

Collins, Charlotte

From: Brownlow, Kellie
Sent: Monday, May 16, 2016 11:01 AM
To: Collins, Charlotte
Subject: Fwd: Multi Use Bridge

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Brownlow, Kellie" <Kellie.Brownlow@cobbcounty.org>
Date: May 16, 2016 at 10:28:04 AM EDT
To: "Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta)" <Dan.Klepal@ajc.com>
Subject: Re: Multi Use Bridge

Dan,

As I told you last week, these are not policy level questions nor was Chairman Lee involved in the communications to which you are referring. I suggest you address your questions to the individuals included in the emails.

The funding for construction of the bridge has been secured from outside sources and that has always been the Chairman's position. I want to make one thing very clear, as with every single project, it is the staff's job to establish accounting practices. This is not a Board level responsibility.

However, because of concerns that have been raised, Chairman Lee has asked that staff submit an agenda item that ensures that no SPLOST dollars are being used in the construction of or accounting for this project.

Kellie

On May 16, 2016, at 9:59 AM, Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta) <Dan.Klepal@ajc.com> wrote:

Tim:

Two questions for the bridge story.

First, you said during the WABE debate last week that no SPLOST money was being used for construction. "The bridge construction costs will have no SPLOST dollars in it whatsoever." Was your precise wording before admonishing Mark Niese that he needed to do more "research."

On Friday, you sent out an email that says this: "The construction of the bridge is not dependent on SPLOST dollars and unfortunately, this issue has become a

distraction to the project. A project accounting question is preventing us from focusing on what is really most important here — moving forward with project construction.”

If the CID money dedicated to bridge construction was being covered by SPLOST funds for two and three years (\$2.5M each year), didn't that mean that SPLOST money was being used for construction? Can you please explain why you provided the answer that you did during the debate?

Secondly, emails I have reviewed show that county staff approached the Braves, through JLL, for more funding for their share of the bridge. Staff reported that JLL reacted positively. Did the county pursue that additional money. If so, what happened? If not, why?

Thanks for your attention to these matters.

From: Brownlow, Kellie [<mailto:Kellie.Brownlow@cobbcounty.org>]
Sent: Friday, May 13, 2016 4:31 PM
To: Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta) <Dan.Klepal@ajc.com>
Subject: RE: Multi Use Bridge

Dan,

Whoever is prompting you to ask these questions has their dates wrong. Below is Chairman Lee's calendar for April 5.

However, in a meeting that actually did occur on April 20 and included Chairman Lee, me, Jim Pehrson, David Hankerson and Deborah Dance, Chairman Lee was briefed on several agenda items including the finance agenda item to change the project accounting for the multi-use bridge that was approved by the Board on April 12. In this meeting, Chairman Lee did not once suggest another course of action. He made it very clear that he was not going to question professional staff. It has been his position from Day one that he would follow the recommendation of professional staff.

April 5

8: 00 am Meeting re: Judicial requests
9:00 am Meeting with Steve White
9:30 am Meeting with Eddie Canon
10:00 am Review week and Planning Commission
11:00 am State of the County Address @ Cobb Young Professionals

Kellie

Kellie Brownlow
Deputy Chief to the Chairman
770-528-3333 (O)

404-374-3130 (M)
kellie.brownlow@cobbcounty.org

From: Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta) [<mailto:Dan.Klepal@ajc.com>]
Sent: Friday, May 13, 2016 3:33 PM
To: Brownlow, Kellie
Subject: RE: Multi Use Bridge

So no policy was discussed during the April 5 meeting between Lee, Hankerson and Pehrson – four days after staff recommended that the general fund be used to bridge the funding gap?

From: Brownlow, Kellie [<mailto:Kellie.Brownlow@cobbcounty.org>]
Sent: Friday, May 13, 2016 3:18 PM
To: Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta) <Dan.Klepal@ajc.com>
Subject: RE: Multi Use Bridge

Dan

The elected officials rely on recommendations from County staff for details of funding and project accounting. If you are interested in the facts about these mechanics, you need to direct such questions to the County Manager or Jim Pehrson in Finance. Elected officials are not involved in project accounting, bridge loans, regional allocations, award funding schedules, payment schedules, matching grant sources and schedules.

You are correct. Commissioners requested that Tim pull the agenda item so the staff would have more time to answer their questions. If you had been there, you would have witnessed that. I encourage you to reach out to the County Manager for more information about the meeting and so that his staff can answer your questions. I am confident that you and the AJC will refrain from making any assertions in your story that are wholly inaccurate no matter the narrative you are trying to push.

Sincerely

Kellie

Kellie Brownlow
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From: Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta) [<mailto:Dan.Klepal@ajc.com>]
Sent: Friday, May 13, 2016 2:55 PM
To: Brownlow, Kellie
Cc: Lee, Tim; 'lee8007@bellsouth.net'
Subject: RE: Multi Use Bridge

Kelli:

Are you saying that Tim Lee did not have any input in pulling the agenda item last month, and the decision to proceed with the project in the SPLOST fund?

My questions stand, and I hope the chairman answers them, especially in light of his comment during the WABE debate on Wednesday where he said no SPLOST dollars were being used for bridge construction.

Thanks,

DK

From: Brownlow, Kellie [<mailto:Kellie.Brownlow@cobbcounty.org>]
Sent: Friday, May 13, 2016 2:37 PM
To: Klepal, Dan (CMG-Atlanta) <Dan.Klepal@ajc.com>
Subject: FW: Multi Use Bridge

Dan,

Please see the email below, from Tim to the County Manager, sent earlier today. The majority of your questions are not policy related and should be directed to the County Managers Office. If you have any questions that are within Tim's purview, related to policy level matters, I'd be happy to get you a statement.

The agenda items to which you refer were actually under Finance, not the County Attorney's tab. The items were pulled upon the request of Commissioner Cupid and the other district commissioners.

I do not believe Tim was included in, nor is he aware of, the emails to which you refer below and therefore will not be commenting on them.

Kellie

Kellie Brownlow
Deputy Chief to the Chairman
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I'm sorry you didn't have time to speak with me after the debate on Wednesday. I hope you made it to your appointment on time.

As I was saying when you walked away, I am working on a story about the multi-use bridge. You stated in the debate that no SPLOST funding was being used for construction. I have a few questions about that.

- The Cumberland Community Improvement District, of course, has dedicated \$5 million toward bridge construction. But that funding won't be available until December 2018 and December 2019. Isn't the current plan for the county to use SPLOST dollars as a bridge loan for the bridge? If not, what funding source will be used.
- If SPLOST funds will be used to cover the CID portion until those checks are written, doesn't that essentially constitute the county providing a bridge loan to the CID for the bridge?
- According to emails I've reviewed, the FTA funding identified by the county to pay for Cobb's share is short by \$1.3 million, according to an April 5 email authored by Susan Reville. According to that email, those "regional allocations" hadn't even been applied for at that time. Have those funds been applied for now? Have the funds been awarded? If they have not been awarded, will the county use SPLOST funds to cover that shortfall?
- The county attorney's office proposed two agenda items that would have moved funding from the SPLOST fund to the Public Facility Projects fund. Same with utility relocation. The board did not consider those agenda items. Why? And doesn't that non-consideration mean that SPLOST funds will be used for both, at least until the other parties make their payments?
- Is there a contract with the Braves for their portion of the bridge funding? When will the team make that payment?
- The bridge was a known need when the SPLOST list was created and voted on, but it is not on the list. How can you utilize those funds if the bridge is not on the approved list?
- You are using matching funds for the utility relocation. What grant are you matching?

Thank you for answering these important questions. Please feel free to call me if you'd like to discuss this directly.

Tim:

One more question: According to emails I've reviewed, the county approached the Braves about the possibility of paying more for their portion of the bridge. According to the email, JLL reacted positively. Did the county pursue that additional funding any further?

From: Lee, Tim
Sent: Friday, May 13, 2016 11:50 AM

To: Hankerson, David; Pehrson, Jim; Dance, Deborah; Wilgus, Jim
Cc: Ott, Bob; Cupid, Lisa; Weatherford, Bob; Birrell, JoAnn; Brownlow, Kellie
Subject: Multi Use Bridge

Mr. Hankerson,

I would like to recommend that staff reconsider submitting the agenda item that takes the project accounting for the multi-use bridge out of SPLOST. The construction of the bridge is not dependent on SPLOST dollars and unfortunately, this issue has become a distraction to the project. This is a critical public safety project that needs to move forward as soon as possible and without further distraction.

My position is not at all intended to underestimate our team. I trust, respect and always rely on their professional recommendations. However, a project accounting question is preventing us from focusing on what is really most important here- moving forward with project construction.

Please let me know if resubmitting the agenda item that was pulled last month is still an option.

Thanks

Tim

Tim Lee 770-846-7340