

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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4TH FLOOR, CITY HALL

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**FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING #3 MINUTES**

 **August 22, 2018**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Location:** City Council Chamber, City Hall – St. James Building; 117 West Duval Street,

**In attendance:** Council Members Greg Anderson, Joyce Morgan, Lori Boyer, Reggie Gaffney, Bill Gulliford, Jim Love, Sam Newby

**Excused**:

**Also**: Council Members Danny Becton, Terrance Patterson, Garret Dennis (arr. 9:05), Matt Schellenberg (arr. 11:29)

Peggy Sidman – Office of General Counsel; Kyle Billy and Brian Parks - Council Auditor’s Office; Adri Maguire-Segui - Legislative Services Division; Sam Mousa – Mayor’s Office; Mike Weinstein and Angela Moyer – Finance and Administration Department

**Meeting Convened**: 9:01 a.m.

Chairman Anderson convened the meeting and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

**Page references from this point refer to Auditor’s Budget Hearing #3 handout.**

Tax Collector

Sherry Hall, Chief Administrative Officer of the Tax Collector’s Office, answered questions from the committee about on-line e-check payments without any added fees for county transactions, utilization of which is three times higher now than when a charge was applied for that service. Fees for state transactions still apply, which aren’t controlled at the local level. Council Member Boyer invited Ms. Hall to present her enhancement request, which is for addition of 4 new entry level employees at $147,904 (salaries and benefits) to restore positions lost to cuts several years ago when budgets were stressed. CAO Sam Mousa said that the request for 4 new employees was made to the Mayor’s Budget Review Committee but did not make the final cut for the proposed budget. He cautioned the committee about adding additional continuing costs given the possibility of the additional homestead exemption being approved in the November referendum and costing the City substantial revenue. Council Member Gulliford thanked Ms. Hall for he performance in the Tax Collector’s Office over many years. Ms. Hall said that the Tax Collector’s contract for e-transactions is coming up for renewal shortly and they will be looking for opportunities to lower costs.

Supervisor of Elections

**Motion**: on p. 6, approve the Council Auditor’s recommendation to increase part-time hours by 64,284 hours to 276,600 hours within the Elections activity to more accurately reflect the number of part-time hours projected to be used in the three elections scheduled in FY 2018/19. This has no impact on Special Council Contingency – **approved unanimously**

**Motion**: on p. 6, recommend decreasing security guard service by $4,482, salaries overtime by $9,613,

and Medicare Tax by $139 to reflect the savings in security guard services and library staff overtime in the Supervisor of Election budget that resulted from the additional Library hours budgeted in FY 2018/19. This will have a positive impact of $14,234 on Special Council Contingency – **approved unanimously**

In response to a question from Council Member Dennis about funding for 2 additional early voting sites on college campuses (UNF and Edward Waters College), Supervisor of Elections Mike Hogan reported that a recent ruling by a court specifically permitting college campuses to be used for early voting does not mandate their use but leaves the discretion to the local supervisor. He said that other counties have used college campuses and seen very little activity at those sites. Because of demands from the community for college campus sites, his office proposes to open one site at the Edward Waters College campus (which already has a regular voting precinct) by purchasing additional equipment using available federal funds and reallocating some salary funding. While UNF officials have been very cooperative in discussions about a site there, Mr. Hogan sees the implementation of a site at UNF as more logistically problematic although they are still exploring options. He did not need any budget enhancements to add these two additional sites. He also noted that there is a lawsuit pending in state court that, if successful, would require all elections offices statewide to print their ballots in both English and Spanish, which would add another layer of complexity and cost if mandated to be implemented by the November election. In response to a question from Council Member Becton, Robert Phillips of the Supervisor of Elections Office said that the Southeast Regional and Pablo Creek libraries are the nearest early voting sites to the UNF campus. Supervisor Hogan said that shuttle buses from the campus to those early voting site libraries has been discussed.

Clerk of the Courts

In response to a question from Council Member Love, Allison Luker of the Clerk’s Office said the office does not need any capital improvements for county functions not already budgeted. In response to a question from Council Member Gulliford, she said that employee turnover is a problem, largely due to low starting salaries. Ms. Luker said that the Clerk’s Office has been a passport application office for the last three years and is seeing good traffic for that function at its two passport sites (county courthouse and Beaches branch office). Council Member Love suggested that the Clerk’s Office also become an outlet for Global Entry Forms, which currently require a drive to Central Florida to the nearest office.

Courts

In response to a question from Council Member Gulliford, Chief Judge Mark Mahon reported that the county’s drug court is a national model for success and recently received a substantial 5-year federal grant to support its operations. Terry Hanlon, director of the drug court program, said that the recidivism rate is 11%, which is extremely successful. Referrals to the drug court are rising substantially due to the opioid crises. The federal grant is particularly targeted at opioid abuse. Mr. Gulliford invited Ms. Hanlon to be a regular contributor to the City’s opioid task force. In response to a question from Council Member Morgan, Chief Judge Mahon described the activities of the Teen Court. Court Administrator Joe Stelma said that for the last two years the court has received substantial contributions from a private donor who believes in the mission of the Teen Court. In response to a question from Council Member Becton, Chief Judge Mahon said that civil and criminal filings are down somewhat and generating less fee revenue, and fees on criminal cases are difficult to collect, although that function is handled by the Clerk of the Courts, not court administration.

Court Cost Courthouse Trust

No recommendations

Teen Court Programs Trust

No recommendations

Court Costs $65 Fee

No recommendations

Recording Fees Technology

**Motion**: on p. 17, approve Council Auditor’s recommendation (a) to add the following items to the judicial budget using an additional transfer of $261,273 from recording fees technology fund balance: State Attorney - $54,163 increase in Professional Services, $4,654 increase in Miscellaneous Services and Charges, and $110,909 increase in Computer Equipment and Software; Public Defender - $52,749 increase in Computer Equipment and Software; Courts - $39,999 increase in Computer Equipment and Software – **approved unanimously**.

Judge Mahon requested an enhancement of $10,509 for purchase of replacement chairs for the courthouse. Ms. Boyer clarified with the court administrator that the request is intended to be recurring each year rather than a one-time allocation.

Public Defender

No recommendations

State Attorney

State Attorney Melissa Nelson said that new and exciting initiatives are being implemented to improve the climate and environment of the office and to better serve and protect the public. Juvenile diversion programs are being emphasized. She noted that Northeast Florida leads the state in drug overdose deaths and her office is prosecuting drug dealers to the greatest extent possible and referring drug cases to federal court where appropriate. Ms. Nelson said that she formed an advisory committee charged with developing a model for juvenile diversion programs and should be getting that report by the end of the year. Council Member Gulliford thanked Ms. Nelson for her office’s vital participation in the work of the opioid task force. In response to a question from Council Member Gaffney, Ms. Nelson said that the intersection of mental health issues and law enforcement is perennially troublesome. The City has very little alternative to incarcerating mentally ill offenders in the pre-trial detention center. The State Attorney’s Office is consulting with a judge from South Florida who is an expert in this field. Jacksonville does have a mental health court that is having success, and referrals to that court are up by 10% over the past year. Council Member Gaffney suggested greater use of court-ordered diversion to outpatient treatment programs to relieve the burden on the jail as a treatment site.

Regarding the State Attorney’s new offices, Ms. Nelson said her staff is very pleased with the building and has plenty of space for its operations. She intends to invite the Council to tour the building, which was postponed last year due to a hurricane. A crime data intelligence center is planned for the building.

**The committee was in recess from 11:00 to 11:14 a.m.**

Parks, Recreation and Community Services

Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services Daryl Joseph answered several questions about revenue sources and trends. Mr. Joseph described the creation of a new team in his department to provide the capacity to immediately tackle park maintenance needs as they arise. Council Member Boyer praised the work of landscape architect Jill Enz of the department who has provided great service in doing preliminary designs on projects to help get projects started without the need for hiring design consultants. Ms. Boyer proposed an enhancement to add one unfunded employee position to possibly be funded via reallocation later in the year for additional assistance with in-house design capacity. Mr. Mousa noted that the City used to have considerable design expertise in-house and eventually decided that contracting out was a better option to get the proper expertise for each job. He expressed no opposition to adding an additional unfunded position in the budget.

In response to a question from Council Member Gaffney, Mr. Joseph said that attendance is up at parks and pools and the department is planning greater publicity efforts to increase knowledge about and attendance at parks. Mr. Joseph reported that the department also had the services of a University of Florida landscape architecture student intern to help with departmental projects last year and is looking for more in the future. Several committee members expressed hope that the numerous maintenance and repair projects in their parks could be accomplished more quickly. In response to a question from Council Member Morgan, Mr. Joseph explained that different playground equipment is installed in different parks based on their size, characteristics and uses, and not all parks get the same equipment. Council Member Boyer asked about possibilities to maximize the joint use of community centers, senior centers, libraries and parks so as to get the most use out of existing public facilities by extending operating hours to serve the greatest possible audience. In response to a question from Council Member Gulliford, Mr. Joseph said that use of boat ramps is steadily increasing and parking for vehicles and boat trailers needs enhancement.

**The committee was in recess from 12:00 to 1:15 p.m.**

Huguenot Park

In response to a question from Council Member Gulliford, Mr. Joseph said that there are opportunities for increasing revenue at the park, particularly if electricity was installed and made available at campsites, which has been requested by campers. In response to a question from Council Member Boyer, Mr. Billy reported that there were no year-end fund recaptures from either Huguenot or Hanna Park in the current fiscal year. Revenues were down because of closures due to hurricane-related damages; the Huguenot campground and two picnic pavilions will reopen next weekend after a temporary road was installed to allow access while the permanent road is still being rebuilt, due for completion next summer.

Hanna Park

**Motion**: on p. 28, approve Council Auditor’s recommendation to eliminate the revenue line of $15,525 for Surcharges – Misc. and offset with an increase of the same amount in Camper Rentals – **approved unanimously.**

Council Member Boyer suggested that since revenues at Hanna Park are projected to grow by several hundred thousand dollars in FY18-19, this fund might be able to repay a portion of the General Fund subsidy made to the park several years ago to help balance its budget. Council Member Gulliford suggested that historical markers be erected at Hanna Park to commemorate the area’s very interesting history. Council Members Boyer and Gulliford praised the concession contractor working at the park for being very proactive and interested in improving the patron experience.

Cecil Field Commerce Center Recreation Center

No recommendations.

Equestrian Center-NEFL Equestrian Society

Mr. Billy noted an Auditor’s Office concern on p. 32 that the Taye Brown trust fund balance has decreased substantially over the last few years and will not be able to sustain its current level of subsidy transfer to the Equestrian Center beyond this year. Mr. Joseph said that improved operations at the Equestrian Center by the new management group should help improve revenues and reduce the subsidy need in the next several years. Mr. Joseph also noted that a covered show ring at the Center that was expected to open this year and improve the financial prospects is just getting ready to begin construction and will be open by the spring. Mr. Mousa said that the private group managing the Equestrian Center is facing financial difficulties in meeting their current fiscal year budget.

Planning and Development Department

In response to a question from Council Member Becton, Director Bill Killingsworth reported that the non-enterprise portions of the departmental budget are basically flat, but the enterprise function budgets are increasing with increasing workload. Council Member Boyer noted that the City has hit its state-mandated acreage cap on the of small scale land use changes for the calendar year and that new applications are being put on a wait list for processing next year. In response to another question from Ms. Boyer, Mr. Killingsworth explained the timing of the North Florida TPO’s next long range transportation plan update and the City’s mobility plan update that will occur in 2019. The current budget contains funding for the bicycle/ pedestrian portion of the City’s mobility plan update; the funding for the roadway update will be in the FY19-20 budget. Ms. Boyer urged the council members who will be serving on the next council to pay great attention to the TPO long range planning update which will guide roadway projects for the next 20 years.

Concurrency Management System

Mr. Billy noted an Auditor’s concern on p. 37 regarding the capacity of this fund to cover annual expenditures into the future. Fund balance has been transferred to make up deficits in operating expenses but is dwindling and is projected to not last more than three more years. Mr. Killingsworth explained that the end of the “fair share” system and concurrency capacity reservations has led to a decline in revenues in this function. Mr. Mousa suggested that the mobility fee application cost needs to be increased to cover the costs of mobility system administration. Council Member Boyer felt that the fee should be studied in conjunction with the City’s overall fee study and set at a rate that recoups the necessary costs of operating the system. Mr. Mousa said that at some point either the fee will need to be increased to keep the subfund solvent or a General Fund subsidy will be needed. Ms. Boyer said that other jurisdictions have adopted a deadline for participants in their concurrency management system to convert to their new mobility management system, and Jacksonville may wish to do the same.

Building Inspection (Excluding Fire & Rescue)

Mr. Mousa noted that the employee cap is increasing by 15 employees to deal with the upsurge in workload in the last two years. In response to an invitation by Council Member Becton, Chief of Building Inspection Tom Goldsbury explained a new process of assigning two employees to handle quick-turnaround minor application issues at the customer service counter (i.e. verifying a previously-reviewed plan that was just missing a document attachment) and answer to customer questions.

Next meetings

Thursday and Friday, August 23-24.

Outstanding items

* Non-departmental expenditures - Constitutional gas tax to fiscal agent
* Sheriff Williams – progress in hiring the 100 new officers, overall employment level, and the deployment of those new officers
* Sheriff Williams – red light camera removal
* Sheriff Williams – false alarm data since the implementation of the new registration system
* Clerk of the Courts – collection rate on the $3 and $65 fees

Special Council Contingency

Brian Parks reported that the Special Council Contingency fund stands at +$516,075

Enhancement requests

* AGAPE $150,000 additional funding request
* Additional funding for Public Service and Cultural Service grants
* City Council Legislative Services – additional Legislative Assistant position ($45,666 salary and benefits, unfunded) for succession planning – no impact to Special Council Contingency
* City Council - council member communications allowance of $2,416 and $2,183 for City hall parking for new council members
* Increased library hours
* Tax Collector – 4 new entry level positions at $147,904 (salaries and benefits)
* Chief Judge Mahon requested an ongoing enhancement of $10,905 in Other Equipment Under $1,000 for purchase of replacement chairs for the courthouse (can this be paid for out of the 1S1 fund?)
* Parks, Recreation and Community Services – add one unfunded position

**Meeting adjourned:** 2:40 p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research

8.22.18 Posted 5:00 p.m.

Tapes: Finance Budget Hearing #3 – LSD

 8.22.18

Materials: Council Auditor’s Budget Meeting #3 handout - LSD

 8.22.18