

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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**COURTHOUSE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**June 18, 2014**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Location:** City Council Conference Room A, Suite 425, City Hall – St. James Building; 117 West Duval Street

**In attendance:** Committee Members Greg Anderson (Chair), Denise Lee and John Crescimbeni

Also: Council Member Doyle Carter; Janice Billy – Council Auditor’s Office; Philip Zamarron – Legislative Services Division

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees

**Meeting Convened**: 10:08 a.m.

Chairman Anderson convened the meeting with a quorum present and the attendees in the room introduced themselves for the record.

Assistant Council Auditor Janice Billy reviewed the latest update of the unified courthouse project budget which shows that the project is on track to be completed within the $350 million overall budget. $338,875,621 has been expended to date, $10,635,953 has been committed/ encumbered and $488,786 remains unencumbered as of June 10th. She reported that $93,346 remains unspent of the $775,000 allocated for furniture purchases. Chief Judge Donald Moran stated that some chairs regularly used by JSO officers and bailiffs are experiencing upholstery damage from the officers’ gun belts and recommended that some of these excess funds be used to reupholster the chairs in a more sturdy fabric.

Joe Capraro of Morganti Construction gave an update on the progress of the conversion of the old federal courthouse into the new State Attorney’s office. The floors from the mezzanine up to the 5th floor are almost completely shelled in and interior finishes are beginning from the top floor down, including tile installation and installation of air conditioning. Work on completing the first floor will begin as soon as City Council approves the pending ordinance to allocate an additional $1.2 million for the build-out. Morganti anticipates having a punch list of needed adjustments and items for completion assembled by September for completion by building occupancy in December. State Attorney Angela Corey reported that half of the additional funding for the first floor build-out will pay for deposition rooms that previously were not included anywhere in the unified courthouse project budget, and the other half will house facilities for the civil citation and diversionary program operations.

A question was raised about when and how the Art in Public Places process will take place to choose artwork for the two buildings. Public Works Director Jim Robinson will communicate with the Jacksonville Cultural Council which runs the Art in Public Places Commission for the City to begin the process.

The committee discussed the current status and future plans for Monroe Street in front of the courthouse. Jason Teal of the General Counsel’s Office reported that the street was removed for the courthouse construction process but has never been legally closed and the right-of-way abandoned, so the road still exists on paper. Council Member Boyer stated that the last legislative act by City Council on the subject transferred $750,000 earmarked for Monroe Street reconstruction out of the courthouse project budget to use for an ash site remediation project, pending a future decision on the restoration of Monroe Street after the courthouse had been in operation for some time and vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns and issues could be evaluated.

Jim Robinson reported on the financial close-out of the courthouse construction project. He said that the Public Works Department and Office of General Counsel, after consultation about the best way to resolve outstanding between the City and Turner Construction and to bring the project to satisfactory conclusion, determined that the best course of action was for the City to pay Tuner its guaranteed maximum price of $245,640,000 in return for which Turner would release the City from any further claims of liability and drop any legal actions. The City paid Turner the remainder of its fee in early June so any remaining funds in the courthouse construction account are now free to be transferred to the State Attorney’s office project, which is what led to the introduction of pending ordinance 2014-408 to allocate $1.2 million for that purpose. Mr. Robinson said that Turner has reported to the City that all but one of its subcontractors has been paid at this point, and a check has been cut to the last company that is being held in escrow by that company’s attorney while remaining issues are resolved. Judge Moran indicated that he understood that W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractors had not been paid by Turner and urged the City to double-check on the status of subcontractor payments. In response to a question Mr. Robinson stated that Turner Construction will pay for all post-completion warranty work pursuant to their contract with no further City funding.

Council Member Lee congratulated all parties involved for nearing the end of a long but ultimately successful process of providing much-needed court facilities for the city for decades to come.

Public comment

John Parker of the Northeast Florida Building Trades Association stated that the courthouse project eventually had a mix of both local and out-of-town labor, and urged the committee to fund ways to do more with local preference hiring so that local taxpayers can reap the benefits of their taxes through employment on local building projects. He urged the City to hire companies that have bona fide apprenticeship programs that train new generations of craftsmen.

**Meeting adjourned:** 10:51 a.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research

6.19.14 Posted 2:30 p.m.

Tapes: Courthouse Oversight Committee meeting – LSD

6.18.14