## Taxation, Revenue, and Utilization



**of Expenditures (TRUE) Commission**

### Marc Hassan, Chair

### Ralph Hodges, Vice Chair

**TRUE Commission**

**Internal Operations Committee Meeting Minutes**

**March 8, 2017**

**4:00 p.m.**

**Attendance:** Commissioners Barbara Finke (Chair), John Pittman, Niki Brunson, Greg Rachal, Danny Ferreira

**Also**: Jeff Clements – City Council Research

Chairwoman Barbara Finke called the meeting to order at 4:03p.m.

Legislative Tracking Committee policies and procedures

Commissioner Niki Brunson – Chair of the Legislative Tracking Committee, reported that the committee had decided at its last meeting to take a close look at proposed economic development incentives in light of the commission’s authority under its authorizing ordinance (Chapter 57, Ordinance Code) and in relation to the provisions of Article 7, Part 10 of the Florida Constitution which prohibits local governments to “become a joint owner with, or stockholder of, or give, lend or use its taxing power or credit to aid any corporation, association, partnership or person…” The TRUE Commission, through Council President Lori Boyer, has requested an opinion from the General Counsel about the constitutionality of local government economic development incentives given the apparent constitutional prohibition cited above.

The committee reviewed and commented on the Legislative Tracking Committee section of a proposed revision to the commission’s Policies and Procedures Manual. The revision states that it is the goal of the Legislative Tracking Committee to improve transparency, trustworthiness and accountability of the legislative process by developing good working relationships with City departments and affiliated agencies, observing economic development incentive negotiations and discussions, providing empirical evidence to support the commission’s recommendations on legislation, and collaborating with City agencies to improve accountability in contract award and management. The group discussed at what point a project or proposal merited TRUE Commission interest and participation; Commissioner Brunson advocated for participation from the earliest stages so that the commission can act as the public’s eyes and ears and can build a base of knowledge from which to make credible suggestions and recommendations. Jeff Clements, Chief of the Council Research Division, noted that economic incentive proposals are currently not made public until they reach the agenda of a public body (Downtown Investment Authority or City Council); prior staff discussions and negotiations are confidential until finalized.

Commissioner Brunson suggested that the TRUE Commission needs a full-time staff person to truly fulfill its potential, someone who could attend numerous meetings on the commission’s behalf, manage relations with City departments, provide in-depth research, etc. Commissioner Ferreira noted that there may be some push-back and potential resentment if the commission tries to become a more active and engaged entity, despite the fact that the purpose would be to represent the views of average citizen and the CPACs in the halls of power.

The committee will meet again on April 12th at 4:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

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