derrick Coaxum – will:

Prepare the CLOC's quarterly updates to the public and provide input into those updates.

Prepare news releases that summarize the quarterly updates.

Coordinate town hall-style updates to the community as required.

Summarizing its findings, the committee said it had reviewed the processes, procedures and administration of the referendum projects to date and reported the following:

The May River and River Ridge projects are on schedule and under budget.

The processes in place regarding budgeting, contracts, procurement and pay application for projects are sound and provide adequate independence and proper chart of authority review.

An early area of concern noted by the CLOC was the future resources required for program and project administration considering the number of schedule referendum projects. Due to the limited staffing in the district's Operations Department, additional support will be required for program and project management to ensure owner's representation on project sites during the construction. The selection of a contract program management firm will assist the district with the gap in program and project management. CLOC had the opportunity to meet with the project team from CBRE Heery at our March meeting. At that meeting, CLOC received from the consultant a detailed explanation of their involvement in the Broward County, Florida referendum management. The committee felt all questions were answered fully and that CBRE Heery is fully qualified for the project management role, subject to a successful negotiation of the contract. CLOC encouraged school district staff to negotiate a contract amount that would then be awarded on a project-by-project basis, subject to satisfactory performance per contracts metrics. If for any reason the consultant fails to perform as contracted, such a reason would be the basis for terminating the consultant's contract.