



Taxation, Revenue, and Utilization of Expenditures (TRUE) Commission

Niki Brunson, Chair

Daniel Henry, Vice Chair

John Roberts, Secretary

TRUE Commission Meeting Minutes

**June 6, 2019
4:00 p.m.**

Attendance: Commissioners John Roberts (Secretary), Mark Merritt, Jim Mazur, Greg Rachal, Jon McGowan, Jimmy Daniel, Daniel Henry, Keshan Chambliss, Jimmy Daniels

Excused: Commissioners Niki Brunson, Benjamin Wasson

Also: Jeff Clements – City Council Research; Tommy Carter – Council Auditor’s Office; Bill Clement, Tom Hackney, Joe Cowan, Larry Schmitt – Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

Secretary Roberts convened the meeting at 4:01 p.m. with a quorum present and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

Minutes

The minutes of the commission’s April 4 and May 2, 2019 meetings were **approved unanimously as distributed**.

Vice Chair Henry arrived and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Public comment

None

Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office – Tom Hackney (Director of Personnel and Professional Standards), Bill Clement (Chief of Budget and Management), Joe Cowan (Chief of Training and Professional Standards), Larry Schmitt (Chief of Personnel)

Bill Clement discussed the overtime requirements of the school guardian program for the Duval County Public Schools, which involves placing JSO officers on overtime in all the elementary schools that don’t have guards provided by the school system to comply with the new state law. The School Board pays \$17.50/hour for school guardians (\$12.50 for salary, \$5 for benefits); JSO pays in the low \$40s to mid-\$50s/hour for officers on overtime depending on their rank. The school system has hard time finding qualified applicants for the guardian positions. Chief Hackney recommended polygraph training (not required by state law) in addition to the psychological screening required by law as part of the guardian training and that has washed out a number of candidates, as has the extensive firearms training/accuracy requirement. There has also been a problem with charter schools hiring away the qualified, trained guardians at higher hourly rates. The School Board is now examining the possibility of hiring licensed

private security guards to provide the service, but Chief Hackney believes that additional JSO training should be required of those personnel as well to ensure their quality and competence. Chief Cowan said in response to a question that approximately 80% of non-guardian police academy students successfully graduate compared to less than 50% of the guardian candidates.

For next year the JSO budget office is preparing a budget based on the same level of reimbursement from the School Board – about 30% of the cost of the training and overtime. The funding methodology for the state funding for the program is fairly obscure – the School Board got an allocation of funding without much clarity about how the amount was determined. Chief Hackney reported that the guardians are in elementary schools; the middle and high schools are staffed by School Board school resource officers, who are paid a higher rate than the guardians, and many of whom are retired JSO officers.

In response to a question about the JSO's positive budget variance and the extent to which that results from unfilled positions, Bill Clement said that unspent salary funding reverts back to the General Fund at the end of the fiscal year. He explained the concept of a budget "lapse" that reflects the expected vacancy rate of positions and the cost savings from those positions not being filled for the entire year. The City Budget Office budgets a "lapse" for the department based on historical trends for vacancies and timing of hiring classes. The department projects 59 vacancies at the end of the current fiscal year. The JSO has hired a retired Navy chief to specifically recruit personnel retiring from the Navy, who tend to make good candidates for the department because of their training and experience. 30-40% of current police academy classes are now current or retired military. The JSO wants its force to reflect the community in all its diversity and is being much more successful in that regard in recent years. The change in the City's pension policy to a defined contribution plan from defined benefit has not been as much of a problem as originally feared. The JSO is attractive because the department is so large and diverse and has lots of advancement opportunities.

Chief Hackney offered to come to a future meeting and answer a list of questions posed by the commission.

Auditor's report

Tommy Carter, Council Auditor's Office, reported that 3 reports have been issued since the last commission meeting.

#747B – Follow-up on Indirect Cost Allocation Audit: the final 2 outstanding issues from the first follow-up report have been completed and the audit is considered closed.

#790A – Follow-up on DAVID (Neighborhoods Department): the acronym DAVID stands for Driver And Vehicle Information Database, a state database that can be utilized by government agencies to look up ownership information on motor vehicles. The department found that its Code Compliance Division didn't use the system very much and decided to discontinue participation, which clears the need for resolution of any remaining issues.

#791A - Follow-up on DAVID (Clerk of the Courts): the two remaining issues from the original audit were cleared and the audit is considered closed.

No additional audits are planned for release in the next week, so the June 13th Audit Committee meeting was cancelled.

Committee reports

Parks and Recreation Maintenance Committee

Commissioner Roberts said that the committee's draft report had been forwarded to the department for its comments. Their reply indicated acceptance of the suggested maintenance tracking methodology and posed several questions about the methodology for calculating some of the financial figures cited in the report. Mr. Roberts explained that those figures came from a national report and used a 3-year averaging methodology, which may account for some of the discrepancy in the figures. Staff was requested to send a copy of the final report to all commissioners for their consideration and a vote at the next commission meeting.

Audit Committee

No report needed following Mr. Carter's earlier presentation.

Legislative Tracking Committee

The committee met prior to the commission meeting and reviewed only a couple of new bills, making no recommendations.

Chair's Comments

None

Old Business

Policies and Procedures Manual – Commissioner Merritt distributed and discussed an updated version of the document worked on by the Internal Operations Committee last year, incorporating handwritten notes by Commissioner Roberts correcting various scrivener errors. Commissioner McGowan reviewed the group's previous discussions regarding communication by the full commission and by individual commissioners, and the difficulty in reflecting the rights of individual members to give their personal opinions on issues without implying that they reflect the corporate opinion of the commission. Commissioner Merritt pointed out the reference on page 12 to a standing Communications Committee. The group will read the policy and discuss it at the next meeting

New Business

- TRUE Commission annual report – staff was asked to add the current list of commission members and their terms of office to the report as an attachment.

Motion – approve the annual report with the addition of a list of commissioners and their terms as an attachment, and with a clarification from Chairwoman Brunson of the sentence on page 2 under Legislative Reviews regarding the TRUE Chair sending out the list of new bill introductions to the CPAC chairs – **approved unanimously**

- Election of officers for 2019-20: the group solicited volunteers for the offices and members indicated their interest in various offices. Several members indicated interest in holding office and others indicated a preference to lead or serve on committees rather than holding office for the full commission.

By consensus the group arrived at the following slate of officers for 2019-20:

President – Daniel Henry; Vice-President – Jimmy Daniel; Secretary – Keshan Chambliss

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Roberts volunteered to be Chair of the Legislative Tracking Committee.

Commissioner Merritt volunteered to be Chair of Audit Committee.

Next meetings

The Parks and Recreation Maintenance Committee scheduled for June 12th was cancelled and the committee will be dissolved when the final report is adopted by the full commission at its next meeting.

The Audit Committee's meeting scheduled for June 13th was cancelled.

The Legislative Tracking Committee is scheduled for June 20th, which will include discussion of additional Sheriff's Office budget and hiring issues and the development of a list of questions to be posed to the JSO for discussion at a future full commission meeting.

The full commission scheduled for July 4th was cancelled in recognition of the City Council's summer break and the Independence Day holiday.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

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