



**2026 Sales Tax Focus Group
Charlotte County Administration Center, Room B-106
18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
November 6, 2025**

Members Present: Eric Axelson, Donna Barrett, Lucienne Pears, Bob White, Steve Vieira, Larry Yerger, Lynne Matthews, Kathi Obendorfer, Gary Butler, Ray Laroche, Mark Vianello. Gary Bayne came in late at 3:04 after the meeting began.

Members Excused: Cindy Marsh-Tichy. Unexcused Sean McLaughlin.

Others Present: Travis Perdue, Director of Facility Management, John Elias, Public Works Director, Tommy Scott, Director of Community Services, Denise Caruthers, Utilities Operations Supervisor, Bruce Bullert, Operations and Engineering Manager Utilities, Claire Jubb, Assistant County Administrator, Melissa Walker, Executive Assistant Administration, Kim Phillips, Financial Analyst, and Francine Lisby, Assistant Budget Director.

Welcome: Emily Lewis, Deputy County Administrator opened the meeting at 3 p.m. Ms. Lewis welcomed all in attendance and reminded the Focus Group Members and Members of the Public to please sign their names on the Sign-In sheets.

Approval of October 30, 2025 Minutes:

MOTION WAS MADE BY BOB WHITE, SECONDED BY LUCIENNE PEARS TO APPROVE AS PRESENTED THE OCTOBER 30, 2025 MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 13:0.

Public Comment: Ms. Lewis opened the floor for Public Comment on Agenda items only. Jack VanderHeyden spoke on two issues: 1) Mid County Operations facility - Mr. VanderHeyden questioned why Charlotte County needs so many hardened buildings. 2) Babcock Ranch: Mr. VanderHeyden questioned whether Babcock Ranch pays impact fees for the buildings we build for them.

Presentations: 2026 Sales Tax Projects:

Travis Perdue, Facilities Management Director was present today to give an overview of the Facility projects on today's Agenda.

Project: Mid County Operations Facility: With organizational growth, the Public Works Department has outgrown their current space. The need to regionalize and consolidate services requires an additional facility in the mid-county region. The new facility will be located in the Murdock area on county owned property and will meet critical infrastructure design. The space will include Administrative Management, Engineering, Project Management and flexible training space. It will support emergency activation for real time monitoring and employee readiness in pre, during and post-storm activities. It will provide a hardened and improved Traffic Management Center and 30,768 s/f of hardened safe room.

Proposal: This project will relocate Public Works Administration from south county to mid county, leaving the Punta Gorda/south county yard as a satellite facility. It will provide space and critical infrastructure to meet the growth and recovery response needs of the community and organization.

Mr. Purdue explained the Hazard Mitigation Grant the county is seeking for this project which is required to be hardened. Member Yerger questioned the term hardened shelter for both hurricane and tornados. Mr. Purdue explained the different tiers of design, basic code minimum and code plus internally. Yerger further questioned the term "safe room" for the entire footprint of the building and whether the building would be ADA accessible? Mr. Purdue explained that while it is not a public building, it will be ADA compliant. Member Pears asked for further information about the Traffic Management Center. John Elias, Public Works Director explained it is a joint project with FDOT. The county maintains all the signal lights in Charlotte County. FDOT has cameras throughout the corridors and at our signalized intersections which allow us to have real time access to the conditions on the road. It is time sensitive for these cameras to be operational after a storm. This new facility provides redundancy in power and networking. Ms. Lewis further asked Mr. Elias to explain what the county is doing to harden the intersections. Mr. Elias explained that there are two types of signalized light intersections along US 41 – cable span and mast arm which is more resilient. The county has received state appropriations monies to harden the rest of our intersections (with FDOT) to be mast arm intersections. Member Obendorfer asked for information about the Punta Gorda satellite that will remain. Mr. Elias said there will be people working in the different areas we serve across the county. Member Matthews asked if this building can be used as a shelter? Mr. Purdue said we are building the safe rooms to be the strength of a shelter, to support internal operations only. Ms. Lewis added that Bissett Park Project is being designed to be used as a public shelter. Mr. Elias added to the earlier comment about ADA accessibility that the building will have assessable space for the public to have meetings but not to be used as a shelter. Member Barrett asked if any of the unused buildings will be sold? Mr. Elias said no, we could potentially add more yards due to space needs. Ms. Lewis agreed and added we may institute more regional services due to the size of the county. Member Barrett asked for a list of what is encompassed in Public Works. Mr. Elias listed the divisions of Capital Projects, Traffic Management, Engineering, Mosquito and Aquatic Control Waterways, Solid Waste, Asset Management, Business Administration and Maintenance and Operations. Member Bayne asked how this project applies to our review questions? Ms. Lewis explained this project was added because Public Works is important in supporting the community post disaster. Member Laroche asked if this will relieve some of the pressure on the EOC? Mr. Purdue stated that the people who staff the EOC will not change but the new facility will provide a safer structure for staff. Mr. Purdue added that Utilities and Public Works find it difficult to find alternative funding sources for their infrastructure needs. Member Viera

said this is a \$27 million dollar project, what is the total cost if grant money is received? The Hazard Mitigation Program grant has not been approved yet said Mr. Perdue. Ms. Lewis added that \$14,486,000 is the pending grant amount and is located on the CIP page. If the grant is approved those funds would be applied first and then the remainder would be sales tax funded. Member Yerger asked would this facility work under or parallel to EOC during an emergency? Mr. Elias replied EOC directs our operations based on need. Yerger asked how do you communicate? Mr. Elias reported that we plan for redundancy in communication should power go down. In addition, every department has a structured order of response to follow, especially in case communication to the EOC is lost. Member Axelson asked if the grant money is received, where does the unused funds dedicated to this project go? Ms. Lewis explained the ranking process of Tier 1 (the projects with higher priority of funding) and Tier 2 (projects in case of excess funds).

Project: CARE Expansion/Grace Street Complex: The growth of the program has determined the need for expansion. This master planning project determines the best use of the site's complex and buildout capacity. The Clinic and mixed-use space site may be combined with the CARE facility site by vacation of Grace St. to utilize 5.4 acres. Current partners on the campus include Guardian Ad Litem, 4H IFAS, Computer Club, and Punta Gorda History Center.

Proposal: Provide space to meet the growth needs of the organization.

The project site is located off of Cooper Street in Punta Gorda near the high school. The County Clinic and CARE Center are both located there. Member Yerger asked if anything will be done physically or are you just looking at the possibilities? Mr. Purdue replied that this is an engineering exercise to see what we can do. If there are any funds left and a needed renovation project appears, we would go into phase two to complete that construction. Member Axelson asked why there is \$4 million listed under construction on the CIP? Mr. Purdue said it will be used for the design cost and whatever is left in the budget will be scoped out through the design process. Member Pears asked if the project cost is for due diligence, feasibility, and then potentially site design and permitting? Mr. Purdue said we need to go through all the steps to know what our limitations are. Pears also asked about the useable life left in the current facility. Mr. Purdue replied that the county maintains the building and it is in good shape, however it is a desirable space that is currently at capacity. Member Butler asked if there are any additional funding sources for this project such as from Foundations? Mr. Purdue replied no, the scope of the project needs to be defined first. Member Vieira asked if there is an obstacle to vacating Grace Street? The county owns the property, said Mr. Purdue, we are within our right to do so

Project: Babcock Ranch Community Library and Annex: The Master Developer's Agreement (MDA) identifies a need for a community library and annex in the Babcock Ranch community. This building will serve the Babcock Ranch community and its needs by offering access to public services, knowledge of the internet, learning resources, community events, and multipurpose space for various users along with support services for general government services including Tax Collector, Supervisor of Elections, Clerk of Courts, Property Appraiser, and flex space for BOCC departments.

Proposal: Construct a 40,000 square foot building to accommodate both the library and annex services that will meet the community's needs.

Mr. Purdue explained the MDA with Babcock Ranch concerning the services that the county is required to add to that area. A library and annex are needed as the population increases. The proposed new building will be modeled on the Punta Gorda Library facility. Ms. Lewis referenced the public comment we received asking about impact fees at Babcock and Ms. Claire Jubb, Assistant County Administrator addressed the issue saying the MDA between the county and Babcock requires that impact fees are collected for any building created at Babcock except for transportation. Those fees are then used to reimburse Babcock when they build certain parts of the infrastructure. There are certain things we partner on like fire stations and this library project. Babcock is required to build the shells, and the county does the build-out. The impact fees go to building those shells. Member Yerger asked why there is a design fee of \$2 million dollars when we can use a design we already have with some modifications? Mr. Purdue replied that design fees are based on a percentage of the construction cost and further explained how the design process is developed. Yerger asked how can you have a construction cost without a design? Mr. Purdue explained that this proposal was given to an estimating consultant to evaluate the project cost. These are more realistic numbers, reflecting the local economy as well as national escalation. Member Axelson referenced Tringali offering emergency services in the past and asked if the same agreement is available in Babcock in case of a disaster and if there are any kiosks that offers county services? Mr. Purdue said there are no kiosk services at this time, but we have an agreement that emergency services, (such as "point of distribution") can be activated in these facilities. Ms. Lewis stated that the county does provide library delivery services and during elections, our Supervisor of Elections does provide polling locations at Babcock. Member Barrett asked if this building will be in Babcock or in the surrounding area? Yes, it is in Babcock said Mr. Purdue.

Claire Jubb, Assistant County Administrator was present to give an overview and answer questions about the two road infrastructure projects on today's Agenda. Ms. Lewis turned over the moderating of the meeting to her. Ms. Jubb explained that these proposals are water quality improvement projects that go in conjunction with the road projects that will be presented to the Focus Group in January. These projects will be constructed at the same time to reduce costs.

Project: Harborview Road (between Date Street and Interstate 75):

Utility system improvements, including potable water, sanitary sewer and reclaimed water. As a result of the Florida Department of Transportation's Harborview Road widening project and drainage modifications, the project will require utility relocations, adjustments (new, replacement or removal of existing or removal of existing infrastructure), upsizing and extension of utility facilities within the project limits.

Proposal: Construction of approximately: 12,500 linear feet of 12-inch PVC and ductile iron pipe potable water mains, including all necessary valves, fittings, marker balls, meter taps, fire hydrants, future connections for looping and all related appurtenances; 12,500 linear feet of 12-inch PVC and DIP reclaimed water utilities, including all necessary valves, fittings, marker balls, meter taps, future reclaimed water main connection, and all related appurtenances; 12,500 linear feet of 12-inch PVC and DIP wastewater utility mains including all necessary valves, fittings, marker balls, future wastewater pump station connections and all related appurtenances; Gravity sewer mains to be determined to service abutting properties to this roadway; Stub-outs at various locations to serve adjoining properties along the roadway; Removal of approximately 1,600 linear feet of 12-inch potable water main, 1,070

linear feet of 6-inch reclaimed water main, 2,700 linear feet of 6-inch, 8-inch, and 12-inch asbestos cement, PVC and DIP mains.

Member Viera inquired about the funding listed in the CIP. Ms. Jubb said this is only one of the funding pieces and the rest is in the road project. Viera commented that Charlotte Harbor Water Association has the certificate right to provide potable water along Harborview Road and they are trying to obtain funds from the USDA for the same work. Why are we not working together? Ms. Jubb agreed. Member Pears asked does this handle existing customers and does this account for growth? Bruce Bullert, Utilities Engineering Manager, responded that this covers existing customers, providing new sewer services and will have infrastructure in place for future growth. Member Viera asked will this be part of the septic to sewer conversion? Yes, Mr. Bullert replied. John Elias interjected that Public Works is in communication with Charlotte Harbor in designing this project. Member Barrett asked for an explanation why we need this project and what would happen if we do not move forward with the project? Ms. Jubb and Mr. Bullert both commented on the old infrastructure and how close the septic systems are to the river which is an environmental issue. Member Bayne asked about the 24-inch transmission water main and would development along I-75 contribute to that? There is some opportunity, but it depends on timing said Mr. Bullert. Member Barrett commented that doing both roads and infrastructure at the same time would avoid what happened on Midway previously. Member Yerger asked if there are any bridge replacements (box culvert) as part of this project and will precautions be taken to protect the eco system of those canals? Mr. Elias stated there is a box culvert that will be expanded in an environmentally sensitive area, and the county would be required to follow all regulatory precautions. Member Butler commented that this project will be affecting low income and seniors that live in that area, and they will benefit.

Project: Edgewater Drive (flamingo Boulevard between Samantha Avenue and State Road 776): Utility system improvements, including potable water, sanitary sewer and reclaimed water. As a result of the Flamingo Boulevard/Edgewater Drive widening project from a two-lane to a four-lane roadway, the project will require utility relocations, adjustments (new, replacement or removal of existing or removal of existing infrastructure), upsizing and extension of utility facilities within the project limits.

Proposal: Construction of approximately: New reclaimed water main from Midway Boulevard to El JoBean Road (S.R. 776); Replace the existing 12-inch water main from Midway Boulevard to Collingswood Boulevard; New water main along Edgewater from Collingswood Boulevard to El JoBean Road (S.R. 776); Replace the existing 10-inch force main from Midway Boulevard to Collingswood Boulevard; Design a new force main from Christopher Waterway to Collingswood Boulevard; From bridge to Collingswood Boulevard, extend the previously designed vacuum sewer from the south right-of-way of Edgewater Drive to all existing homes/lots that front Edgewater Drive. Extend the vacuum sewer down each right-of-way of each crossroad for future connections; Extend existing gravity sewer from Midway Boulevard to the bridge, stub-out to side streets.

Ms. Jubb reported the Edgewater Drive infrastructure proposal is similar to Harborview. Member Pears asked if these are the lines that provide water to west county? Mr. Bullert responded that these lines only service the immediate area around the lines, but they do supplement the lines going out to west county. Pears asked for a description of what it would look like if the road and utility improvements

were not undertaken concurrently. Ms. Jubb explained the road building process and if the infrastructure, is not done at the same time, the new road must be dug up to replace the old infrastructure costing the county additional monies as well as citizen inconvenience. Mr. Bullert explained it is very difficult to come back after Public Works widens the roads, (adding turn lanes, and medians) to add or replace infrastructure because of the added cost. We are trying to avoid system failure in some of the older areas. John Elias added that a new road being built here has no infrastructure, so this is all new – new road and new infrastructure. Member Yerger confirmed that the new infrastructure will be on county right-of-way with no new land needing to be purchased. Correct said Ms. Jubb. Member Butler ask if this will have a positive impact on areas prone to storm damage, like Aqui Esta? Ms. Jubb said yes and to wait for a more information when the road projects are presented in January, 2026.

Focus Group Member Project Scoring: Ms. Jubb requested the Focus Group to complete today's scoring sheets and turn them into the staff from Fiscal.

Meeting Adjournment:

MOTION WAS MADE BY DONNA BARRETT AND SECONDED BY KATHI OBENDORFER TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 4:12 P.M.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Emily Lewis,
Charlotte County Deputy Administrator

Date Adopted: 1/8/26

Minutes recorded by Andrea Yerger,
2026 Sales Tax Focus Group Administrative Assistant