**Taxation, Revenue, and Utilization**



**of Expenditures (TRUE) Commission**

**Niki Brunson, Chair**

**LEGISLATIVE TRACKING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**April 13, 2018**

**11:00 a.m.**

**City Council Conference Room B**

**Suite 425, City Hall**

**Attendance:** TRUE Commissioners John Roberts, Greg Rachal, Gloria Stephens, Jon McGowan (arr. 11:09)

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

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

The meeting was called to order at 11:04 a.m. and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

The group talked about the process by which the committee reviews legislation and how to select the bills worthy of review and comment.

**2018-223** (approving Economically Distressed Area Targeted Industry Program (EDATIP) Grant to Project Cart) – Jeff Clements explained that this is the first time the Council will be using this new economic development program, which was created during the last re-write of the City’s Public Investment Policy to provide incentive options to small-scale projects that don’t qualify for the City’s other typical incentives because of their relatively modest capital investment, average wage, and job creation expectations.

**2018-228** (transferring $113,430.20 in funds Recaptured to Gen Fund - GSD for FY 216/2017 to Huguenot Park Subfund to address the Negative Cash Balance) – the committee was curious about the reasons why Huguenot Park has a negative budget balance, wondering whether it a result of park closure due to Hurricane Irma or more systemic causes.

Jeff Clements reported that the City administration is in the midst of a citywide fee study, looking at all the various fees the City charges to determine if they are necessary and sufficient to achieve their intended purposes. The committee was interest in how long that study will take and whether the Council will ultimately set the new fee levels.

**2018-230** (appropriating $1,730,860.08 in remaining unspent funds in the Dune Restoration Acct to provide funding for Post-Hurricane Irma Beach and Dune Repairs) – Commissioner Rachel questioned why the City didn’t we spend the available $1.7M trying to be proactive to get the beaches/dunes ready ahead of the 2018 hurricane season. Commissioner McGowan said that beach and dune work are very dependent on state and federal government funding and the timing of the release of that funding. He said the 3 beaches cities will push hard for action on this issue because the beach is so important to their identity and economy. Commissioner Rachal said the City needs to move as quickly as possible to be sure it gets whatever state and federal funds are available before any deadlines expire.

**2018-229** (declaring 2 parcels of property on Wilson Boulevard to be surplus and authorizing sale for less than appraised value) – the committee questioned why it would be in the City’s interest to sell the land and buildings for less than their appraised value.

**2018-234** (authorizing an exchange of two parcels of property at no cost) – Mr. Clements explained that bill provides for a swap of a non-repairable house (owner is eligible to participate in City’s Limited Repair Program, but the house is in such poor condition that the maximum amount of funding available will be insufficient to bring the house up to code standards) for a previously-repaired house the City has taken back from the owner via foreclosure.

**2018-236** (Creating New Sec. 111.601 - Tourist Development Donations & Sponsorships Special Revenue Fund) – Mr. Clements explained a series of changes made recently to the Duval County Tourist Development Council’s contact with Visit Jacksonville, Inc. for convention and visitor services and tourism marketing service. As part of entering into a new multi-year agreement between the TDC and Visit Jax, then-Council President Boyer insisted on numerous changes in contracting and accountability standards for Visit Jax in the new contracts. This particular bill addressed a situation regarding budgeting funds for the visitor information stand at Jacksonville International Airport, which is also financially supported by St. Johns and Nassau Counties.

The group determined that no bills among the new introductions stand out as needing further investigation. Commissioner McGowan posed the question, if the TRUE wanted to say something about 2018-229, for instance, what would the process be? How would the committee or full commission take action in a timely manner to express an opinion to City Council? Could the Legislative Tracking Committee vote to send a note of concern to the City Council in hopes of influencing their consideration? Could the full commission delegate to the Legislative Tracking Committee the authority to raise a concern directly with a Council committee, or would any action take ratification by the full commission? The members proposed that delegation of power by the full commission to the Legislative Tracking Committee to at least inform the Council about TRUE’s interest/potential concern would give the commission a mechanism for more timely input into the legislative process. Commissioner Roberts suggested that perhaps the full commission could delegate to Legislative Tracking the ability to express an opinion to Council, with the proviso that any commissioner could subsequently call a special meeting of the full commission to discuss the issue. The subject will be raised for discussion in the next full commission meeting and could lead to consideration of additional changes to the Policies and Procedures Manual currently being revised by the Internal Operations Committee. No action on a specific bill is needed at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

Jeff Clements, City Council Research Division

Posted 4.13.18 4:30 p.m.