

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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**SPECIAL BUDGET ANALYSIS COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**May 8, 2014**

**3:00 p.m.**

**City Hall**

**117 W. Duval St., 1st Floor**

**Committee Room B**

**Attendance:** Council Members Clay Yarborough (Chair), Reggie Brown, Warren Jones, Don Redman, Matt Schellenberg

**Excused:** Council Member Richard Clark, Robin Lumb

**Also**: Kirk Sherman – Council Auditor’s Office;Paige Johnston – General Counsel Office; Paula Shoup– Legislative Services Division; Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research Division

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

Council Member Yarborough called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

**Regulatory Compliance - Kimberly Scott, Director**

Ms. Scott introduced her staff and began with a brief summary of the four divisions (Animal Care and Protective Services, Environmental Quality, Mosquito Control and Municipal Code Compliance) within the department. The current budget is $14.4 million with 47% being allocated for salaries. Department revenue totals $1.4 million from various fees and payments for services rendered. The major source of revenue comes from Animal Care & Protective Services and Environmental Quality Divisions. Regulatory Department has 252 FTEs and 7 part-time positions. There are 50 vacancies of which 21 are unfunded grant positions. The department is working with Employee Services to fill vacancies based on divisional needs. Notable projects and initiatives include involvement with various community groups; board and neighborhood improvement community meetings (CPACs, ShAdCos); neighborhood blight committee; and stakeholders’ town hall meetings. Ms. Scott reported that an Office of Consumer Affairs will be reestablished to handle enforcement of Chapter 250 – Miscellaneous Business Regulations; Chapter 696 – Unfair and Deceptive trade Practices; and Section 804.806 – Charitable Solicitations by Permit. Legislation for Consumer Affairs is being drafted for approval by MBRC which includes developing a budget. It should be noted that funds have been designated to cover the activity of this division for the remainder of this fiscal year. **CM Jones requested the cost of establishing the Office of Consumer Affairs and the number of consumer complaints reported to 630-City.**

*ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES DIVISION (ACPS) – Nikki Harris, Chief*

Ms. Harris reported that the function of ACPS was to ensure proper treatment and control of domesticated animals (dogs and cats) by enforcing laws, regulation, codes, and procedures. The most important function is to serve as a community source for adoptable pets. Key accomplishments include having the highest live-release rate in the division’s history: FY13 - 1947 euthanasia vs. FY12 - 4220 euthanasia. The first quarter of FY14 shows a save rate of over 90% which depicts a “No Kill” status. The key challenge for the current fiscal year is loss of staff due to budget cuts. The next four years ACPS is challenged with potential loss of three positions that are currently funded by First Coast No More Homeless Pets. This agency has been informed their grant award is being decreased which prevents the funding of the three positions. Additional fiscal challenges include anticipated increase in internal grounds/building maintenance costs (air condition units, corroded pipes and kennels) replacement of washers/dryers. ACPS opportunities for income and compliance are expected to increase with the availability of web licensing, renewals and submissions; and collection of outstanding final judgments associated with citations. Year-to-date outcomes show that 2172 animals have been adopted and 2492 animals transferred to Humane Society. Ms. Scott reported that Clerk of Court is preparing a list of all active/outstanding final judgments. She estimates there being approximately 10,000 judgments. Typically, the cost of a final judgment is $500. Ms. Harris stated the owner of an unlicensed pet can be given a payable citation. Citizens can call in an address of suspected unlicensed animals to be investigated. The response time for collection of deceased animals is generally within one business day. There are fifteen officers for the entire county of which one has the sole responsibility of collecting deceased animals. Ms. Harris discussed feral cats and suggested that the division is called to provide assistance and training to residents with concerns. **CM Schellenberg requested an update on whether all the Mandarin feral cats had been sprayed and neutered.**

*EVIRONMENTAL QUALITY DIVISION (EQD) - Melissa Long, Acting Chief*

Ms. Long reported that the primary function of EQD is to improve the quality of life in Jacksonville by addressing several aspects of environmental protection. The division addresses noise complaints; responds 24 hours a day to hazardous material emergency incidents; performs extensive monitoring of surface waters; ensures compliance with Nation Ambient Air Quality Standards and air monitoring; inspects construction sites to ensure proper erosion and sediment control measures; and provides technical oversight for the removal of petroleum contamination and chemical contaminants from City’s environment. There are 500 sites that remove 250,000 to 400,000 pounds of these contaminants a year. EQD staff has significantly reduced the permit processing time by 83% by revising procedures. It now takes an average of five days for processing. The Emergency Response Activity provided in-house OSHA-mandated training to City first-responder employees which resulted in a cost savings of $23,925. Another key accomplishment of EQD is the involvement with Neighborhood Ad Hoc Blight Committee that led to modifications and improvements of the inspection process related to water pollution at car washes. The next four years presents challenges in the increase of certification costs from the Department of Health due to privatization of the laboratory certification operations; and cost associated with equipment replacement, repairs and maintenance. Ms. Long stated that EQD requires additional funding from the Tag Fee Fund Balance and Air Pollution 105 Grant to replace aging air monitoring equipment. The division requires $3,500 for the maintenance contract cost associated with a mercury analyzer. The division hosts key events through the Environmental Protection Board such as the Environmental Symposium, Water Festival and Air Festival at the Museum of Science and History. There is a lack of a common platform that exists for data-sharing amongst agencies involved in water well and groundwater contamination issues in Duval County. The division is seeking to improve communication and create a data-sharing program through collaboration with Duval County Health Department and Department of Environmental Protection staff. This opportunity will provide more efficiency and better accessibility. The EQD staff and ITD are in the process of developing a GIS CARE Dashboard to allow field access for staff to review complaints that may be in the same area of daily inspections to provide quicker response. Other notable initiatives include providing e-permitting to make it more convenient for customers; screening of shellfish beds for possible reopening; preparing for 5 year assessment of the Basin Management Action Plan.

Ms. Long provided a brief summary of her background which includes chemical engineering with extensive environmentally based experience. There was detailed discussion about the contamination concerns of the Ribault River and Brownfield sites. **Ms. Long commented that EQD staff would look into Ribault River issues along with providing a list of studies conducted for CM Brown. Ms. Scott committed to CM Brown to complete the review and research as it pertains to need of staff, services and/or division to deal with Brownfield sites. CM Jones requested to meet with Ms. Long to discuss McCoy’s Creek and lumber yard on Fairfax.** Ms. Long shared information about the importance of ditches to the extensive municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4). Ditches filter and slow down the water flow to allow some treatment to occur. There is an unfunded federal mandated regarding septic tank removals. Ms. Long shared that this mandate is the responsibility of Public Works. She intends to collaborate with PW as it relates to the developmental plans. She suggested that removal be prioritized according to those closest to the river with the highest impact.

*MOSQUITO CONTROL DIVISION (MCD) – John Shellhorn, Chief*

Mr. Shellhorn reported that this division protects public health and enhances the quality of life by suppressing mosquitos that transmit disease and cause discomfort. The division monitors mosquitos; spray insecticides; treat habitats; and educate the public on prevention and protection. Revenue enhancements include a fully-budgeted carryover of state funds in 2014 compensated for general fund cuts in the operation budget; and state contribution to local mosquito control program appears solid for FY 2015. Innovation accomplishments include partnership with Naval Entomology Center for Excellence at NAS Jax for training and equipment testing; purchase of wheeled helicopter lift-jack forestalled issue with door height at hanger; and roof replacement project that evolved into a major building renovation with energy savings and ADA compliance. The major challenges for MCD are the reduction of aerial spray capability and decreased staff. Over the next four years, challenges will include seeking funding for new helicopter; reinstating operating funds to replace depleted state fund balance; and preparing for possible disease outbreak scenarios. The cost of a new fully equipped helicopter is $1.1 to $1.3 million dollars. There are several areas of opportunities which include adopting nighttime aerial spraying using night visions goggles; upgrading vehicle tracking system for safety, reporting and improved transparency of operations; incorporating a mobile technology for field service technicians. In the area of technology, MCD is working with ITD to secure a replacement database to address existing process delays, aids in inspections, and support production of management reports. The IT inventory is up-to-date. Some of the notable initiatives are securing a MOU with Duval County Health Department for cooperation on mosquito-borne disease responses; expanding its public outreach through articles on mosquito protection measures in the Senior Service Division directory; and completion of a study utilizing specialized sampler to aid in targeting specific mosquito species.

Mr. Shellhorn commented that after inspections are done areas of breeding are prioritized for aerial service. It should be noted that a certain area has a limit of number of sprays it can received. Also, aerial sprays can only be done during specific times. On a busy yearly average, the division could receive approximately 9000 service requests. There was discussion about storm water retention ponds as it relates to regulating maintenance and mosquito control. Ms. Long stated regulations falls under Water Management District or Department of Environmental Protection depending on when pond was permitted. Mr. Shellhorn reported that the procurement process to surplus helicopters at Craig Field has begun. The division works with the JSO officer in Public Works to address issues related to waste tires. **Mr. Shellhorn will provide CM Brown a listing of well fund mosquito programs in other cities throughout the State of Florida.**

*MUNICIPAL CODE COMPLIANCE DIVISION (MCCD) – Mr. Robert Prada, Acting Chief*

Mr. Prada stated that Municipal Code Compliance Division serves as property safety/maintenance, zoning and sign code enforcement for the City of Jacksonville. Some of the common issues investigate by MCCD include, but are not limited to, unsafe structures; nuisance overgrowth; vacant and open buildings; abandoned/junk vehicles; illegal signage, and; unpermitted land use. The key accomplishments include enforcement of Chapter 741 (Zero Tolerance for Litter); participation in Operation Urban Blight; and participation in Operation Dolphin. In FY13, 2094 citations were issued with $99,780 collected in fines. In FY14, 682 citations have been issued with $32,823 collected in fines. There have been over 5500 opened inspections since the establishment of Operation Urban Blight. The current and four year division challenges are staff shortage and difficulty in recruitment due to retirements and comparable salary levels; and internal process to appropriate funding from the Nuisance Abatement Special Lien Fund to MCCD for contractual services expense delay compliance by city contractors. The “robo-call” automatic dialing system, modern database system with upgraded hardware, and collection of outstanding final judgments of citations are key opportunities for the division. Technology within MCCD needs upgrading to provide more efficiency and accuracy. ITD is working on an Enterprise Land Management system to replace the PICS database. Field inspectors are in need of new laptop computers. The “robo-call” system will dial the telephone number associated with illegal posted signs on the right-of-way. An automated message provides information to resolve the issue. Upon payment of the citation the calls will end. Mr. Prada stated that the Ad Hoc Blight committee is seeking funding for “robo-call” for this fiscal year. There was detailed discussion about feather signs in front of businesses. They can be included in the business square footage of signage. These types of signs are routinely cited for being on right-of-way. **Mr. Prada will follow up with CM Lumb regarding the permitting of feather/pole signs through the building department.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Strasser provided details about his involvement with No More Homeless Pets and the impact the facility (Joseph A. Strasser Animal Health & Welfare Building) has had on the community through providing high quality spray/neuter services. He stated that the City was nearing a No-Kill community. He shared that it cost less to adopt a pet versus euthanasia.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:01p.

Yvonne P. Mitchell, Council Research Division (904) 630-1679

Posted 05.16.14 5:00 p.m.