



City Council Chambers
9101 Bonita Beach Road
Bonita Springs, Florida 34135

CITY COUNCIL MEETING PUBLIC COMMENTS

May 20, 2026

COMMENT #1

Sent: 05/19/26 – 12:20pm

From: Dave Jaye <dave.jaye55@gmail.com>

To: City Mayor and City Council

Subject: Opposing the August 18, 2026 Property Tax Bond Referendum – The \$170 Million "Debt Sentence"

1. The 93-to-1 Taxpayer Overpayment Rip-Off Official 2025 Lee County Property Appraiser tax rolls—verified directly via correspondence with the Property Appraiser's office—confirm that the 6.15-mile Seminole Gulf Railroad corridor within Bonita Springs is valued at just **\$378,005** for tax purposes. Despite this, the City Council is actively forcing a ballot measure to pay **\$28.6 Million** for this land. Paying a private corporation 93 times its tax-appraised value for "as-is" polluted industrial dirt is a historic, reckless transfer of public wealth.

2. Deliberate Lack of Transparency (Appraisal Blackout) The City Council has actively refused to present an independent, professional Realtor appraisal of this corridor to the public *prior* to the August 18th vote. Asking voters to approve a multi-million dollar bond while keeping them blindfolded to the actual market value of the property is a direct failure of transparency.

3. The True \$170 Million Total Debt Burden The \$35 Million bond on the ballot is only the "Bone." Factoring in 30 years of interest and fees, the bond principal immediately balloons to **\$70 Million**. Furthermore, because the city is purchasing the corridor "as-is," taxpayers are directly swallowing an estimated **\$100 Million+ in Phase 2 liabilities** for 100 years of hazardous waste (HazMat) toxic mitigation, rail and tie removal, corridor paving, and the costly construction of three massive overhead overpass bridges at Bonita Beach Road, W. Terry Street, and Old 41.

4. Commercial Windfall vs. Taxpayer Liability Under the current terms, the private Railroad keeps 100% of the lucrative revenue from billboards, cell towers, and utility leases ("The Meat"), while taxpayers assume all toxic environmental liabilities ("The Bone").

Furthermore, Mayor Mike Gibson operates private business interests (Engel's Bicycles and Grandpa's Pizza) located just 500 feet from the proposed trail entrance—positioning his storefronts for immense commercial gain from taxpayer-funded trail traffic. Despite this clear financial conflict of interest, the Mayor refused to abstain from the critical votes pushing this tax hike onto the ballot.

Conclusion: The Lee County Taxpayers Association urges the City Council to halt this reckless bond proposal. We advise all Bonita Springs residents and business owners to look at the raw source data at usataxfighters.org and **VOTE NO on August 18, 2026**, to protect their wallets and their grandchildren from a 30-year debt sentence.

Thank you for your assistance in ensuring these comments and verification documents are formally entered into the public record.

Sincerely,
Dave Jaye
Chairman, Lee County Taxpayers Association
25810 Hickory Blvd. Apt. 603, Bonita Springs, FL 34134
586-488-5177

ATTACHMENT:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Newly Uncovered Tax Records Reveal Railroad Track Only Worth \$378k Now Being Sold to Bonita Taxpayers for \$28.6 Million

BONITA SPRINGS, FL — In a brazen taxpayer heist, the City of Bonita Springs is pushing voters to approve \$28.6 million for just 6.15 miles of the Seminole Gulf Railroad corridor— land the Lee County Property Appraiser values at only \$378,005 on the 2025 tax roll. That’s a 93-to-1 rip-off— 93 times the official taxable value— turning public money into a massive windfall for a private railroad while saddling residents with \$170 million in total debt and a century of toxic cleanup. See the full audit and documents: <https://usataxfighters.org/bonita-springs-tax-increase-proposal-what-taxpayers-need-to-know/>



The Scandal in Plain Numbers:

- **Official Tax Value:** \$378,005 (Real Assessed Value per 2025 Lee County Tax Roll for the Seminole Gulf Railroad Bonita Springs segment)
- **City Offer:** \$28.6 million— 93 times higher
- **Ballot Ask:** \$35 million bond (ballot measure August 18, 2026) that balloons to \$70 million with 30 years of interest and fees
- **Phase 2 Bombshell:** Another \$100 million+ for full Rails-to-Trails conversion— ripping out tracks, removing 100 years of industrial pollution (HazMat), paving the corridor, and building bridges over Bonita Beach Road, W. Terry, and Old 41.
- **Total Taxpayer Hit:** \$170 million — all for “as-is” contaminated railroad dirt
- **Railroad Keeps All Revenue:** Billboard, cell towers, Utility & Lease annual payments continue even after taxpayers buy the land for \$28.6 million.

“This is a taxpayer mugging,” said Dave Jaye, Chairman of the Lee County Taxpayers Association (LCTA). “The railroad pays only \$4,000 a year in taxes by claiming their land is almost worthless. Now Mayor Gibson and the City Council

want to give the Seminole Gulf RailRoad a \$28.6 million golden parachute while forcing families and businesses to swallow \$170 million in debt and toxic cleanup costs. This is a Red Alert Emergency caused by government incompetence.

Serious Red Flags & Conflicts of Interest:



- **No independent appraisal** before the vote—deliberately delayed until *after* the August 18 election.
- **Purchase agreement hidden** from the public— LCTA had to file a public records request to expose the 21-page sweetheart deal
- **Mayor’s glaring conflict:** Mayor Mike Gibson owns a bike shop and pizza parlor just 500 feet from the proposed trail. His businesses stand to make a windfall in increased revenue if voters approve this \$170 million taxpayer-funded project.
- **Unknown railroad influence:** It remains unclear how much — if any — money the City Council or the Mayor has received from the Seminole Gulf Railroad or its allies.
- **Zero Rail Road accountability** for 100+ years of industrial hazardous waste left behind for taxpayers to clean up. City buys the rail-road segment “As is”.

No competent government would force taxpayers to pay 93 times the appraised value for polluted land without a proper appraisal, full environmental disclosure, or cleanup agreement. Yet that’s exactly what Bonita Springs voters are being asked to approve. No responsible buyer— let alone a city spending taxpayer dollars— would pay 93 times the tax-appraised value for polluted land without a full appraisal, full disclosure, or an environmental cleanup agreement. Yet that’s exactly what Bonita Springs voters are being asked to approve. The Lee County Taxpayers Association urges voters to **REJECT** this reckless \$35 million bond property tax increase on August 18, 2026.

COMING SOON: The Bonita Springs Debt Sentence Calculator Bonita Springs residents and business owners are about to get the clear, unfiltered financial data that City Hall is trying to hide before the August 18th election. The Lee County Taxpayers Association is finalizing our interactive 30-Year Debt Sentence Calculator. Watch this space. The calculator—your most powerful weapon for fiscal accountability—is coming soon.

“Before you vote please review the tax rolls, the purchase agreement, and our audit at <https://usataxfighters.org/>” asked Dave Jaye. “The Rail Road and the Mayor get the meat, and the taxpayers get the bone. Protect your wallet and your grandchildren from this 30-year \$170 property tax increase by voting no on August 18, 2026”

About the Lee County Taxpayers Association: A non-partisan watchdog fighting for government transparency, fiscal responsibility, and taxpayer rights. Visit <https://usataxfighters.org/> for source documents and updates.

LEE COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
Exposing Public Corruption and Wasteful Spending
Dave Jaye Researcher (586) 488-5177
dave.jaye55@gmail.com
<https://usataxfighters.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/LeeCountyTaxpayersAssociation>
<https://tripledippers.org/>

\$35 Million Property Tax Increase Proposal on August 18, 2026
Ballot for Bonita Springs to Buy Rail Road Tracks

Railroad's 'MEAT':
Billboards & Utility Revenue
(\$200k year/6M over 30 Years)

Taxpayer's 'BONE':
Environmental Liabilities &
\$100 Millions+ Unfunded
Infrastructure

usataxfighters.org





Dave Jaye <dave.jaye55@gmail.com>

Information Request: Assessed Valuation for Seminole Gulf Railway (Estero & Bonita Springs)

3 messages

Dave Jaye <dave.jaye55@gmail.com>

Tue, May 12, 2026 at 4:55 PM

To: DataServices <DataServices@leepa.org>

Bcc: Jude Richvale <juder@gisdbs.com>, Joseph Doyle <naplespatriots@comcast.net>, Ron George <rongeorgephd@gmail.com>

DataServices@leepa.org

Subject: Information Request: Assessed Valuation for Seminole Gulf Railway (Estero & Bonita Springs)

To the Lee County Property Appraiser Data Services Team,

I am writing to request a summary of the current assessed and taxable valuations for all real property parcels and tangible personal property accounts held by the **Seminole Gulf Railway (SGLR)**, or its subsidiaries, within the following specific jurisdictions:

- 1. The City of Bonita Springs**
- 2. The Village of Estero**

Specifically, I am looking for a breakdown of the 2025/2026 assessment roll data that identifies the market value, assessed value, and taxable value for the railroad corridor and associated infrastructure within these municipal boundaries.

I would prefer to receive this information in an electronic format (such as an Excel or PDF summary) to avoid any unnecessary printing costs or clerical time.

Please let me know if there are any specific forms or fees associated with this informational request. We would appreciate a timely response to this inquiry. If this request cannot be fulfilled as an informal inquiry or within a reasonable timeframe, please let me know so that I may transition this into a formal Public Records Request (PRR) per Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.

Thank you for your assistance and for your office's commitment to providing transparent data to Lee County residents.

Sincerely,

Dave Jaye 25810 Hickory Blvd. Apt. 603 Bonita Springs, FL 34134
586 488 5177

DataServices <DataServices@leepa.org>

Wed, May 13, 2026 at 11:20 AM

To: Dave Jaye <dave.jaye55@gmail.com>

Good morning,

Attached is the 2025 Tax Roll value breakdown for the Seminole Gulf Railway in the City of Bonita Springs and Village of Estero. The 2026 values are not available at this time.

Regards,

Craig Herrera

Lee County Property Appraiser's Office

(v) (239) 533-6185

(e) dataservices@leepa.org

**** FREE DATA & INFORMATION ****

Code Information

<http://www.leepa.org/systems/Codes.aspx>

Interactive Reports

<http://www.leepa.org/OnlineReports/Reports.aspx>

Tax Roll Data & Information

<http://www.leepa.org/Roll/TaxRoll.aspx>

GIS Data & Parcel Information

<http://www.leegov.com/gis/data/gis-data>

****All records exempt from public disclosure per Florida Statute 119 have been removed.**

****Lee County Property Appraiser's Office makes no warranties, expressed or implied, including those of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose for any work product provided. In no event shall Lee County Property Appraiser have any liability for lost profits or incidental or consequential damages, regardless of the cause.**

****Florida has a very broad Public Records Law. Most written communications to or from government officials are regarded as public records and may be made available to the public and media upon request. Your email communications may therefore be subject to public disclosure****

From: Dave Jaye <dave.jaye55@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2026 4:55 PM

To: DataServices <DataServices@leepa.org>

Subject: Information Request: Assessed Valuation for Seminole Gulf Railway (Estero & Bonita Springs)


[Quoted text hidden]

How did we do? We want to hear from you!

<http://www.leepa.org/Feedback/Feedback.aspx>

Under Florida law, email addresses are public records. If you do not want your email address released in response to a public records request, do not send email to the Lee County Property Appraiser Office. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing.

Lee County Property Appraiser Office

 **LCPA 2026-05-13.xlsx**
10K

Dave Jaye <dave.jaye55@gmail.com>
To: DataServices <DataServices@leepa.org>

Fri, May 15, 2026 at 2:46 PM

Hello Craig,

Got the 2025 data, thanks for sending that over quickly. Keep up the good work

I will use this for now.

TY,

Dave Jaye

[Quoted text hidden]

Rail Short Name	County	Jurisdiction	Jurisdiction Allocation Percentage	Total Track Miles
SGR	Lee	157 Bonita Springs	13.40161255	6.15
SGR	Lee	340 Village Of Este	11.48398344	5.27

Real Just Value	10% Cap Limitation (Based On Prev.Year)	Real Assessed Value	TPP Just value
\$378,005	\$84,173	\$293,832	\$15,757
\$330,362	\$73,564	\$256,798	\$13,502

TPP Exemption	TPP Taxable Value	Total Taxable Value	Penalty Percentage
\$3,350	\$12,407	\$306,239	
\$2,871	\$10,631	\$267,429	



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9101 Bonita Beach Road
Bonita Springs, Florida 34135

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC COMMENTS
May 20, 2026

COMMENT #2

Sent: 05/19/26 – 2:27pm
From: Alan Glazier <alanaglazier@gmail.com>
To: City Council and Mike Fiigon

Subject: Item #5 Consent Agenda

From Alan Glazier 67 years resident
42 years Bonita Springs Historical Society
2nd President
12 years Historical Preservation Board
Last Chairman

Member of Community Involved Family from the Chamber of Commerce, Board of Realtors to the Bonita Springs Utilities

I ask you to pull the Item about the Demolition of the Goodbread Building from the Consent Agenda and Move it to a Night Meeting or Stop the Demolition all together. Many people have Voiced their Opinion About having these items in a Morning Meeting and also not wanting it Demolished But to save it use it for something. We lost the Elementary School do you want to Inflict even more Pain on our Community? The Building still has Historic Designation ask Mike Fiigon. There have been Plans sent to the City for Use of the Building or Facade for Historic Displays. The Historic Preservation Board set aside \$500,000 to restore it use for this Purpose. This Property belongs to the Residents of Bonita Springs not just the Council as was said on 5/6 when it was said we Own it and can do what we want with it. Some Council Members have Voiced being Offended by being called Carpetbaggers. I ask you then to Prove that you care for Bonita and if you have a History here Stand Up and Show that you Care about Preserving what We Have Left of Downtown. Also at the last meeting I heard mention of the Founding Fathers. Bonita Springs goes back decades before the Turn of the Century it goes back to the 1920's and before it was built on the Backs of People by the Name of Lietner, Liles / Lyles

,Harvard,Haines,Glazier,Nelson,McSwain,Huttenbrock,Higginson,Paul,Goodwin,Reahard,Trew and Many more. It was built by Members of the Council of Clubs, The Board of Trade, Chamber Of Commerce and many other organizations of Community Active Groups. Have you ever went to a Square Dance at the Community Hall a Teen Dance there a Ball Game at the Old Ball Field or many other things that were done in the Pavilion? That's our History and that's why we want to save what we can.

One of the Designations of Old 41 is Historic Downtown Bonita Springs.

May is Historic Preservation Month and I haven't heard anything about a Proclamation for that. So I ask you to pull this Item 5 from the Consent Agenda and Once and For All Support Historic Preservation in Bonita Springs.

Thank You

Alan Arnold Glazier Proud Resident of Bonita Springs

END COMMENTS